Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

OMB Control Number 1205-0522

Alabama's Combined WIOA Plan

draft

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State plan.

Alabama selects a **COMBINED STATE PLAN.**

The State must submit a plan that covers the six core programs

Alabama's plan covers the six core programs:

1. Adult Program (Title I of WIOA)
2. Dislocated Worker Program (Title I)
3. Youth Program (Title I)
4. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II)
5. Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act as amended by Title III)
6. Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV)

The State Combined Plan may include one or more partner programs

Alabama's plan covers these additional programs:

1. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
2. Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (SNAP)
3. Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
4. Veterans
5. Unemployment Insurance (UI)

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II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

(II)(A) Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

(II)(A)(1) Economic and Workforce Analysis

(II)(A)(1)(A) Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State.

The State of Alabama experienced record low unemployment rates, strong GDP growth, and the addition of 130,000 new jobs between 2004 and 2007. Although this period brought a more diversified economy to the state, Alabama was not immune to the effects of the recession. Between 2008 and 2010, Alabama lost 138,500 jobs. Since the recession, Alabama's recovery has been slow but steady. Federal, state, and local government budgets suffered tremendously during the recession, and cutbacks have occurred at all levels. Federal budget constraints have hurt the state's military base operations and also the state's federal research contracts. These funding cutbacks have led to fewer jobs and a slower economic recovery.

Although manufacturing sharply declined during the recession, it remains a strong employer in the state. Due to the change in the global economy in recent decades, the state's traditional industries have gone through major changes. Many manufacturing operations moved overseas, resulting in a significant decline in the textile and apparel industries. Since 2000, the state's economy has diversified with the addition of several foreign owned companies into the state. This diversification began with the influx of major automotive manufacturers. While the major auto manufacturers did experience some decline during the recession, they have experienced increased auto sales and increases in exports since the recession. This growth and recovery resulted in additional shifts and additional employees. The recovery and growth for auto manufacturers has had a positive effect on parts suppliers and companies that support the automotive industry. The addition of automobile manufacturing has contributed to additional transportation manufacturers decisions to locate in Alabama. Both shipbuilding and aerospace manufacturing have experienced success in Alabama. Since 2009, Alabama's exports have increased over 57.0 percent. In 2014, Alabama's total exports were $19.5 billion, just short of the state's record set in 2012 for overseas shipments.

Alabama has a population of approximately 4.8 million people and has experienced a growth rate of 1.5 percent since 2010. Since 2000, Alabama's population has grown an average of 0.7 percent each year. The most heavily populated region is Workforce Development Region (WDR) 4, the region that includes the Birmingham metro area. WDR 4 represents 23 percent of the population in the state. The regions that have experienced the most growth since 2000 are WDR 2, that includes the Huntsville metro area, and WDR 8, the Auburn Metro area. These have grown an average annual rate of

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1.35 percent and 1.32 percent respectively. WDR 6, in west Alabama, continues to experience a loss in population to other areas. The most recent population estimate for WDR 6 is 95,911, which was down 4.9 percent since 2010.

The demographic composition of Alabama's population is 70.4 percent white, 27.1 percent Black, 1.5 percent Asian, and 1.2 percent American Indian. The largest percentage of white population lives in north Alabama, while the largest percentage of black population lives in central Alabama. Mobile County has the largest percentage of American Indian population. The largest percentage of the Asian population resides in Jefferson County, followed by Madison County. The latest Hispanic population figure for the state is 191,838, which is 4.1 percent of the state's population, up from 3.8 percent in 2010. The counties with the largest percentage of Hispanic population are Franklin (16 percent), DeKalb (14 percent), and Marshall (13 percent). All three of these counties are in the northern part of the state. The population in Alabama continues to age at a fast pace. In 2000 only 22 percent of the population was over the age of 55. In 2014 over 27 percent of the population was over the age of 55.

As of January 2015, Alabama is organized into ten (10) workforce development regions (WDRs). Each of the regions has a board consisting of industry leaders, educators, economic developers, and others with an interest in workforce and economic development. Some regions are established as 501c3 organizations with executive directors and are supported with funding from the state, the federals government, and private industry in the region. WDR 9, known as the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC) was the first of these 501c3 boards in Alabama. This region includes the Mobile, Daphne/Fairhope/Foley metro areas. Other boards that have recently become 501c3 organizations include (1) WDR 3 made up of the Tuscaloosa metro area and know as West Alabama Works; (2) WDR 4 composed of the Birmingham metro areas and known as the Central Six Development council; and, (3) WDR 8 in the Auburn-Opelika metro area known as East Alabama WIN. Each of the ten regions in the state varies economically. All include at least one metropolitan area with the exception of WDR 6, a small rural region in west Alabama.

WDR 1 is located in northwest Alabama and includes the Florence/Muscle Shoals metropolitan area. The population of this region in 2014 was estimated to be 267,138, a 0.5 percent decline since 2010. The

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per capita income in WDR1 in 2013 was $31,703, nearly $5,000 lower than the state average. Total employment in 2014 was 98,874, up 1.0 percent since 2009. Manufacturing employs the largest percentage (24 percent) of the workforce in WDR 1. Historically, the region has been known for its wood manufacturing industry. Although there have been declines since 2000 to a low of 3,174 employed, the industry has recovered some since the recession, growing over 13 percent. As with the rest of the state, WDR 1 has experienced growth in transportation manufacturing. The region already had a presence in motor vehicle body and trailer manufacturing, but since the recession, has attracted some motor vehicle parts manufacturers. Employment in this industry has tripled since 2009. The region still has a significant agriculture base, with an estimated employment of 4,500. In November 2015, the unemployment rate for WDR 1 was 6.6 percent (7,520 unemployed workers), higher than the state rate of 6.0 percent.

WDR 2 is in northeast Alabama and includes the Huntsville and Decatur metropolitan areas. The estimated population in WDR 2 in 2014 was 860,348, 3.1 percent higher than in 2010. Per capita income in the region was $37,278 in 2013, nearly $800 above the state average. Madison County per capita income was $43,481, higher than the state average by $7,000. This region, specifically the Huntsville area, is well known as a hub for high technology. With the second largest research and development park in the United States, the area is home to a large array of Fortune 500 companies, local and international high-tech companies, and U.S. space and defense agencies. WDR 2, as a center for research and development, employs nearly half of the state's total architecture and engineering occupations, and a third of the computer and mathematical occupations. With a total employment of 404,462 in 2014, the region has grown 2.7 percent since the worst part of the recent recession. Since 2009, employment in computer systems design and related services has increased by 22.0 percent. Federal government employment in WDR 2 has grown 12.5 percent since 2009, due to the presence of numerous government projects in the area. Although the metropolitan areas are highly technical in nature, the surrounding counties in the region still have a high presence in agriculture, employing over 3,000 individuals. This region continues to be a large producer of poultry, cattle, and cotton in the state. The latest unemployment figures from November 2015 reveal an unemployment rate in WDR 2 of 5.2 percent, lower than the overall rate for the state.

Located in the western part of the state, WDR 3 includes the Tuscaloosa metropolitan area; however, the majority of counties in the region are fairly rural. The region had an estimated population of 299,780 in 2014, 67 percent of whom reside in Tuscaloosa County. Per capita income in the region is lower than the state average by over $2,500, with an estimate in 2013 of $33,919. Tuscaloosa County makes up approximately 82.0 percent of the region's total employment. Educational Services is the dominant industry in Tuscaloosa County, due to the location of The University of Alabama in the county. The region as a whole, though, has experienced a large positive impact by the addition of manufacturing companies. Total employment has grown 5.75 percent since 2009, reaching 123,650 in 2014. While the region has experienced significant losses in apparel, petroleum, and coal product manufacturing, transportation manufacturing in the region has grown, as it has in the rest of the state. The transportation manufacturing

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industry, employing 6,242 people in 2014, experienced more than 37.0 percent growth since 2009. In November 2015, WDR 3 had an estimated 7,509 people unemployed, a rate of 5.5 percent.

The most heavily populated region in the state is WDR 4, which consists of the Birmingham metropolitan area. The 2014 population estimate for WDR 4 was 1,121,266, representing 23.0 percent of the state's total. Nearly 26.0 percent of the state's workforce is located in the region, with a total employment of 542,177 in 2014. This region is centrally located in the state, at the intersection of a six-spoke interstate system. This makes it a perfect location for regional distribution centers. The WDR 4 is the financial center of the state, with approximately 50.0 percent of the state's employment in finance and insurance industries. According to the Federal Reserve, Birmingham has nearly $220 billion in bank assets, ranking it as the second largest banking center in the south and the 11th largest nationally. Corporate headquarters for four financial institutions and several major insurance companies are located here. WDR 4 also leads the state in health care services and research. The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is the fourth largest academic medical center in the United States, and it ranks 44th out of 965 institutions in the National Science Foundation Total R&D expenditures. Furthermore, UAB's University Hospital is the third largest public hospital in the nation. This region currently has the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 5.1 percent, with 27,208 unemployed.

WDR 5 is located in the eastern part of the state and includes the Gadsden and Anniston metropolitan areas. The 2014 population estimate of 430,028 for WDR 5 showed a decline of 1.4 percent from 2010. Population in the two metro areas in the region make up over 50.0 percent of the region's population. These metro areas had a population decline of over 3,500 people since 2010. Per capita income in the region was $32,196, approximately 12.0 percent below the state average in 2013. The largest percentage of the workforce in WDR 5 is employed in manufacturing industries. Total employment in 2014 was 158,926, up only 0.1 percent since 2009. Although manufacturing has grown slightly in the region since 2009 (up 3.6 percent) the region still suffers from large numbers of jobs being exported to other countries. Prior to 2000, textile and apparel companies were moving out of the country. These industries in Alabama employed 13,699 in 2000, and only 2,215 jobs remain in 2014. Fortunately, the area landed a major automobile manufacturing plant in 2001, which also attracted parts suppliers to the area. Transportation manufacturing employment has grown 21.0 percent since 2009, with an employment of 10,238 persons in 2014. The latest unemployment data for the region shows that in November 2015 WDR 5 had approximately 10,630 unemployed, equaling a 5.9 percent unemployment rate.

WDR 6, located in west central Alabama, is composed of some of the most rural counties in the state. The estimated population in 2014 was 95,911, down 4.9 percent from 2010, with the population decreasing in every single county over the period. The average labor force in 2014 was 34,968, but the latest census data has reported that the region has a very low labor force participation rate (estimated at around 45.0 percent). Additionally, the workforce is aging, with just over 25.0 percent over the age of 55. Per

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capita income in the area was $31,242 in 2013, which was 14.4 percent below the state average of $36,481. Total employment in the region has continued to decline slightly each year, dropping 3.8 percent from 2009 to 2014. The region has experienced some employment growth in food manufacturing, and has gained some new auto parts manufacturers. Like most areas of the state, and the nation, employment has also increased in employment service companies due to the fact that many places are using people employed by employment services to work in their businesses. There is a strong agriculture industry in the region with an estimated employment of around 2,300. WDR 6 consistently has the highest unemployment rate of all the regions. The latest figures for November 2015 report an estimated 2,914 people unemployed, equating to an 8.6 percent unemployment rate.

WDR 7 consists of the Montgomery metropolitan area and the city of Montgomery. The 2014 population estimate of 407,414 declined slightly (by 0.5 percent) since 2010. Montgomery County made up over 50.0 percent of the region's population, and its population declined 1.4 percent since 2010. However, population increased in both Autauga and Elmore counties, an indication that some of the people who lived in Montgomery County moved to those neighboring counties. In 2013, per capita income was $40,168. A large percentage of veterans live in this region, with the presence of the Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery County. The latest figures show that the percentage of the adult population who are veterans is 15.1 percent in Autauga County, 15.4 percent in Elmore County, 11.6 percent in Montgomery County, and 12.1 percent in Butler County. With the state capital located in Montgomery, the primary industry in the area is state government. Total employment in the region was estimated at 194,647 in 2014, which is down slightly from 2009. Some of the decline is due to a reduction in state government. But, like most of the other regions of the state, WDR 7 has experienced significant employment growth in transportation industries. With the construction of a major automobile manufacturing plant in WDR 7, employment has grown 10.6 percent in automotive manufacturing and 159.0 percent in automotive parts manufacturing since 2009. The region has also enjoyed growth in aerospace manufacturing, with employment growth of 19.5 percent since 2009. Like other regions of the state and the nation, this area has also seen growth in employment services industries, due to a change in how companies hire employees. Since 2009, employment in this industry has grown around 22.0 percent. The latest unemployment figures for November 2015 show that an estimated 10,364 people were unemployed in WDR 7 producing a 5.6 percent unemployment rate, lower than the state unemployment rate.

WDR 8 is located in east-central Alabama. Within the region is the Auburn-Opelika metropolitan area. Also included in this region is Russell County, a part of the Columbus, GA metropolitan area. This region is one of the fastest growing in the state. In 2014 the population was estimated at 278,128, with a 7.1 percent growth since 2010. Lee County's population, making up 55 percent of the entire region, grew 10.0 percent from 2010 to 2014. Furthermore, Russell County's population grew 12.6 percent during the same period. The per capita income for the region was still fairly low in 2013 at $30,341, $6,140 below the state's average. The primary industry in the area is education services, due to the presence of Auburn University, Tuskegee University and

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several community colleges in the region. A study by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities reported that Auburn had a $5.1 billion economic impact in the state in 2014. Since 2009, total employment in WDR 8 has grown around 9.0 percent, with manufacturing growing over 12.0 percent. Chemical manufacturing employment has grown 180.0 percent since 2009. Furthermore, WDR 8 has seen a more than 60.0 percent growth in both fabricated metal product manufacturing and transportation equipment manufacturing between 2009 and 2014. The latest data for WDR 8 show the unemployment rate at 5.2 percent, with approximately 6,577 people unemployed.

WDR 9 encompasses the southwest region of the state. This area consists of the Mobile metropolitan area and the Daphne-Fairhope-Foley metropolitan area. The latest population estimates for the metro areas combined are approximately 615,000, while the total population for the remaining six counties in the region is 127,452. Per capita income for the region in 2013 was $34,173, 6.3 percent below the state average, with Baldwin County having the highest per capita income at $39,100. Although total employment has only grown 1.4 percent between 2009 and 2014, manufacturing employment has grown over 11.0 percent. Primary metal manufacturing has grown 15.0 percent, and transportation equipment manufacturing has grown over 40.0 percent, with most of the growth being in ship manufacturing. In 2014, the Business Facilities Magazine ranked the Mobile metropolitan area third in the nation for economic development growth potential. In the region as a whole, the November 2015 data show that approximately 20,214 people were unemployed, which equates to a regional unemployment rate of 6.4 percent.

The southeast region of the state, including the Dothan metropolitan area, makes up WDR 10. Population in the region declined slightly from 343,949 in 2010 to an estimated 346,678 in 2014. Houston County showed the most population growth during the same period, with an increase of 2.6 percent reaching 104,193. Military veterans are a large part of this region, with the latest figures showing that an estimated 13.7 percent of the adult population in the region are veterans, the highest veteran rate in the state. Coffee County had the highest percentage of veterans, with an estimated 7,431 residing there. This county also had the highest per capita income in the region at $38,002 in 2013, higher than the state average. WDR 10's per capita income was $34,555, which was $1,926 below the state average. This region is home to a major university, a military base, and has strong presence of aviation training. Additionally the region still plays a major role, both in the state and nation, in agriculture production. The area continues to be a large producer of cotton, peanuts, poultry, and eggs. Total employment in the region in 2014 was estimated at 139,395. In November 2015, the unemployment rate was 5.9 percent, close to the state average, with 8,340 people unemployed.

During 2014, total employment for the state averaged 1.86 million, still lower than the pre- recession level of 1.95 million. Alabama's total employment dropped to an annual average of 1.81 million at the height of the recession, and, as a result, the state is experiencing a slow recovery. The industry sector with the largest effect on the state's economy continues to be manufacturing, with $17.63 billion in manufactured goods exports in 2014. In the 20th century, the majority of manufacturing in the state consisted of nondurable goods, such as textile, apparel, food, paper, etc. Due to changes in trade

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agreements and many manufacturers moving out of the country in pursuit of cheaper labor, these industries are no longer the primary source of income for the state. Since 2000, durable goods manufacturing has risen to the forefront, through extensive economic development efforts to replace the thousands of jobs lost in nondurable goods manufacturing. Transportation manufacturing has had the greatest positive impact, presently making up over 20.0 percent of the manufacturing employment in the state.

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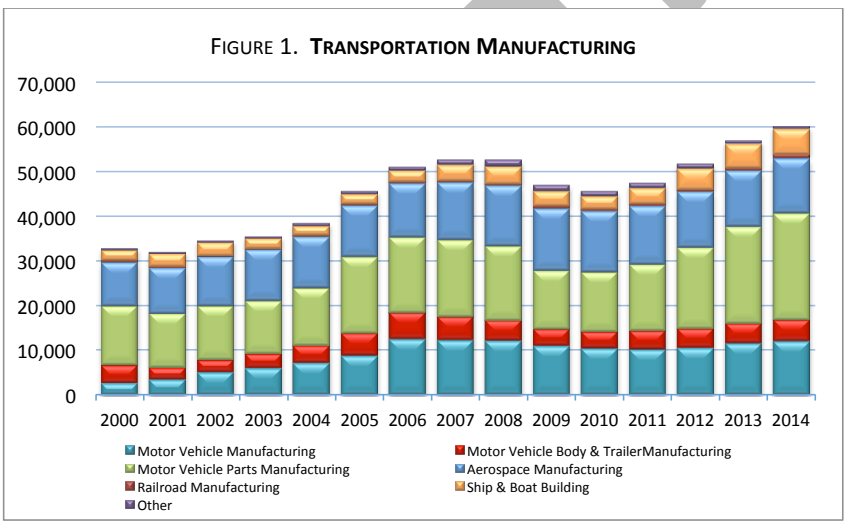
(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

A majority of the industries targeted for recruitment, retention, and renewal are manufacturing industries. Three of those targeted industries, **Aerospace, Automotive,** and **Metal Manufacturing**, which includes ship building, are in the transportation manufacturing sector (Figure 1). At the height of the recession, the transportation manufacturing dropped down to 45,692 employed, but since has grown over 31 percent, with automotive parts manufacturing growing the most at 78 percent since 2010. Ship and boat building had a slight setback in 2010, decreasing from an employment of 3,515 in 2009 to 3,018 in 2010. It quickly recovered to 3,640 in 2011 and continues to increase every year. Top Aerospace cluster occupations for 2013 in Alabama are shown in Table 1. Top occupations in Alabama in 2013 for the Automotive cluster are shown in Table 2. Top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Sheet Metal and Ship Building cluster are shown in Table 2.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Table 1: Top Occupations for Aerospace Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Computer Programmers	2,730	5%	$39.41
Computer User Support Specialists	2,500	4%	$22.15
Computer Systems Analysts	2,290	4%	$38.67
Software Developers, Applications	2,140	4%	$45.20
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	2,050	3%	$30.80
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,920	3%	$47.72
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1,820	3%	$23.85

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

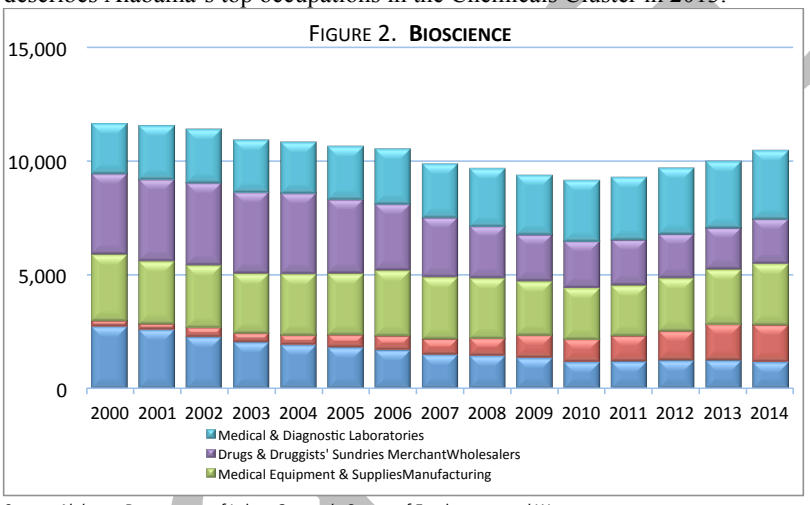
Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	$16.85
Tire Builders	1,960	5%	$23.37
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,950	5%	$14.67
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	1,770	4%	$18.07
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,340	3%	$24.00
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1,270	3%	$15.42
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	900	2%	$11.39
Industrial Engineers	830	2%	$40.72
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	650	1%	$17.29

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

Table 3: Top Occupations for Sheet Metal and Ship Manufacturing Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	3,090	6%	$17.87
Machinists	2,410	5%	$19.21
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,810	4%	$14.67
Team Assemblers	1,790	4%	$16.85
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,590	3%	$24.00
Layout Workers, Metal and Plastic	1,400	3%	$22.26
Helpers--Production Workers	1,390	3%	$11.54
Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,360	3%	$20.95
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	1,230	3%	$17.19

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects*

Two industries**, Bioscience** and **Chemicals,** are also being targeted through the state's strategic plan, *Accelerate Alabama*, introduced by Governor Robert Bentley in an executive order in July 2011. While the total employment in the bioscience cluster has experienced a downturn since 2000, the cluster has grown over 14 percent since 2010, and there have been announcements of 335 new jobs to come. Most of those jobs announced are in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, a field that has experienced a steady growth in employment of 473.0 percent since 2000, and has continued to grow during the recession years (Figure 2). The **Chemicals** cluster also took a downturn since 2000, but has grown slightly since the recession (Figure 3). A very small portion of this cluster (soap, cleaning compound, and toiletry manufacturing) has grown 154 percent since 2000. Additionally, since 2014, announcements for 200 new jobs in paint, coating, and adhesive manufacturing have been made. Table 4 describes Alabama's top occupations in the Bioscience Cluster for 2013. Table 5 describes Alabama's top occupations in the Chemicals Cluster in 2013.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Table 4. Top Occupations for Bioscience Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,230	13%	$31.17
Dental Laboratory Technicians	630	7%	$16.54
Chemical Plant and System Operators	500	5%	$28.08
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	370	4%	$25.41
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	360	4%	$17.26
Phlebotomists	300	3%	$13.05
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	280	3%	$15.42
Customer Service Representatives	250	3%	$14.48
Packers and Packagers, Hand	230	2%	$10.17

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

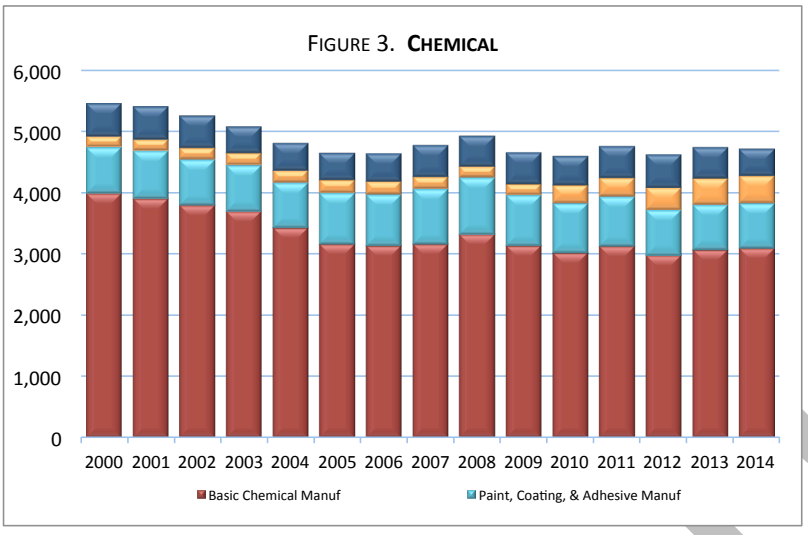
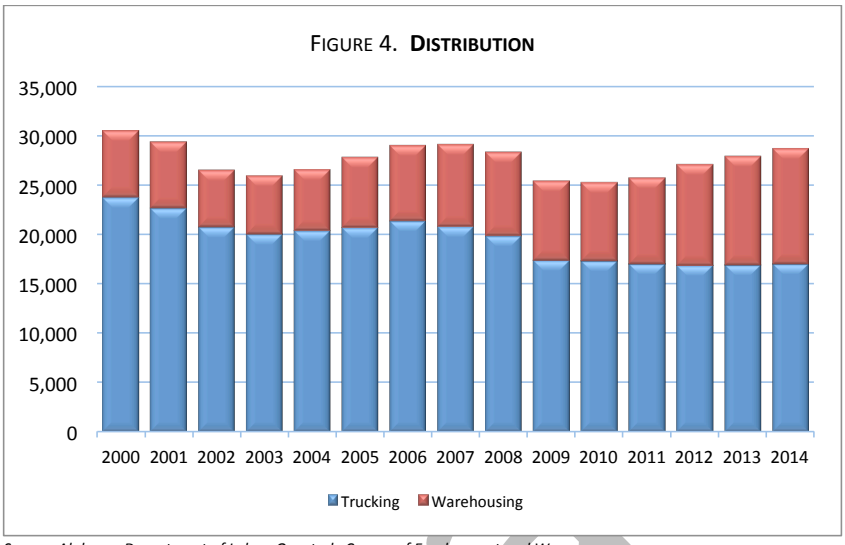


Table 4. Top Occupations for Chemicals Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	1,140	7%	$26.44
Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	950	6%	$16.13
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	780	5%	$15.42
Packers and Packagers, Hand	700	4%	$10.17
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	690	4%	$24.00
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	680	4%	$18.81
Chemical Plant and System Operators	620	4%	$28.08
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	510	3%	$14.59
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	440	3%	$14.49

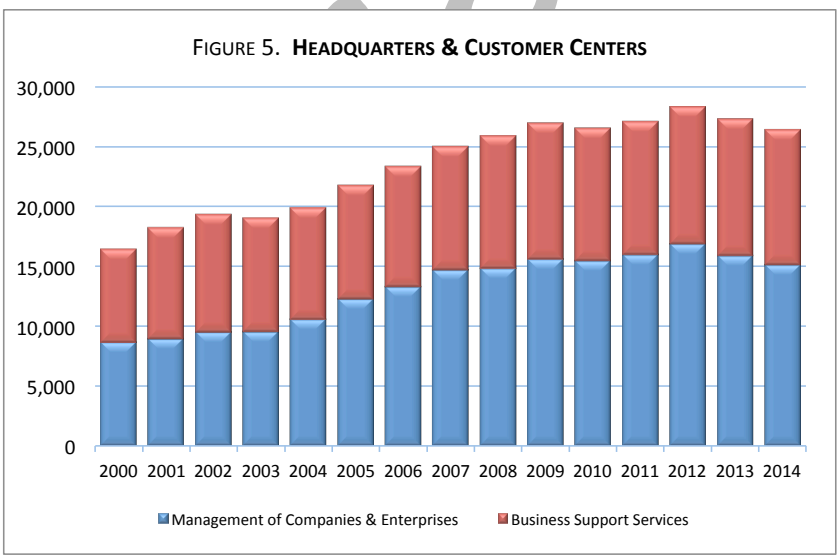
Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar.
Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster

Two more targeted clusters in *Accelerate Alabama* were **Distribution Centers** and **Corporate Operations.** While **Distribution**, like most industries, experienced a downturn during the recession, it has steadily increased in employment since 2010. Warehousing, a component of **Distribution Centers**, has especially grown, increasing of nearly 47 percent since 2010, with more than 1,000 additional jobs announced since 2014 (Figure 4). Additionally, approximately 140 new jobs have been announced for general freight trucking. **Corporate Operations** as a cluster has been growing at a steady pace

since 2000 (Figure 5). From 2000 to 2014 this cluster has grown 60 percent, with nearly 1,300 new jobs announced. Table 5 shows the top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Corporate Operations Cluster. Table 6 describes the top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Distribution Cluster.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

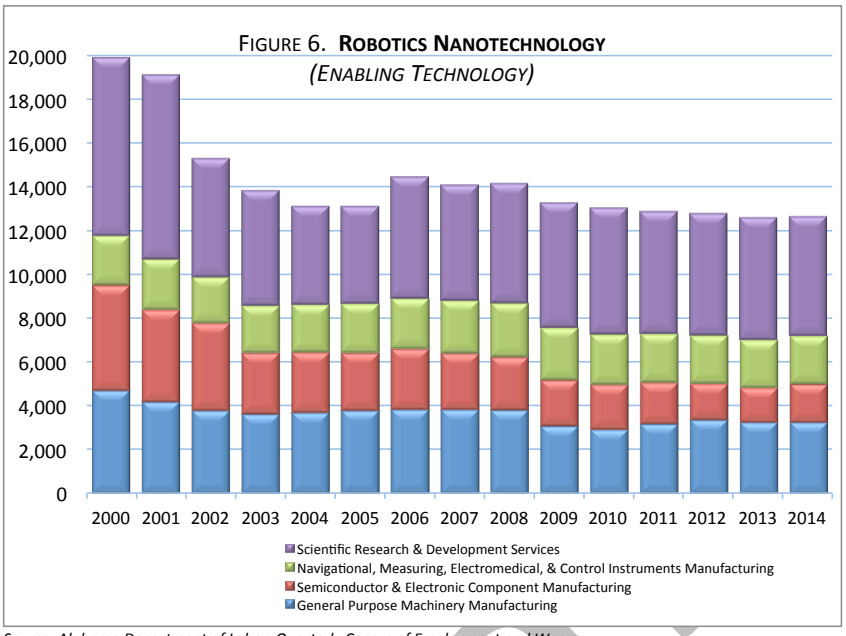
Table 5. Top Occupations for Corporate Operations Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Customer Service Representatives	5,910	21%	$14.48
Telemarketers	1,900	7%	$10.55
General and Operations Managers	1,650	6%	$58.48
Bill and Account Collectors	1,550	5%	$15.00
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,230	4%	$17.06
Accountants and Auditors	1,080	4%	$31.97
Office Clerks, General	610	2%	$11.09
Computer User Support Specialists	580	2%	$22.15

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

Table 6. Top Occupations for Distribution Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	12,240	30%	$19.74
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,810	16%	$11.67
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,400	6%	$14.49
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1,990	5%	$11.35
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,810	4%	$10.17
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1,130	3%	$14.46
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,120	3%	$31.17
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	1,030	2%	$14.34

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

Alabama's strategic plan for economic development (*Accelerate Alabama)* also targeted industries that are associated with **Enabling Technology**, due to the increased use of nanotechnology and robotics (Figure 6) used in many of the large automotive production plants in Alabama and surrounding states. To show the Alabama's commitment to prepare the workforce for these types of jobs, AIDT and robotics industry leaders collaborated to build a robotics technology park. The park consists of three training facilities, each targeted to a specific industry need. While the industries associated with this cluster show minimal growth thus far, nearly 1,000 additional jobs have recently (since 2014) been announced for the state. Table 7 shows the top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Enabling Technology cluster.

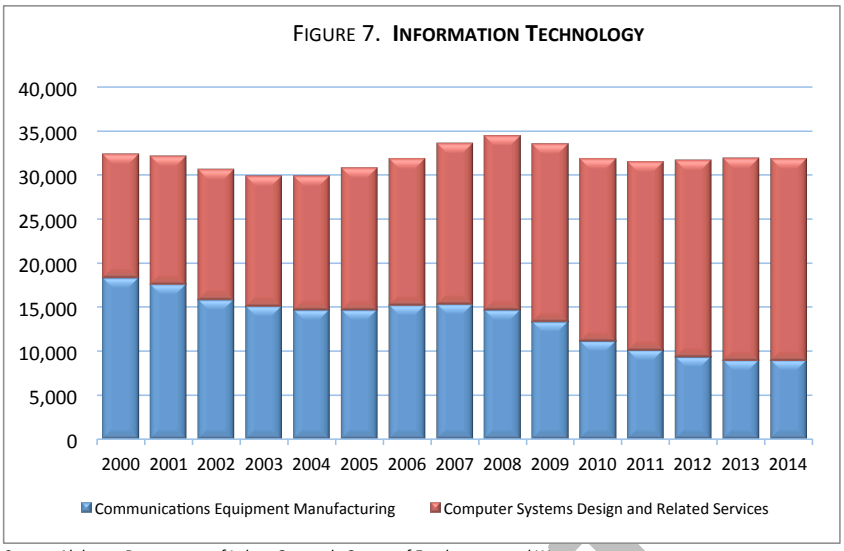


Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Table 7. Top Occupations for Enabling Technology Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	1,000	8%	$13.59
Computer Systems Analysts	680	5%	$38.67
Machinists	500	4%	$19.21
Software Developers, Systems Software	450	4%	$47.72
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	410	3%	$15.57
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	410	3%	$17.87
Electrical Engineers	380	3%	$45.20
Industrial Engineers	330	3%	$40.72
Team Assemblers	310	3%	$16.85

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

Information Technology, another targeted industry cluster, overlaps the **Enabling Technology** cluster somewhat. The largest industry in the **Information Technology** cluster (Figure 7) is business support services, a field that has grown at a steady pace, even during the recession, up 63 percent since 2000. Additionally, over 500 new jobs have been announced in this cluster since 2014. The top occupations in the Information Technology cluster in Alabama in 2013 are shown in Table 8.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Table 8. Top Occupations for Information Technology Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Computer User Support Specialists	2,440	7%	$22.15
Computer Programmers	2,400	7%	$39.41
Software Developers, Applications	2,160	6%	$45.20
Management Analysts	2,030	6%	$45.23
Computer Systems Analysts	1,830	5%	$38.67
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,350	4%	$47.72
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	940	3%	$33.73

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

The final two clusters targeted in *Accelerate Alabama* are historically a large part of the state's economy; **Food Products** and **Forest Products**. In 2012 Alabama's agriculture industry produced cash receipts of $5.35 billion (Table 9). In the U.S. the state ranks 2nd in peanut production, 3rd in aquaculture, and 4th in poultry broilers. The state also ranks 10th in the U.S. in both cotton and chicken/egg production. According to the Alabama Forestry Commission, Alabama's forests generate over $21 billion in timber production and processing revenue. The state ranks 3rd in timberland acreage in the 48 contiguous states, behind only Georgia and Oregon. According to a 2013 report published by Auburn University (February 2013), Agriculture, forestry and their related industries account for 41 percent of Alabama's $174 billion economy and provide 22 percent of all jobs in the state. The study has determined that agriculture, forestry, and related industries generate 8 jobs per million dollars of sales (Table 10).

This report identified over 90 industry sectors that are related to agriculture and forestry production, including food and kindred product distribution sectors, like wholesalers, food stores, and restaurants. For these reasons, it is beneficial to the economy of the state to continue to support and pursue advancements in production and research for these industries. Table 11 describes the top occupations in the Food Products Cluster for 2013. Table 12 describes the top occupations in the Forest Products Cluster in Alabama for 2013. Figure A shows the Direct Employment and Employment Impacts of agriculture, forestry and related industries in Alabama as reported in 2010.

Table 9

TABLE 1. ***ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL FACTS***

Alabama: *Leading Commodities for Cash Receipts, 2012*

2012 HIGHLIGHTED CROPS			
CASH RECEIPTS			U.S. RANKING
All Commodities	**$5.35**	billion	**# 25**
Broilers	$2.81	billion	# 4
Cattle & Calves	$536	million	# 27
Chicken Eggs	$352	million	# 10
Cotton	$318	million	# 10
Peanuts	$293	million	# 2
Corn	$190	million	# 28
Soybeans	$178	million	# 22
Aquaculture	$111	million	# 3

Source: USDA, NASS, Georgia Field Office, Southern Region. Retrieved from Website: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Alabama

Table 10

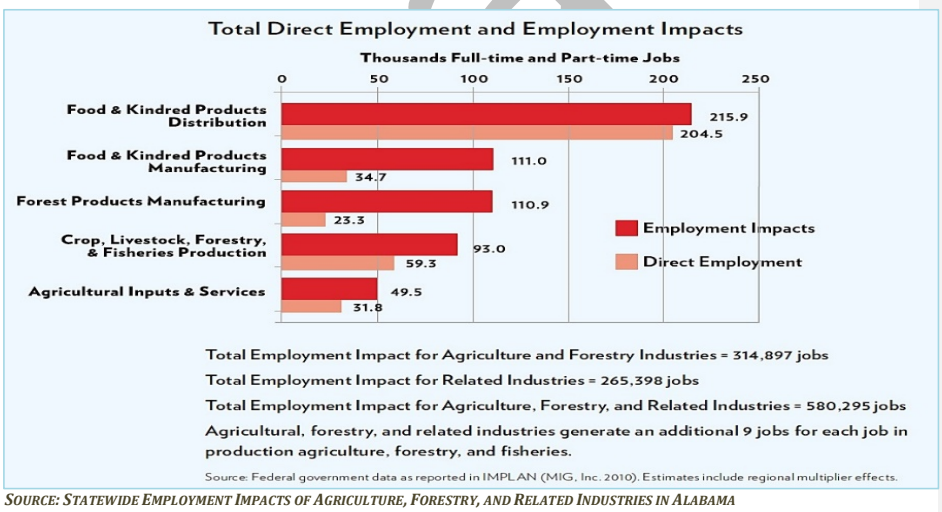
TABLE 2. ***LABOR INTENSITY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND RELATED INDUSTRIES***

Industries	*Jobs/Mn $
Crop, livestock, forestry & fisheries production	10
Food & kindred products manufacturing	3
Forest products manufacturing	2
Food & kindred products distribution	17
Agricultural inputs & services	8
Average	**8**

*number of full-time and part-time jobs created per million dollars of output

Source: Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Auburn University, February 2013, p. 18. *Economic impacts of Alabama's agricultural, forestry, and related industries.* Retrieved from Website: http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1456/ANR-1456.pdf

Figure A



SOURCE: STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND RELATED INDUSTRIES IN ALABAMA

Table 11. Top Occupations for Food Products Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	12,090	29%	$10.66
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,280	5%	$31.17
Helpers--Production Workers	2,270	5%	$11.54
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,480	3%	$10.17
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	1,330	3%	$12.21
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1,300	3%	$12.73
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,220	3%	$11.67
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,100	3%	$24.00
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	990	2%	$10.95

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

Table 12.Top Occupations for Forest Products Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	2,260	6%	$18.11
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	2,200	6%	$13.61
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	2,160	6%	$11.87
Logging Equipment Operators	1,920	6%	$15.78
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	1,840	5%	$13.35
Helpers--Production Workers	1,490	4%	$11.54
Team Assemblers	1,420	4%	$16.85
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,360	4%	$24.00

Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

One industry sector that was not addressed in the *Accelerate Alabama* plan is **Healthcare**. The fact that the baby boomers are approaching retirement age, and also that people are living longer, is beginning to have a large impact on the healthcare system. Additionally, there are many more specialized jobs in healthcare than in the past, due to the fact that healthcare costs have risen in tandem with the demand for healthcare services. While hospitals have experienced small but steady growth every year since 2000, most of the growth in healthcare employment has come from industries that provide more specialized care (Figure 8). Industries such as outpatient care centers, home health care services, and specialized health practitioners have doubled in employment since 2000. In addition employment in residential disability, mental health, and substance abuse facilities has grown 226 percent since 2000. Continuing care retirement and assisted living facilities have also doubled in employment. Furthermore, as the population ages, so does the workforce in the healthcare industry. In Alabama in 2014, 21 percent of the healthcare workforce was over the age of 55. There is a projection of nearly 60,000 new jobs in healthcare for the period of 2012-2022. That

projection combined with an increasing number of workers approaching retirement, the demand for healthcare employees is very high in the state.
Table 13 shows the top occupations in the Healthcare cluster in Alabama in 2013.

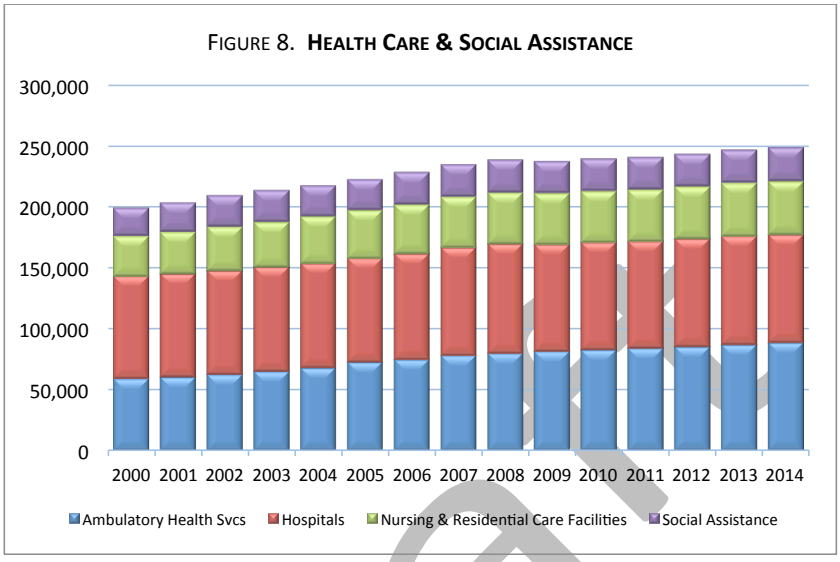


Table 13. Top Occupations for Healthcare Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly
Registered Nurses	39,580	16.95	$27.82
Nursing Assistants	21,110	8.00	$10.86
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	12,060	5.12	$17.52
Personal Care Aides	11,050	3.59	$8.82
Medical Assistants	6,570	2.69	$12.81
Home Health Aides	3,660	2.57	$9.70
Office Clerks, General	4,780	2.40	$11.30
Receptionists and Information Clerks	6,690	2.33	$11.95
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,740	1.97	$16.44
Medical Secretaries	4,410	1.67	$15.33
Billing and Posting Clerks	3,820	1.49	$15.30
Radiologic Technologists	3,230	1.41	$22.62
Dental Hygienists	2,540	1.23	$21.71
Dental Assistants	3,340	1.22	$15.13
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	2,560	1.06	$14.61
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	2,230	1.02	$15.73

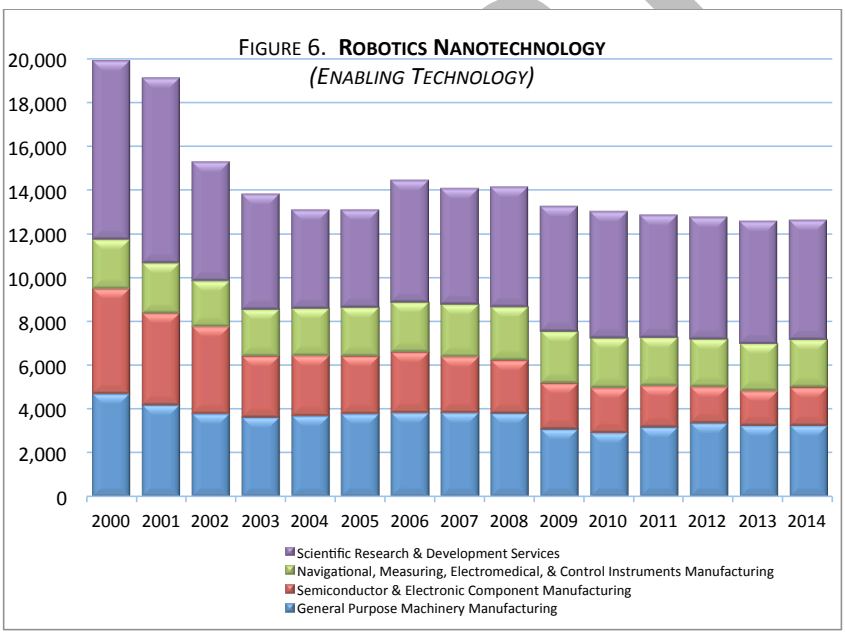
Source: 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. *Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.*

(I)(A)(1) (A) (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Alabama's strategic plan for economic development is also targeting industries that are associated with **Enabling Technology**, due to the increased use of nanotechnology and robotics (Figure 6) used in many of the large automotive production plants in Alabama and surrounding states. To show the dedication to prepare the workforce for these types of jobs, AIDT and robotics industry leaders across the nation collaborated to build the robotics technology park. The park consists of three training facilities, each targeted to a specific industry need. While the industries associated with this cluster show minimal growth thus far, nearly 1,000 additional jobs have recently been announced for the state.

Cyber Security is an emerging industry another cluster which overlaps the **Enabling Technology** cluster. Huntsville, Alabama is home to the second largest research park in the United States, Cummings Research Park, with over 400 companies that include Fortune 500 companies, local and international high-tech enterprises, and US space and defense agencies. It also includes a thriving business incubator and competitive higher education institutions. **Cyber security** is most certainly an emerging sector in this state, and in the entire country.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Table 14 lists Alabama's targeted industries and occupations by Workforce Development Regions. Table 15 presents the top ten knowledge and skill areas for the demand occupations in targeted industry clusters.

Table 14. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations by Region

WD Region	Target Industries	Occupations
WDR 1	• Automotive • Metals Manufacturing • Distribution • Energy Related • Service Related Industries	• Advance Manufacturing • Engineering Technicians • Green Technicians • Logistics • Nursing
WDR 2	• Aerospace and Defense • Construction • Health and Life Sciences • Information and Communications Technology	• Architecture and Construction • Business Management & Administration • Finance • Health Science • Hospitality & Tourism • Information Technology • Manufacturing • Marketing • Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics • Transportation, Distribution & Logistics
WDR 3	• Automotive • Healthcare • Construction • Manufacturing • Service Industry	• Healthcare/Nursing • Hospitality • Customer Service (Jobs) • Transportation/Drivers • Logistics • Information Technology • Machinists • Industrial Maintenance • Production/Assemblers • Welders/Fitters
WDR 4	• Manufacturing • Healthcare • Energy • Service Industry • Logistics	• Welders/Fitters • Machinists • Industrial Maintenance • Nursing • Allied Health • Green Technology • IT • Customer Service • Culinary • Drivers
WDR 5	• Automated Manufacturing & Robotics • Construction and Construction Services • Healthcare	• Quality Assurance & Safety • Heavy Equipment Operator • Healthcare Practitioner • Medical Records and Health Information Technician

Table 14. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations by Region

WD Region	Target Industries	Occupations
	• Hospitality and Tourism Services	• Industrial Maintenance • Computer User Support Specialist • Plating and Coating Machine Setters, Operators & Tenders • Welding, Soldering and Brazing Workers • Metal Workers and Plastics Workers • Electrical Workers and Electronics Repairers, Commercial/Industrial
WDR 6	• Construction • Healthcare • Hospitality and Tourism • Manufacturing • Retail and Services	• Agricultural Business • Bio-Fuel • Customer Service Rep. • Entrepreneurial Development • Healthcare Workers • Industrial Maintenance Tech • IT Services • Management • Tourism Guides • Trades (carpentry, brick layers plumbing)
WDR 7	• Agriculture • Healthcare • Manufacturing • Service/Tourism • Transportation/Warehousing/ Distribution	• Computer Skills • Customer Service Reps • Engineering Technician • Industrial Maintenance • Logistics • LPNs • Mechanics • RNs • Truck Drivers • Welding
WDR 8	• Manufacturing • Healthcare • Transportation, Distribution & Logistics • Hospitality & Tourism • Architecture and Construction	• Assembler/Operator • Certified Nursing Assistant • Commercial Driver License Driver • Computer Numeric Control Machinist • Customer Service Representative • Industrial Maintenance Technician • Licensed Practical Nurse • Occupational/Physical Therapist • Pipe Fitter/Welder • Utility Assistant/ Linemen

Table 14. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations by Region

WD Region	Target Industries	Occupations
WDR 9	• Aviation and Aerospace • Construction • Healthcare • Advance Manufacturing • Maritime	• Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic • Assembler • Electrical Maintenance/ Electrician Engineer • Electrician • Lab/Med Technician • Mechanical Maintenance/Mechanical Engineer • Millwright • Pipefitter/Pipe welder • Registered Nurse • Ship-fitter
WDR 10	• Healthcare • Transportation • Manufacturing • Aviation • Services	• Auto & Vehicle Mechanics • Automotive Technology Specialists • Construction Trade Workers • Customer Service Representatives • Engineers • Industrial Maintenance • Nurses • Physical Therapist Assistants • Physical Therapists • Sheet Metal Fabricators • Surgical Technicians • Truck Drivers • Welders

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Table 15. Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

Top 10 KSAs
Demand Occupations in Targeted Industry Clusters

Knowledge	Rank	Skill	Rank	Ability	Rank
English Language	12.2%	Critical Thinking	10.42%	Problem Sensitivity	7.10%
Customer & Personal Service	9.8%	Monitoring	9.57%	Near Vision	6.79%
Mathematics	8.9%	Reading Comprehension	9.01%	Oral Comprehension	6.31%
Mechanical	8.2%	Active Listening	8.93%	Deductive Reasoning	5.71%
Production and Processing	7.5%	Speaking	8.14%	Oral Expression	5.44%
Public Safety and Security	6.7%	Operation Monitoring	6.29%	Written Comprehension	5.27%
Education and Training	5.4%	Coordination	6.18%	Information Ordering	4.74%
Computers and Electronics	5.2%	Judgment & Decision Making	4.84%	Speech Recognition	4.65%
Medicine and Dentistry	4.8%	Quality Control Analysis	4.44%	Control Precision	4.09%
Engineering and Technology	4.2%	Operation and Control	3.93%	Manual Dexterity	4.02%

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division. O*Net OnLine.

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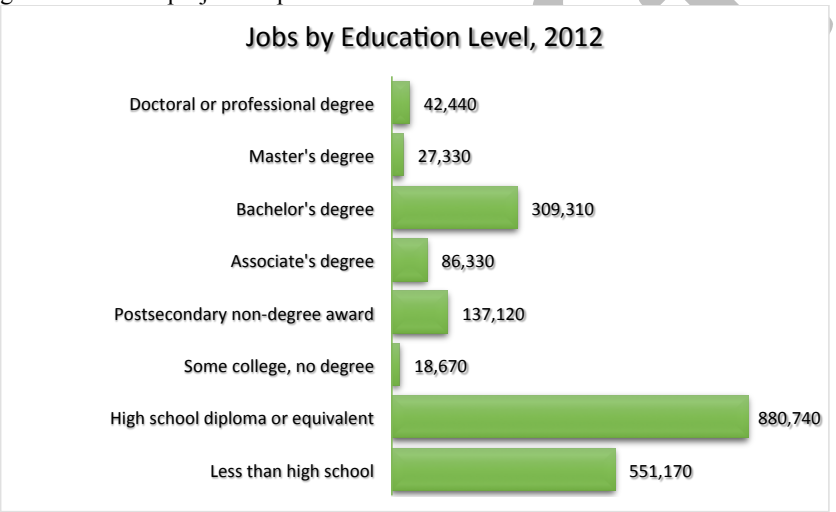
(I) (A) (1) (iii) Employers' Employment Needs

Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

In 2012, only 30 percent of jobs were in occupations that typically require postsecondary education for entry. Within this group, jobs in occupations that require a Bachelor's degree for entry held the largest share at 15 percent. Occupations requiring a high school diploma or equivalent, and less than high school, made up 70 percent of jobs in 2012. Occupations with the highest percentage growth typically require a form of postsecondary education, with associate's degree occupations holding the highest share at 18.9 percent.

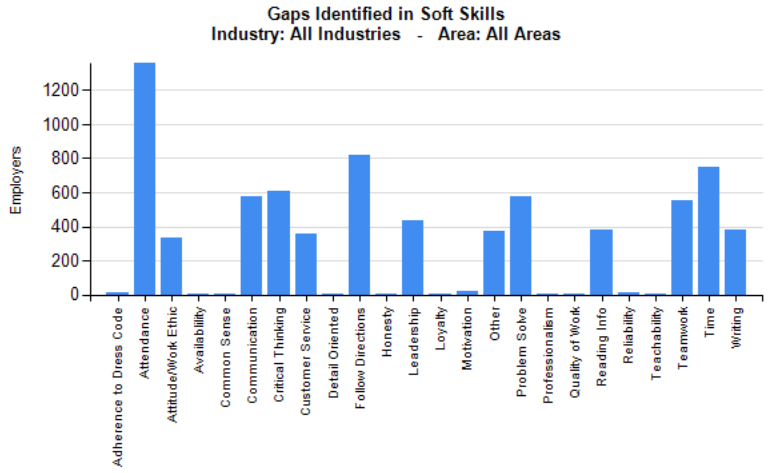
All occupations requiring postsecondary education are projected to grow faster than average, 10.4 percent. At 8.7 percent, less than high school occupations show the slowest growth over the projection period.



Over the past five years there have been a multitude of reports all over the country about skills gaps. More importantly the emphasis has been on employees' lack of soft skills. Alabama is no different. Employers all over the state declare that they cannot find employees with adequate skills. The Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division decided that the state needed current data to illustrate the employers' concerns in these areas. As a result, a skills survey was conducted, and published in 2013. Many of the employers voicing these concerns were in manufacturing and construction industries. So, for this study, the decision was made to survey employers in manufacturing, construction and utilities. A sample of 6,926 employers was randomly selected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over 5,000 employers in the three industries responded to the survey. The survey instrument included three categories

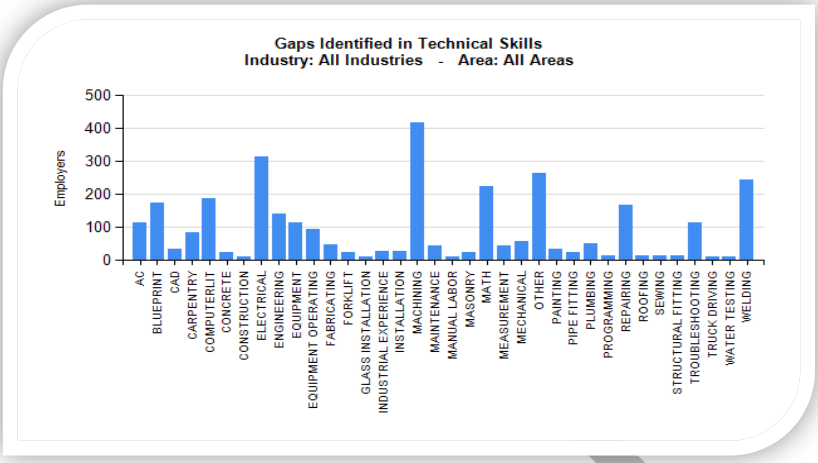
of questions: Recruitment Challenges; Skills Gaps Identified; and Training and future needs.

Employers in the sample who had hired within the past two years were asked the level of difficulty they had in finding candidates with adequate basic skills. A majority of those stated that it was either extremely or moderately difficult. The responses also indicated that it was most difficult to hire people with experience in the occupation, but hundreds of employers said it was most difficult to hire for entry-level positions. Over 1,300 employers indicated that the number one reason for rejecting applications was that the prospective employee did not pass a drug screen, surpassing lack of work experience as a factor for not hiring an applicant. When given the opportunity to list other reasons, employers indicated (1) lack of driver's license or reliable transportation, (2) lack of required certification, (3) attendance history, (4) employment history, (5) failed employment skills testing, and (6) other reasons, most relating to a lack of soft skills.



A list of soft skills and a list of technical skills were provided, so the employers could choose all skills gaps identified in existing staff. Of the soft skills, across all industries and all areas, poor attendance was the overwhelming top choice. Others chosen at high levels were time management deficits, inability to following directions, lack of critical thinking skills, and poor communication. Gaps identified in technical skills often varied by industry. In a majority of the manufacturing industries, the top technical gaps were machining skills, welding skills, and electrical knowledge. In utilities, the number one technical skill gap was in the area of math. Utilities employers also ranked engineering and electrical deficits at high levels. The selections from construction companies varied

depending on the type of work that was done. Some of the top skill gaps identified were in the areas of carpentry, blueprint reading, industrial experience, equipment operating, electrical, and welding.



When employers were asked what area of training would be the most valuable to improve the workforce, choosing from soft skills, occupational experience, or education, the majority ranked soft skills as most valuable.

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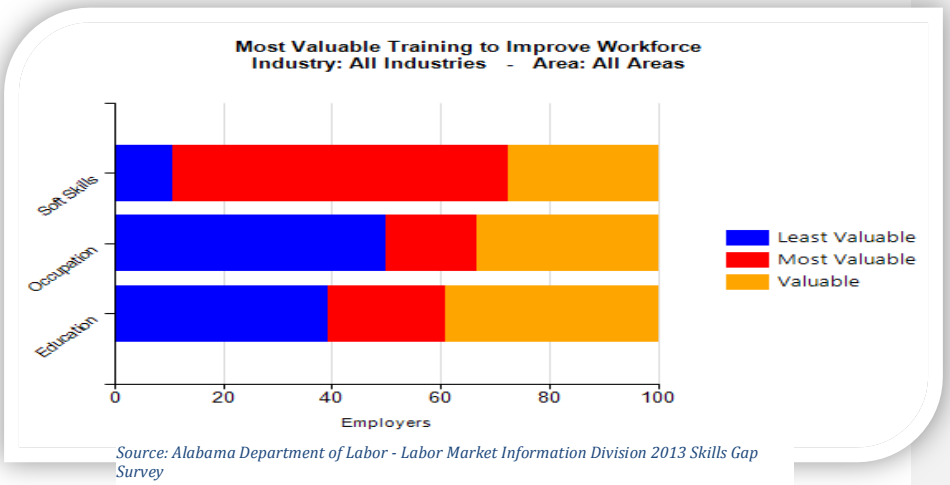
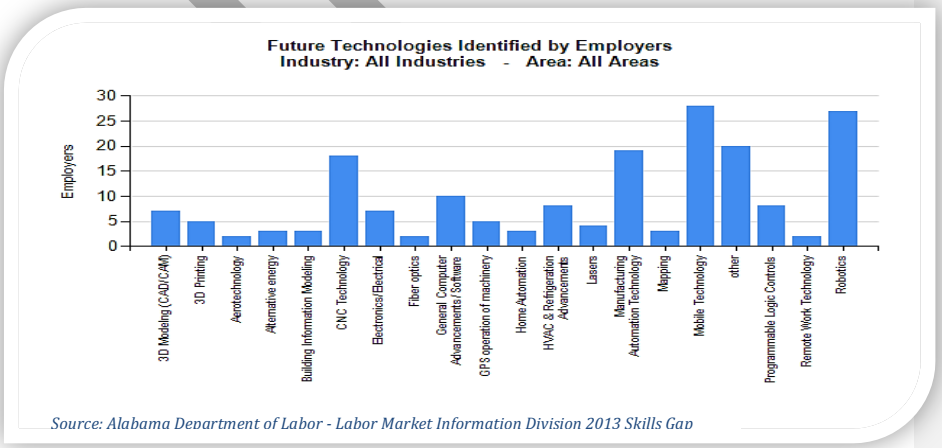
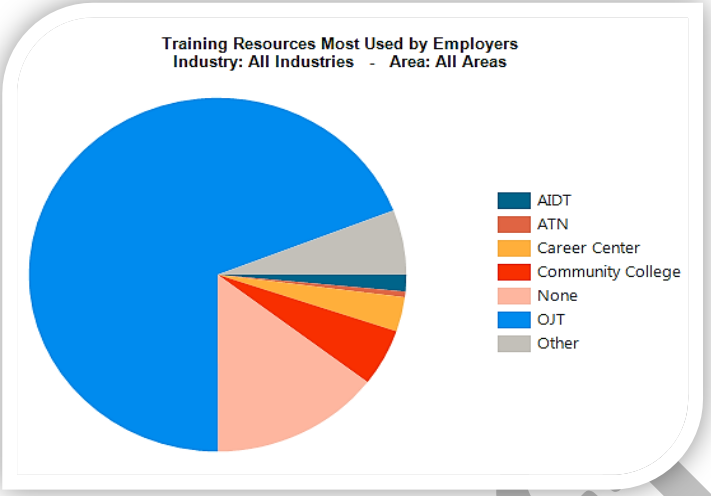


Source: Alabama Department of Labor - Labor Market Information Division 2013 Skills Gap Survey

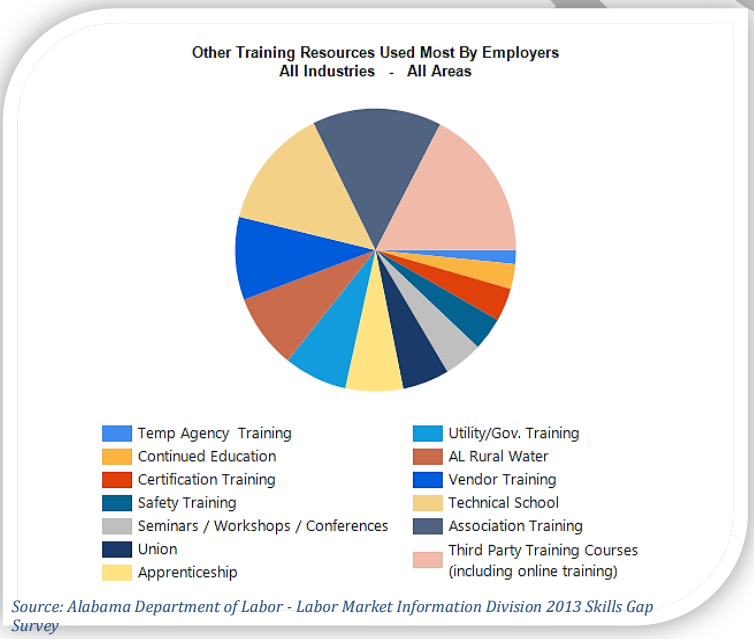
Respondents also were given the opportunity to list future technologies that would require training. Employers listed mobile technology, robotics, computer numerical control (CNC) technology, manufacturing automation technology, and general computer advancements as the top five technologies. The survey revealed that a majority of employers do not presently use training resources provided to them by various workforce development partners. A majority of employers conduct their own training on the job.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor - Labor Market Information Division 2013 Skills Gap



Source: Alabama Department of Labor - Labor Market Information Division 2013 Skills Gap Survey



Source: Alabama Department of Labor - Labor Market Information Division 2013 Skills Gap Survey

(I)(B) Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section three of WIOA3. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State.

(I)(B)(i) Employment and Unemployment

Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the State.

The unemployment rate has been declining continuously since 2009 when it was highest due to the recession (Figure 11). Unemployment rates in 2014 ranged between 6.0 percent and 10.9 percent for the WDRs, with a 6.8 percent annual average for the state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014 unemployment rates were higher for younger workers. Youth, age 16 to 19, experienced an estimated unemployment rate of 29.7 percent in 2014, which is down from 2010 when it was 30.8 percent. Labor Force participants between the ages of 20 and 24 experienced a significant drop in unemployment rate between 2010 and 2014, dropping from 20.9 percent to 12.9 percent. In April 2015, unemployment rates ranged from 4.8 percent (WDR 4) to 8.3 percent (WDR 6) for the regions, with a 5.3 percent rate for the state. WDR 4 had the largest labor force and WDR 6 had the smallest. The latest figures show that in November 2015 Alabama had an unemployment rate of 6.0 percent, down from 6.1 percent in November of 2014. Still, Alabama's rate is higher than the nation, which is currently at 5.0 percent. WDR 2 has the lowest rate of 5.2 percent, while WDR 6 continues to experience the highest rate in the state at 8.6 percent.

Figure 11. Alabama Unemployment Rate

Source: Alabama Department of Labor

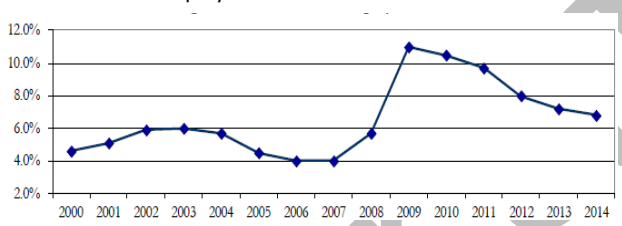


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Table 16. Unemployment Rate by Demographics

Subject	
AGE	**Unemployment rate**
16 to 19 years	26.40%
20 to 24 years	16.70%
25 to 44 years	8.50%
45 to 54 years	5.70%
55 to 64 years	4.10%
65 to 74 years	3.70%
75 years and over	3.00%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	
White	6.70%

Black or African American	13.70%
American Indian and Alaska Native	8.60%
Asian	4.90%
Some other race	5.00%
Two or more races	14.50%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	6.60%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	6.70%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Below poverty level	28.50%
DISABILITY STATUS	
With any disability	17.20%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 25 TO 64 YEARS	
Less than high school graduate	13.70%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.90%
Some college or associate's degree	6.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher	3.10%
MILITARY	
Veterans	5.54%

Source: American Community Survey 2014

Alabama's labor force participation rate has fallen from 61.4 percent in 2007 to 57.2 percent in 2014, third lowest in the nation, behind West Virginia and Mississippi. Since the unemployment rate is based on those people actively seeking employment, the labor force participation has a significant impact. According to a study conducted by The Liberty Foundation, where it compared labor force participation rates using 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, out of the 51 states, Alabama ranked second lowest labor force participation for ages 35 to 44, third lowest for ages 45 to 54, and fourth lowest for ages 55 to 64. Fortunately, the participation rates for these age groups increased in 2014, with the 35 to 44 year old group increasing from 75.9 percent in 2013 to 80.2 percent in 2014. Furthermore, BLS data shows that labor force participation for youth age 16 to19 has dropped from 31.4 percent in 2010 to 25.7 percent in 2014.

A majority of counties with participation rates lower than the state average are located in the western part of the state. In 2014, the measure of labor underutilization in Alabama was 12.6 percent, close to the nation at 12.0 percent. This measure includes the unemployed, those employed part time, and those marginally attached to the labor force. According to the Current Population Survey (CPS), Alabama had an average of 153,500 unemployed residents in 2014. Just over 89,000 workers were employed part time for economic reasons, which is referred to as involuntary part time. These people were either part time because the businesses they worked for were experiencing poor business conditions or were unable to find full time employment. People marginally attached to the labor force are those who are not presently working, but would like to work, are available to work, and have looked for work within the last year, but have not searched within the last four weeks. In Alabama, the marginally attached in 2014 was approximately 35,600. The number of discouraged workers in the state, which is a subset of the marginally attached, was around 11,000, accounting for 31.0 percent of all marginally attached.

The latest census figures for 2014 estimate the population in the state age 16 to 19 is 266,406. Over 43,000 were not enrolled in school, and approximately 17,000 were not enrolled in school or participating in the labor force. In Alabama, in 2014, there was approximately 120,000 youth age 14 to 21 in the workforce, 60.0 percent of them worked in retail trade and accommodation and food services, earning an average monthly wage of $800. Nearly 7,500 worked in manufacturing, earning an average monthly wage of $2,000, 6,500 in health care with an average monthly wage of $1,000, and 8,800 in administrative and support and waste management services with an average monthly wage of $1,300. In 2012, the unemployment rate for youth age 16 to 19 was 17.1 percent, and 16.0 percent for those age 20 to 24.

According to the SSI Annual Statistical Report 2014, Alabama ranks seventh in the nation in the percentage of the population who are receiving disability social security benefits. Census estimates from 2014 show that there were

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approximately 776,448 people in the state with a disability, nearly 40.0 percent over the age of 65. Nearly 140,000 disabled persons were in the labor force in 2014, with over 24,000 being unemployed (Table 17). Half of those unemployed had some form of cognitive difficulty. Approximately 14,000 of the employed disabled persons had been determined to be below poverty level within the previous twelve months, while just over 11,000, nearly half, of the unemployed were below poverty level. Nearly 45.0 percent of the households in the state, with one or more people having a disability, received food stamps (Table 18).

Table 17. Disabled in the Labor Force

Disability	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force
Total with disability	114,928	24,477	283,144
Hearing Difficulty	37,185	3,364	36,278
Vision difficulty	25,109	5,052	44,060
Cognitive difficulty	29,134	13,020	134,187
Ambulatory difficulty	44,315	7,576	183,488
Self-care difficulty	9,816	1,656	63,148
Independent living difficulty	16,211	6,069	130,137

Source: American Community Survey 2014

Table 18. Households & Families Receiving Food Stamps

Households Receiving Food Stamps	**291,541**
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	25.50%
Households with children under 18 years	53.70%
Households below poverty level	59.10%
Households with one or more people with a disability	44.90%
Household Median income (dollars) past 12 months	15,749
Families Receiving Food Stamps	**210,434**
Families with no workers in past 12 months	28.00%
Families with 1 worker in past 12 months	48.20%
Families with 2 or more workers in past 12 months	23.80%

Source: American Community Survey 2014

In 2014, Alabama ranked 21st in the country in veteran population. (VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics) The state is home to five military bases: Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Montgomery; Anniston Army Depot, Bynum; Fort Rucker, Dale; Redstone Arsenal; and, Aviation Training Center Coast Guard, Mobile. In addition, Alabama is home to the fifth largest Army National Guard in the nation, with a total force of approximately 13,000. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS, 2014), the veteran population in the state in 2014 was approximately 344,304 (Table 19). The largest percentage of veterans lives in the areas where military bases are located. WDR 7, which includes the Montgomery metro area, includes a large percentage of veterans. A very large percentage of veterans live in southeast Alabama in WDR 10, where Fort Rucker is located.

Veterans in the state display a strong desire to become members of the workforce, which is displayed in the labor force participation rate of 72.0 percent. Over 63.0 percent of the veteran population in the state has at least some education beyond high school, with 25.0 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher. While the unemployment rate in 2014 averaged around 6.8 percent, the rate for veterans was 5.6 percent (ACS 2014). Still, there are many who need additional assistance due to disabilities incurred while serving, and other circumstances. Nearly 30,000 veterans were considered below poverty level in 2014 (ACS 2014). In addition, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics estimated that 88,048 veterans in the state were receiving disability compensation.

Table 19. Veteran Population

Subject	Veterans
Civilian population 18 years and over	344,304
MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Civilian population 18 years and over with income	35,573
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	
Civilian population 25 years and over	339,797
Less than high school graduate	7.30%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	29.00%
Some college or associate's degree	38.20%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.50%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Veterans
Civilian population 18 to 64 years	189,579
Labor force participation rate	72.00%
Civilian labor force 18 to 64 years	136,509
Unemployment rate (CPS rate)	5.60%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Below poverty in the past 12 months	8.60%
DISABILITY STATUS	
With any disability	32.40%

Source: American Community Survey 2014

An additional source of skilled labor exists in a pool of workers who are considered underemployed. Workers in occupations that underutilize their experience, training, and skills are underemployed. These workers often respond to job opportunities that they believe are better for reasons that include; lack of job opportunities, low wages in available jobs, and living too far from jobs. Workforce partners in Alabama fund an annual underemployment survey. This survey is in its sixth year of existence. The 2014 survey reported approximately 8,896 responses across the state. In 2014, the underemployment rate in Alabama was 25.2 percent. Half of the counties in the state had an underemployment rate higher than the state. The workforce development regions with the lowest rates were WDR 5 and WDR 10, with 22.2 percent for both. WDR 8 had the highest, 30.6 percent, with WDR 7 close behind at 28.7 percent. Both of those regions include universities that produce large numbers of college graduates annually.

Most workers are satisfied with their jobs, but not satisfied with their earnings. If offered jobs paying up to 15.0 percent higher wages, 29.0 percent, about 590,000 workers, will leave their current jobs; 6.0 percent, 140,925, would leave for only a 5.0 percent increase. Respondents are asked if they have looked for a better job within the past three months. For all employed respondents in the state in 2014, 21.7 percent responded that they had, which was up from 19.3 percent the previous year. Of only those considered underemployed in the state, 35.7 percent had sought another job, up from 34.9 percent the previous year. The latest survey reported WDR 2 and WDR 3 with the highest percentages of respondents that have pursued a better job within the last three months. In WDR 2, 26.5

percent of all employed, and 43.9 percent of those considered underemployed sought better opportunities. Data reported in WDR 3 was 23.8 percent of all employed, and 42.1 percent of underemployed.

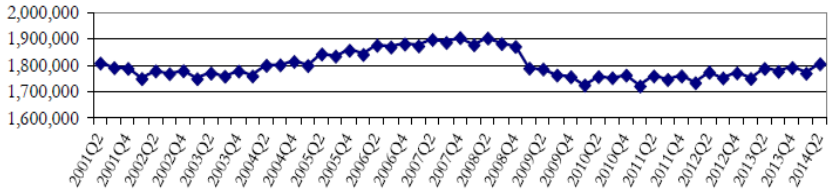
Included in the survey instrument were questions about job satisfaction and willingness to train. Data collected showed that 70.0 percent of workers classified as underemployed were willing to train for a better job. Understandably, more were willing to train if the cost was covered by someone other than themselves. However, more of the underemployed were willing to pay for training themselves to develop their skills and gain better opportunities.

(I)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends

Labor Market Trends. Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

Nonagricultural employment of Alabama residents in the state averaged about 1.8 million quarterly from the second quarter of 2001 to the second quarter of 2014 (Figure 12). The number of jobs in the state dropped from a high of 1.9 million in fourth quarter 2007 to a low of 1.7 million in the first quarter of 2011. Employment has shown signs of recovery after the first quarter of 2011, but was just above 1.8 million in the second of quarter of 2014.

Figure 12. Alabama Nonagricultural Employment



Source: Alabama Department of Labor and U.S. Census Bureau.

The manufacturing sector was the leading employer in Alabama with 254,575 jobs in the second quarter of 2014. Rounding out the top five industries by employment are health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and educational services. These five industries provided 1,063,112 jobs, 58.8 percent of the state total. Manufacturing has historically had a huge impact on the economy of the state. Due to the export of jobs to other countries, a large faction of Alabama's manufacturing employment in textile and apparel dwindled down to only a few thousand, tens of thousands at its height. Alabama has since replaced many of those lost jobs with transportation manufacturing. The state is home to four major auto manufacturing plants, a major ship building plant, several aerospace manufacturing plants including one producing planes in the US for the first time, located in Mobile, AL. These major plants have led to hundreds of thousands of jobs in parts manufacturing across the state. Automobiles have become Alabama's number one export. The state ranks second in the United States in vehicle exports, and fifth in the number of vehicles manufactured.

The growth of transportation manufacturing in the state has produced a huge demand for highly skilled technical workers. Occupations such as team assemblers, aircraft mechanics, aircraft assemblers, welders, industrial machinery mechanics, computer-controlled machine operators, machinists, and many others have experienced significant increases in employment. Furthermore, advances in technologies, such as the wide use of robots for parts assembly, have raised the level of skills required to compete for these jobs. As a result, industry and workforce development leaders in the state joined forces to open a Robotic Maintenance Training Center in 2010. This facility provides industry specific training in robotic systems, advanced manufacturing, welding, and more at no cost to Alabama industries and their affiliates. In 2011, the advanced research and development center was added to the Robotics Technology Park. This facility is used by public and private entities that are engaged in research and development of robotic and automated technologies. The newest facility, set to open in early 2016, is the integration, entrepreneurial and paint/dispense training center. The entrepreneurial section will allow Alabama companies space to build and adapt automation for new and existing manufacturing processes. It will also allow the companies to train staff on equipment processes before moving that equipment into the plant. The paint/dispense division gives Alabama businesses the opportunity to train employees in both manual paint-spraying techniques as well as robotic dispense training. It can also be used for dispense process research and testing. This facility, as well

as the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) Maritime training facility in Mobile, are providing invaluable training services to manufacturing employers across the state.

Health care makes up approximately 13.0 percent of the state's employment. While hospitals have maintained a fairly steady employment level over the last decade, the more specialized areas of the health care industry are showing rapid growth. Due to the rise in the age of the population, the demand for home health services and nursing care facilities has grown rapidly. Two of the largest occupations in demand in recent years, have become personal care aides and home health aides. Although these are entry-level occupations, and the wages are very low, they provide those who are interested in health care as a career a wonderful opportunity to enter the field before their training is completed. Outpatient surgical procedures have become the norm due to advances in technology, and this has created a boom in outpatient care facilities, or rehabilitation facilities. The huge demand for physical therapists, physical therapists assistants, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists is a result of the increasing number of people who need assistance in order to function independently after medical procedures. The huge demand for health care has also created higher patient loads on physicians, which in the last decade has resulted in an increase in medical assistants, physician assistants, surgical assistants, etc. These professionals get trained to perform basic health care services, such as physicals, minor illnesses and health issues, and administer diagnostic tests, under the supervision of a physician. This frees the physicians to focus on the more serious medical problems. This is the trend throughout the health care industry. The number of surgeons, physicians, dentists, anesthesiologists cannot alone handle the huge needs from a growing and aging population. This provides huge opportunities for people who are interested in working in a health care field and earning a sustainable wage without having to obtain advanced degrees. In Alabama, as in most of the states in the nation, specialized health care occupations dominate the high demand occupations. Half of the current list of the top forty occupations in highest demand are healthcare occupations, with nine requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry into the careers. Furthermore, looking at a list of the top 40 occupations in demand requiring less than a bachelor's degree, nearly half of those are also health care occupations.

The high demand occupations in the state are reflective of the industries that are showing a large potential for growth in the coming decade. Workforce development partners are dedicated to providing training to meet employers' demands for a skilled workforce in these high demand occupations. Furthermore, the goal to lift the state's economy is to provide its citizens with the necessary tools so that they are successful in careers that are high demand, fast growing, and also provide sustainable wages. The current top 40 high demand occupations in Alabama are based on the 2012-2022 occupational employment projections (Table 20). All three factors, demand, growth, and wages, are used to determine the occupations that fall into the category of high demand, or hot jobs, in the state.

Half of the occupations in high demand in the state are a result of the growing need for health care. With the demand for trained people in these careers comes a demand for instructors to teach. Oftentimes it is difficult to obtain instructors for health care specialties, because they earn higher wages working in the field than they would earn by teaching. Due to insurance costs and an increased number of the population needing health care, there are more demands for medical technician and assistant positions. Occupations such as physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physical therapist assistants, and others of this nature are increasing in demand to help physicians with the increased patient loads. Furthermore, the rise in the aging population is presenting needs in home health care and nursing care facility healthcare occupations. While the demand is high, so is the turnover; for these careers offer fairly low wages. This results in a very difficult situation to meet the needs of an aging population.

Approximately 25.0 percent of the high demand occupations are in what is being referred to as skilled trade occupations. These are normally occupations that appear in construction and manufacturing industries. Four of them, industrial machinery mechanics, engine and other machine assemblers, team assemblers, and computer-controlled machine tool operators, are a direct result of a fast growing transportation manufacturing industry in the state. While these are statewide demand occupations, the demand for skilled trade occupations in the state vary by region depending on the industry structure. This variability is reflected in the high demand occupations by region.

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The remaining occupations that occur statewide in the high demand list are IT occupations, managers, and various financial and data analyst type occupations. This analyst demand is both a reflection of an aging population that is planning for retirement and also an increased emphasis on making effective and efficient decisions on production enhancement based on data analysis.

Most of these occupations require a bachelor degree or higher for entrance into the career. Due to the emphasis in WIOA on training beyond high school for entrance into high demand careers, the state also publishes the 40 high demand occupations that require less than a bachelor degree for entry (Table 23). All of these occupations except three can be classified into healthcare or the skilled trade, construction or manufacturing, categories. A majority of them are projected to produce over 100 openings on average each year, based on both growth and replacement. The growth in these industries in addition to the high rate of older workers in both health care and manufacturing is expected to produce a large number of openings.

Table 20. Alabama High Demand Occupations 2012-2022

SOC	Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	Percent Change (%)*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	1,730	2,460	41.87	3.58	100	$124,456
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	2,460	3,310	34.46	3.01	120	$108,163
29-1123	Physical Therapists	2,290	3,080	34.66	3.01	135	$83,459
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	5,840	7,400	26.58	2.40	245	$79,202
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	1,750	2,300	31.83	2.77	90	$88,318
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	3,740	4,630	23.82	2.16	135	$91,070
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,870	2,680	43.42	3.66	125	$53,714
13-1111	Management Analysts	5,880	7,120	21.03	1.93	215	$90,315
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	10,790	13,270	22.92	2.09	365	$55,989
15-1133	Software Developers, Systems Software	3,430	4,180	21.82	2.00	120	$96,298
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	3,050	3,970	30.23	2.67	170	$46,531
13-1051	Cost Estimators	2,590	3,220	24.64	2.20	145	$56,974
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	7,390	9,310	25.85	2.34	305	$45,150
25-1072	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	1,370	1,830	33.21	2.94	65	$66,658
13-1081	Logisticians	3,880	4,700	21.14	1.94	125	$81,276
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	1,120	1,430	28.18	2.47	50	$101,706
29-1141	Registered Nurses	45,970	54,620	18.82	1.74		$55,869
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	2,380	3,010	26.69	2.38	95	$58,334
15-1122	Information Security Analysts	1,030	1,360	31.95	2.82	50	$78,810
51-2031	Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2,150	3,440	59.84	4.81	165	$35,687
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	1,140	1,510	32.54	2.85	50	$73,262
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	2,420	2,910	20.27	1.86	110	$93,757
11-9021	Construction Managers	4,720	5,590	18.55	1.71	160	$89,682
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	2,930	3,500	19.47	1.79	100	$119,169
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,130	1,630	44.59	3.73	65	$47,758
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	9,300	11,140	19.74	1.82	455	$48,790
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14,550	17,960	23.38	2.13	695	$35,178
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	2,520	3,190	26.67	2.39	120	$44,080
29-1071	Physician Assistants	430	580	36.07	3.04	25	$88,677
29-1061	Anesthesiologists	680	850	23.54	2.26	35	$245,745
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	4,450	6,010	35.12	3.05	210	$29,313
47-2031	Carpenters	11,160	13,910	24.59	2.23	410	$32,267
51-2092	Team Assemblers	29,770	36,220	21.67	1.98		$33,751
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	10,730	15,700	46.41	3.88	575	$17,830
31-1011	Home Health Aides	8,340	11,730	40.57	3.47	495	$19,206
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	27,430	30,970	12.91	1.22	865	$119,850
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	2,060	2,720	31.89	2.82	125	$33,367
29-1051	Pharmacists	5,160	5,890	14.11	1.33	195	$119,015
29-2012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	2,210	2,820	27.74	2.47	120	$35,849
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	1,200	1,480	23.09	2.12	45	$65,139

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wage data based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Twenty occupations were selected as the fastest growing in the state for the 2012-2022 period (Table 21). Each of these occupations was expected to have an average of nearly 3.0 percent growth each year during the period. Twelve of the twenty are health care related occupations, and six were primarily construction or manufacturing occupations.

Table 21. Alabama Fast Growing Occupations 2012-2022

SOC	Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	Percent Change (%)*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings
51-2031	Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2,150	3,440	59.84	4.81	165
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	360	530	49.58	3.94	25
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	10,730	15,700	46.41	3.88	575
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,130	1,630	44.59	3.73	65
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,870	2,680	43.42	3.66	125
51-4012	Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	290	410	42.27	3.52	20
47-3011	Helpers--Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters	340	490	41.98	3.72	20
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	1,730	2,460	41.87	3.58	100
47-2132	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	550	770	40.62	3.42	30
31-1011	Home Health Aides	8,340	11,730	40.57	3.47	495
27-3091	Interpreters and Translators	360	500	38.55	3.34	20
29-1071	Physician Assistants	430	580	36.07	3.04	25
13-1121	Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	470	640	35.39	3.14	25
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmasons	840	1,140	35.19	3.10	40
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	4,450	6,010	35.12	3.05	210
29-1123	Physical Therapists	2,290	3,080	34.66	3.01	135
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	2,460	3,310	34.46	3.01	120
47-3013	Helpers--Electricians	1,860	2,490	34.16	2.96	90
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	590	790	33.96	2.96	25
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	540	720	33.58	2.92	30

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wage data based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 23. Alabama High Demand Occupations, Associate Degree and Under 2012-2022

SOC	Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	Percent Change (%)*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary ($)
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,870	2,680	43.42	3.66	125	53,714
47-1011	Supervisors of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	10,790	13,270	22.92	2.09	365	55,989
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	3,050	3,970	30.23	2.67	170	46,531
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	7,390	9,310	25.85	2.34	305	45,150
29-1141	Registered Nurses	45,970	54,620	18.82	1.74	1,755	55,869
51-2031	Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2,150	3,440	59.84	4.81	165	35,687
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,130	1,630	44.59	3.73	65	47,758
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	9,300	11,140	19.74	1.82	455	48,790
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14,550	17,960	23.38	2.13	695	35,178
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	4,450	6,010	35.12	3.05	210	29,313
47-2031	Carpenters	11,160	13,910	24.59	2.23	410	32,267
51-2092	Team Assemblers	29,770	36,220	21.67	1.98	1,115	33,751
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	10,730	15,700	46.41	3.88	575	17,830
31-1011	Home Health Aides	8,340	11,730	40.57	3.47	495	19,206
51-4011	Computer Controlled Machine Tool Ops, Metal & Plastic	2,060	2,720	31.89	2.82	125	33,367
29-2012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	2,210	2,820	27.74	2.47	120	35,849
47-2111	Electricians	10,070	11,880	18.02	1.67	370	43,197
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	3,300	4,220	28.05	2.49	180	29,374
51-4122	Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1,560	2,060	32.12	2.82	90	34,727
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	360	530	49.58	3.94	25	55,187
51-4041	Machinists	6,020	7,220	19.92	1.83	260	38,512
31-9092	Medical Assistants	6,920	8,800	27.06	2.43	320	25,598
47-2061	Construction Laborers	12,060	14,860	23.25	2.11	540	26,614
51-2011	Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1,960	2,460	25.61	2.30	80	42,413
49-9021	HVAC, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	4,910	5,890	19.89	1.84	220	39,170
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	660	870	32.32	2.80	40	44,244
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	840	1,100	30.60	2.73	40	44,696
53-2012	Commercial Pilots	1,180	1,390	17.23	1.65	55	83,943
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	3,550	4,220	18.85	1.74	115	45,463
47-3013	Helpers--Electricians	1,860	2,490	34.16	2.96	90	26,318
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	1,970	2,500	27.25	2.41	75	33,994
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	1,740	2,210	26.93	2.42	65	35,145
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	3,970	4,800	20.98	1.92	145	31,982
31-9091	Dental Assistants	3,060	3,720	21.51	1.97	130	30,809
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmasons	840	1,140	35.19	3.10	40	34,817
21-1011	Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselors	760	990	29.62	2.68	40	38,540
29-2071	Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	2,750	3,330	21.22	1.93	130	30,756
27-1026	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	4,120	5,010	21.80	1.98	200	24,986
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	6,810	8,090	18.87	1.74	255	30,390
41-4012	Sales Reps, Wholesale & Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	25,380	28,340	11.66	1.11	790	63,394

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wage data based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The average monthly wage across all industries in the state was $3,204. New hire monthly earnings averaged $2,196 or 68.5 percent of the average monthly wage. The highest average monthly wages were for mining at $6,196; utilities $5,725; professional, scientific, and technical services at $5,299; and finance and insurance $4,725.

Accommodation and food services paid the least at $1,216. Mining had the highest average monthly new hire wage at $5,173 followed by professional, scientific, and technical services at $4,273 and utilities at $3,610. Accommodation and food services paid newly hired workers the least, $1,031.

The leading employers were not the highest paying sectors. Of the top five employers, only manufacturing paid wages above the state average. The highest wages were in small employers—mining; professional, scientific, and technical services; utilities; and finance and insurance. By broad industry classification, service-providing industries generated 75.6 percent of total state jobs in second quarter 2014. Goods-producing industries were next with 19.4 percent, and public administration accounted for 5.0 percent. The distribution is for all nonagricultural jobs, and there is significant variation by workforce development region.

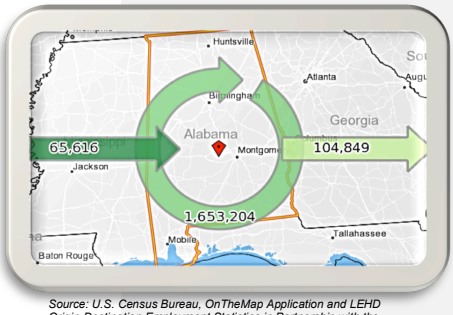
At 20.7 percent, older workers (age 55 and over) constitute a significant and growing part of total nonagricultural employment (Figure 13). The share of older workers for the WDRs ranged from 18.6 percent for WDR 8 to 25.1 percent for WDR 6. To meet long term occupational projections for growth and replacement, labor force participation of younger residents must increase otherwise older workers may be required to work longer.

	Nonagricultural Employment	
Age Group	Number	Percent
14-18	29,660	1.6
19-24	203,233	11.2
25-34	395,771	21.9
35-44	401,436	22.2
45-54	403,401	22.3
55-64	286,168	15.8
65+	87,792	4.9
55 and over total	373,960	20.7
Total all ages	1,807,461	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics Program.

Note: Rounding errors may be present. Nonagricultural employment is by place of work, not residence.

Figure 13. Worker Distribution by Age in Alabama for 2nd Quarter 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics in Partnership with the Alabama Dept. of Labor, Labor Market Information Division.

Alabama continues to experience a larger number of its residents commuting to other states to work, than those commuting into Alabama to work. In 2013, commuter outflow exceeded inflow by approximately 39,233, an increase of almost 16.0 percent since 2011. Approximately 25,019 of these out commuters are under the age of 30. Additionally 40.6 percent of the out commuters earn more than $3,333 per month, while only 37.9 percent of workers living and working in Alabama earn above $3,333 monthly. A majority of Alabama's out-commuters continue to work in the State of Georgia more than any other state, with just over 45,000. The combined total of out-commuters to Mississippi, Florida, and Tennessee was approximately 45,000.

(I)(B)(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

In 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revised their assignment of educational and training categories to occupations. While these assignments represent a typical path to enter an occupation, more often than not additional training must occur to develop employees to perform more specified tasks. Using American Community Survey (ACS) and the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) data, BLS assigned every occupation an education and training category including three parts; typical education needed for entry, work experience required in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training.

Using these assignments, the training and educational level of the present workforce and future needs of the workforce was analyzed in Alabama using 2012-2022 occupational employment projections data. In 2012, only 30.0 percent of the people worked in occupations that required formal education beyond high school (Figure 14). In other words, only 30.0 percent of the jobs required at least some college or postsecondary award or certification to qualify them to enter employment. However, around half the people in jobs that didn't require formal training, high school diploma or less, were still required to successfully complete some level of moderate to long term training to learn the specific duties of the job. When looking at the projected employment through 2022, the state is expected to grow 10.4 percent. Analyzing the projected growth by formal training categories, jobs requiring an associate's degree are expected to grow the most at 18.9 percent, significantly higher than the state average. Furthermore, all categories from some college without a degree all the way through a doctoral or professional degree are expected to grow at a rate higher than the state average. This is the norm throughout the country. Those jobs only requiring a high school diploma or less are projected to grow near 9.0 percent over the period.

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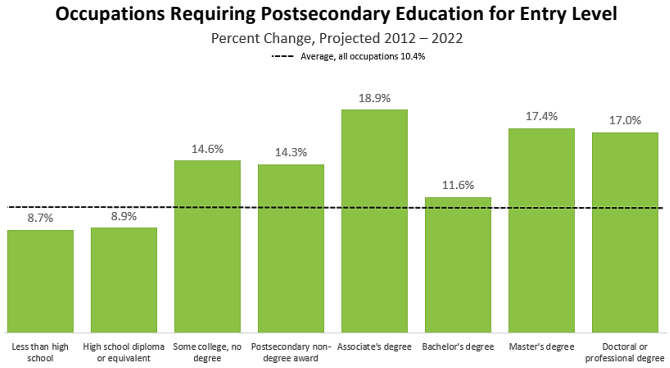
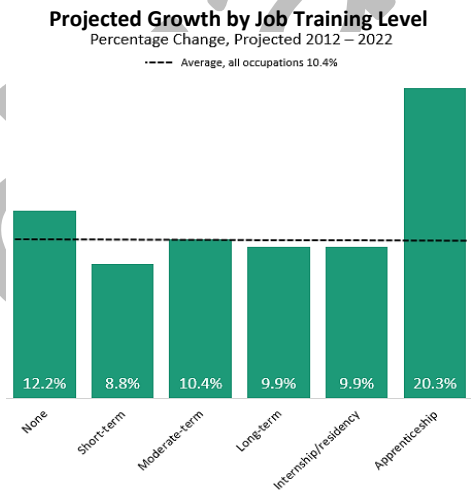
Figure 14.



Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Alabama Education & Training Outlook, 2012-2022

Looking at projected growth by on-the-job training requirements, jobs requiring apprenticeships are projected to grow twice as fast as the state average, at 20.3 percent. Statistics have always shown that education pays, and the data still holds true. But in 2013 in Alabama, the average salary for the workforce in jobs requiring an associate degree, $48,622, nearly equaled the state average salary for all occupations at $48,723. The data also illustrates that work experience pays more; for people holding jobs that required work experience to enter the occupation, received higher than the average wages for all occupations in the state (Figure 15). Those requiring at least five years of work experience nearly double the salary of the state average.

Figure 15.

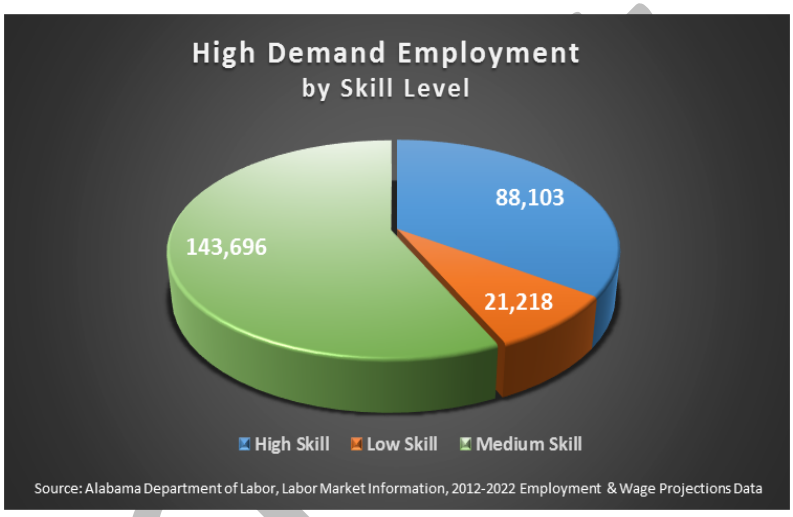


Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Alabama Education & Training Outlook, 2012-2022

In recent years, national attention has been drawn to skills requirements for jobs. Employers are telling workforce development officials that they cannot find people with the skills to fill their open positions. Often employers and public officials will use the term "high skilled jobs" or that they can't find skilled people to fill these jobs. The understanding is that these gaps are often in skilled trade positions and jobs that do require training past high school, some more intensive than others, but don't require as high as a bachelor degree to enter the job and be successful.

Some researchers have begun using terms such as low skill, medium skill, and high skill jobs. Low skill jobs are jobs that require a high school diploma or GED or less and no further training to enter the occupation. High skill jobs require a bachelor's degree or higher. Medium skill jobs have become the focus of workforce development efforts. These are jobs that may not require a degree, but do require at least some training after high school, whether it's extensive on the job training, or a certification, license, or apprenticeship, or maybe an associate degree. These are the jobs employers are experiencing difficulties filling. Over a third of the jobs in Alabama fall into this category. Furthermore, looking at the top forty occupations that ADOL determined to be high demand for the projection period of 2012-2022, not only are there more people currently employed in those high demand medium skilled jobs, than the high and low skilled jobs combined, there will obviously be more openings due to growth and replacement in those jobs than the high and low skilled combined (Figure 16). Just the medium skilled high demand jobs alone were projected to create over 32,000 new jobs through 2022. These are the jobs that are important to fill, for these are determined to be growing faster than average, produce a large number of job openings, and also provide a sustainable wage.

Figure 16.



During the 2011-2012 school year Alabama's high school graduation rate was 75.0 percent, higher than only ten states in the nation, with the national rate at 80.0 percent. Education and public officials in the state have worked tirelessly to improve the graduation rate, implementing PLAN 2020, with the goal of preparing all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school, and getting the high school graduation rate up to 90.0 percent by 2020. As a result, during the 2013-2014 school year, Alabama's high school graduation rate was up to 86.3 percent, up from 80.0 percent the previous year. Furthermore Alabama had the nation's second highest increase behind Delaware in the same time period. On January 14, 2016 the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) announced a graduation rate increase to 89 percent for the 2013-14 school year. Early data show that approximately 68.0 percent of the high school graduates met standards for college, work, or the military. Although the graduation rate has improved, the percentage of students enrolled in Alabama public colleges taking remedial classes has remained steady at 32.0 percent. Half of Alabama's high school graduates enrolled in Alabama public colleges. Of these nearly 23,000 students, 15.0 percent of them took remedial math, 5.6 percent took remedial English, and another 11.4 percent took both remedial math and English in college. The large percentage of Alabama students required to take remedial classes beyond high school intensifies the gaps in decision making and problem solving skills. Alabamians who are weak in the basic math and English skills will be less likely to be able to apply these skills to everyday workplace decisions.

(I)(B)(iv) Skill Gaps

According to employers, the more apparent problem with the workforce in the state is a lack of soft skills. Skills such as work ethic, dependability, basic comprehension skills, ability to follow rules, critical thinking, and leadership are lacking in the workforce in the state. Alabama's *Ready To Work* program, provided at 63 sites, was developed to train students in basic skills requiring a 95.0 percent attendance and punctuality rate, a 70.0 percent score on the *Alabama Certified Worker Examination*, a minimum WorkKeys Assessment Level 3 on Applied Math, reading for information, and locating information, and others. The AIDT Maritime Training Center in Mobile reports that tardiness and absenteeism is the major cause of the industry's 38.0 percent turnover rate. A survey conducted by WDR 9, known as the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council, revealed that the main reasons for terminating employees were not lack of technical skills, but tardiness, absences, and lack of teamwork.

The Occupational Information Network (O*NET), divides skills into various categories, with basic skills being skills that all occupations require at some level. O*NET also uses additional categories of skills, such as complex problem solving, resource management, social, systems, and technical skills. For total openings projected for Alabama through 2018, the highest skills gaps are expected to occur in basic skills, obviously because these skills are present in all occupations. The most critical of these skills was reading comprehension, with active listening next. The resource management skill that will experience the highest gap is time management. The highest skills gap for systems skills was in judgment and decision-making, and the highest gap for technical skills was in equipment selection.

In closer examination of the required skills for Alabama's projected high demand, fast growing, and high earning occupations, a determination was made on the percentage of occupations that include a particular skills as primary, or ranked in the ten most important skills for the occupation (Table 24). Complex problem solving is a primary skill in 58.0 percent, judgment and decision making primary in 65.0 percent, and social perceptiveness in 55.0 percent of the high demand occupations. Technical skills that were prominent in the high demand occupations were operation monitoring (watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly) and quality control analysis (conducting tests and inspections of products, services or processes to evaluate quality or performance).

Table 24. Percentage of Selected Occupations for Which Skill Is Primary

	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
Basic Skills			
Active Learning	38	35	54
Active Listening	98	80	90
Critical Thinking	98	90	90
Learning Strategies	10	10	10
Mathematics	8	5	18
Monitoring	73	80	56
Reading Comprehension	85	70	82
Science	15	10	34
Speaking	93	80	88
Writing	53	30	60
Complex Problem Solving Skills			
Complex Problem Solving	58	25	72
Resource Management Skills			
Management of Financial Resources	3	0	2
Management of Material Resources	0	0	0

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Management of Personnel Resources	8	0	12
Time Management	35	50	12
Social Skills			
Coordination	45	55	28
Instructing	23	35	14
Negotiation	0	0	8
Persuasion	8	10	12
Service Orientation	35	45	12
Social Perceptiveness	55	55	42
Systems Skills			
Judgment and Decision Making	65	40	80
Systems Analysis	10	5	8
Systems Evaluation	5	0	2
Technical Skills			
Equipment Maintenance	3	0	0
Equipment Selection	3	0	0
Installation	0	0	0
Operation and Control	5	5	2
Operation Monitoring	10	10	2
Operations Analysis	3	0	8
Programming	5	5	2
Quality Control Analysis	13	15	0
Repairing	3	5	0
Technology Design	0	0	0
Troubleshooting	3	5	0

Note: Rounding errors may be present. Source: O*NET Online and Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama.

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II. (a) (2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

II. (a) (2) (A) The State's workforce development activities

Alabama devotes significant resources to education and workforce development at the local, regional and State levels. In 2014, Governor Bentley created and formally established the Alabama Workforce Council. The Council was tasked with advising and supporting core partners in Alabama's workforce development and education system to include, but not limited to, reviewing ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State, evaluating regional workforce development and educational needs by promoting regional workforce councils and evaluating public/private partnerships (sectors) to create a feedback loop for industry and education.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [1]: Added by Castile 2-5

The core programs including WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Rehabilitation Services provide a number of educational training activities through their respective programs. All of these activities are represented on the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB). The AWDB also has cross representation from the private business sector membership on the Alabama Workforce Council.

The core programs previously under the Workforce Investment Act and currently under WIOA have participated and partnered in Alabama's One-Stop Career Center system since 2001. The core partner programs include WIOA Title I, adult, dislocated worker and youth training activities provided through a newly developing system within Alabama. In the proposed system there will be not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9) local workforce development boards and an appropriate number of administrative entities. The State level administrative entity for

WIOA Title I is the Alabama Department of Commerce, that provides oversight and policy guidance through the Alabama Workforce Development Board for activities under WIOA Title I.

The yet to be determined workforce development areas provide career services, client assessment, case management, referral to Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work based learning. They also provide specialized employment and training activities for youth, including basic education, GED programs, occupational skills training, and work based learning activities.

The Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes the following programs and entities operated through the following agents.

- Alabama Career Center System – Operated as a partnership between the Alabama Department of Commerce ((WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Alabama Department of Labor (Wagner-Peyser) UI, TAA and Veterans). The Career Center System also collaborates with Adult Education, Rehabilitative Services, TANF, SNAP and Title IV of the Older Americans Act (SCESP). Statewide there are 26 Comprehensive Career Centers and 14 satellite and iterant sites in the system. In PY2014 the Alabama Career Center System provided 352,837 individuals with Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services and 7,924 individuals with WIOA training services, serving low-income adults, youth, and dislocated workers. Wagner-Peyser funding for PY2014 was $8,502,449 and Workforce Investment Act funds totaled $32,090.579.

- Adult Education Activities – Adult Education services are offered through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) throughout the state. In Fiscal Year 2015 funding totaled $20,154,737 and had enrolled approximately 20,000 full time and 26,000 part time students in adult education classes. Adult Education have been an active partner with the Alabama Career Center system since 2001 and will continue to expand services within the Career Centers under WIOA.

- Alabama Department of Labor – Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services – The Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) houses the Wagner-Peyser program (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services programs. ADOL Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I programs have been collocated as part of the Alabama Career Centers since 2001. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) is provided by the ADOL. Alabama Job Link is the online job seeker and employer registration system that provide job seeker skills, abilities and work history with employers posting job openings in the system. ADOL provides Trade Act services and Veterans employment representatives in the Career Centers. In PY2014 approximately 350,000 job seekers were registered in the AJL system.

- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) – The Department of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities to become employable. Services include skill assessments, counseling, training programs, job placement, assistive technology and transportation. For Program Year 2014 funding for the VRS program totaled approximately $25,000,000; and for the same period 31,244 job seekers with disabilities were provided services. Since 2001 the VRS has been an active partner in the Alabama Career Center System.

Optional Partner Programs

- Alabama Department of Human Resources – TANF and SNAP – The Alabama TANF Program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. TANF provide family assistance to provide income to low income one parent families needing support to provide basic needs for dependents. The welfare to work component of family assistance is known as the JOBS program. All clients receiving assistance are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability.

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Individuals on family assistance determined to ready to engage in work activities will be placed in a work-related activity such as subsidized/unsubsidized employment, job search, job readiness classes, skills training or GED classes. The number of TANF clients in work activities for FY15 averaged 4,800 monthly and TANF expenditures for work activities totaled $12,243,965.

SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) also operated a work-related program through a contract with the Alabama Department of Labor for job search assistance. The number of clients provided services was 18,089 and expenditures totaled $1,392,000.

Alabama Department of Senior Services – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) – The Senior Community Service Employment program provides work-based job training for older Americans age 55 and up. For Program Year 2014 Alabama was allocated $1,599,492 for the program to fund 165 slots for older workers through sixteen (16) subgrantees across the state.

Although not formal partner programs included in this plan, Alabama's community college system and K-12 public schools provide important support for the Alabama workforce system. Alabama's College and Career Ready standards for all high school graduates play an important role in preparing all students for college and workplace success. The Alabama Community College System is critical to the success of all workforce development activities in the state. Their specific programs for Career Technical Education in K-12 and the ACCS programs and activities are described in relevant sections of this plan.

II. (a) (2) (B) The strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities

The strengths and weaknesses of Alabama's workforce development activities include the following:

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [2]: Added by D Hopper 2-16

Strengths:

- Strong support from political education and business leaders for workforce programs across all agencies and programs.
- Business leadership within the Community College system to align training programs with the needs of business and industry.
- The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) with its network of 26 colleges and 89 instructional sites provides access to students throughout the State seeking career pathways and credentials to qualify for middle skills jobs.
- Alabama has partnership between state level core program agencies that goes back to 2001. There is a culture of strong communication and collaboration that enhances services throughout the Alabama Career Center System.
- The Alabama Career Center System that provides services to job seekers and employers at 26 comprehensive centers and 16 satellite and itinerant sites.

Weaknesses:

- Limited data integration – Two of the core partner programs maintain separate data management systems for participant tracking and case management functions.
- Limited awareness of the State and Local Workforce System as a brand by job seekers and employers. A unified and universal brand for the Alabama Workforce System needs to be created and implemented.
- Lack of a P-20W statewide longitudinal data system to track how job seekers and students are using the Alabama Workforce System and competency job training programs from K-12 and postsecondary to employment.
- The workforce system core and other partners must continue to emphasize soft shell training into all Alabama Workforce System supported training programs.

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II. (a) (2) (C) State workforce development capacity

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) currently consists of 25 community and technical colleges with over 100 sites to deliver education and training for the citizens of Alabama. The ACCS has over 150 Career and Technical Education credit programs that may lead to stackable short certificates, certificates, and Associate of Applied Science Degrees, with most having stackable, nationally recognized credentials as part of the program. The industry sectors that have the biggest enrollments are healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. The ACCS works very closely to with regional/local business and industry to support programs in high demand to meet capacity needs. The ACCS has several tools to offset potential capacity issues, such as utilizing labs at the partner secondary schools, mobile training units, employing adjunct faculty from business and industry, and etc.

The ACCS also has short term training programs at each of the colleges that target high demand, high wage careers on scheduled and on an "as needed or as required basis". These programs have tremendous flexibility, and provide another avenue for those individuals needing a quicker setting for completing their training needs so they can move into their career pathway faster. This type of training leads to nationally recognized credentials or licensing and the curriculum provides a linkage for the individuals to potentially gain college credit should they choose to pursue additional training and education during their career.

Alabama's workforce system capacity to provide services to both jobseekers and employers is shared by a number of agencies and program providers as summarized in (2)(A) of this document. The State's network of Career Centers is a shared function among the Alabama Department of Commerce for WIOA Title I services, the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) for Wagner-Peyser, UI, Trade Act and Veterans' services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services for vocational rehabilitation services and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) for adult education (ABE) services. The network of twenty-five (25) comprehensive Career Centers and twenty-two (22) satellite and itinerant centers provides broad coverage in all sixty-seven (67) counties in Alabama. Also, the Alabama JobLink is an internet-based online registration system for jobseekers and employers.

The State agencies overseeing Alabama's WIOA core programs and optional partners not only share space and services throughout the Alabama Career Center System but also interact on a regular basis to share program opportunities to best deliver programs on a local and regional basis. Our agencies working off a solid background of sharing data and collaboration of program services are ready to serve the State's businesses, jobseekers, training seekers, and others with the most viable options to meet their needs. The Alabama Workforce System has implemented a number of recent changes including agency/program consolidation and industry led regional councils to ensure more efficient and comprehensive access to available services.

II. (b) State Strategic Vision

II. (b) (1) Vision

II. (b) (2) Goals

The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended and the Governor and Legislature have wholly adopted these recommendations as our goals:

1. The State of Alabama will implement a Workforce System based on the Governor's Economic Development Strategic Plan *(Accelerate Alabama 2.0)* which is the second part of a two part plan to maintain the economic development momentum enjoyed by Alabama over the last several years.

2. Provide a longitudinal data system as an integral part of the new Workforce System.

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3. Develop and implement a strong network of empowered Regional Workforce Councils that will play a central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain.

4. Implement a streamlined funding system that enables each supply point to excel at meeting business needs and needs of citizens already in or preparing to be in the Alabama workforce.

5. Create or identify streamlined funding channels for training with clear performance metrics.

6. Develop and support a statewide education and training resource system that enables each resource to excel at meeting business needs effectively.

II. (b) (2) (A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce in Alabama include the following:

1. To align and consolidate the programs and activities of the Community College system and Regional Workforce Councils with the state's vision and goals.

2. To align the activities and programs of colleges, universities, and training agencies with the *Accelerate Alabama 2.0* plan's three main tenets--Recruitment, Retention and Renewal.

3. To ensure that all programs have strategies to serve individuals with barriers to employment. (The state has a very strong Department of Rehabilitation Services that works with many training and education programs. Our goal is to increase awareness of solutions for these individuals to be vertically integrated into all workforce programs.)

II. (b) (2) (B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers

Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers in Alabama include the following:

1. To implement a robust Regional Workforce Council System that provides direct feedback to education programs (Community and Technical College System, the K-12 Career Tech System, etc.) and to the Department of Commerce WIOA training providers.

2. To align the activities and programs of local Workforce Investment Boards with activities and programs the state Regional Workforce Council system.

3. To develop public/private partnerships that provide direct engagement between the public and private entities to increase capacity for meeting employers' workforce needs.

II. (b) (3) Performance Goals using table in Appendix 1 for core programs

Alabama's core workforce development programs and WIOA partner programs are gathering and analyzing data on performance indicators to report for the 2014-2015 year. All programs will reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of this plan. To effect an orderly transition to the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA, the Departments will use the transition authority under WIOA Section 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators in the first plan submission. Alabama is committed to collecting and reporting on all indicators as required by WIOA for current and future years using the reporting system prescribed.

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	Year:		Year:	
	Proposed/ Expected Level	Proposed/ Expected Level	Proposed/ Expected Level	Proposed/ Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit				
Adult				
Dislocated Workers				
*Youth (Education, Training, or Employment				
Adult Education				
Wagner-Peyser				
Vocational Rehabilitation				
	Year		Year	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit				
Adult				
Dislocated Workers				
*Youth (Education, Training or Employment				
Adult Education				
Wagner Peyser				
Vocational Rehabilitation				

II. (b) (4) Assessment (in relation to vision and goals above) – Assessment and use of assessment feedback to make improvements

Assessment goals and goals for using assessment feedback to make improvements in programs and activities are as follows:

1. To implement a longitudinal data collection and feedback system in the Regional Workforce Council regions to report to and inform decision making by the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC).

2. The AWC will use the feedback/assessment data to make recommendations to the Governor, The College System Chancellor, State Superintendent, Secretary of Commerce and Legislature to meet business needs and improve training/education activities and programs.

II. (c) State Strategies to achieve goals

Alabama's strategies for achieving its strategic workforce development goals emerged from a two-year task force study by the Alabama Workforce Council appointed by Governor Robert Bentley on July 2, 2014. This study, by Alabama's leaders of industry, business, education and government, recommended these strategies in their report to the Governor on January 31, 2015:

1. Develop and implement a robust longitudinal data system (P-20W) for use by all stakeholders to inform decision-making and planning to meet changing workforce training and education needs. The P-20W data system will collect data from state education agencies, the Department of Labor, industries, and other parties to evaluate education and workforce trends. The system will serve as the centerpiece of the education and industry "feedback loop".

2. Create and launch an awareness campaign to change generational misperceptions about long-term careers in the skilled trades and raise awareness about long-term career opportunities in Alabama. The campaign will serve as the marketing centerpiece for the state's workforce development efforts to educate students and

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adults about career pathways and opportunities, and to direct them to a one-stop-shop online resource for more information about educational programs, industry websites, and other workforce development programs.

3. Develop and implement a "One Stop Shop" online workforce information resource -- a single online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities. Separate portals within the main site will deliver content relevant to each of the identified target demographic groups – (1) students, (2) adults seeking to re-enter the workforce, (3) parents, and (4) educators.

II. (c) (1) State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D)

Alabama's 26 Community Colleges (ACCS) has adopted a "1:2:7 Imperative" designed to better address the needs of students for whom a bachelor degree or graduate degree is not needed for employment. To assist these workers, ACCS's goal is to create a highly with multiple access points to provide educated, skilled workers reflecting the needs of regional businesses, thus improving both the local and state economy.

Alabama Community College System (ACCS) annually provides an entry to postsecondary education for approximately 150,000 students including credit, non-credit, and adult basic education. In order to meet the challenges of Alabama's current and emerging industries, ACCS is committed to providing the education and training to meet the skills demanded of the new and restructured jobs of the 21st century. Projections show an increasing number of those occupations, also know as middle-skill jobs, require a high school education coupled with some level of postsecondary training in career and technical education programs rather than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. It is projected that out of every ten (10) projected future occupations, one (1) will require a postgraduate degree, two (2) will require a bachelor's degree, and seven (7) will require a certificate, credential, and/or an associate's degree.

To meet these challenges, ACCS is implementing programs and strategies to:

- Cultivate partnerships and implement a modified "supply chain" approach;
- Create highways to completion (clear, defined steps to completion coupled with student-centered services and supports)
- Build capacity (acquire resources to accomplish the ACCS mission)
- Make data-informed decisions using a longitudinal data collection to evaluate progress and plan next steps.

Alabama's K-12 education system is also involved in workforce development and educating students for Alabama's high demand, high-paying jobs. Alabama public schools now (as of 2014) require all graduates to be college and career ready. Students enrolled in public high schools participate in career awareness courses and have opportunities to earn both college credit and career certifications while attending high school. All 12th grade students take the ACT WorkKeys assessment to provide prospective employers with information about their work place skills. In addition, all Alabama 11th grade students take the ACT to assess the achievement of academic skills.

Alabama's K-12 schools have a wide variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that allow students to pursue areas of interest for future employment. Career Pathways form a transit system for careers, mapping out the various routes workers can take to achieve their career and life goals. They serve as a recruitment and retention tool for industry sectors, clearly conveying the career pathways within the industry to incumbent and potential employees.

Businesses identify the career progression within occupations they need to prosper. The education system, with continued consultation with employers, organizes programs that allow job seekers to access the right amount of education and training to fulfill those job requirements and move up the career ladder throughout their lives.

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The career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress towards the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways fully engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs. In turn, customers are encouraged to choose among a full range of education and work-based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the customer to a career pathway that taps their talents and leads to long-term economic security.

Career pathways are most effective when they are highly informed by businesses in a regional economy and, when they are supported by system partners. These pathways can offer a mechanism for those with barriers to employment to move more efficiently into jobs. The workforce development partners can identify potential participants and provide the support services for these job seekers to succeed in their education and training. Business input can help the education system better tailor and update curriculum based on regional industry needs and trends.

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) represents all schools in the state of Alabama, including 136 high schools. The ALSDE career and technical education (CTE) section is responsible for facilitating career, technical and academic education. Alabama organizes its CTE programs using the Career Clusters framework. Alabama CTE is offered through the following institutions: (1) Comprehensive high schools, (2) specialized CTE centers, and (3) Community Colleges. Alabama implements programs of study across all sixteen Career Clusters. Alabama has adopted the National Career Clusters Model and is implementing standards and programs across all 16 Career Clusters. The Alabama State Plan indicates that Career Cluster implementation will provide a smooth transition between secondary and postsecondary education and eliminate duplication of coursework. They will help students select a program of study that is academically and technically challenging that will also lead to postsecondary education opportunities or entry in to a high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupation. Alabama CTE leaders are working to align the state's CTE with the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations' top 40 high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations. This information is being used for all secondary CTE Courses of Study development.

Programs of Study: Alabama maintains programs of study, secondary CTE standards and postsecondary CTE standards in each of the Career Clusters.

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Finance Career Cluster
- Government & Public Administration Career Cluster
- Health Science Career Cluster
- Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster
- Marketing Career Cluster
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Secondary to Postsecondary Transition & Alignment: Alabama offers dual enrollment and statewide articulation to ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary, namely through the Accelerated High School program, the Early College Enrollment Program and other dual enrollment opportunities.

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Alabama has statewide articulation agreements in the following Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, AV Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster
- STEM Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Recognizing a major shortage of craft professionals within Alabama and a need for better career pathways for students, Alabama's legislature signed into law a requirement for all of ALSDE's CTE programs to have industry-supported advisory programs to ensure students are career ready upon graduation.

Industry Collaboration: In 2013, ALSDE created industry committees in response to new legislation requiring Alabama CTE programs to have advisory programs to ensure industry has influence on the training process. ALSDE identified representatives for the construction industry advisory committee by utilizing trade associations, like Associated Builders and Contractors and Home Builders Association. The construction advisory committee consists of a diverse group of industry stakeholders ranging from large contractors to state-led utilities to residential builders.

Feedback from all industry advisory committees indicated a strong demand for industry-recognized credentials, so the committees established Career Readiness Indicators, which equate to credentials or certifications that demonstrate a student is ready for career placement. The construction advisory committee strongly supported the use of NCCER curricula for the craft professions because committee members agreed NCCER provided the most widely recognized credentials.

The construction advisory committee meets twice a year to monitor Career Readiness Indicators, evaluate goals, validate curricula and ensure that students are learning in-demand skills. This routine observation and feedback allows industry to refine students' skills so that they are better suited for employment right out of high school.

Simulating the Workplace: In the fall 2015 semester, ALSDE launched the Alabama Simulated Workplace initiative that creates an environment modeled after the workplace. For example, students log their time and attendance and receive a simulated paycheck. The program is designed to build a student's real-world portfolio, and instead of receiving a letter grade, the student receives practical feedback on how to improve for his or her career. If a student's portfolio is weak, the student can even be fired.

The Simulated Workplace not only enhances instructional delivery and changes the culture of CTE, but also gives students the opportunity to take ownership of their individual performance. By 2018, every Alabama CTE center will become a simulated Alabama company. An essential component of the Simulated Workplace is feedback from industry advisory committees that inspect programs using industry-based rubrics as measurement tools. Each inspection team will review curriculum, interview instructors and students, and observe classroom environments, safety procedures and working processes.

Additionally, students graduating from ALSDE-endorsed workplaces receive not only a high school diploma, but also two credentials. The first credential is from ALSDE representing successful completion of an endorsed program, and the second is an industry credential that the curriculum is based upon. Students learning construction crafts earn NCCER Core or level credentials, which are also Career Readiness Indicators.

An important part of effectively delivering NCCER training to all of Alabama's CTE students was for the ALSDE to become an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor. Doing so allowed the ALSDE to establish each of its schools that offer construction programs as NCCER Accredited Training Education Facilities. This streamlined the process of delivering NCCER training and assessments, and made it easier for students to obtain NCCER credentials.

Career Preparedness: To better facilitate career-based decision making among its students, ALSDE requires every student take a one-credit career preparedness course in ninth grade that focuses on academic and career planning prior to graduation.

The career preparedness course has three integrated areas of instruction: academic planning and career development, financial literacy and technology. Students define their career goals and plan their coursework through grade 12. This four-year plan is a dynamic document that can be updated, but it serves as a compass for students' career paths. The course allows students to spend a year looking at careers and what it takes to get there.

In addition, ALSDE employs 79 career coaches to better educate students on the options available to them. Career Coaches in Alabama high schools act as liaisons between industry, students and parents in each of ALSDE's schools. More students are earning in-demand industry credentials than ever before. From 2013 to 2014, NCCER module completions rose by nearly 90 percent and ALSDE expects to see even greater growth in when 2015 results are reported. The ACT WorkKeys assessment is administered to all high school seniors in Alabama public schools.

As baseline data for Alabama's CTE programs the following information for the 2014-15 school year is presented in Figure 16:

Figure 16: Career Technical Education programs in Alabama

Number of public high schools	376
Number of public high school offering CTE courses	72
Students enrolled in public high schools	262,062
Students enrolled in CTE courses	170,448
Students identified as high school CTE concentrators	81,341
Number of public community colleges	26
Number of full and part-time students enrolled in public community colleges	125,477
Number of post-secondary CTE concentrators	39,932
Total Perkins funds received	$ 19,175.065
Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to secondary schools	70 %
Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to post-secondary	30 %

II. (c) (2) Strategies to align the core programs and partner programs, mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs

The Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division is dedicated to assisting the growth of Alabama businesses and the workers that sustain their operations. By directing individuals toward job skills improvement programs, education, and training, the Workforce Development Division equips workers with the tools and talents that employers demand.

At the center of the Workforce Development Division's mission is AIDT, one of the nation's top state workforce training agencies. AIDT offers comprehensive pre-employment selection and training, leadership development, on-the job training, and assessments — all specific to each company's needs. AIDT has worked with thousands of businesses and trained more than 600,000 workers.

The Workforce Development Division is responsible for several workforce programs formerly managed by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, including the Alabama Career Centers (funded by the Department of Commerce and managed by the Alabama Department of Labor) and various training programs. The division also oversees the state's 10 Regional Workforce Development Councils, which connect local business leaders with education officials to formulate strategies to ensure the job demands of the industry are being met.

Formally established in 2015 by the Alabama state legislature via Alabama Legislative Act No. 2015-450, the Regional Workforce Councils provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. The Councils are business-driven and business-led and work with their member counties to develop a regional strategic plan and comprehensive workforce development system that supports local economic and job development activities.

Councils monitor the workforce needs of business and industry in their region, then develop and implement practical solutions. These range from hosting regional job fairs for immediate hiring needs, to addressing the short-term and long-term training needs of businesses. Regional Workforce Councils are a key mechanism in helping to ensure that there is an available pipeline of highly trained workers with relevant skills that Alabama companies want. Alabama's Regional Workforce Councils direct critical information and data to and from the Alabama Workforce Development Board.

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III. OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

III. (a) State Strategy Implementation

III. (a) (1) State Board Functions (Board operational structures and decision-making processes)

The Governor appoints members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) and designates the Chairperson. The State Board through its bylaws will establish working committees to assist the Governor and the full Board in carrying out the functions and responsibilities in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These working committees include, but will not be necessarily limited to, an Executive Committee, a Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committee, and a Communication and Marketing Committee. The Chair will also appoint short-term subject-related task forces to address issues such as (1) the development and continuous improvement of the workforce system in the State, (2) the development and improvement of the one-stop services delivered to workers, job seekers, and employers, and, (3) the development of such other policies to promote and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the State. Both committees and task forces will have Alabama Department of Commerce staff and/or staff from the required core partners as designated resources to assist in completing committee and task force objectives as they carry out the responsibilities of WIOA Section 101(d).

In 2014 the Governor also created the Alabama Workforce Council to enhance industry and education collaboration on an on-going basis and to review ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State. A number of the members on the Alabama Workforce Council have also been appointed to the Alabama Workforce Development Board to provide continuity and to develop common recommendations on policy and workforce alignment needs. State Board meetings will be held quarterly. Committees and task forces will meet every other month to consider recommendations and initiatives for submission to the full Board. All Board meetings are subject to the Alabama Open Meeting Act.

III. (a) (2) Implementation of State Strategy

this section under construction

III. (a) (2) (A) Core program activities to implement the State's strategy

this section under construction

III. (a) (2) (B) Alignment with activities outside the plan (alignment with core program activities by mandatory one-stop partners , registered apprenticeships, education, human services, and other programs not covered by the plan)

this section under construction

III. (a) (2) (C) Coordination alignment and provision of services to individuals

this section under construction

III. (a) (2) (D) Coordination alignment and provision of services to employers

this section under construction

III. (a) (2) (E) Partner engagement with educational institutions

this section under construction

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III. (a) (2) (F) Leveraging resources to increase educational access

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has implemented streamlined Prior Learning Assessments for those individuals that have gained skills while on the job, military, or other means. This allows the students to earn college credit for the past experience, and accelerates their entry into their chosen career pathway. This program is also available for those Adult Education students that may have several years of experience and are looking to improve themselves and increase their earning capacity.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [3]: moved content per G Dudley 2-011

III. (a) (2) (G) Improving access to postsecondary credentials

The ACCS has implemented several strategies to improve access to postsecondary credentials. The ACCS has long been a nationally recognized leader in the number of articulated CTE courses between secondary and postsecondary, allowing high school students an edge in accessing college awards. In addition to articulation, Alabama has become a national leader in providing high school students dual enrollment for dual credit in CTE and academic courses. Alabama has increased the numbers of students taking advantage of this opportunity each year, and has realized tremendous growth in the last five years as more students and parents learn of the significant savings that are available in terms of time and money. Tremendous momentum is in place and should continue as more systems, parents and students learn of the advantages of these opportunities.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [4]: Moved content per G Dudley 2011

The ACCS is seeing extensive expansion of stackable certificates (awards) within CTE Programs. Students may earn several short certificates (minimum of 9 semester hours for each certificate) that lead to a Long Certificate or AAS Degree, depending on the program. This also includes advanced short certificates that may be beyond the Long Certificate or AAS Degree for those individuals needing advanced training and/or credentials. This structure allows for multiple entry and exit points for students, and allows them to gain a significant credential when they exit a program. Within these awards, stackable, nationally recognized credentials are built into the structure, such as NCCER for construction and maintenance related sectors, NATEF/ASE certifications in a transportation sectors, and etc.

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III. (a) (2) (H) Coordinating with economic development strategies

The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies.

III. (b) State Operating Systems and Policies

III. (b) (1) State operating systems

III. (b) (1) (A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, job banks, etc.).

The Longitudinal Data System (LDS) funding for development and implementation is in the Governor's budget, fully funded for four years. Negotiations with the legislative budget chairs and legislative leadership are underway, and all indications are that we will be successful in getting the funding.

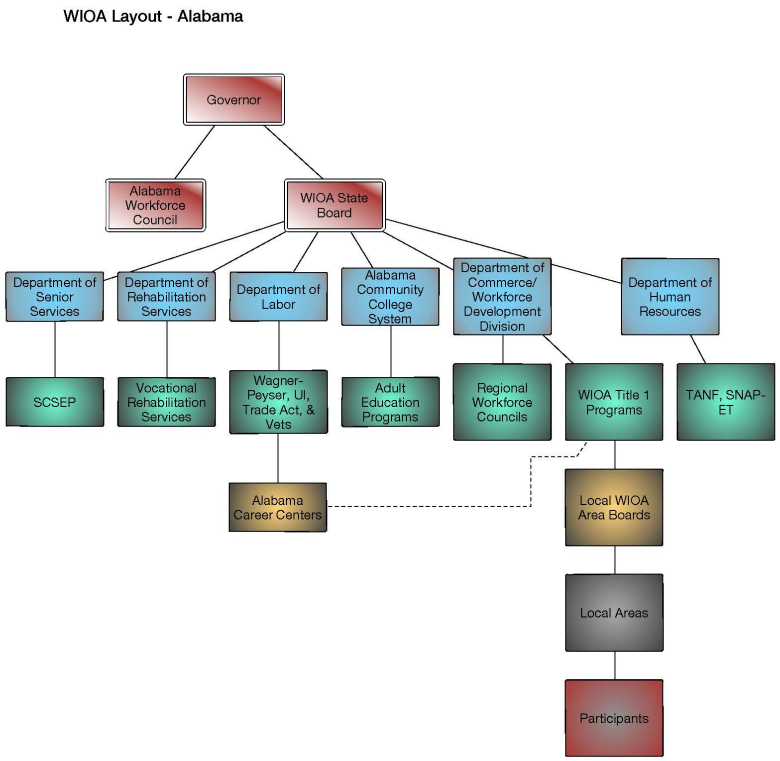
III. (b) (2) State policies

this section under construction

III. (b) (3) State Program and State Board Overview

this section under construction

III. (b) (3) (A) State agency organization (include organizational chart)



III. (b) (3) (B) State Board

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster (Government)

The Governor; Robert Bentley
Representative Terri Collins, Alabama House of Representatives
Senator Clay Scofield, Alabama Senate

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster – (Business)
George Clark, Manufacture Alabama
Ronnie Boles, General & Automotive Machine Shop
Joseph Brown, Alabama Power Company
Glenn Camp, HB&G Building
John Carroll, Phifer Wire
AJ Cooper, Cooper Law
Bobby Humphrey, Bryant Bank
Jason Long, Thompson Tractor
Mike Reynolds, BroadSouth Communication
Wayne Silas, Silas Electric and Tree Service
Perry Hand, Volkert Inc.
Sandra Kobias, Austal USA
Patrick Cagle, Jobkeeper Alliance
Cleveland Poole, Pioneer Electric
Kasey Myers, CSP Technologies
Jessica Horsley, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce
Donnie Jones, West Alabama Works
Sherry Vest, Alorica
Ashley Ramsay-Naile, CrowderGulf
Bruce Willingham, Mach III, Inc.
Ronnelle Stewart, Brookwood Medical Center

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster-(Labor and other organizations)
Mike Fields, AFL-CIO
Bren Riley, AFL-CIO
Mary Albritten, AFL-CIO
Donnie Stanley, Alabama state Building Trades
Frank Coiro, Montgomery Job Corps

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster – (Government Representatives, Required WIOA Core Partners)
Fitzgerald Washington, Alabama Dept of Labor
Ed Castile, Alabama Dept of Commerce
Cary Boswell, Alabama Dept of Rehabilitation Services
Tim Alford, Alabama Community College System

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster – (Government Representatives, Required Elected Officials)
Merceria Ludgood, Mobile County Commission
Alberto (Butch) Zaragoza, Jr., Mayor of Vestavia Hills

III. (b) (3) (B) (i) Membership Roster – (Government Representatives, Other agencies and institutions)
Nancy Buckner, Alabama Dept of Human Resources
Mark Heinrich, Alabama Community College System
Gregory Fitch, Alabama Commission on Higher Education
Philip Cleveland, Alabama Dept of Education
Sydney Raine, Mobile Works
Jim Searcy, Economic Development Association of Alabama

III. (b) (3) (B) (ii) Board Activities

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The Governor appoints members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) and designates the Chairperson. The State Board through its bylaws will establish working committees to assist the Governor and the full Board in carrying out the functions and responsibilities in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These working committees include, but will not be necessarily limited to, an Executive Committee, a Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committee, and a Communication and Marketing Committee. The Chair will also appoint short-term subject-related task forces to address issues such as (1) the development and continuous improvement of the workforce system in the State, (2) the development and improvement of the one-stop services delivered to workers, job seekers, and employers, and, (3) the development of such other policies to promote and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the State. Both committees and task forces will have Alabama Department of Commerce staff and/or staff from the required core partners as designated resources to assist in completing committee and task force objectives as they carry out the responsibilities of WIOA Section 101(d).

In 2014 the Governor also created the Alabama Workforce Council to enhance industry and education collaboration on an on-going basis and to review ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State. A number of the members on the Alabama Workforce Council have also been appointed to the Alabama Workforce Development Board to provide continuity and to develop common recommendations on policy and workforce alignment needs. State Board meetings will be held quarterly. Committees and task forces will meet every other month to consider recommendations and initiatives for submission to the full Board. All Board meetings are subject to the Alabama Open Meeting Act.

III. (b) (4) Assessment of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners
III. (b) (4) (A) Assessment of core programs

this section under construction

III. (b) (4) (B) Assessment of one-stop program partner programs

this section under construction

III. (b) (4) (C) Previous assessment results

This section under construction

III. (b) (5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs
III. (b) (5) (A) (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State of Alabama will apply the "alternate" Section 128(b)(3)(B) Youth allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The "alternate" procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The "alternate" Youth formula applies seventy percent (70 percent) weights to the basic Section 128(b)(2) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. thirty percent (30 percent) are comprised of local area "excess poverty" and "unemployment above the State average".

The excess poverty "alternate" allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies "above 7.5 percent of population" to capture the "excess poverty" for WIOA Youth "alternate" allocation formula components.

The WIOA alternate formula "Unemployment above State average" component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula "excess unemployment" component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines "excess

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unemployment" as that above 4.5 percent of the labor force; "unemployment above the State average" is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above "alternate" 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a 75 percent weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a 25 percent weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the "alternate" formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur.

III. (b) (5) (A) (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State of Alabama will apply the "alternate" Section 133(b)(3)(B) Adult allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The "alternate" procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The "alternate" Youth and Adult formulas apply 70 percent weights to the basic Section 133(b)(2)(A) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. 30 percent are comprised of local area "excess poverty" and "unemployment above the State average.

The excess poverty "alternate" allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies "above 7.5 percent of population" to capture the "excess poverty" for WIOA Adult "alternate" allocation formula components.

The WIOA "alternate formula "Unemployment above State average" component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula "excess unemployment" component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines "excess unemployment" as that above 4. 5percent of the labor force; "unemployment above the State average is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above "alternate" 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a seventy-five percent (75percent) weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a twenty-five percent (25percent) weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the "alternate" formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur.

III. (b) (5) (B) (i) Title II - Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education state office will allocate adult education funds through a needs-based and performance-based funding formula. The formula will take into consideration the population in need in each county based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimate. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment-related supports in the area. The formula will be designed to consider the levels of performance in the local programs as compared to established goals as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds.

The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following:

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1. Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of adults with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, individuals' with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law).

2. Provide a description of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation).

3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs.

4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance. The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve:
    a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment after program exit;
    b. Median earnings of program participants;
    c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting;
    d. Effective service provided to employers.

5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One-Stop Career Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for Career Center participant, with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One-Stop Career Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to participants.

6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met.

7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFP that are listed below.

<u>Assessing the RFP</u>
The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following:

1. The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier.

2. The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability.

3. The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals.

4. The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan.

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5. The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself.

6. The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices.

7. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance.

8. The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship.

9. The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance.

10. The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/business partners, and workforce boards.

11. The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as childcare, transportation, and mental health services.

12. The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting.

13. The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

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III. (b) (5) (C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation – . . . for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is a combined agency housed within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Therefore, funds for services provided to individuals who are blind are from the same federal and state funds used for all individuals served. Internally, Blind and Deaf Services is a separate division from the General VR division and, each year, the amount of money allocated to the two divisions is based on the amount of funds needed for each program.

III. (b) (6) Program Data

III. (b) (6) (A) Data Alignment and Integration

III. (B) (6) (A) Describe the plans of the the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

Two of the core partners in Alabama have interoperable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner-Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Interagency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [5]: Content added by D Hopper 2-10

The State plans to appoint a management information systems/data integration committee to develop a plan to ensure alignment of data for the core partners. The Alabama Legislature has recently introduced legislation to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to provide for the operation of a system to track performance and workforce data throughout Alabama's education systems. The core program partners will continue, however, to work together over the coming months to implement the exchange of common data elements over all six core program activities.

Alabama's core partner program entities will continue to work throughout Program Year 2016 to fully streamline intake and service delivery to track participation across the core and optional programs. Management will require data collection and reporting staff to meet quarterly (at a minimum) to develop plans and recommendations to ensure this occurs. As mentioned previously Title I and Title II programs currently have common intake.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

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III. (B) (6) (A) (i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

Two of the core partners in Alabama have interoperable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner-Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Interagency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [6]: Content added by D Hopper 2-10

The State plans to appoint a management information systems/data integration committee to develop a plan to ensure alignment of data for the core partners. The Alabama Legislature has recently introduced legislation to create

the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to provide for the operation of a system to track performance and workforce data throughout Alabama's education systems. The core program partners will continue, however, to work together over the coming months to implement the exchange of common data elements over all six core program activities.

Alabama's core partner program entities will continue to work throughout Program Year 2016 to fully streamline intake and service delivery to track participation across the core and optional programs. Management will require data collection and reporting staff to meet quarterly (at a minimum) to develop plans and recommendations to ensure this occurs. As mentioned previously Title I and Title II programs currently have common intake.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

III. (B) (6) (A) (ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

Legislation has been introduced and has the support of the Governor to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to be developed, operated, and maintained by the Alabama Office of Education and Workforce Statistics within the Department of Labor. This data system will match information about students from early learning through postsecondary education and into employment. The purpose of the system is to generate timely and accurate information about curriculum performance that can be used to improve the education system of the state and guide decision makers at all levels. The system will facilitate the enhancement of college and career ready students thought the collection and analysis of performance and workforce data.

An advisory board to the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics is created by the legislation. This board will oversee the development and operation of the system and will establish the research agenda of the office. All student information collected from participating education and workforce authorities shall be protected, safeguarded, kept confidential, and used only by appropriate educational and workforce authorities in order to serve the best interests of students in accordance with state and federal law.

The advisory board consists of the following members:

- The Commissioner of Labor
- The Secretary of Information Technology
- The Governor's Education Policy Advisor
- The Chair of the Senate Education Budget Committee
- The Chair of the House Education Budget Committee
- A representative of the State Board of Education
- The State Superintendent of Education or his/her designee
- A representative of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees
- The Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System
- The President of the Alabama Council of College and University Faculty Presidents or his/her designee
- The President of the Alabama Association of Independent Colleges and Universities or his/her designee
- The Chair of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education or his/her designee

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- The Secretary of the Department of Early Childhood Education or his/her designee
- The Secretary of Commerce or his/her designee
- The State Service Commissioner of the State Department of Veterans Affairs or his/her designee
- The Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama or his/her designee
- The Chair of the Alabama Workforce Council or his/her designee
- One information technology expert representing private industry with expertise in large data systems and data security
- One representative of the local school system superintendents
- One representative of the public

III. (B) (6) (A) (iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across mandatory one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

III. (B) (6) (A) (iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section116(d)(2)).

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

III. (B) (6) (B) Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. (States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.)

Alabama utilizes UI wage rewards to track participant success for WIOA Title I and Title III programs for entered employment, employment relation and median wage measures. Agreements for Title II, (Adult Education) and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation participants tracking for these three measures will be effected in order to track measureable employment and wage activity.

Marcia Burke 3/2/2016 6:41 AM
Comment [7]: Added by D. Hopper 2-12

For the measures relating "Evidential Attainment", "Measurable Skill Gains" and "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" the core partner agencies will utilize extensive call management through the Alabama Career Center System data on these measures.

The Alabama Longitudinal Data System (ALDS), once it becomes operable in 2017, should provide information on all students in post secondary education and below. The purpose of the ALDS includes the timely and accurate information about education performance that can be used to improve the education system of all education providers and guide decision makers at all levels, to facilitate the enhancement of the performance data and workforce data. The ALDS will require the primary users of data on educational attainment, including the State and Local Workforce Development Boards to address deficiencies in the delivery of educational programs throughout the system.

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III. (B) (6) (C) Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (applies to core programs)

Alabama will continue to utilize quarterly State UI records wage data as well the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) which facilitates the exchange of wage data among participating States in order to measure progress and performance accountability for State and local area performance measures. This wage data also assists in evaluating and accessing workforce and local labor market information. Currently, the Alabama Workforce Development Division has a data sharing agreement with the Alabama Department of Labor (State UI records) and with WRIS. These data sharing agreements are modified as necessary to reflect changes in staff and/or federal or state law. Safeguards are in place to ensure wage data stored for reporting purposes is deleted after ETA reports have been generated.

III. (B) (6) (D) Privacy Safeguards. Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Data collection and data analysis for decision-making and planning for Alabama's workforce development and education programs shall conform to privacy safeguards established in state and federal law. The longitudinal data system described above in III. (B) (6) (A) (ii) will be operated and maintained by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics. This office is considered an authorized representative of the State Department of Education under applicable federal and state laws for purposes of accessing and compiling student record data for research purposes. The Office will develop deidentification standards and processes using modern statistical methods. The Office is responsible for the protection and the maintenance of confidentiality of collected student data, including compliance with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all other relevant state and federal privacy laws, including rules and policies established by the advisory board that are not in conflict with existing state or federal laws or rules or regulations.

III. (B) (7) Priority of Service for Veterans
III. (B) (7) Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

In affiliation with the American Job Center (AJC) network, the Alabama Veterans' Services Program within the Alabama Career Center system shall offer comprehensive employment and career placement service to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of self- service Internet-based job services and direct assistance at AJCs throughout the state.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) system, as a point of entry for self-service registration, provides a priority service notification to veterans and covered persons at https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/mn_veterans_dsp.cfm

Veterans and persons entitled to priority services and training complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for priority services and training at the point of entry into the workforce development system.

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Veterans who can use AJL competently are encouraged to self-register and make maximum use of the automated access to resources. As a core service, career center specialists review applications and resumes submitted by veterans and covered persons who register for employment using self-service, to ensure that veterans' applications clearly state job objectives and show meaningful information with regards to work history, education and training. Because veterans' resumes are listed first in the search results and are annotated with an American flag, employers can quickly locate qualified veterans for job openings. To ensure that veterans' receive priority in referral to job openings, the Alabama Job Link system provides 24- hour email alerts to veterans for any job listing that matches their resumes. The automated system to select qualified candidates for job openings is programmed to refer only qualified veterans in the first 24 hours of the listing, unless no qualified veterans are available.

Priority service is also provided when veterans, or others eligible for priority, are identified at intake when registering for services at any AJC, or other service delivery points. Career center specialists will ensure that each veteran completing a full application will have properly recorded their skills, education, training, job or career interests, work experience, licenses or certifications, employment availability, contact information, and other vital information.

Additionally, AJCs will use signage, graphics, and displays to inform veterans and Covered Persons of priority service (as described under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 42 and 20 CFR Part 1010) and as applicable to all US DOL-funded employment services and training.

Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans' Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans' Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons.

All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans' Priority in the State WIA and Wagner-Peyser Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans Program Letters addressing DVOP-LVER Roles and Responsibilities.

The Alabama strategy leverages improvements in technology to enable career center specialists to locate and review the resumes of veterans using on-line self-services for the purpose of offering helpful advice or suggestions on presenting their skills and abilities to prospective employers, because the AJL data system is designed to support employers searching for key words, then automatically flags the resumes of veterans and Covered Persons who are identified as qualified candidates within the parameters entered by the employer. This advantage offers veterans and Covered Person a Priority in Service and enables an employer to contact them directly, with or without a referral through a posted job order.

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE):

> Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job center (AJC) network will provide comprehensive employment, training, and career placement services to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of Internet-based job services and personal assistance at Alabama Career Centers in the statewide AJC network. Alabama has more than 32,000 residents currently serving in the Armed Forces and of that nearly 13,000 in the National Guard and Reserve component. Alabama National Guard ranked fifth in numbers of troops deployed.

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The Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network operates under the auspices of the Alabama Department of Labor, the state agency responsible for providing employment services and related services to veterans, and is authorized by the Governor to make application for funds to carry out the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) to carry out the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) enables veterans to use self-services, including registration. This approach enables specialists in the DVOP to review the registrations and resumes submitted by veterans on-line and then contact veterans who appear to need further assistance. Alabama DVOP specialists prioritize their efforts with veterans who are facing significant barriers to employment (SBE) in securing employment, including veterans who appear to be having difficulty in using the Alabama Job Link (AJL) automated system. The assignment of DVOP specialists at specific Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network is based on a strategy to ensure veterans with SBEs are priority customers in the Alabama Workforce Development system. Although many veterans can and will use the internet-based self-registration and various self-service features, veterans with SBEs are provided intensive services. Veterans who enter the Alabama Workforce Development System at an AJC (Alabama Career Center), are served initially by career center specialists. For veterans who appear to have an SBE, career center specialists will offer additional services, to include referral to a DVOP who will provide intensive services and case management services to veterans having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), as defined by Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03-14 and VPL 04-14:

1. All veterans enrolled in the Five-track Employment Program administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. As covered in a separate agreement with VR&E, a client determined to be "Job-Ready" by VR&E will be referred by a VR&E Employment Coordinator to the state's Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), who will refer the Job Ready VR&E client to an appropriate AJC manager for case management and job placement services.

2. Homeless Veterans, as defined in Section 103(a) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a)).

3. Veterans lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

4. A Recently-separated military service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who at any time in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks.

5. Low-income veterans (as defined by WIA at Sec. 101(25) (B)).

6. A veteran who is an ex-offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months.

7. Veterans ages 18-24 years old transitioning from active military service.

    a. A Special Disabled Veteran or Disabled Veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1). Special Disabled and Disabled Veterans are those who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or, were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability.

    b. Veterans in the categories above will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual's employability planning.

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Locating Priority Group Veterans
Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

III. (B) (7) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System

Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) prohibits discrimination against individuals who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities that receive financial assistance from DOL, or, under certain circumstances, from other Federal agencies or are otherwise part of the American Job Center delivery system. Section 188 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, among other bases. [Section 188 of WIA, 29 U.S.C. § 2938; Section 188 of WIOA, 29 U.S.C. § 3248] Section 188 also requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances. On July 22, 2014, the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In general, WIOA took effect in July 2015, and supersedes WIA. Section 188 of WIOA contains provisions identical to those in Section 188 of WIA.

In 2005, a team of persons with disabilities and others reviewed each Alabama Career Center for physical and programmatic accessibility using a survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIA. A re-survey of Career Centers (including satellite centers) is being done in FY 2016 to check physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, services, technology and materials using a DOL survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIOA and a policy checklist. The surveys also measure compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. This re-survey is being conducted by a team of persons with disabilities and others that includes assistive technology experts on deaf and blind needs. All of these surveys measure physical access from parking to entrances to where services are provided as well as accessibility of bathrooms, telephones, tables, and water fountains. Policies are also being evaluated to ensure that they do not exclude individuals with disabilities. Computers are being evaluated to ensure access for those with disabilities affecting hearing, vision, and manual dexterity.

At the completion of surveys of the Career Centers, a summary report will be compiled which will list all physical and programmatic barriers, if any, and suggested strategies to remove those barriers. New policies to ensure access may also be suggested. Responsibility for implementation of barrier removal strategies will be divided between the one-stop delivery system partners. Staff training may be developed where necessary to ensure that they have the knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness to address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

II. **COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS**. Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Coordinated planning for all Alabama core and partner programs will be centered in the Alabama Department of Commerce. The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies.

Regional Workforce Councils in the workforce regions of the state will serve as the foundational information gathering entities that provide data and recommendations to the Alabama Workforce Board. The Workforce Board quarterly meetings and the meetings of its committees will bring forward needs, recommendations, data analysis,

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and initiatives to improve workforce development and to meet the needs of Alabama's current and emerging industries.

III. COMMON ASSURANCES (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;
2.	The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;
3.	The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;
4.	(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;
6.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;
8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;

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9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
10.	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and
12.	Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.

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VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

(a) General Requirements

(1) Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas**.**

(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

Alabama for a number of years has been, and is currently divided into, three local Workforce Investment Boards. The local WIBS include Mobile county, Jefferson county and the balance of 65 counties. While this may have made sense at the time these decisions were made, we are in the process of developing a new and improved approach to serving Alabama citizens. Based on the changing dynamic and continued growth among the business sectors within the state, the fact that rural Alabama has been underserved and to ensure that all citizens are served effectively and appropriately we will be changing the areas designated to a number not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9). It is our intent to get these changes made, local boards established and services underway within the next 10 to 12 months. Maps are being finalized at this date and will be revealed as soon as the Governor approves. Alabama is undergoing dramatic and important changes that will better serve our citizens.

(B) Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

The Department of Commerce has for many years worked directly with practically every business and all the business sectors within the state. Commerce is involved with small business development, export/trade, film/entertainment, industry recruitment and workforce training in all 67 counties. Commerce is involved with large municipalities and very rural communities state wide to include county commissions, city councils and mayors. Whether it is business leaders or community leaders and they are sending a very clear message, the current 3 local area designations are not working and citizens are not being served adequately. These leaders have been quoted as saying we do not know how to access WIOA to assist our local citizens.

Alabama Governor Robert Bentley appointed a business led, CEO level Workforce Council two years ago and they have made many recommendations. This group of business professionals represent all areas of the state and are a cross section of health care, manufacturing, banking, construction and government leaders and in their very first set of recommendations made in January of 2015 they recommended reviewing and changing the current WIOA (WIA at that time) Workforce Boards to better and more effectively serve the citizens of Alabama. They recommended the Governor hire an outside independent third party vendor to survey state wide business leaders, employed workers, college students, unemployed workers and all potential stake holders related to the Alabama workforce and workforce programs. In 2015 companies from Orlando, Florida, The Ideas Group and an Alabama Company, Direct Communications were hired to perform this task over a several month period. As predicted the recommendation was made by these companies in their report to Governor Bentley, to implement "a strong network of effective empowered regional workforce regions who should own the central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain." In addition, the vendors recommended the Workforce System be driven by business and industry demand and criteria. In other words the decisions for workforce initiatives should be made locally and a 65 county local area of a 67 county state does not allow appropriate local representation or decision-making. Governor Bentley and the Department of Commerce, The Alabama Community College System, Alabama Department of Labor and the economic developers of Alabama agree that the state should introduce a seven (7) to eight (8) region, local area designation for all workforce issues to include WIOA resources with decisions made at the local level by local business and concerned citizens.

Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive PY2015-05 and PY2014-05, Change 1 (appendix ___) provided local areas the process for submitting local area designation requests. The policy was posted on the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs website for public comment. Change 1 to the policy was also posted on the Alabama Department of Commerce website for public comment. Change 1 to GWID PY2014-05 defined "performed successfully" as the local area met or exceeded the levels of performance the Governor negotiated with local Board and Chief Elected official, and the local area has not failed any individual measure for the last two (2) consecutive program years before the enactment of WIOA. Sustained fiscal integrity means the secretary nor the Governor has not made a formal determination during either the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that neither the grant recipient no the administrative entity of the local area misexpended funds under the Workforce Investment Act, Title 1 due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. State WIA Reporting and Fiscal staff verified performance measures and fiscal integrity for each local area that submitted a request for initial designation.

(C) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

A local area that applies for local area designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) (initial designation) or Section 106(b)(3) (subsequent designation) and is not granted designation may submit an appeal to the State Workforce Development Board. The local area must file notice of intent to appeal and within ten (10) working days must submit their rebuttal package stating the grounds for the appeal and the reasons why the appellant should be initially designated. The rebuttal must be sent via certified mail to the Alabama Department of Commerce c/o State Workforce Development Board, Post Office Box 304106, Montgomery, Alabama 36130. The appellant may be asked to provide additional information and documentation. State WIOA staff will work in conjunction with the State Board to expedite the appeal and schedule a formal hearing before the Board. The goal for any appeal is to be resolved within 30 days of the filing of the appeal. If the appeal to the State Board does not result in designation, the appellant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor. (See attachment _____. GWID, PY2014-05, Change 01)

D) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

State partner agencies responsible for the administration of Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Rehabilitative Services have agreed to physically co-locate in all comprehensive one-stop career centers in each local area. The State is in the process of developing a WIOA policy to establish an appeals process related to determinations of infrastructure funding by the Partners. The appeals process will be incorporated in the State's WIOA one-stop certification policy.

(2) Statewide Activities.

(A) Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

The State issues policies issued by the USDOL/ETA as well as policies developed by the State via Governor's Workforce Innovation Directives. These policies are posted on the Department's website; and at the time of posting to the website, an e-mail is sent to the local workforce development areas' administrative entities and workforce partner agencies as well as to other workforce personnel to notify them that a new policy has been posted to the website. Policies cover all areas of compliance (fiscal and programmatic) with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

State of Alabama General Funds allotted to the Department for Workforce Development Activities are governed by State legislation. Expenditures to enhance the education of the citizenry through activities, expenditures for capital improvements or equipment that promote literacy, learning, arts appreciation, public health and mental health, are

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allowable under the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-24-3, which governs the uses of these funds.

> *(B) Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.*

The State has an established and approved budget for the use of WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds. The required state level activities for oversight and monitoring, grant administration, reporting to the USDOL, incentive awards to local workforce development areas, pre apprenticeship project, etc. are included in the approved budget. Also, allowable activities such as incumbent worker training projects funded with Governor's Set Aside funds are included in the approved budget. The Title I-B administrative entity also provides funds for operational costs to include the costs for the driver/operator for the State's Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) with Governor's Set Aside funds as well as Rapid Response funds when the vehicle is being used for a Rapid Response related layoff event The State has administered a successful incumbent worker training program since 2001, which was funded with Workforce Investment Act, Governor's Set Aside funds. If necessary, the budget may be submitted to the State Workforce Development Board for approval of an amendment should other allowable statewide activities be considered for funding with WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds.

Rapid Response activities in Alabama are the responsibility of the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce. Rapid Response staff responds to WARN and non-WARN events immediately upon notification of pending layoffs or business closures. Rapid Response staff will contact the designated contact person for the company or business to provide an overview of services and material available to the affected employees. If the affected employees are part of a union, a representative of the AFL/CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT) is also included in the meetings. Once Group Employee Meetings (GEM) dates are established, the Rapid Response Unit immediately notifies the local Career Center, UI, Community Based assistance agencies and others that can provide support and information to the affected workers.

The State has a newly established "layoff aversion team," whose purpose is to provide assistance to "at-risk" companies should those companies contact the team prior to it being too late to avoid layoffs. The purpose of this team, which is composed of staff from several workforce partner agencies, is "lay-off aversion." Each agency funds its own staff members for this team, so there's no additional

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cost to the WIOA Title I-B administrative entity. One example of assistance might be incumbent worker training, if that is determined (by the team and the employer being assisted) to be the best route to avoid layoffs.

(C) In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

The State Rapid Response Unit works closely with the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) Alabama Career Center management in the event of a natural disaster. Staff partners with local career center staff to identify businesses adversely affected and workers who lost jobs as a result of a disaster. The Rapid Response Unit, Local Workforce Area representatives and Alabama Career Center management team members also make an initial assessment of the extent and number of businesses affected and job losses to make a determination of application for national emergency grant funds. The State Rapid Response Unit and the Alabama Department of Labor staff will coordinate with FEMA and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency to provide information and assistance through established emergency assistance sites and locations.

(D) Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

Early intervention for possible TAA-eligible workers is provided by the State Rapid Response Unit assisted by local Career Center staff that, together, comprise the Rapid Response team. Customers attending Rapid Response General Employee Meetings are provided a general outline of available TAA services and instructed to report to their local Career Center upon receipt of their TAA eligibility notice. Available to assist in early interventions efforts are the Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) providing internet access to areas removed from Career Centers and ten (10) Portable One-Stops each offering ten (10) PCs with internet access.

(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

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(1) *Alternative Training Models*. If the State is utilizing alternative training models (e.g. on-the job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

(2) *Registered Apprenticeship.* Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

Governor's set aside funds are utilized to assist in funding a position in the State AFL/CIO office to assist in facilitating a registered apprenticeship program being added to the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The State Workforce Development Board will also strongly encourage local workforce development areas to set aside a dedicated sum of local Title I-B funds for Registered apprenticeship training slots.

(3) *Training Provider Eligibility Procedure.* Provide the procedure for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

The Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division issued Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive Number PY2015-03, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Provider Policy on September 11, 2015 (see attachment ___). This policy described the process and procedures required by local workforce development areas and interested training providers to apply for and maintain eligibility on Alabama's WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Registered Apprenticeship programs need only submit a letter requesting to be included on the ETPL with information about occupations included, name and address of program sponsor, location of related instruction and method and length of instruction. Apprenticeship sponsors will not be required to meet the State's minimum performance goals and will be granted automatic approval to the list.

(c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

(1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.

The State will establish policy requiring Local Workforce Development Areas to submit RFP's for WIOA youth activities for review before being issued by the local area. The

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RFP's will be required to award youth program funds to established potential youth providers with the organizational history to meet expected youth performance measures.

(2) Describe how the State will use funds to carry out Youth Program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2).

Local Workforce Development areas are allotted WIOA youth funds to carry out youth programs through a network of competitively procured youth providers. These providers are required by language in the RFP to address how the fourteen program elements required in WIOA section 129(c)(2) will be provided to WIOA youth participants. State level monitoring staff will review how the local areas review and maintain that local providers meet this requirement.

(3) Provide the language contained in the State policy for "requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment" criterion specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

Alabama's state policy definition for someone who "requires additional assistance to complete and educational program or to secure and hold employment" is a low income individual who is (1) Indian, Alaska Native, or Hawaiian Native; (2) individuals who are English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; and (3) eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers.

(4) Provide the State's definition of "alternative education".

Currently in Alabama, alternative education types include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, school-within-a-school programming, and second chance schools for disruptive students and students who are not academically successful and who do not qualify for special education services. Just as there are many types and setting for alternative programs, there are many delivery models based on the programs' philosophy and the needs of the students being served. Many successful innovative processes/programs combine academics with career technical interventions and/or school community partnerships to make school meaningful while preparing students for the future. Other programs may employ a behavioral intervention model to address the following: to guide students in learning how to recognize and manage anger; alternatives to aggression; strategies for developing self-control and personal responsibility; skills for getting along with others; and skills for success in the workplace. Currently in Alabama, the programs and models designed to meet the needs of students at risk of school failure are as diverse as the students themselves.

(5) Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define "not attending school" or "attending school," indicate that is the case.

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Every child between the ages of 6 and 17 years is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term in every scholastic year except that, prior to attaining his or her 16th birthday every child attending a church school as defined in Section 16-28-1 is exempt from the requirements of this section, provided such child complies with enrollment and reporting procedure specified in Section 16-28-7. Admission to public school shall be on an individual basis on the application of the parents, legal custodian, or guardian of the child to the local board of education at the beginning of each school year, under such rules and regulations as the board may prescribe. The parent, legal custodian, or guardian of a child who is 6 years of age, may opt out of enrolling their child in school at the age of 6 years by notifying the local school board of education, in writing that the child will not be enrolled in school until he or she is 7 years of age.

(6) If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

(d) Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

This does not apply to Alabama. Alabama does not have a single-area.

(1) Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)

(2) The entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)

(3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

(e) Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

(1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

(2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

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(3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

(4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

(A) supporting employer engagement;
(B) connecting education and training strategies;
(C) supporting work-based learning;
(D) improving job and career results, and
(E) other guidance issued by the Department.

(5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

(6) Describes the processes used to:

(A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
(B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
(C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
(D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
(E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

(7) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

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TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;
2.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;

3.	The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
4.	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
6.	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
7.	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);
8.	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
9.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board,
	department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
10.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
11.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

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(a) *Aligning of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).*

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Workforce Division's Adult Education Office has aligned to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). The CCR standards reflect the necessary skills and abilities required for the rigor of postsecondary education, training, and employment. The CCR standards provide benchmarks aligned to the Common Core standards that create a framework that can be used to strengthen adult education instruction. Alabama Adult Education has officially adopted the College and Career Readiness standards that support the State standards used by the Alabama Department of Education. The Alabama State Board of Education, the governing board of the Department of Education, approved the adoption of the internationally benchmarked Common Core State Standards along with selected Alabama standards in November 2010. By combining both Common Core and Alabama's standards, our state has adopted a set of the most comprehensive standards in the nation, ensuring students are prepared for a successful future in the ever-expanding global environment.

The adoption and alignment of the College and Career Readiness standards allow adult educators to target the specific skills that will ensure our adults are prepared to attain a high school equivalency, postsecondary education, training, and/or employment. Collaboration with K-12 and college partners will confirm consistent expectations for preparing students for entering postsecondary education without the need for developmental education. Adult Education Title II contracted programs or any future selected programs are required to teach these standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students with the skills and abilities for postsecondary education, training, and the demands of the workforce.

To facilitate the understanding and knowledge of CCR standards in the adult education classroom, professional development training will focus on how to use and implement the standards. Standards training will continue to be the foundation of targeted professional development. The courses will deliver the intensity and duration to lead to successful understanding and skills mastery.

The curriculum, instructional techniques, and support materials used in the instructional process must align to the standards for warranting quality and rigor. Instructors have been participating in professional development activities that support the use of the standards. Specific materials that are being used must have alignment. For example, instructors have went through standards training through various professional

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development activities such as: facilitated online standard courses through the National Center for Family Learning, self-paced online courses through the U.S. Department of Education supported Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), local targeted professional development and specific sessions during the Summer Adult Education conference. Additional training sessions are scheduled to continue the efforts in teacher preparation. The state efforts will support all programs using a standards based approach to adult education. Standards-based education is the process for planning, delivering, monitoring and improving academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment. In standards-based education, the standards help to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. Student learning is the focus of standards-based education. This approach aims for a high and deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook-based or lesson-based instruction. Although standards define individual skills, standards-based education does not promote a skill-by-skill methodology. Multiple standards can and will be integrated in instructional activities to promote College and Career Readiness for preparing the prepared workforce of tomorrow.

(a) Local Activities. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;
Literacy;
Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
Family literacy activities;
English language acquisition activities;
Integrated English literacy and civics education;
Workforce preparation activities; or
Integrated education and training that—

1. *Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and*
2. *Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.*

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to

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family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The ACCS Adult Education Office is Alabama's eligible agency for adult education and is responsible for the administrative and programmatic oversight of the Title II AEFLA funds to eligible, competitively selected providers. ACCS Adult Education will solicit requests for funding proposals from eligible providers as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law to serve the eligible adult education population who:

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

The eligible entities selected will provide academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- read, write and speak the English language and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and,
- obtain sustainable employment.

Eligible entities include the following organizations granted they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

1) Local education agencies
2) Community-based organization or Faith based organizations with demonstrated effectiveness
3) Volunteer literacy organizations with demonstrated effectiveness
4) Institution of Higher Education/Learning
5) Public or private nonprofit agencies
6) Libraries
7) Public housing authorities
8) Nonprofit institutions that are not described in (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults
9) Consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8.

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Ineligible applicants would be characterized as the following:

- Applicants that are not compliant with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or those applicants that discriminate on the basis of nationality, origin, race, gender, religion, or handicap;
- Applicants that lack evidence of the capability of stable fiscal control;
- Applicants that lack assurance that religious restrictions will not be violated;
- Applicants that lack qualified staff, facilities, and equipment.

In accordance with federal law, supplanting federal dollars for state and local dollars is prohibited.

ACCS Adult Education state office will distribute funds in accordance to the following process:

1) Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carryout section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carryout section 225;
2) Shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carryout state leadership activities under section 223; and
3) Shall not use more than 5 percent of the grant funds for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Funding will be awarded and allocated to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process. The criteria will include meeting the eligibility requirements, a proven record of demonstrated effectiveness, and a plan that will align with all of the requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The state review team will have representation from the local workforce investment boards and the core partners. This will aid in the selection of high quality providers that can be successful in meeting the goals and needs within the state, regional, and local area. Grants will be awarded on a multi-year basis contingent upon annual performance.
Eligible individual: an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who—is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

The ACCS, Adult Education office will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media throughout the state. Notification of the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) release will be published in the statewide newspapers and sent to the local media outlets. The information will also be posted on the ACCS website and other means of available communication such as social media.

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The ACCS, Adult Education office will award funds to eligible providers for the delivery of adult education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- read, write and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- obtain employment.

The ACCS, Adult Education office, in compliance with WIOA, will require eligible providers selected to provide services in one or more of the following categories:

- adult education and literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation activities;
- integrated education and training;
- career pathways.

Federal Definitions

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

Literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality, to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities: (A) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. (B) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. (C) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children. (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. See Special Rule for Family Literacy.

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English Language Acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated Education and Training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and
English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce Preparation Activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated Education and Training models will be a focus of adult education programs. Creating opportunities for adults to gain academic and technical skills for employment in a contextualized way. Adult Education programs will contextualize basic academic instruction to support the achievement of a high school equivalency and the skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education & training. This approach will allow for an acceleration of knowledge and understanding. The integration of skills will ensure that our adult learners will be able to apply and use their knowledge to be successful in training and/or employment.

Request for Funding Proposal (RFP)

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Adult Education state office allocates adult education funds through a needs based and performance based funding formula. The formula will take into consideration the population in need in each county based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5 year estimate. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment-related supports in the area. The formula

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will be designed to consider the levels of performance in the local programs as compared to established goals as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds.

The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following:

1. Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of adults with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, individuals' with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law).

2. Provide a description of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation).

3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs.

4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance. The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve:
    a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment after program exit;
    b. Median earnings of program participants;
    c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting;
    d. Effective service provided to employers.

5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One-Stop Career Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for Career Center participants—with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One-Stop Career Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to participants.

6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met.

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7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFP that are listed below.

Assessing the RFP

The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following:

- The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier;
- The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals;
- The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan;
- The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself;
- The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices;
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship;
- The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance;
- The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/business partners, and workforce boards;

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- The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as child care, transportation, and mental health services;
- The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting.
- The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

(c) *Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals. Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:*

Adult education and literacy activities;
Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
Secondary school credit;
Integrated education and training;
Career pathways;
Concurrent enrollment;
Peer tutoring; and
Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education office will provide corrections education services and services for other institutionalized population as described under section 222(a)(1). AE will not use more than 20 percent of the overall 82.5% or greater that is described in section 231 to carry out the activities as described in section 225 for corrections education and other institutionalized populations.

A correctional institution includes any prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. A criminal offender is any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense.

The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—adult education and literacy activities; special education, as determined by the eligible agency; secondary school credit; integrated education and training; career

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pathways; concurrent enrollment; peer tutoring; and transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible provider receiving funds under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five (5) years of participation in the program.

The correctional and institutionalized population will be afforded opportunities to develop their skills and abilities for successful re-entry into society after release. An emphasis on skills contextualization for pathway programs will ensure that inmates are prepared for employment opportunities. There are several innovative initiatives currently occurring in corrections education in Alabama. One initiative incorporates the use of tablet devices with pre-loaded educational resources that are used back in the inmate's dormitory. This allows for additional time on task that will lead to better knowledge and understanding of the material and the use of mobile devices. Another program that adult education plays an integral part is the Correctional Life-Tech program. The partnership is designed to reduce prison overcrowding and recidivism by preparing deserving parolees for job success and life success. Life skills, adult education and technical skills are integrated into an 18-week program to assist parolees in the transition from prison to society.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Alabama Community College System Adult Education office will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi-year Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. The purpose of this program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English Language Learners (ELL) in acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. English language learners who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries are eligible to access all services provided by section 243.

Educational services for English Language Learners (ELL), including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables them to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers and citizens in the United States. These services shall include instruction in literacy and English acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Integration of workforce culture and skills training will enable learners to begin or continue careers in their chosen fields, including preparation for post-secondary education. A focused effort will be placed on providing English skills so that

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individuals with degree and credentials in their native countries will qualify for employment in the fields for which they have been trained. The desired outcome from the workforce training under this title will be unsubsidized employment in high demand sectors and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

All students in the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programs, as well as students from all other Title II funded programs, may be co-enrolled in other workforce development system programs and receive services concurrently from several partners.

Funding under this title will be awarded based upon the criteria for evaluation of programs applications contained in Section 231 (e) of WIOA.

An evidenced-based pathway approach will be the framework for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. Team planning and teaching will be critical in ensuring the contextualization of the skills to master the English language and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment. The in-demand occupations will be targeted in each regional and local area.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

The Alabama Community College System Adult Education state office will make funds available under section 211(a)(2)(b) for the delivery of integrated English literacy and civics education, in combination with integrated education and training activities, to adults.

Each program that receives funding under this section shall be designed to—

(1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

(2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Alabama Adult Education state office will consider the ELL population in each service area. The eligible provider must demonstrate the need and services to be provided which aligns with the mission of the combined state plan and the requirements under WIOA. The funds will target those areas that have a large population of English language learners and provide the skills to improve one's abilities to read, write, speak the English language, and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

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Integrated English literacy and civics education is defined as educational services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. These type of services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and include workforce training.

An evidence-based approach using the framework of Integrated Career Pathways will be used for the non-skilled or skill deficient adults in our state who are non-native English language learners. Instructors from the ELL program and the technical education programs will be identified to provide an integrated instructional model to effectively and efficiently train the adult participants. The program will be a bridge that seamlessly prepares our ELL adults for employment opportunities like any other career pathway program in our state.

Eligible providers must demonstrate in their request the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training career pathway activities. These activities will be provided through collaboration with WIOA and other community partners.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Providers must prepare English Language Learners for unsubsidized employment in demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. The services must reflect the needs of the local, regional workforce area and be aligned to carry out the activities of the program. Civics education is an integral part of the English language acquisition services for the ELL population. An emphasis is placed on contextualized instruction in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge they will need to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members. English literacy and civics education classes introduce students to civics-related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills. The skills learned in these classes strengthen the ELL adult's ability to be an active participant and contributor to our communities and economies.

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An increased emphasis on college and career readiness will be extended to the ELL and EL Civics programs. Integrated Education and Training (IET) pathway activities will include preparation of ESL/EL Civics for employment opportunities in the demand industries and with full coordination with the local workforce system. Providing targeted IET professional development to the ELL/EL Civics instructors will be crucial in preparing the English language acquisition population to be an active participant in the college and career readiness initiatives of the state.

(e) *State Leadership. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.*

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The Alabama Adult Education State office reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways,). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State.

[David Walters and Dennis Hopper – Does this need some type of title or header? Doesn't seem to flow with paragraph above---maybe "These funds will be used for the following activities:"] Marcia

1) Support in alignment of adult education and literacy services with one-stop partners and the core programs. Local programs will align with local one stop partners to ensure that contextualized basic academic support is embedded in training designed to prepare the job seeker/student with the employability skills needed to be successful in achieving or sustaining gainful employment. There will be a seamless support of services between the partners. These funds will be used to cover the instructional costs for supporting these efforts.

2) Establishment and continued operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to the local activities required under Section 231 (b) including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, dissemination of information about best practices and researched based models for improving teacher effectiveness and quality of instruction.
    a. Professional development targeted to models of integrated education and training, career pathways, and bridge programs that can prepare students for success in postsecondary education, training activities, and sustainable employment.

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3) Technical assistance to the local programs for compliance under the WIOA Title II requirements and the other parts of the law that describes the common performance measures and roles of the partners as related to state and local areas.
    a. Assistance in the use of technology in both administrative and instructional formats to increase effectiveness and efficiencies
    b. Leadership training for program directors will be used to enhance their abilities as administrative and instructional leaders.
    c. Assistance in using data to inform programmatic, instructional decision making. Leadership funds will allow for any upgrades that will be needed for reporting common measures and assessing the performance of the program. Training on the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) will be provided on an annual basis at the summer conference and as needed periodically throughout the year on rollouts.

Alabama Community College System, Adult Education will be ensuring compliance with the requirements of section 223 as they apply to adult education participation and partnership. Alabama Community College instructional staff and Adult Education have been working together with the fiscal agent providers of adult education and Career Centers to develop career pathway models. State level and local level staff has reviewed other states in the development of integrated education and training and career pathway models at all educational levels. A pathway program is currently underway at one of the adult education college providers with partnership from the local workforce investment board. Currently, multiple college providers are working internally with college faculty and adult education staff to have pathway programs established at all colleges with multiple program options. Research, best practices, and strategies for creating and sustaining Career Pathway models are being disseminated. Several Community College Presidents and local college and workforce investment board leadership have been developing and refining their processes for implementation. The regional workforce councils are also very supportive of the career pathway programs, essential skills training, apprenticeships, and the contextualized academic instruction. Creatively incorporating all of the integrated education and training models, such as Alabama's *Ready to Work* program, will be central to successful transition to sustainable employment in the future. Adult Education is part of the Workforce Division of the Alabama Community College System and supports the *Ready to Work* program by integrating the basic academic and technology skills instruction to assist the participants to be successful in the training and attain a high school equivalency, if needed.

(a) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

WIOA common measures along with other measures established by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Community, Technical and Adult Education will be used to assess the quality and performance of the providers. Besides these measures the programs will

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be evaluated on state established goals for enrollment, overall academic level completions, attainment of a high school equivalency and National Career Readiness Certificate. Local eligible programs are responsible to meet all programmatic goals and outcomes that are set by the state. Performance outcomes for each provider will meet or exceed the levels of performance for the common measures set forth under WIOA and the measures established by the National Reporting System performance indicators for Title II Adult Education. The effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement toward meeting the measures will be continuously evaluated. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and the indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).

Performance Accountability
In addition to the above outcome measures, the ACCS Adult Education state office has established goals for enrollment, academic performance, high school equivalency, and for the number of National Career Readiness Certificates earned. Each provider received their portion of the state goal based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) of the population 18 and over without a high school diploma. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about the models and proven or promising practices within the state is continuous.
The process is defined as follows:

Monitoring is the annual, systematic tracking of adult education program implementation. It consists of examining the progress made in the project against the agreed upon goals set forth in the application for funds. The purpose of monitoring also provides the opportunity to make constructive suggestions or recommendations. It employs systematic collection of data and on-site observations by providing stakeholders the extent of progress and achievement of objectives, proper and lawful use of funds, and compliance with federal and state level policies and guidelines.

Desk-top Monitoring is continuous process that includes the analysis of data from the AAESAP management information system and reports, such as the mid and end-of-year reports from providers. Desk-top monitoring informs

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management on how the provider is performing against the national and state expected measures.

On-Site Monitoring includes Program Management; Recruitment, Orientation and Intake; Retention, Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction; Transition and Support Services; Professional Development; Program Performance shall be assessed using the ACCS adult education state approved monitoring instruments. On-site monitoring is an in-depth process that requires preparation in notification of the intent, dissemination of the monitoring tool, the actual intensive visit process, and the all-important findings, results, corrective action plan, and follow-up to ensure issues have been resolved. This allows the adult education state office to determine the provider's understanding and ability to meet the intent and purpose of the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the requirements of the National Reporting System for adult education (NRS). Monitoring reports shall address specific findings and observations. Programs shall be monitored based on a risk analysis that incorporates data and information from the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) management information system. Adult Education has reasonable processes reflective of reporting requirements. For example, staff will provide a copy of the documented monitoring report within a timeframe based on business days from the conclusion of the visit. The provider will have a sufficient amount of time based on business days to respond with a written report reflective of the action required (i.e. corrective action plan or program improvement plan). Adult Education will determine the appropriate follow-up measures to ensure that the program has complied with the plan of action.

Targeted Monitoring is performed to follow-up and verify the satisfactory completion of findings identified during the performance of on-site monitoring. ACCS adult education staff conducting the targeted monitoring visit shall notify the provider within an agreed upon reasonable time for the visit and notify the provider in writing if the result is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Findings are the discoveries that the program is out of compliance or has issues that will impact the ability to accomplish the intent and purpose of WIOA, this plan, or initiatives directed by the Chancellor. Findings require a response and a solution for ensuring that it does not occur again. The response is followed up on again to confirm that the solution has been implemented and is working.

Evaluation

Adult Education will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities, including performance measures in Sec. 223. Program reviews and evaluations of state-administered adult education programs, services, and activities will be conducted based on data analysis, site visits, and evaluation instruments. Activities such as professional development, instructional curriculum, and resources implemented into service delivery will be consistently monitored and evaluated through the year.

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Types of activities may include self-evaluation of program activities; report of progress in achieving state goals for adult education; effectiveness of teacher training; provider effectiveness; extent to which state adult education technology needs have been met; extent to which adult education for workers, the homeless, and other special populations have been met; and use of results to determine achievement of levels of national and state performance measures, and effectiveness of WIOA implementation.

Self-Evaluation can occur regularly through the use of self-assessment guides that are based on scientific, research-based models of adult education. The "Red Flag Chart" developed by McLendon and Associates is one of many tools that can be used for successful administrative and instructional practices. Also, the WIOA self-assessment tool developed by OCTAE and restructured by NAEPDC states for local programmatic use is a great resource for preparing for Comprehensive One Stop Career Center expectations and how to improve partnerships. Data reports from the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) are used by directors and their *Program Improvement Team* (PIT) crew to analyze and develop strategies for improving program performance. PIT crew is in reference to the 2014 three day professional development training conducted by NAEPDC staff for Alabama.

Monitoring and Evaluation Reviews

Mid-year Report gives the programs an opportunity to answer specific questions that are designed to create constructive self-assessment on where the program is and where it needs to be by the end of the year. Challenges and successes are reported. The current mid-year report was designed to get the programs thinking about actions that would improve academic, career readiness, essential skills services which would align with the intent of WIOA. Best practices are also shared in the mid-year report and are compiled and shared with all directors. Also, directors that have very creative and innovative best practices are scheduled to present at the next directors meeting and/or state conference. All mid-year reports are reviewed and receive a reply from adult education state staff.

Year-end Report is the written report from the local provider addressing the success and challenges that were experienced during the year. It is reflective, yet it provides the context for designing services and instructional programming during continuation years. This report may also alert staff of risks that are apparent and would require a monitoring visit or follow-up. The reports are used to discuss the readiness of WIOA implementation with questions that require programs to strategically assess employment and college and career readiness. The reports give insight into the challenges and barriers to success, which assists in designing professional development efforts.

Evaluations are used after any professional development training offered at a local, regional, or state level. The evaluations can be used to assess the success and areas of improvement that will need to occur before the next training.

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Surveys are used to gather feedback from the practitioners to guide professional development needs and other activities pertinent to continuous improvement of programs and practitioners. There are also used to evaluate how technology is being integrated into the classroom environment.

Software and Curriculum Review is a committee composed of directors and instructors with the task of reviewing educational products that can be used to support the needs of adult learners and practitioners. Products are evaluated based on the opinions of the practitioners based on several criteria (including, but not limited to: cost, design, outcomes, user-friendly for student/staff, content, skill level, administrative functions, and time on task).

Webinars are useful in providing pertinent information to the field in a consistent message. Future discussion on College and Career Readiness, Pathway programs, Integrated Education and Training, role of Adult Education at the Career Centers, are all future topics for discussion. Understanding how to implement the required components of WIOA is critical.

As discussed previously, the Adult Education office will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews, monitoring visits, performance reports, mid-year reports, and on-site program reviews. An important piece of the on-site review is teacher observation and evaluation. This is also part of the annual personnel review, that is the responsibility of the program director. Teachers are reviewed by a comprehensive evaluation tool used by state staff and directors to capture and assess the observations made during the review. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other programmatic requirements, specific actions will be taken to improve the quality of the program. The state office uses the following process to improve the quality of adult education services.

1. **Corrective Action Plan (CAP) -** A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with state and/or federal policies. The Adult Education state office will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and resolve the CAP.

2. **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) -** A program improvement plan of action will be required for programs which are identified as low-performing when compared to the state performance on federal or state benchmarks. The plan will include specific action steps, such as student retention, post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training, and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance through an increase in the quality, rigor, and intensity of processes and direct services.

3. **Program Self Review** - A program self-assessment document is used to assist the programs in self-identifying programmatic and administrative compliance and the status of each area as related to adult education. The program can use the

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document as a guide to assess the strengths and opportunities for improving certain areas of need.

Adult Education state staff will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support to all programs. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at a program.

Adult Education and Literacy CERTIFICATIONS AND Assurances

CERTIFICATIONS

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;

ASSURANCES

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; and

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4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program;

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WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)

(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

(1) Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Alabama Wagner-Peyser employment services utilize professional development activities from several resources. Bedrock of the professional development is the Alabama State Personnel Department which offers courses such as interview and selection; performance appraisal; presentation skills; and dynamics of supervision to ensure selection of quality staff, properly motivated to perform with a high level of interpersonal skills. Each ASES staff member has this training plan in his or her individual file. One-Stop Center weekly staff meetings of all partners are conducted to share information and train staff. Veteran's staff training provided periodically by NVTI is leveraged by Employment Service to include ES staff. Staff members are also afforded the opportunity to attend Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conferences twice a year to learn the latest in workforce development programs and skills training. Additionally, ADOL-ETA and Workforce Three-One training webinar offerings are transmitted to One-Stop staff for live participation or viewing of recorded programs later. Finally, implementation of the Kuder Professional Development Program is being evaluated to provide ES staff Career Advisor Training which teaches skills needed to deliver career exploration, career decision making, job seeking, and job placement services. This training meshes with the Alabama Department of Education that has implemented Kuder as their Career Planning System for all students.

(2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues.

Wagner-Peyser staff members are cross-trained on UI eligibility issues and are responsible for conducting the UI work test and, more recently, have been designated as responsible for the UI eligibility assessment portion of the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. Other core programs, including WIOA staff, are aware of UI eligibility issues through One-Stop staff meetings and a desk-aid developed by UI for One-Stop staff use in identifying potential eligibility issues. Wagner-Peyser management works closely with Unemployment Insurance management to provide continuous training to One-Stop staff on UI program changes that may affect eligibility.

(b) Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

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Information, both written and verbal, on filing a claim for unemployment compensation is available in the reception area in all one-stop centers where client service needs are assessed and identified. Telephone and internet computer access for filing claims are provided in one-stop center resource rooms. Individuals needing assistance in filing claims are provided staff-assistance by Wagner-Peyser resource room attendants.

(c) Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Wagner-Peyser staff reach out to UI claimants occurs early and often in their claim, either electronically, by phone, and/or by mail to apprise of one-stop center services and encourage visiting their nearest center for reemployment assistance. Claimants profiled and selected for RESEA are mandated to come to a center for mandatory reemployment services to include: (1) orientation to all services, including self-service; (2) provision of labor market and career information; and, (3) development of an Individual Reemployment Plan that includes work search activities such as assessments, counseling, training, resume preparation, and job search. UI claimants not selected for RESEA receive many of the same reemployment services through the Wagner-Peyser grant and the state funded Claimant Assistance Program. Other unemployed individuals have available many of these same reemployment services as determined appropriate with their needs by interview and assessment with Wagner-Peyser staff.

(d) Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

(1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

UI claimants must register in Alabama Job Link (AJL), the state's automated labor exchange and log-in to the website weekly to search for a job, or visit a one-stop center for staff-assisted services as part of their job search requirement for receipt of benefits. UI claimant contacts are recorded in AJL and reported electronically to UI. Failure to comply with job search requirements may jeopardize benefits.

(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

ASES has an integrated workforce registration system that captures and shares common information from both UI and AJL in establishing a labor exchange registration for all UI claimants in AJL.

(3) Administration of the work test work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

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Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained in administration of the work test for UI claimants, including making eligibility assessments. As possible availability issues are detected during interviews with UI claimants, they are reported to UI staff for adjudication. Wagner-Peyser staff members also provide staff-assisted reemployment services to include job search and placement services.

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained to recognize clients, including UI claimants, needing education and training services and/or resources in order to acquire skills leading to high demand, high wage career paths. They are also trained to provide referral and application assistance to reach this goal.

(e) Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

(1) Assessment of Need.

(A) Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Alabama is not identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) state, or among states with the highest estimated MSFW activity, relative to the MSFW program.

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed the number of farms in Alabama decreased significantly (-11.3%) since 2007 to number 43,228 in 2012. While all size categories registered losses, the steepest declines were found among smaller farms (less than 180 acres) which shrank 13.7%. Farms with 180 acres or more declined 3.5% during this period. Farm acreage also decreased (-1.4%) during this period. Agricultural employers number an estimated 1,500 in the state. During PY 2014, an estimated 200 agricultural job orders for almost 1,600 agricultural job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link, the state's automated labor exchange. It is projected that PY 2015, job orders and job openings will remain unchanged or decline slightly from the preceding year.

The number of acres harvested for crops in Alabama, where historically MSFWs may be employed because of the crop's need for hand harvesting, hand planting or both, have also declined. These crops and acreage are: Sweet Potatoes - 2,700; Potatoes -1,100; Tomatoes - 1,300; Sweet Corn - 1,200; Vegetables - 19,000; Watermelons - 3,100; and Peaches - 3,500 (Tons). Overall, total acreage for these labor intensive vegetable crops has also decreased over the last few years as many growers have switched to crops such

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as peanuts and feed corn which are highly mechanized in their production, thus necessitating the need for fewer agricultural manual workers.

An attempt to review and analyze agricultural hired farm labor, to include the number of MSFW employed and possible labor shortages in these labor intensive crops, found only summary total agricultural labor numbers available in the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture. Detailed information was not found available by crop for labor. Lacking data on hired farm labor, estimates available through the Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System (LEARS) as determined in collaboration with WIA/MSFW grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and Alabama Job Link were used to estimate the number of MSFWs in Alabama at approximately 200.

The estimated number of MSFW in PY 2014 appears to be down from the previous year's estimates owing to fewer farms and the shift to more mechanized, less labor intensive crops. No significant change in MSFW is expected in the State in PY 2015. During PY 2014, it is estimated that sixty-three (63) MSFW registered for work in Alabama Job Link (AJL).

Assessment of MSFW numbers and needs, while difficult to ascertain, have been estimated from information and input from many sources such as WIA/MSFW 167 Grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and other knowledgeable sources.

As a non-significant MSFW state, ASES cooperates and works closely with Telamon, WIOA 167 Grantee, to outreach, identify, and serve the state's MSFWs. Through this agreement with Telamon, ASES is able to achieve many of the state's outreach goals and determine needs to include employment, training and housing.

In PY 2015, Telamon (WIOA 167 grantee), partnering with Career Centers and with co-location in two (2) centers (Mobile and Huntsville), will require registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIOA, Title I, Section 167 door into Alabama Job Link, the state's labor exchange system. The possibility of additional co-locations is also being explored. This collaboration is expected to increase the number of MSFW registered in AJL in PY 2015.

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

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Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

(2) Outreach Activities.

(A) Describe the State agency's proposed outreach activities including strategies on how to contact farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Career Center outreach activities will assist in providing timely information to partner agencies and Workforce Development Boards about special employment, training, economic and educational needs of MSFW and their families. Outreach activity will interface with the WIA 167 grantee activities to assure all resources and assistance available to MSFW and their families is accessible. This coordination of service is assured and enhanced through the collaboration and, in some instances, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in Career Centers.

(B) The plan for the proposed outreach activities must include:

(i) The goals for the number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by W-P staff.

Career Center Wagner-Peyser staff have a goal of 500 farmworker contacts to be made during PY 2015.

(ii) The number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by other agencies under cooperative arrangements. These numerical goals must be based on the number of farmworkers estimated to be in the State in the coming year, taking into account the varying concentration of farmworkers during the seasons in each geographic area, the range of services needed in each area and the number of W-P and/or cooperating agency staff who will conduct outreach.

The continuing cooperative agreement with the WIOA/MSFW Grantee is expected to produce approximately 100 MSFW outreach contacts. The number of MSFWs fluctuates during the year with heaviest concentration in Spring, Summer and Fall seasons representing planting to harvest. The number of seasonal farmworkers remains stable during these months with pickup during the Fall harvest season.

(iii) The State's plans to conduct outreach to as many farm workers as possible.

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Career Centers will identify MSFW service needs and contact individuals and groups to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Pre-seasonal canvassing will be conducted by local office staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Telamon, partnering with the Career Centers will register farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for additional American Job Center services through the Career Center system.

Intensive efforts will be made to contact all MSFW whose usual residence is in the local Center area and those that migrate into the area that do not contact Career Centers for service. MSFW will be informed of their rights to full Career Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation, and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies to include WIOA for possible individualized and training services, will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFW informing them of their rights under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be given to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Bilingual regular and outreach staff, if possible, will be assigned to offices where substantial proportions of MSFW are primarily fluent and/or literate in Spanish, but not in English.

MSFW choosing to pursue more stable employment in non-agricultural jobs will be assisted as appropriate. Referral to training will be increased through improved cooperation with the State WIOA/MSFW grantee. Complainants will be assisted with filing complaints and resolution will be attempted, or if needed, complaints will be referred to appropriate agencies.

In an effort to make sure that farmworkers are being informed of resource available to them, the state MSFW Monitor Advocate will continuously conduct outreach and reach out to all available resources related to MSFW program.

This plan has been furnished to the State MSFW Monitor Advocate, WIA Section 167 Grantee, and other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations for review and comment.

(iv) The number of outreach workers dedicated to outreach to farmworkers by service areas.

Due to the small number of MSFW in the state, one-half (0.5) of a full-time equivalent Wagner Peyser staff position will be assigned outreach activities. This represents no change from recent years. Other staff may be assigned as needed.

(3) The State's strategy for:

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(A) Coordinating outreach efforts with WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

ASES Career Center staff members have a working partnership with Telamon Corporation, the 167 Grantee. Coordination of outreach efforts is assured through regular meetings and communication and is further enhanced through the co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers. A cooperative, coordinated effort is pursued to minimize duplication of services and maximize the number of MSFWs contacted. As MSFW are contacted, their needs are assessed and, those in need of Career Center services are referred and encouraged to visit for assistance. Services may include assessment, job referral, job placement, job development, counseling, training, support services, and information on unemployment insurance. Also, ASES, Telemon, and ALFA, have agreed to have quarterly meetings to discuss ways to effect overall improvement of the MSFW programs and services.

(B) Explaining to farmworkers the services available at the local one-stop centers.

Information on One-Stop partner services is available to MSFWs in Career Centers and through ASES staff performing outreach. Centers have access to translators through a listing of local individuals who can provide translation services should the need arise. Information regarding available Career Centers and staff-assistance is also provided through farmers and other government agencies that receive inquiries when visited by MSFWs.

(C) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Telamon, the 167 Grantee partnered with ASES, coordinates outreach efforts that will assure through regular meetings, communication with farmworkers and advocacy groups to include information on the complaint system. In addition, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers will ensure the successful distribution of information to MSFWs visiting Centers. Telamon, the 167 Grantee, assists migrants and seasonal farm workers in the State of Alabama. Its two primary objectives are: (1) to help farm workers seek alternatives to agricultural labor; and, (2) to improve the agricultural lifestyle of those who wish to remain in agriculture.

(D) Providing farm workers with a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Agency staff and Telamon workers educate farmers regarding the posting of DOL migrant and seasonal farmworker posters and literature addressing farmworker rights, to include terms and conditions of employment, in visible high traffic areas such as check-in

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areas and break-rooms. Staff members also notify other State agencies that may serve Migrant Seasonal farmworkers of this information as well.

(E) Urging those farm workers who have been reached through the State's outreach efforts to go to the local one-stop center to obtain the full range of employment and training services.

In a collaborative effort, ASES works with local partner agencies to ensure that farmworkers reached through outreach are informed and encouraged to visit their local Career Center where they can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Alabama Career Centers. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies, ASES, and Telamon partner with are local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and, health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care.

(4) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the activities planned for providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system.

Pre-seasonal canvassing is conducted by local Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers will conduct outreach activities to identify MSFW and services needed. Individuals and groups are contacted to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Telamon, partnering with the Career Centers, registers farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for and in need of additional services through referral to the Career Center system. Career Centers strive to ensure that MSFWs are afforded the same basic, individualized and training services available to all clients.

Agricultural employers continue to be reached by ASES as part of the Work Alabama program, focused on helping farmers find and hire temporary agricultural workers. Agricultural employers are encouraged to place job orders in Alabama Job Link. Career Center staff will assist in referring farm laborers.

(5) Other Requirements.

(A) State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement that indicates that the State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and approve the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate is a merit employee of the Alabama Department of Labor and was afforded the opportunity to review, comment, and approve the AOP.

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(B) Review and Public Comment. The plan must provide information indicating that WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other appropriate farmworker groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations, have been given an opportunity to comment on the State AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

In developing the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) information and suggestions were solicited through survey of the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee (Telamon Corporation), and other appropriate groups, agencies, organizations to include: the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), and Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries. The State Monitor Advocate for MSFW was also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the AOP.
The items that follow are the suggestions received and the State response to the survey conducted:

Telamon - WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee

- Comment: Telamon, partnering with the Career center system and co-located in some Job Centers, will register farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for additional American Job Center services through the Career Center system.
- Response: Closer collaboration/coordination with partners serving MSFW should further outreach efforts allowing easier access to services, resulting in increased registrations, stimulation of dual enrollments with partners, and access to all services of the One Stop delivery system.

- Comment: Need to be provided with referrals from One-Stop partners of individuals entering the One-Stop system who are identified as primarily dependent on farm work for their livelihood.
- Response: Increased awareness of One-Stop partners of specialized services, including educational and job training programs for individuals with agricultural farm work experience, should increase referrals resulting in better service to farmworkers.

Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA)

- Comment: Communication/Information on services available through Career Centers doesn't always reach farmers and farm workers.
- Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies, organizations and in particular the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee should help ensure farmers and farm workers are aware of the services available to them through the Career Center system.

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- Comment: Farmers don't always use the Career Center services available to them.
- Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations to promote awareness of services available and staff assistance if needed should encourage farmers to use these services.

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Alabama Cooperative Extension System

- Comment: The extensive network of job centers located throughout the state, the itinerant point centers located in key locations and the outreach activities planned provide appropriate levels of support for employment and training services to MSFWs and agricultural employers.
- Response: None.

State Monitor Advocate

- Comment: Better data on the number of farm workers in the state is needed.
- Response: Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be pursued to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the state.

The AOP was also posted on the ADECA-WDD website for public review and comment. Although solicited, no additional information or comments were received.

(C) Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Planned progress in agricultural outreach in PY 2014, did not achieve all of the progress sought. Agricultural job orders received and Agricultural job openings received remained largely unchanged from the previous two years at 240 job orders and 2,000 openings. Based upon historical trends, ASES does not expect these trends in the agricultural sector or the numbers of MSFW to change significantly in PY 2016. This reflects the continued decline in the number of farms and acres harvested in the state. The conversion to crops that are highly mechanized in their production also curbs the necessity for agricultural manual workers.

This trend is also reflected in the number of MSFW registering and seeking services through the Career center system. Those registered during the previous program year by quarter were: June 2014 – 98; December 2014 – 18; March 2015 – 35; June 2015 – 63; and September – 33. Of those served, indicators of compliance were met in referrals to employment, receipt of staff-assisted services, and Career Guidance while compliance was not met in referral to support service, job development contacts, and job placement.

Achievement of the state's goals was hampered by transition of the Monitor Advocate position following retirement of the incumbent and hiring of a new Monitor Advocate. This disruption in continuity of service delayed many of the plans for outreach. The new

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Monitor Advocate and Telemon (167 Grantee), along with Alabama Career Center management and staff, have resumed pursuit of increased the outreach efforts that are expected to net positive results. While too soon to tell if the increased efforts have made a significant improvement, with continued outreach and effort based on the current information, Alabama should see no less than an upward trend in outreach.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
2.	The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
3.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4.	State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services portion of the unified or combined state plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council. All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

(1) input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

(2) the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

(3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

(a)(1) Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the DSU, and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to have a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) that meets on a quarterly basis. Council membership is representative of most areas of the state and includes a cross section of disabilities and minorities. Local vocational rehabilitation advisory councils, created by the SRC to obtain direct consumer input at the local level and to provide easier access, continue to meet across the state, and SRC members continue to report on information or advice from these councils at each quarterly SRC meeting. The councils also continue to serve as recruitment grounds for future SRC members due to member training provided during meetings.

The SRC continues to advise the Designated State Unit (DSU) on a variety of issues. Specific activities and advice of the SRC include the following:

Review and comment on the State Plan. As in prior years, an SRC subcommittee appointed by the SRC Chair reviewed the state plan and attachments, and the DSU asked for comments. No comments were obtained on the State Plan or attachments, nor were there any recommendations for changes or revisions. The SRC through a subcommittee agreed with the goals and priorities in the State Plan.

Review and comment on the Agency's CSPD. The SRC received information on the CSPD, and recommended no significant changes to the recruitment or retention plan. The SRC also reviewed information on current training programs for VRS staff and consumers and recommended no significant changes.

Review and comment on the VR Employer services. The SRC continued to work with the Agency on issues affecting employer services and made the following recommendation:

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Recommendation: The Agency should upgrade the VR client applicant data in the applicant pool database.
Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

Review and comment on Impartial Hearing Officer List: The SRC continued to monitor the list for vacancies and recommend replacements where appropriate. No revisions to the list were recommended.

Review and comment on VRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey: The SRC reviewed the Agency's consumer satisfaction survey and recommended the following:

Recommendation: The Agency should use the survey and methodology proposed by Auburn University.
Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

SRC Training. Council members received training and/or informational materials on the following areas:

a. STAR Reutilization Centers
b. People First of Alabama
c. VR Process and FLPA (Functional Limitation Priority Assessment Tool)
d. Emerging Adults
e. Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities

Revision of SRC bylaws. Although there were changes to the Rehabilitation Act through WIOA during FY 2015, the SRC did not amend its bylaws since the final regulations had not been released.

After consideration of comments, the SRC agreed with the college tuition policy and supported its implementation. The SRC also agreed with changes to the Agency's self-employment policy.

SRC Recommendation: VR should use dual enrollment (high school and college) for eligible VR clients.
Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.
SRC recommendation: College preparation training programs should include training on independent living skills.
Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it for those college-bound VR clients who need independent living skills training.
SRC recommendation: The Agency should use a three-tier funding approach for self-employment VR cases.
Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

(2) The DSU has accepted all of the SRC's recommendations as stated above.
(3) The DSU has not rejected any of the SRC's recommendations.

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(b) Request For Waiver Of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

(1) a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;
(2) the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
(3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

(b)This agency **has** requested a waiver of statewideness.

The types of services to be provided by the program on a statewide basis are as follows:

JOINTLY FUNDED JOB COACHES

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services enters into third party cooperative agreements with twenty-seven (27) local education agencies. These agreements are written and carried out in compliance with 34 CFR 361.28. The agreements provide for jointly funded job coaches to provide pre-employment transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Services are individualized and are directly related to preparing students to enter and maintain integrated competitive employment in the community.

Services provided by Job Coaches include: (1) assisting with development of school based learning, developing work based learning experiences (paid or unpaid) in the community; (2) assisting VR counselor with providing job readiness (resume writing, interview skills, completing applications, etc.); and, (3) developing competitive integrated employment sites. Once job placement is accomplished, on site job coaching is provided. Students served by this program include: (1) those with disabilities following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway; (2) those with disabilities exiting with the Alabama High School Diploma, not enrolled in Career Technical Education; and, (3) those with disabilities following the Essential Life Skills Pathway for services not typically or customarily provided by the LEA.

State Unit approval will be obtained before services are initiated. All services will be provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan. The agency has on record that no federal funds are used by the LEA to provide their share of the services.

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LEAs with which third-party third cooperative agreements for Job Coaches are being formulated are:

Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Alabama School for the Blind– Talladega County
Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind Alabama School for the Deaf – Talladega County
Anniston City – Calhoun County
Baldwin County – Jefferson County
Bessemer City
Blount County
Clarke County
Escambia County
Etowah County
Eufaula City – Barbour County
Hale County
Haleyville City – Winston County
Homewood City – Jefferson County
Lauderdale County
Leeds City – Jefferson County
Limestone County
Marshall County
Monroe County
Pell City – St. Clair County
Piedmont City – Calhoun County
Pike County
St. Clair County
Shelby County
Sylacauga City – Talladega County
Talladega County
Tarrant City – Jefferson County

PROJECT SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a one-year internship program for students with disabilities in the last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government, or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three (3) internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, a special education teacher, and job coaches to create an employment goal, and to support the student during this important transition from school to work. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the employer, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the State Department of Education, the Development Disabilities Council, the Department of Mental Health, and the local school system. The program is currently available in the following counties: Montgomery,

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Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Shelby, Etowah, Marshall, Baldwin, and two (2) programs in Mobile.

When participating in Project SEARCH, the student actually goes to the employment site each day as opposed to going to the school. The LEA provides a classroom teacher to provide employment instruction in the morning, and the students go to assigned work stations the remainder of the day. Work stations may include patient escort, food service, instrument sterilization, and other settings in the hospital. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORTS (IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT)

IPS Supported Employment is an approach to support employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS is evidence-based SE that is based on the following principles: (1) zero exclusion, (2) competitive employment in the community, (3) mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, (4) benefits planning provided, (5) job search occurs rapidly, (6) employment specialists develop relationships with employers in their communities, (7) job supports are continuous, and, (8) consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among seven states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at two sites in the state. The grant is for five years, during which time our agency and partners will be working towards sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and at Alapointe in Mobile. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

(1)No funds from these participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS.
(2)State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated.
(3)All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

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(c) *Cooperative agreement with agencies not carrying out activities under the statewide workforce development system. describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to*

1. *Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;*
2. *State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;*
3. *Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;*
4. *Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and,*
5. *State use contracting programs.*

(c) The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has cooperative agreements and working relationships with entities outside of the state Workforce Investment System. These agreements provide the agency with the opportunity to extend services to people with disabilities referred by other agencies, as well as the chance to utilize the services of other agencies for its consumers.

(1) Federal, State and Local Programs

Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB): ADRS enjoys an excellent working relationship with AIDB. AIDB is charged with the responsibility of providing elementary and high school residential education for blind and deaf students in Alabama. Also, through its E. H. Gentry Technical Facility, it provides vocational assessment and training for adults with visual, hearing, and other disabilities. ADRS refers consumers to E. H. Gentry for vocational services. Also, the agency works very cooperatively with AIDB in providing appropriate services to students in the AIDB high schools for the blind and deaf. ADRS works collaboratively with the School for the Deaf and School for the Blind to provide deaf and blind students with summer employment opportunities. ADRS also works actively with the Helen Keller School for Deaf and Blind that is also a part of the AIDB system. ADRS assists AIDB in transitioning these students into employment when they have completed school or, when appropriate, assists the students with further education.

ADRS has a collaborative agreement with AIDB to jointly fund Rehabilitation Teachers who provide special teaching services to people with visual disabilities. Also, the agency jointly funds Interpreters, Randolph-Sheppard Specialists, and Orientation and Mobility Instructors.

Department of Corrections: ADRS is cooperating with the Alabama Department of Corrections. ADRS receives referrals on inmates who are in the prison system who will be transitioning back into their home areas through liaison counselors to the prisons. ADRS has established a system to handle these referrals and to provide services to

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eligible individuals when they return home. An ADRS staff specialist in the State Office is overseeing this initiative.

Department of Risk Management: ADRS works cooperatively with Alabama's Risk Management program. We receive referrals of individuals injured on the job to assist Risk Management in helping various state agencies retain individuals in employment who may have been injured.

Governor's Office: ADRS receives, on a regular basis, referrals from the Governor's office. The Governor's office contacts ADRS to make referrals of individuals who have contacted the Governor's office regarding various problems. These referrals are received by an Assistant Commissioner of ADRS, and forwarded to the appropriate local supervisor for follow-up and assessment. Understandably, many of these referrals are for services beyond the scope of ADRS; however, efforts are made to provide the Governor's staff with an appropriate service outlet to address the needs of the consumer.

Bureau of Indian Affairs and State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission: ADRS recognizes the need for services to Native Americans. The agency has liaison counselors assigned to various tribes throughout the state to receive referrals and to extend our services to Native Americans within Alabama. ADRS also coordinates services through the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission for Alabama's eight state recognized tribes and one state and Federally recognized tribe. ADRS provides services to American Indians with disabilities to the same extent as the agency provides such services to other significant segments of the population with disabilities residing in the state.

Department of Youth Services (DYS): Alabama has a Department of Youth Services. This Department is established to work with delinquent youth. It is hoped that the services of DYS will prevent delinquent youth from eventually advancing to the adult correctional system. ADRS has a specialist who is very actively involved with DYS. This individual receives referrals on a regular basis from DYS and forwards those referrals to the appropriate field staff.

Department of Mental Health (DMH): The Agency maintains an ongoing relationship with DMH. ADRS serves numerous consumers with mental illness. ADRS works on cooperative initiatives to ensure services are provided to eligible consumers. ADRS maintains a relationship with the DMH Division of Substance Abuse and a network of residential aftercare service providers. ADRS is working extensively with the DMH to expand and improve the ADRS supported employment program. This includes efforts in the areas of Employment First, extended supports, and collaborating on grants.

Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF): ADRS continues its relationship with the Alabama Head Injury Foundation. This relationship is directed towards maintaining a service delivery system to address the needs of consumers affected by traumatic brain injury.

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Community Rehabilitation Programs: ADRS continues an excellent working relationship with a wide network of community rehabilitation programs throughout the state. These CRPs are a critical link in our service delivery effort.

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA): ADRS has an ongoing partnership with the ADECA. The agency has worked cooperatively to pursue grants to serve people with disabilities.

The Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP): ADAP is the Alabama arm of the Protection and Advocacy program for people with disabilities. ADAP makes referrals to Alabama's toll free number for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through ADRS which coordinates the service.

Statewide Independent Living Centers: ADRS is represented on the State Independent Living Council and works closely with Alabama's three Independent Centers coordinate services and referrals.

Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD): GOOD serves as a clearinghouse for resources related to people with disabilities. ADRS maintains an ongoing relationship with the Governor's Office in order to provide resources as needed.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP): ADRS partners with OFCCP to provide affirmative action training to employers on issues related to hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. ADRS hosted a major conference for employers in conjunction with OFCCP staff to provide information to employers on the 503 Federal Hiring mandates.

Social Security Administration (SSA): The Agency maintains an excellent working relationship with the SSA. The ADRS specialist, Donna Bowden, is very knowledgeable regarding Social Security issues and has given numerous presentations on the Ticket to Work, Work Incentives Improvement Act, not only to ADRS staff, but other agencies.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): The partnership between EEOC and ADRS involves staff cross training on disability and employment law in addition to ADRS linkage to public and private sector businesses to assist with non-discriminatory practices in the employment, retention, training and promotion of individuals with disabilities. ADRS is a regular trainer for the EEOC technical assistance seminars for employers as well.

Department of Labor – Veterans Employment Training Service (VETS): ADRS collaborates at the state and local level with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff to assist wounded warriors in return to work or obtaining employment with Federal contractors and other businesses. This includes vets access to the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program.

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Alabama Industry Liaison Group (ALILG): Represents Federal contractors' compliance issues to include those tied to disability (Section 503 of the Rehab Act). ADRS is the lead provider of information, training and resources related to outreach, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities to ALILG businesses and ALILG routinely trains ADRS business relations consultants and participates in local, regional and state conferences sponsored by ADRS.

Alabama Business Leadership Employment (ABLE) Network: The 501c3 conglomerate of Alabama businesses that advocate for the employment of individuals with disabilities, uses ADRS business relations program as their lead resource for disability-in-the-workplace issues while co-sponsoring numerous training events for employers. They also serve as an advisor to ADRS on disability issues and resources for employers.

Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM): Representatives from a variety of Federal agencies throughout Alabama that function under the OPM work directly with the ADRS business relations consultants to implement Federal hiring mandates, Schedule A recruitment, accommodations, and employee retention impacting workers with disabilities in the Federal sector.

Department of Veterans Affairs: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. ADRS collaborates with the VR&E program at the national and state level to serve and place into employment veterans completing the VR&E program, providing customized services through ADRS specialty counselors, rehabilitation technology specialists for accommodations, and for return to work assistance.

(2)Assistive Technology Act - ADRS participates in providing assistance to people with disabilities living in the state who have technology related needs through the Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR) program. This is a statewide device reutilization and loan program which loans out needed equipment through a network of reutilization centers. ADRS also participates in the ABILITY loan program that is a loan guarantee program to assist people with disabilities in obtaining financing for assistive technology.

(3) Rural Development Office of Alabama: ADRS maintains a relationship with this office to receive referrals from rural areas that may need agency services.

(4) Non Educational Youth Services: ADRS has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Youth Services to provide a process for transitioning youth who may or may not be involved in an educational program into employment or training. ADRS also serves out of school youth through CRP's and Supported Employment projects and through collaboration with Workforce partners in the Career Centers where we house VR counselors who serve large numbers of out of school youth.

(5) State Use Contracting: ADRS currently has no cooperative agreements to participate in state use contracting programs.

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D) Coordination With Education Officials

(1) The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

(2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

(A) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

(B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

(C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

(D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services

(1) Plans, policies and procedures for coordination with Education officials: ADRS is committed to providing pre-employment transition services to assist students with disabilities in the high school setting in making a seamless transition to the world of work or vocational/post-secondary education.

ADRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for the provision of transition services. This agreement serves to ensure that students with disabilities, who are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, are provided services without unnecessary delay, as well as, to increase the collaborative efforts of the ADRS and ALSDE regarding the coordination of services that will improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities. The agreement describes (1) the scope of services to be provided by the ALSDE and ADRS; (2) the financial responsibilities of each party; (3) the methods of consultation and technical services needed to formulate IPEs; (4) the role of each agency in transition planning; and, (5) methods and strategies for identification of students needing transition services. Transition planning, sharing of student information, and consultation activities are stated in the agreement.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS):
New federal mandate requires ADRS, in collaboration with the local educational agencies, to use 15% of ADRS federal allotment in providing or arranging for the provision of pre-employment transition services (PETS) for all students with disabilities, ages 16-21, in need of such services who are eligible for or potentially eligible for services.

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PETS required activities include:

- Job exploration counseling.
- Work – based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible.
- Counseling and guidance on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living.
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

In order to achieve the 15% federal mandate, ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs, and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs:

- **Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training)**
  Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.
- **Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) –** SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.
- **Jointly-Funded Job Coach** - ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS and LEA pay half). The jointly funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements.

At the state level, ADRS participates as an equal partner in the **Alabama State Interagency Transition Team (SITT).** SITT is a multidisciplinary group of 37 representatives from 22 state agencies (ADRS, ALSDE, Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education) and organizations providing services for students and young adults with disabilities. The purpose of this group is to develop a better understanding of each agency's role and responsibilities in service delivery for Alabama's students and young adults with disabilities, and to seek

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and implement new and better ways of providing secondary special education and transition services.

At the local level, the ADRS has procedures in place to ensure the agency is actively involved in the transition of students with disabilities from school to work. The agency has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition counselor. The counselor visits the school on a regularly scheduled basis to meet with teachers and guidance counselors in order to provide vocational rehabilitation information and to receive referrals of students with disabilities in need of rehabilitation services. The VR counselor meets with the student and parents in order to explain rehabilitation services to enable a student's informed choice regarding these services. School records and other information needed for eligibility determination is obtained. Once eligibility is determined efforts are made to begin determining rehabilitation needs and a vocational goal. As appropriate and as necessary, the transition counselor can provide the student with vocational evaluation while still in high school in order to assist a student in determining an appropriate and feasible vocational goal. Counselors make every effort to participate in IEP meetings. This provides the counselor the opportunity to have issues addressed in the IEP related to disability. The counselor also provides some level of expertise regarding accommodations the student may need related to disability. Per ADRS policy, when transition services are being provided to an individual (student) with a disability who is also eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is prepared in coordination with the appropriate LEA and includes a summary of the relevant elements of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for that individual. The ADRS transition counselor will complete an IPE on each student determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services by the time the student leaves the school setting.

(2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:
(A)consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

ADRS provides consultation and technical assistance regarding VR, application process, eligibility requirements, vocational assessments, job placement services, local service providers, post-secondary education, and other topics deemed appropriate that will lead to a successful employment outcome. ADRS partners with ALSDE and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute to host an annual transition conference. This conference is attended by a variety of transition stakeholders including staff from LEAs, ALSDE, ADRS, Community Rehabilitation Programs and parents of students with disabilities. This conference provides an opportunity for counselors and transition staff to be updated on the latest successful trends and practices related to transition. Transition counselors also participate in transition work groups, teacher workshops and transition fairs hosted by the LEAs. These activities allow ADRS staff excellent interaction opportunities with education staff and teachers.

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(B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs

ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities. As stated earlier, ADRS has transition counselors designated to each LEA who work closely with the special education and career and technical education teachers in the development of the IEP for those students/consumers with whom the ADRS is involved and attend IEP Team meetings and/or provide input that will assist in making decisions about services that will be provided by the ADRS, such as assistive technology, career exploration or work experience opportunities. ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities.

(C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

ADRS recognizes the roles and responsibilities of each agency. Educational responsibilities rest with educational agencies that include the cost of accommodations for students with disabilities. Transition counselors are trained to be sure responsibilities of the education agency are not transferred to ADRS while the student is in school. The educational agency is responsible for ensuring students with disabilities are provided equal access to education. The school is responsible for providing school records to be used in determining eligibility and planning a rehabilitation program. ADRS utilizes school records and other available information in order to develop a rehabilitation program. These roles and responsibilities further defined in the formal interagency agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education.

*(D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services***.**

Outreach efforts continually occur between LEA staff and the designated VR counselor. These counselors (who most often have exclusive transition cases) work with teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, psychometrists and other education staff to identify students with disabilities who need transition services. Additional outreach will occur at IEP meetings, community based transition team meetings, teen transition clinic, job fairs, advocacy meetings, parent focus groups and other related events. These outreach efforts will inform school personnel, students, other state agency personnel, advocates, appropriate family members and other representative of the following:

a. Description of the purpose of VR
b. Information regarding eligibility requirements
c. Information regarding application procedures and
d. Scope of services that may be available to eligible individuals.

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(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a viable working partnership with 25 Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) statewide. The CRPs play a vital role in assisting the department to meet its mission of providing quality employment outcomes for individuals with severe disabilities.

Currently, the Accreditation Commission (CARF) accredits 22 of the CRPs in Alabama and three providers who are in a "provisional status" and have agreed to meet CARF standards in a twelve-month time frame. As the nature of services provided by CRPs continues to change, the options regarding standards and accreditation requirements will change.

Within the CRP section area, one State Office Administrator supervises the general CRP programs, another State Office Administrator supervises the Supported Employment Providers (SEP) and both share an Administrative Assistant. All three employees report to the Assistant Commissioner of VR general field services.

The CRP Administrator is responsible for initiating agreements with non-profits and for profits from which ADRS consumers receive services. CRP section staff review the qualifications of both nonprofits and for profits, meet to discuss fees and payment rates, and monitor service delivery through management/data reports and field visits.

In 2005, the agency instituted a system to ensure that all community based service providers who desire to provide services meet CARF standards and maintain their accreditation. This requirement provides some assurance that CRP's address issues like ADA accessibility, accountability, safety, staff qualifications, accommodations, and affirmative action in hiring persons with disabilities and address any special communication needs of consumers.

Currently, the CRP Administrator meets with CRP staff to discuss services and formulate an agreement that establishes agreed upon fees, referrals, and employment goals for each CRP. This information is shared with local counselors so that appropriate referrals and service authorizations can be made to the CRPs.

The department has formally developed and implemented the "Stages to Employment Payment System" (STEPS), which is a four-step outcome based payment schedule that is efficient, requires minimal paperwork, and focuses on the individual needs of the consumer served. To date this effort has met with positive feedback and all CRPs are utilizing this service/payment system.

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The department continues to work cooperatively with CRPs statewide to improve services at the local level. There is a continuous need for services. The development and establishment of new programs will change with the assessment of consumer needs.

Based on an assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services currently provided by CRPs statewide, a number of trends appear to be taking place:

- Increased emphasis on serving individuals that are considered underserved, individuals with the most significant disabilities, and individuals residing in rural areas of the state.
- Increased emphasis on consumer choice.
- Increased emphasis on serving ADRS consumers in their home communities.
- Increased emphasis on integrated employment.
- Increased incentives based on performance.
- Increased emphasis on community based services.
- CRPs are becoming more diversified regarding services provided and funding streams.
- More options regarding accreditation requirements as providers and the nature of service provision changes.
- Increase of supported employment long term supports.

The department's commissioner, the assistant commissioners for general field services, and blind/deaf services, and the CRP specialists meet regularly with all community rehabilitation program directors. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual concern, improve communication, and focus on the continuous improvement of the partnership.

Supported employment is available in Alabama to individuals who require intensive and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. Supported employment services are available through some 38 community based providers in the state. These services are currently provided in all regions of the state through cooperative agreements with community-based organizations and agencies.

The availability of job coach services is provided in most of the state's network of 25 community rehabilitation programs. Additionally, specialized center based services for

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blind and deaf consumers are being expanded and developed in local communities throughout the state.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to stay abreast of national issues regarding community rehabilitation facilities through its attendance and participation in conferences of state and national significance including Alabama Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (AARF), Alabama Association of People Supporting Employment First (AL-APSE), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and National Rehabilitation Association (NRA).

Collaborative efforts between ADRS Computer Services and the CRP section have recently developed computer generated reports that assist the CRP section in tracking targeted CRP goals and outcomes such as numbers of individuals successfully employed, cost per successful closure, and average wage.

F) Arrangements And Cooperative Agreements For The Provision Of Supported Employment

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities including youth with the most significant disabilities:

- *supported employment services; and*
- *extended services.*

Supported Employment (SE) is available in Alabama for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services, and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. These services are provided in all regions of the state by 38 approved community-based organizations.

Supported Employment services are available to individuals regardless of their disability. Currently, the primary disabilities served include persons with significant intellectual disabilities, severe mental illness, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, visual and hearing impairments, severe orthopedic impairments, traumatic brain injury, and other severe disabilities.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services currently utilizes a Milestones service and payment process. Milestones, a service and outcome based payment system, has significantly improved the quality of supported employment throughout the state, while proving to be more cost effective for the Agency. Providers of supported employment are paid for successful outcomes achieved by individuals participating in supported employment. The Milestones program segments the rehabilitation process into four distinct areas: (1) Determination of Needs and the Discovery Process, (2) Hire, (3) Job Retention/Coaching and (4) Closure.

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Extended supports including natural supports are available at the job site, and are provided for the duration of the employment. Providers of long term supports are required to document twice monthly contact with each consumer successfully working in the community, and to maintain this documentation in case files for the duration of that consumer's job. This information is reported monthly to the ADRS Supported Employment Coordinator for tracking purposes.

To ensure the highest quality of services, training is provided throughout the year to address issues related to supported employment, including the provision of extended services. This training is available to all SE providers as well as other agencies that may collaborate to provide supports to an individual working in the community. These agencies include the Alabama Department of Mental Health, The Alabama Department of Education, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This training is currently being offered twice a year in a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. APSE (Association for People Supporting Employment First) is sponsoring, and our state Chapter of APSE are also participating in CESP National Certification (National Certification for Employment Support Professionals).

Project SEARCH, a statewide initiative to improve transition services for students with most significant disabilities began in Alabama in FY 2012 with two pilot sites. Alabama now has 10 Project SEARCH sites and we will continue to work to expand this transition program in our state. All sites have a state team member assigned to them to help with implementation and fidelity. Trainings take place throughout the year and the teacher and job coach both attend national SEARCH training as well. Cooperative Agreements between the Local School Systems (LEA's) Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation Program and the local employer supporting the program are in place for all 10 sites.

In FY 2014, ADRS in a collaborative effort with and ADM, piloted Project GATE. Project GATE (Gaining Access to Employment) moved consumers with most significant disabilities from sheltered work to training in industry. ADRS and ADMH are currently hosting 5 GATE Projects. This program was recently recognized by the ICI: Promising Business Relations, Developments in Integrated Employment for innovation in employment. "This innovative and collaborative training program blends funding from both key agencies. It provides opportunities for higher wages, more innovative and opportunities to provide customization. Job coaches are on site and training the interns". Participants are either offered employment at the host site or in the community upon completion of training."

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education continue to work towards Employment First legislation. Additionally, the lead agencies (ADMH and ADRS) have been very active in regional trainings to assist

providers, families, and advocates to better understanding Employment First and to address fears and concerns from these groups. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is also participating with the Alabama Department of Mental Health in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Additional training, to the Employment First Team, is being provided via Vision Quest (through ODEP). Partners on the Employment First Tem are working as a local unit and in concert with other states to better understand how to successfully infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid Waiver and State Plan Options. An Employment First interagency agreement is in draft form at this time.

Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment is an evidence based approach to supported employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS is an evidence based practice to SE that is based on zero exclusion, competitive employment in the community, mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, benefits planning is included, job search occurs rapidly, employment specialist develop relationships with employers in their communities, job supports are continuous, and consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among 7 states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at 2 sites in the state. The grant is for 5 years during which time we will be looking at sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and Alapointe in Mobile County (urban site). This grant includes Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Auburn University, the Alabama Department of Veteran's Affairs and Dartmouth University.

In a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with AL-APSE/ the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education training and educational activities continue to be offered twice a year to improve the consistency of service delivery by job coaches and supported employment providers. This training is coordinated by ADRS and the ADMH and offered by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. SE job coaches, School job coaches, Job developers and coaches from private and nonprofit, as well as other state agencies are welcome to attend. Project SEARCH teachers and job coaches attend this 3 day interactive training as well. Project SEARCH sends their teachers and job coaches to this training as well.

ADRS will partner with ADMH, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs-Workforce Development, Alabama Department of labor, Community College System, Job Corps, Department of Veterans Affairs, the AL Department of Veterans Affairs, Reintegration Apprenticeship, the WIA Indians and Native American programs to implement the DEI grant. This grant provides funding to increase the number of youths with disabilities ages 19-24 served through American Job Centers and improve their employment and training outcomes while increasing the Job Centers capacity to serve people with disabilities. The goal of the grant is to increase access to existing

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employment, training and educational opportunities available through the states workforce partners, which will promote a culture of employment as a priority for persons with disabilities.

(g) Coordination With Employers

The vocational rehabilitation services portion of the unified or combined state plan must describe how the designated state unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

(1) Vocational Rehabilitation services; and

(2) Transition services for youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, such as pre-employment transition services

(g)(1) Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In addition, the new indicators in WIOA, specifically Indicator 6, will measure Effectiveness in Serving Employers. In the world of disability, that effectiveness almost always goes beyond the employment of individuals with disabilities.
This document provides a summary for inclusion in the VR state plan to address the above since the new legislation asks that we describe how VR, as the designated State unit, will work with employers to accomplish the above.
ADRS has committed to a "dual customer" approach in working with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for the consumers we serve. While doing so, ADRS also focuses on developing effective working relationships with business to address their disability related issues in the workplace from outreach and recruitment, to accommodations, to education, to resources linkages and more via the development and delivery of appropriate products and services to meet those needs as specified in the WIOA proposed regulations and beyond. Specific list of services to business, along with their explanations, is available on the ADRS website business page: www.rehab.alabama.gov/business-partners .

To accomplish the above, ADRS has a business relations unit, "READI-Net" (Resources for Employment And Disability Information Network), staffed by specially trained Business Relations Consultants (BRCs, in a classification separate from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, who are charged with establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with business in order to generate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities or to assist business with retention of workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability. BRCs also develop and deliver the other disability-related services needed by business and are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of those services while simultaneously assisting a wide variety of consumers (youth and adults) with all levels of job readiness preparation through group or one-on-one sessions, job development, job search, job retention and follow-up.

In addition, ADRS works with a network of community-based organizations on customized placement services for consumers, also necessitating coordination with employers. These partnerships include special assistance to students and youth with disabilities, Transition services, and supported employment assistance. This coordination

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with business also involves internal ADRS staff specializing in job readiness and placement services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing and may include Deaf Support Specialists or other contract employment specialists focusing on visually impaired.

Engagement with businesses through the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program also necessitate collaboration with business and includes ADRS vocational rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation technology specialists

To foster collaboration among these resources, thus avoiding duplication of effort with employers while maximizing assistance to consumers, ADRS has developed local collaboration teams facilitated by BRCs to include any and all local entities that assist VR consumers with job readiness, placement and retention and who reach out to employers on behalf of those consumers. These groups meet either monthly or quarterly and can include: ADRS staff, community rehabilitation programs, supported employment projects, jointly funded job coaches with the school systems, disabled veterans organizations, workforce partners, staffing companies and more.
To enhance coordination with employers, the ADRS READI-Net program and BRCs also engage with entities that represent business and disability-related issues: Staffing companies, Society of Human Resource Management, Chambers of Commerce, Alabama Industry Liaison Group, EEOC, OFCCP, and other partners that represent the needs of employers. BRCs work through those entities to deliver needed dis ability-related services to the business.
Operating under an "employer account system" to ensure accurate record keeping of services provided to employers and to organize outreach to employers, ADRS has an employer data base, "Mr. ED", that maintains permanent records on every business contacted by BRCs or with whom BRCs have a working relationship as an "account". These records reflect the following:

- Company name and detailed demographics on contact info, staffing patterns, benefits, referral processes, type company (e.g. Federal contractor, Federal agency, private sector, etc) and more;
- Specific services provided to the company by ADRS;
- Employment and retention outcomes with the company;
- Archived records that can be re-activated to reflect the history of the partnership

A number of customized services to business, on behalf of ADRS consumers, to enhance hiring opportunities by the business include a variety of the following initiatives which require coordination with the business and delivery by ADRS staff or partners:

- Pre-hire work experiences
- Mentoring or internships
- Summer work experience
- On-the-Job training support (fiscal and programmatic) after hire
- Targeted Job Tax Credits
- Accommodations at the job site such as:
    - Job coaching

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  - Delivery and set up of accommodation resources
  - Additional follow up services to ensure success
- RAVE services to assist existing employees with disabilities

Determination of whether or not ADRS has effectively served employers (Indicator 6) is driven by specific input from long term ADRS business customers who serve as advisors to ADRS through:

- VR State Rehabilitation Council – Business Relations Committee
- ABLE Network – Alabama Business Leadership Employment Network, the state chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network

That input reflects the following elements in determination of whether or not ADRS effectively served the employer:

1. Chart of Core Functions (attached) with specific reference to the WIOA proposed regulations and approved by the SRC and ABLE Network. These functions reflect an overview of how VR will function in its partnerships with employers.
2. Agreement with the Business Services listed in the WIOA proposed regulations
3. Expansion of the Business Services listed in WIOA proposed regulations
4. Methods to determine the effectiveness of services to business

(**2**) **Transition Services:** ADRS will coordinate with employers to provide pre-employment transition services for students and youth with disabilities through the development of internship sites, job shadowing opportunities and trial work experiences.

(h) Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated state unit will collaborate with the state agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

(1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;
(2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and
(3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services

(1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act

The State of Alabama Independent Living Service, a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, provides comprehensive services for individuals needing independent living and competitive integrated employment. Services are provided through specialized counselors who manage services for both vocational rehabilitation and the Medicaid waiver. Additionally, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, the Alabama Department of

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Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama's Medicaid Agency are all principle players in ***Employment First*** in Alabama. These agencies meet monthly to promote and expand collaboration and collaborative efforts for individuals with disabilities seeking competitive integrated employment, including those with more significant disabilities especially.

Additionally. ADRS and ADMH conducted statewide trainings on ***Employment First***, and together ensure that those who are funded through the home and community based waivers are participating in the ***Employment First*** initiatives and trainings. ADRS has also been working with providers, funded by the home and community based waivers, to become vendors of supported employment funded by ADRS to move individuals into community based employment through an outcome based payment process.

(2)the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities

Alabama Department of Mental Health is responsible for providing services o individuals with developmental disabilities, and ADRS works collaboratively in our state to increase competitive integrated employment, particularity for individuals with more significant disabilities. Initiatives such as **Project SEACH**, that currently serves over 100 individuals with significant disabilities at ten different locations throughout the state, the **GATE** project which is a collaborative effort to move individuals served through the waivers in day programs into community based, integrated employment opportunities through development of training sites embedded in employment opportunities in the communities, and conjoint trainings for job coaches working through both entities, community based rehabilitation partners, school personnel, jointly funded school personnel and other community providers.

(3)the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

IPS SE is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to serve individual with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse in SE. We currently have one IPS program in West Alabama in a rural setting and another in South Alabama in an urban setting. We are working on sustainability.

(i) Comprehensive System Of Personnel Development

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

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(A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

(i) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

(ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

(iii) projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

(B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

(i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

(ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

(iii) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

(2) Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel. Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

(3)Personnel Standards. Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

(A)standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

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(B)the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

(3) Staff Development. Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

(A)a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

(B)procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

(4) Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs. Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

(5) Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. This system is based on finding candidates who possess prescribed levels of specific education and experience for available positions/job classifications. After employment, a second phase of this comprehensive system of personnel development is initiated. This includes an initial orientation to the department, its goals, and mission. A regular system of personnel appraisal and staff development is tailored to suit the needs of each staff member.

(1)(A) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development:
ADRS maintains a comprehensive system of data on personnel needs. This is maintained within the agency's human resource division. This data system allows for the input of personal information about each staff member and includes all possible training opportunities for staff to attend. It can also record historical information about each training, maintain participant lists, and track continuing education credit hours as needed.

(i) As reported in the latest RSA-2 information (December 2014), the total number of consumers served by the staff in 2015 was 30,248. The majority (83%) of individuals served were coded in case files as having significant disabilities or higher.

2014 RSA-2 Personnel Reporting Categories	Number
Administrative Staff	71
Counselor Staff	188
Staff Supporting Counselor Activities	163
Other Staff	2
Total	424

(ii) Those classified as "counselor staff," can be somewhat deceiving because it takes into account specialty staff (rehabilitation teachers and orientation and mobility specialists) that may not be considered actual vocational rehabilitation counselors. This number is currently closer to 158 rehabilitation counselors who provide services through our field offices and One-Stop Career Center sites. It also includes three "hybrid" counselors who work under the State of Alabama Independent Living Program (SAIL). These counselors serve consumers who dually qualify for independent living services and vocational rehabilitation services. Each of these counselors currently averages a caseload of approximately 148 consumers. New vocational rehabilitation counselor positions (FTEs) are not being requested in next year's budget because all of the current vacancies cannot be filled due to the mandated statewide hiring freeze and budgetary constraints. Last year the agency was granted a blanket approval to fill positions beyond the hiring cap for direct service and direct service support staff that are federally funded.

A database is used to track the educational backgrounds and experience of the active counselors and field supervisors within the department for the express purpose of encouraging and enabling all staff to reach the state's highest definition of 'qualified rehabilitation professionals.' This database supports already existing systems and contains information gathered from educational transcripts required upon application to this job classification.

The agency also employs orientation and mobility instructors, interpreters, rehabilitation teachers and rehabilitation employment specialists. A qualification for orientation mobility instructor is an ACVREP or NOMC certification. Interpreters must be licensed by the Alabama Licensure Board for Interpreters and Transliterators. A rehabilitation teacher must have at least a Bachelor's degree and one year experience; however, most of the rehabilitation teachers have Master's degrees. The business relations consultants may come from a business background or a vocational rehabilitation service background with appropriate degrees.

(iii) Fifty-nine (59) "counselor staff," fifteen (15) supervisors from the "administrative staff" and five (5) specialists from the "staff supporting counselor activities" will be eligible to retire within the next five years based on their age or years of service. These

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numbers represent actual positions currently filled and do not include those budgeted positions presently not filled. There are many unfilled positions due to the hiring freeze. In addition, field supervisors and rehabilitation specialist positions are included in this number (79) because counselors are often promoted into these supervisory roles, leaving counselor vacancies. Therefore, we can project the need for approximately seventy-nine (79) counselors over the next five years to remain staffed at the current budgeted level.

It is difficult to project the number of 'Staff Supporting Counselor Activities' and 'Other' staff. However, of the remaining "administrative staff" (less the supervisors) and the support staff (less the specialists) and the "other" the estimate would be eighty-five (85) eligible to retire over the next five years. This is based on the fact that 42% of the current overall agency staff will be eligible to retire within the next five years, based on age or years of service.

The department's Leadership Training Institute (LTI) has 105 graduates still working for the department, fourteen (14) of them graduated last year. This training works to prepare existing staff to assume leadership roles. These graduates actively compete for leadership roles when vacancies occur. Another method of preparing LTI graduates for leadership roles is involving them in departmental task forces and special assignments. It gives current leadership the chance to see how well LTI graduates perform and the strengths they possess.

Currently, all rehabilitation counselors hired to work with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services must possess master's degrees from an accredited university in specific fields of study and become "eligible to sit" for the CRC exam.

There are currently four (4) counselors who do not meet the state CSPD requirement. One (1) has enrolled to complete her coursework in the spring. The three (3) remaining have been offered opportunities to further their education either by distance education or on campus, thus enabling them to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness and provide for succession planning.

	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Rehabilitation Caseload Counselor	155	7	50
2	Rehabilitation Field Supervisors	20	0	3
3	Rehabilitation Specialists	16	1	3
4	Orientation & Mobility Specialists	5	0	0

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5	Interpreters	12	1	2
6	Rehabilitation Audiologists	4	0	0
7	Rehabilitation Teachers	20	1	2
8	Rehabilitation Technology Specialists	6	0	1

(B) Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

Row	**i** Institutions	**ii** Students Enrolled	Employees Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	**iii** Graduates from the Previous Year
1	Alabama A&M University	55	1	10	12
2	Alabama State University	21	3	3	9
3	Auburn University	17	3	9	9
4	Troy University	17	0	0	25
5	University of Alabama	43	0	0	7

The above institutions provide excellent candidates for available counseling positions. This translates into increased candidates for the department to recruit into employment. All graduates obtain the necessary credentials to apply for and/or test for certification and licensure. Many, but not all, sit for the CRC exam or seek the LPC credential.

The state personnel department's qualifications for rehabilitation counselor currently require specific master's degrees; therefore, ADRS will not be presented with candidates without appropriate degrees. In addition, ADRS and state personnel have worked to strengthen the application process by setting a time limit to be "eligible to sit" for the CRCC (the end of their probationary period, which is up to one year).

2.) Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel: ADRS works diligently to implement strategies necessary to address personnel issues. Since 2002, the department has a dedicated staff specialist devoted to the issues of recruitment and retention. This individual works with the executive leadership team and task forces to create and implement a recruitment and retention plan that is updated annually to address the projected personnel needs of the department. However, ultimately the State Department of Personnel is the entity that provides and oversees hiring practices, salary schedules, and staff vacancies among other personnel issues. Within the strategic planning and implementation process, the following issues are addressed:

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1.) Maintain a strong relationship with key personnel at the State Department of Personnel and universities offering educational opportunities for potential ADRS employees. Unpaid internships will continue to be offered as a recruiting tool for students in the field of rehabilitation. Paid internships will be re-instated once the hiring freeze is lifted. The professional trainee job class will be used to attract individuals to pursue professions in rehabilitation requiring experience such as rehabilitation teacher and rehabilitation employment specialist. This will allow dedicated individuals to train while gaining the experience needed to be eligible for hire. A hiring procedure known as 'disability preference' continues to enable ADRS to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities. Other avenues to recruit individuals with disabilities are made possible through specialty areas such as rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility. Also educating consumers with the potential to pursue rehabilitation professions is a recruitment tool as well as supporting entry level staff to pursue professional positions through a process of "grow your own."

2.) Continuation of promotions of deserving rehabilitation counselors to the senior rehabilitation counselor level. Promotions are based on exemplary performance of job duties and the ability to take on additional duties within the unit. This provides incentive for younger counselors to remain with the department and helps address the issue of supervisory succession planning. The counselors who are promoted and retained are then in line to fill supervisory vacancies, with proper training.

3.) Regularly scheduled exhibits at various professional, educational and disability organization meetings to share employment opportunities with potential candidates. Exhibits are used for recruiting students into the field of rehabilitation and for recruiting professionals into positions within the department. Several ADRS administrators have served on advisory boards for rehabilitation counseling programs and are also asked to sit on interviewing panels for RSA scholarship recipients.

4.) Maintain an active role on the advisory committees of Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University. Both universities are known as historically black colleges/universities and provide an opportunity to recruit students from more diverse backgrounds to positions within the department.

Seasoned and retired staff are encouraged to work as adjunct professors within the graduate rehabilitation counseling programs which affords a practical application of information to the students.

5.) Develop more marketing tools, created through annual meetings with educators, to increase interest in the field of rehabilitation from high

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school students and encourage undergraduate students to pursue Master's level work in one of the rehabilitation programs. Departmental transition counselors are used to recruit high school students across the state. There has also been increased participation in high school career events to educate students of the many professions within the department.

The ADRS public website includes an expanded career opportunities section that can be accessed by college career services, advocacy groups, and students. This section provides information on career opportunities and employee benefits available within the department.

The development of an orientation program for new employees, which includes a disability etiquette section, serves as a recruitment and retention tool. It provides information for all new employee to effectively interact with individuals who have disabilities as well as knowledge regarding legal obligations and work procedures.

(3) (A) Personnel Standards: The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services adopted a standard which states rehabilitation counselors would be "eligible to sit" for the CRC exam in 2009. This standard is easily obtainable by a majority of new staff, because they are graduating from rehabilitation specific programs. Almost all other staff hold related degrees, which fortunately contain coursework in the theories and techniques of counseling, a critical component in an individual's ability to be "eligible to sit" under current CRCC reviewing practices. Transcripts are required as part of the state personnel application process allowing coursework to be reviewed by the hiring supervisor and the human resource division of the department.

However, one of the greatest obstacles in using the "eligibility to sit for the CRC" standard are the changes that CRCC periodically makes to this criteria as it relates to Category D and R. CRCC implemented a change to the categories in July 2014. This in effect knocked 16 agency staff out of "eligibility" status. In order to prevent this from happening in the future, the agency is considering certifying all current counselors and supervisors that meet CSPD for the agency based on the current educational standards for CRC eligibility and not requiring them to meet any new standard that should be implemented. Individuals hired after any new CRCC regulations are enacted will be required to meet the new standard as being "eligible to sit" for the exam.

Ninety (90) possess a master's degree and CRC certification (47%)

Additionally, 97 possess a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling (CORE program) *or* required coursework and experience and are eligible to sit for the CRC exam (99%)

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There are currently four (4) counselors who do not meet the state CSPD requirement. One (1) will complete her coursework in the spring. The three (3) remaining have been offered opportunities to further their education either by distance education or on campus, thus enabling them to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness and provide for succession planning.

These employees who either possess a master's degree in a non-related field, or possess a related degree but without the necessary coursework or supervised experience have been presented with opportunities to acquire a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling through RSA long term training grant programs or obtain the necessary coursework through the RSA in-service training grant. All have been made aware of the requirement to meet the state standard. Those who chose to remain or were hired by the department beyond the required timeframe have had their signature authority removed for determinations of eligibility and rehabilitation plans. These rehabilitation counselors' specific duties must be reviewed, approved, and signed by a senior counselor or supervisor meeting the CSPD standard. Current and closed consumer files are reviewed by the department's Quality Assurance section to assure compliance with this policy until the staff meets the CSPD requirement.

ADRS and state personnel adopted new minimum qualifications in 2012 to strengthen the application process. By requiring that qualified candidates must be eligible to sit for the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) by the end of their probationary period (up to one year) ADRS now has the ability to terminate employees who do not complete the necessary requirements. This change has helped to align the state personnel qualifications more closely with the CSPD standard.

However, there appears to be an effect on the number of qualified applicants in areas of the state where there is not a rehabilitation counseling program. This has recently prompted a discussion among agency leadership to review and possibly make changes to the CSPD standard and/or the personnel qualifications in the future.

The listed salary range of our beginning rehabilitation counselor positions is $33,902.40- $51,376.80. The senior rehabilitation counselor pay range is $37,389.60-$56,685.60. Each pay range consists of eighteen steps. Newly hired counselors can start at step three of the eighteen-step range, or $35,589.60, in order to help in recruiting efforts.

(B) These requirements help ensure that personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

(4) Staff Development: The department has an extensive in-service training program. The department maintains a departmental training team that meets to

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identify, plan, and coordinate training. A department wide training plan, reviewed by this team on an on-going basis, targets core subjects as well as new topics related to particular job classifications or specialty areas.

(A)These topics may include, but are not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, case management, Social Security work incentives, employment development, WIA, medical aspects of disability, disability etiquette, assistive technology, assessment, job placement, and multicultural issues. Two assistive technology expos/symposiums are held annually to assist in carrying out section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials is accessed as well as RSA webinars to disseminate knowledge to staff from research and other sources.

The department utilizes *MAESTRO* learning management software to track training records for each staff member. This software allows for input from both field and state office staff. *MAESTRO* will track an individual's training record, training dates, and future training needs. AT&T Connect webinar system and in-house video-on-demand capabilities have broadened the counselors' ability to participate in training programs, webinars, and receive valuable time-sensitive information without spending time away from their office and consumers while significantly reducing travel/training costs.

(B)Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge:
Webinar technology, video on demand capabilities, and internal intranet site all allow the department to disseminate information from the federal level to the local level at speeds often much faster than standard personnel meetings and supervisory instruction. Training and program evaluation staff are utilizing the SharePoint platform as a training tool. The goal is to continue to expand its use for business intelligence, staff collaboration, team and project collaboration as well as to develop SharePoint forms and workflow applications. Although instructor led training continues to serve an important role and appropriate staff are encouraged to attend training conferences to meet specific needs, these technologies have definite benefits when timing is critical.

The department's Leadership Training Institute (LTI) has been continuously changed and updated since 1994 to include new approaches and concepts of leadership. This training, offered nine times since its inception has proven to sufficiently meet the changing needs of the department by preparing staff to fill vacant leadership positions statewide. The most recent LTI class (2015) included 14 VR field staff.

The State Department of Personnel offers supervisory training in the areas of performance appraisal, progressive discipline, FMLA, sexual harassment, employment law, interview and selection, and the dynamics of supervision. A portion of these trainings are required for all new supervisors.

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5.) Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs: ADRS maintains regular communication with programs providing specialized training in the areas of deafness and blindness. Communication is maintained with Western Oregon University to train staff in the area of deafness. Staff members serving the deaf and hard of hearing populations attend an annual training conference to address issues relative to deaf services and to meet with students at the Alabama School for the Deaf. The department also remains actively involved with Mississippi State University's blind program. Mississippi State also assists the blind programs with consumer satisfaction surveys. Staff members serving the blind and low vision populations attend training programs annually to address issues relative to blind services. The department possesses Braille and large print producing capabilities in local offices to address the needs of Braille and large print users. UbiDuos and video phones are available in the reception areas, resource rooms and counselor offices to assist staff and consumers with communication and hearing difficulties.

ADRS continues to work with Alabama A&M University to target and recruit candidates for the rehabilitation counseling program in either the blindness or deafness tract. This two year Master's program includes the second year in Mississippi (MSU Vision Specialist) or Tennessee (UT's Orientation to Deafness) for the specialized training. Priority to receive the RSA long term training scholarship will be given to students interested in pursuing sensory specialties. Also, ADRS rehabilitation counselors with general caseloads, but with an interest in working with consumers with sensory impairments, qualified for specialty training through the RSA in-service training grant.

ADRS applicants and eligible individuals who speak limited English can be provided interpreters or are able to access vendors for remote interpreter services. The ADRS consumer guide has been translated into Spanish. Spanish instruction is encouraged by using technology and individual instruction either online or in person for staff.

6.) Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Approximately half of ADRS cases served and the closures obtained, involve transition students. This year, 16,240 transition students received services and 2,238 were successfully employed. The department continues to strengthen the jointly funded job coach program with twenty-seven (27) local school systems across the state and two (2) with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB). This program is designed to place students with disabilities who are in their final year of school into competitive jobs in their local communities before they leave school. The program is cooperatively managed by local VR service staff and school system staff and employs full-time and part-time job coaches. Students, parents, rehabilitation counselors, local school special and regular education staff, and the job coaches, work together to plan for students' successful and smooth transitions to adult life and work.

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ADRS continues efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models to meet the needs of students with more-significant disabilities and overcome barriers to employment and community living. College Prep Program services were offered at six sites around the state, with more than 200 students participating. Collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections continues as ADRS implements the Prison Transition Initiative for youth with disabilities incarcerated in adult prisons.

ADRS established a statewide Transition Workgroup to develop a strategic plan for strengthening and improving transition services. A Best Practices Guide for Transition Services for staff was developed as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities in schools and that also serves as a tool to help transition counselors develop ideas and services/programs in their local areas. ADRS also supports many local transition events such as career fairs, transition expos, mentoring days, and summer employment readiness program.

ADRS is represented on the State Interagency Transition Team (SITT). This is an interagency work group designed to identify existing interagency barriers to effective transition services and develop appropriate remedies. This group consists of representatives from ADRS, Division of Special Education, Auburn University, University of Alabama, Department of Mental Health, Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Association of Higher Education and Disability, and the Young Adults in Transition (YAIT) group. This group encouraged local areas to establish Community Transition Teams to address transition issues for youth with disabilities.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is annually provided an opportunity to give input about the department's CSPD initiatives. Current and future personnel issues are presented by field services program directors. Detailed information is presented through discussions, handouts and questions and answers. Comments and suggestions are requested at any time throughout the year.

(J) Statewide Assessment

(1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of those:

(A) individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

(B) who are minorities;

(C) who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and

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(D) who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system; and

(E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

(2)Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

(3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

(**1) Needs Assessment**: The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the State Rehabilitation Council jointly conducted the triennial Statewide Needs Assessment during FY 2014. A variety of sources were utilized in order to obtain information needed for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of Individuals with disabilities residing in the state, particularly their vocational rehabilitation needs. ADRS utilizes a variety of sources in order to accomplish the needs assessment. ADRS is engaged in multiple stakeholder groups, including service providers from other Alabama agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. Data was collected from these organizations that were incorporated into our Needs Assessment Analysis. Agencies included the State Rehabilitation Council, The Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Community Rehabilitation Programs, Centers for Independent Living, Governor's Office on Disability, and the agency's own Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, Supported Employment Providers, Vocational Rehabilitation Field Staff and Workforce Development.

The agency also utilized information with its ongoing relationships with various consumer groups including the Alabama Association for the Deaf, the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, the Alabama Head Injury Foundation, the Alabama Deaf-Blind Coalition, and the Alabama Workforce Board. The agency also utilized input from the agency's Blind Advisory group, Deaf Advisory group, which provided valuable information about rehabilitation needs. The above listed agencies provide the agency with a rich source of information as to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State of Alabama.

It was not surprising that the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, minorities and underserved participants, and individuals with disabilities served by components of Workforce Investment System were very similar.

Underserved Individuals with Disabilities: Autism continues to be an emerging underserved disability. Data indicate that 1 in 68 children born fall on Autism spectrum

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disorder scale. Job placement is need of this group. It is especially important due to the difficulty people with autism have on the job due autistic behaviors.

Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control in FY 2015 indicate that 31.5% of Alabama's population have some type of disability.

Services to those of Hispanic decent: The agency's data for the years FY 11 through FY 14, indicate a need for additional outreach to the Hispanic community. According to United States census of 2010, the Hispanic community in Alabama has grown by 144% since the census of 2000. This indicates a need for outreach to this underserved population

The deaf-blind population is one at which the agency is directing a concentration of services. A significant number of this population resides in Talladega, Alabama due to the presence of the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind.

(A)Rehabilitation needs indicated for individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD): Information from this group indicates a need for expansion of Supported Employment services in the state. While we have expanded the number of supported employment providers in recent years, the agency's method for determining which consumers are MSD is resulting in more consumers eligible for and requesting supported employment. It is in the rural areas where additional service providers are needed.

(B)Rehabilitation needs of minorities: Services to individuals with disabilities who are minorities paint an interesting picture in Alabama. While African Americans comprise 26% of the total population of Alabama, African Americans made up 44% of those participating in VR services over the last three years. Additionally, in FY 2012, African Americans comprised 41% of the successfully closed rehabilitation cases. Nevertheless, increased number of job placements for individuals with the most significant disabilities and minority groups is noted as a need.

(C)Unserved and underserved populations: Common needs among the various underserved populations included the need for additional job placement and an increase in wages. Also, as is the growing trend across the United States, more employers are offering part-time employment. Our placement efforts will be directed toward locating full-time employment for consumers.

Services to Rural Areas: Alabama is a predominantly rural state. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to improve services to rural areas. While the agency has staff assigned to serve every county, the challenge can be to locate service providers in the local areas. This is particularly applicable to those needing supported employment, thus the agency's ongoing expansion of supported employment providers.

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(**D)Vocational rehabilitation needs of individual service to other components of the Statewide Workforce System**: Service needs were identified as included additional placement services, higher wages, and more services to veterans.

(E)Youth with disabilities: Youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including their need for pre-employment transition services Need to Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs: Alabama has a long and lasting partnership with "Brick and Mortar" rehabilitation facilities such as Easter Seals and Goodwill and other independent organizations and agencies. This relationship has been in existence for over 50 years and has worked well to cover the needs of agency consumers in many geographic areas of the state. However, ADRS does not foresee growth in developing new large Community Rehabilitation Programs. This is due to the trend in the last five years of establishing small independent businesses and agencies providing more community-based services. ADRS will expect to maintain the same standards as has been held for previous organizations serving its consumers.

(2)Additionally, the future of vocational rehabilitation is to provide community based experiences as opposed to those in the confines of a CRP facility. With the passage of WIOA, we can expect more vocational assessments, work adjustment experiences, and paid work experiences to occur in the community, for both transition and non-transition consumers.

Further, as ADRS moves towards serving consumers with more significant disabilities, we can anticipate the need for specialized and well trained staff in the various community service programs to provide services to these consumers. The role of the traditional rehabilitation facility professionals are now more involved within the community, becoming familiar with employment trends, and skills needed to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

As the agency continues on the path of serving those with more significant disabilities, there may be the need to enhance the assessment and evaluation capability of CRPs. Three potential areas of Community Rehabilitation Program improvement were noted: increased availability of comprehensive learning disability evaluations, services to individuals with autism, and increased emphasis on social skills training.

One strategy to expand learning disability evaluations will be to attempt to utilize existing learning disability projects to train other Community Rehabilitation Program staff. The sharing of knowledge and practices will assist the agency in expanding this service.

The agency will invite CRP staff to specific trainings in order to improve and elevate skills of CRP employees in areas such as autism and social skills training.

The Assistant Commissioner of the CRP Section recently retired and was not replaced. The CRP and Supported Employment Specialist of the CRP section were placed directly

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under the Assistant Commissioner for VR General Services. This created a closer alignment between these two sections and should enhance services.

(3) An assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services provided under this part are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Pre-Employment Transition Services: New federal mandate requires ADRS, in collaboration with the local educational agencies, to use 15% of ADRS federal allotment in providing or arranging for the provision of pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible for or potentially eligible for services. A student with a disability is defined as an individual who is ages 16-21, is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or is an individual with a disability for the purposes of 504. ADRS and the Local Educational Agencies (LEA) will be collaborating to meet the following needs of students with disabilities: (1) Increased job exploration opportunities (2) Increased work based learning experiences, such as volunteer work, work experience including trial work, job shadowing, internships, (3) Increased opportunities for students with disabilities to explore postsecondary educational programs such as visits to vocational, junior and four year universities, increased opportunities for participation in college prep programs. (4) Increased opportunities for workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living. (5)Increased instruction/activities regarding self-advocacy and peer mentoring.

Funding: Funding estimates are difficult to determine to serve the above populations, but the agency is always seeking additional state funding to match available federal dollars.

(K) <u>Annual Estimates</u>

On an annual basis state estimates of the:

1. The number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

   (A) The VR program
   (B) The Supported Employment Program; and
   (C) Each priority category, if in an order of selection.
3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and
4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection identify the cost of services for each priority category.

1.It is estimated 25,000 will be eligible for services under the VR program.

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2. **(A)(B)(C**)It is estimated 28,950 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 1,350 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. The DSU is not in an order of selection.

3.ADRS is not in an order of selection.

4. It is estimated $79,076,821 will be expended under Title I and $372,696 under Title VI.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Part B if Title I	Title I	$76,076,821	28,950	$2,628
Part B of Title VI	Title VI	$372,696	150	$2,498
Part B of Title I for Additional Supported Employment	Title I	$3,000,000	1200	$2,498
		79,449,517	30,300	2,622

(l) <u>State Goals And Priorities</u>

The state unit must:

(1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed by the VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.
(2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and supported employment programs.
(3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
    (A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
    (B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116of WIOA; and

(C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

(1) The goals below were jointly developed and agreed to by the agency and the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC and the agency jointly reviewed the goals and jointly agreed to any revisions.

These goals were developed after analysis of available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program including reports and recommendations from the SRC and the statewide needs assessment.

State Plan Goals Fy 2016

1. Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches $10.60.

2. Expend 15% of the State's Federal allotment for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).

3. Meet a minimum of 4 times per year with workforce development partners in order to increase interagency coordination and collaboration, improve services for all consumers, and increase outreach efforts to underserved populations.

4. Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.

5. Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of Assistive Technology in order to better meet the individual needs of consumers

(2) Increase case service dollars expended for Supported Employment by 5%.
(3) These goals and priorities are based on:
A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA,
(C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

(m) <u>Order Of Selection</u>

(1) Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:
(A) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.
(B) The justification for the order.

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(C) The service and outcome goals.
(D) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.; and
(E) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

(2) If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

(n) Goals And Plans For Distribution Of Title VI Funds

(1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.
(2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:
(A)the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years; and
(B)how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

(1) Goals And Plans For Distribution For Title Vi Part B Funds

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) has an extensive history and commitment to providing supported employment within the state. Currently, ADRS matches Supported Employment State Grant funds at over 8 times that amount. The Department anticipates continuing to increase funding for FY 2016.

ADRS distributes supported employment funds to its rehabilitation counselors who in turn purchase needed supported employment services through a network of approved vendors utilizing a Milestones outcome based payment system. This process provides payments to authorized supported employment providers for assisting individuals to reach Milestones toward successful employment. Supported Employment providers are reimbursed for the following Milestones:

1. Milestone 1: Determination of Needs (20% of total) (Discovery Profile can be substituted making it approx. 26%)

2. Job Development and Hire (20 % of total)

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3. Job Coaching and Retention (25 % of total)

4. Successful Closure (Employment Stability for 90 days) (35% of total)

***80% of funding occurs on and after the person is employed (74% with Discovery)

Each provider receives funding based on the milestone achieved for each person served. Provider goals are based upon past performance, input from the ADRS liaison counselor, and the estimated need for supported employment services in each service area of the state. The Department's goal for FY 2015 is for 250 consumers to obtain competitive, integrated employment in their community. Supported employment services are provided utilizing an individualized, customer driven approach, encompassing each person's individual support needs to ensure an appropriate and successful job match.

Additionally, The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has committed to increasing successful supported employment outcomes through collaboration and coordination with other agencies and organizations including sharing or braiding funding. ADRS is currently participating in the following collaborative efforts to help achieve supported employment priorities:

(2) Activities for Youth with the Most Significant Disabilities

Project SEARCH, an innovative transition program for students, was piloted in two areas of Alabama beginning in 2012. We currently have 10 Project SEARCH sites. These programs are collaborations between our department, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, local school systems, and local supported employment programs. The State Team is working to expand this program and hopes to have additional sites in FY 2015. This includes the potential development of Project SEARCH for students who are deaf, blind, and individuals who are both deaf and blind within the next 2 years. This year long internship offers unique highly skilled training opportunities leading to competitive employment opportunities for students with the most significant disabilities.

• Collaborative efforts continue as we work with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers that will be referred for community based integrated employment, and be able to utilize the waiver for long term support. To date, this collaboration has resulted in the addition of 5 Mental Health providers contracting with ADRS to become Supported Employment providers.

• Certificate Based Job Coach Training is collaboration between our agency, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting

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Employment First). This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We offer this training twice a year to SE Job Coaches, School Job Coaches, Job Coaches employed by the Department of Mental Health and other community job developers and job coaches. This year, job coaches specializing in sensory impairments also participated in this training as we work to collaborate more closely with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) and their AIDB regional center staff located throughout the state.

• Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education have been working to secure Employment First legislation and continue to participate in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to support the concept of Employment First. Additionally, several partners are participating in the Vision Quest training, offered through ODEP, to assist Alabama with options to infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid waiver, State Plan Options and increased collaboration to better serve consumers as they move towards integrated, community based employment options.

• ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to improve transition services; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to community based Supported Employment providers while still in high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community based assessments or begin the Discovery Profile before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transit ion to Supported Employment Services.

•The GATE program (Gaining Access to Employment) is a training program that takes consumers from sheltered work or day habilitation and fully immerses them in industry training. This collaboration between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Alabama Department of Mental Health began in North Alabama and now has 5 sites. The GATE program braids funding utilizing from both ADRS and ADMH (Medicaid waiver). Adults, who are long term consumers of day programs are trained in competitive integrated employment settings using job coaches for support during their internships. Consumers are paid wages while they intern, primarily in manufacturing settings.

(A) Extended service provision is provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in a variety of ways. This includes the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support youth in Project SEARCH, contract service provision to SE vendors, grant dollars for IPS and DEI, fund raising, and private pay. Extended services not to exceed four years.

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(B) Alabama is exploring the use of the Medicaid Rehab Option and targeted case management for IPS to support extended services to youth in that program. We are also partnering with Alabama Department of Mental Health to explore various opportunities to use the waiver to support extended services for individuals seeking community based integrated employment. We are currently partnering with DMH, and will continue to do so, to support youth in Project SEARCH requiring extended services. Fund raising and private funding is also being utilized to support extended services to youth.

(O) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):
(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
(2) How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.
(3) The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
(4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).
(5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.
(6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.
(7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
(8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:
(A) achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
(B) support innovation and expansion activities; and
(C) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

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The agency employs a number of strategies to expand and continuously improve services. The sections below will describe some of the specific methods and strategies to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities in Alabama.

(2)How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis

The agency has multiple strategies to provide access to technology services and devices on a statewide basis during all phases of the rehabilitation process. To start the agency has a statewide network of degreed and qualified rehabilitation technology specialists. The team members are located strategically throughout the state so all staff have access to their expertise. This team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss among themselves, and with partner agency, staff various advances and new products in rehabilitation technology. These meetings provide vendors the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative pieces of technology to demonstrate to the team. This team will act as a training agent for other agency rehabilitation staff throughout the state. Team members will attend unit meetings throughout the state to discuss and demonstrate technology to frontline counseling staff. The team members will also continue to attend national conferences, such as the Assistive Technology Industries Association (ATIA) conference, where they will be exposed to innovative technology. The rehabilitation technology team will continue to present at various conferences throughout the year. Conferences they will attend and present at include the Alabama Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference, the Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference, the Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology), and other conferences as appropriate. As part of this statewide team of rehabilitation technology specialists, the agency also employs an assistive technology specialist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing assistive technology and an assistive technology specialist specializing in blind and low vision technology. Having this team of rehabilitation technology specialists provides a resource for counselors to purchase and utilize technology for consumers throughout the rehabilitation process, including evaluation, IPE development and implementation, training, and employment.

The agency also has a state of the art Adaptive Driving Program. The agency has ten (10) vehicles equipped with comprehensive adaptive driving equipment. These vehicles are used by two (2) Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists and five (5) Certified Driving Instructors who provide adaptive drivers training to people disabilities statewide. The program is unique in that through a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, one of the agency's adaptive driving staff has been certified to give the driver's license road test to our consumers and confer upon them a driver's license. In partnership with the UAB Center for Low Vision the agency's Adaptive Driving Program is now providing comprehensive training in bioptic driving. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that utilizes both the individual's general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the individual's far vision. This has been a very

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successful partnership and an avenue of independence for many individuals served by the agency.

A number of agency staff attended the annual Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference at Auburn University as well as the annual Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology) at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind.

(3) The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

The agency has made significant efforts over the past four years to identify and work with the most significantly disabled. The agency developed an instrument to determine who are the most significantly disabled of applicants for services. This is known as the Functional Limitation Priority Assessment tool (FLPA). During the eligibility determination process VR Counselors answer specific questions about various limitations that consumer has and then a score is derived which will indicate if a consumer is most significantly disabled, significantly disabled, or disabled.

The agency has developed and continues to improve a system of business intelligence dashboards that provide a graphic view of caseload data for the VR Counselors and Field Supervisors. The VR Counselors and VR Field Supervisors can review this data to determine the number of most significantly disabled individuals being served and successfully rehabilitated. These dashboards are also use to monitor demographic information and this information can in turn be used to address unserved and underserved populations to include minorities and people with the most significant disabilities.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve the emerging Hispanic population in Alabama. Census data shows the Hispanic population in Alabama has grown by 144% since the 2000 Census. The agency has established an account with language Line Solutions to provide interpreting on a real time basis so staff can converse with non-English speaking consumers and minimize any language barriers. The agency will contact various agencies serving Hispanics throughout the state, explain agency services, provide referral materials, and contact information. We will also maintain data on the number of Hispanics served to monitor progress on this issue.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve American Indians residing in the state through partnerships with other service provider, the State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission, and tribal governments.

The agency will provide a wide range of services to the deaf population. First, the agency will continue its practice of serving consumers who are deaf through specialized rehabilitation counselors who have sign language skills. These counselors are familiar with the needs of the deaf and are involved in the deaf community that allow them to relate very well to our deaf population. The agency will continue its use of a network of staff interpreters throughout the state. These interpreters will assist deaf consumers in

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obtaining various types of services, particularly services from employers. The interpreters are able to establish a link between the employers and consumers who are deaf that are recently hired. We will continue to work with a network of deaf support specialists. These specialists assist deaf consumers in various aspects of the rehabilitation process and in getting acclimated to a new employment situation.

The agency will continue to conduct its annual training conference for counselors serving the deaf. A unique aspect of this conference is that students from the Alabama School for the Deaf come to the conference to spend time with the rehabilitation counselors. This interaction is very effective in forging a working alliance between the counselor and consumers who are at the Alabama School for the Deaf.

The agency will continue its active involvement in the One-Stop Career Center system involving deaf consumers. The agency has established a Video Interpreting Network so that when a consumer who is deaf comes through the career center an interpreter will be available.

Troy University, in Troy, Alabama in partnership with ADRS, the Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, has established an interpreter for the deaf training program. The agency is establishing internships for these students within the agency. This will increase the supply of interpreters and eventually mean more support for deaf consumers. In conjunction with this, the agency is attempting to establish a "professional trainee" position. These students would occupy these positions for one year, then transition into employment with the agency.

The agency will continue its activities through the interagency agreement that has been established with higher education institutions throughout the state. This agreement delineates the specific responsibilities of the agency and that of each institution of higher education for individuals who are deaf.

The agency will utilize the Deaf Advisory Committee to help shape ADRS policy in terms of service provision to the deaf community. The Committee also serves as an advocate to legislators and other state officials and is a subcommittee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

College prep for the deaf will be conducted at four campuses: Troy University, Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, and the University of Alabama.

The agency maintains an excellent service delivery system to consumers who are blind or visually impaired. A network of rehabilitation counselors for the blind, technology specialists, vision rehabilitation assistants, rehabilitation teachers, and orientation and mobility specialists provide these services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Additionally, there is a state office specialist who assists with the coordination of blind services. The agency provides a wide range of services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

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In partnership with the agency and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf & Blind an annual Technology symposium is conducted in the state on an annual basis that provides staff serving the blind and visually impaired consumers the opportunity to learn about a wide range of technology related to improving access for individuals who are blind or low vision.

Our consumers who are in high school and college successfully will participate in the 2015 Summer Work Experience. This program continues to offer young adults who are blind, or have low vision, the opportunity to work for six weeks, 40 hours a week, earning minimum wage. The participant's salaries are paid out of the VR Counselors case service budgets. The Summer Work Experience program provides an opportunity for a real work experience. ADRS has partnered with Central Alabama Community College and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind to offer a comprehensive approach in providing a support system to students that have a visual or hearing loss that are interested in attending college. This Dual Enrollment Program involves the campuses of the Alabama School for the Deaf, the Alabama School for the Blind and the EH Gentry Rehabilitation Facility for individuals that are blind and deaf as well as the various campuses under the community college program. Central Alabama Community College offers dual enrollment to visually impaired and hearing-impaired high school students and graduates needing assistance to be successful in college.

The agency will increase its services to disabled veterans as an underserved disability group. The agency is participating on a Governor's task force, the Alabama Veterans Network (AlaVetNet), to improve services to disabled veterans. The task force has brought together a wide variety of agencies that have services to offer veterans, including those with disabilities. The agency will continue to foster our relationships with the rehabilitation counselors employed by the Veterans Administration in an effort to make contact with disabled veterans. The agency counselors will receive referrals on veterans and initiate the vocational rehabilitation process to assist them with entering into employment. The agency will maintain a state office position related to serving veterans, some of the duties of which will include the oversight of veteran referrals and the monitoring of their progress through the VR process. The agency receives referrals from an organization in Huntsville, Alabama known as Still Serving Veterans. This organization assists veterans in returning to civilian life. The agency has completed an interagency agreement and will work cooperatively in processing referrals to assist veterans who may need employment services. The agency completed an interagency agreement with the Veterans Administration in Montgomery, Alabama to formalize the referral process referenced above. That agreement is still in effect.

The agency has an active program in serving individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a staff person who oversees various grants related to traumatic brain injury. The agency has a task force related to brain injury. It includes members of various social service organizations who may have contact with individuals who have traumatic brain injury. This organization meets on a quarterly basis for the exchange of information which will benefit services to individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a network of TBI care coordinators located strategically throughout the state. The role of

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the care coordinator is to receive the initial referral of someone with a brain injury, then assist the individual and family in accessing the state's network of services for persons with TBI. This includes services of the agency and services of other agencies. Alabama has two specialty caseloads in Mobile and Birmingham dedicated to serving individuals with TBI. These two counselors also serve as a resource to other counselors in the state who may receive a TBI referral.

Over the past three years 44.6% of the consumers served and 42% of the consumers closed rehabilitated in the agency were minorities. The population of the state is approximately 30% minority (26% African American & 4% other). Consequently, minority numbers are well represented in the agency's service delivery system. Nevertheless, outreach efforts will continue at the local level to be sure that minorities are aware of agency services and programs. In addition, the agency employs a diversity & recruitment coordinator to ensure that we have a diverse staff to meet the varied needs of the consumers served by the agency. This individual has completed a diversity plan that has been approved by the administration of the agency. This plan indicates the strategies to hire minority staff to work within the agency. The agency conducted diversity training for all agency staff. This training addressed the needs of diverse consumers the agency serves. Another effort of outreach to minorities is continuation of a grant that the agency has from the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). DHR requested agency assistance in providing placement services for hard to place individuals. The grant was given to the agency and individuals were hired utilizing those grant service funds to specifically work with this population. The agency is receiving referrals on many of these individuals who have a significant impediment to employment and may be in need of vocational rehabilitation services.

Services to Individuals in Supported Employment Programs: The agency recognizes a critical factor in a successful supported employment is long-term supports. The agency will continue its dialogue with state and private entities that can be involved in the provision of extended services for supported employment consumers.

The following are efforts the agency is making to overcome barriers and provide equitable access to and participation in supported employment services:

1. The agency has a state specialist overseeing the expansion and effectiveness of the agency's supported employment efforts. Two additional specialists have been hired to assist with the growth and expansion of supported employment in Alabama in the last 2 years. This growth includes ten (10) project SEARCH sites, the expansion of the GATE Project, IPS SE for individuals with serious mental illness, and an additional Connections program for individuals with Autism. We are currently collaborating with the State Department of Education and training rehabilitation transition counselors on provision of services to students at an earlier age while in the secondary setting. This should increase participation of students with more significant disabilities and provide those services earlier. We currently have contracts with secondary education for students with most significant disabilities. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to

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develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community- based assessments before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition.

2. Training on Certificate Based Job Coach Training in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, and the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First), The Network on Employment continues. This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports.

3. The agency began four years ago with two Project SEARCH sites. We currently have ten (10) sites, and we expect this program to continue to grow. These sites provide real life internships embedded in businesses that lead to competitive integrated employment. We currently have over 100 participants in Project SEARCH.

4. ADRS continues to work cooperatively with Department of Mental Health to move consumers towards community-based employment from sheltered workshops. We continue to work collaboratively on *Employment First* endeavors. Many of the providers for ADMH that have traditionally supported day programs are either vendors with ADRS for SE or exploring becoming a vendor to move individuals to community based integrated employment. Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education have submitted a bill to the legislature in the Employment First collaborative initiative. The partners are also participating in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to work together to support the concept of employment first. Additionally they are working to identify barriers relating to provision of services to those who require additional supports and to expand capacity within providers.

5. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for supported employment services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. Supported employment providers will be active in the local high schools to

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present information regarding their programs to parents, students, and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit school in order to facilitate a seamless transition from school to employment.

6. Services to Individuals with Autism: Autism is an emerging disability with increasing numbers requesting services from the public rehabilitation program. This holds true for Alabama. Staff has participated in several training programs during the current fiscal year related to autism. It is expected this will continue in FY 2016. Also, a staff member has been in the state office has job duties to develop and enhance the agency's autism program. The agency will to provide consultation to supported employment projects and CRPs who need technical assistance and support in serving this expanding population. This effort is intended to build capacity within our existing provider network. We have identified Triumph, Inc., a successful supported employment provider for individuals with autism, to serve as the consulting organization. Triumph continues as a vendor to provide supported employment services. Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility hosts a Connections programs for students, youths, and young adults with Autism. Last year we expanded this program to the Montgomery area. They receive support from LCARA an advocacy group in the Lee County area. We also assisted Auburn University in a grant application to try and get research to make Connections an evidence-based program. We are currently working to expand this program to several additional areas of the state in the next year. This year-long social skills training takes place in the classroom, but then is applied in real world settings in the community where classroom skills taught are then utilized. Nearing completion of the program the participants are referred to community- based rehabilitation programs for employment.

(4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

ADRS continues to collaborate and coordinate transition services with the LEAs. A Menu of Services was developed to assist the LEA and Transition Counselor when discussing VR services that are available to students with disabilities. ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs:

(1) Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training) - Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.

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(2) Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.

(3) Jointly-Funded Job Coach - ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements.

(4) Vocational Assessments – ADRS transition counselors will expand the delivery of vocational assessments to students with disabilities earlier in the transition planning process to assist with identify the student's interests, abilities, aptitude, and values.

(5) Best Practices – ADRS Transition Counselors developed a guide for best practice as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age in the secondary education setting who are eligible for, or potentially eligible for, VR services.

(5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

As the agency continues on the path of serving the more significantly disabled, there may be the need to enhance the assessment and evaluation capability of CRPs. Three potential areas of Community Rehabilitation Program improvement were noted: (1) increased availability of comprehensive learning disability evaluations, (2) services to individuals with autism, and (3) increased emphasis on social skills training.

One strategy to expand learning disability evaluations will be to attempt to utilize existing learning disability projects to train other Community Rehabilitation Program staff. The sharing of knowledge and practices will assist the agency in expanding this service. The agency will invite CRP staff to specific trainings in order to improve and elevate skills of CRP employees in areas such as autism and social skills training.

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The Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Section, that previously led the four-person agency CRC section retired and was not replaced. The CRP and Supported Employment Specialist of the CRP section were placed directly under the Assistant Commissioner for VR General Services. This creates a closer alignment between these two sections and should enhance services.

(6)Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

All performance indicators were met in FY 2015 with the exception of 1.5, the average hourly wage. Improvement strategies for performance indicator 1.5 are described below:

1. The agency has revamped and updated the Retaining A Valued Employee (RAVE) program. RAVE is a service to employers to assist them in procuring rehabilitation services needed to retain an employee who is having difficulties on the job due to disability. It results in referrals of long standing employees needing rehabilitation services who are receiving higher wages due to time on the job. Successful rehabilitation of these referrals results in a higher average wage for the agency and benefits the consumer and employer.

2. The agency has and will continue to establish relationships with federal contractors that hopefully will result in hiring of our consumers. This relationship combined with the President establishing $10.10 as minimum wage for those employed by federal contractors sets the stage for wage increases and moving the agency closer to achieving Indicator 1.5. The agency's coordinator of employer development will provide VR Field Supervisors and VR Counselors monthly information on federal employment opportunities paying higher wages. Also, Business Relations Consultants will be asked to carefully search for higher paying jobs as they contact employers. We will train VR Counselors on means of obtaining useful labor market information. The agency will consult with neighboring states attaining this indicator to investigate what strategies they are employing. There will be a continuous effort to get counselors to discuss training with consumers, since training can lead to higher paying jobs.

3. The agency will continue participation in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Employment Team (NET), and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). The agency employment development coordinator is very active nationally and regionally in this initiative.

4. The agency continues to assist consumers with gaining the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs through collaboration with technical schools, universities, and partnerships with agencies such as AIDT. AIDT, an independent

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agency under the supervision and oversight of the Secretary of Commerce, encourages economic development through job-specific training. Training services are offered in many areas, at no cost, to new and expanding businesses throughout the State. ADRS along with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind started a partnership with AIDT in FY 2015 to expand training and in-demand employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired.

(7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The agency maintains a very productive relationship with the Workforce Development System of Alabama. First, the Commissioner of the agency sits on the Statewide Workforce Development Board. Consequently, the agency has a voice at the table to advocate for the needs and issues of individuals with disabilities. The agency has counselors stationed on a permanent basis in One-Stop Career Centers in several of the larger cities in the state. These staff members receive referrals and also provide advice and information to other staff in the One-Stop Career Centers on how to serve individuals with disabilities. The agency will have numerous staff participate in the state Workforce Conference, when conducted, involving all partners and other service providers related to the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The agency sits on the planning council of this conference so that various breakout sessions related to the needs of individuals with disabilities are included on the agenda. The agency is currently working in collaboration with the Career Centers and Workforce Development Partners on assessing all of the Career Centers in the state for accessibility. Recommendations will be made by the agency and the Workforce Development Core Partners will work together to ensure that the Career Centers continue to be accessible for all individuals with disabilities. Also, as mentioned previously, the agency has established a Video Interpreting Network. Should a deaf individual come into the local One-Stop Career Center, a video interpreting situation can be set up for that individual to be served.

(8)How the agency's strategies will be used to:
(A)achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
(B)support innovation and expansion activities; and
(C)overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)).

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(A)Achieving Goals and Priorities

Goal 1. Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches $10.60.

The agency's coordinator of employer development will provide VR Field Supervisors and VR Counselors monthly information on federal employment opportunities paying higher wages. Also, Business Relations Consultants will be asked to carefully search for higher paying jobs as they contact employers. We will train VR Counselors on means of obtaining useful labor market information. The agency will consult with neighboring states attaining this indicator to investigate what strategies they are employing. There will be a continuous effort to get counselors to discuss training with consumers, since training can lead to higher paying jobs.

The agency will continue participation in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Employment Team (NET), and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). The agency employment development coordinator is very active nationally and regionally in this initiative. Self-Employment Training for VR Staff: Self-employment is a viable employment option for some VR consumers. The agency conducted self-employment training for selected VR staff in 2006. There have been significant staff changes since that time. It is appropriate now to train new staff on possibilities presented by self-employment. A new state office specialist was hired in the summer of 2011. A significant portion of that person's duties will be related to self-employment. Outreach efforts will be made to locate and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Labor market information will be gathered and shared with counseling staff about projections for future career opportunities within the state. This will assist the counselors in directing consumers towards training that will lead towards prompt employment.

The agency will utilize its corps group of Business Relations Consultants to assist in identifying businesses that will provide internship (training) opportunities for consumers. Internships and on-the-job training opportunities are excellent methods to assist consumers in getting needed training, immediate employment, and also an increase in the average starting wage of the consumers of the agency.

Goal 2. Increase case service dollars expended for Supported Employment by 5%.

Efforts will be made to increase the number of Project SEARCH sites. We currently have ten (10) Project SEARCH sites and are working to increase these programs-including a Project SEARCH to serve students with sensory impairments. We hope to have that site developed over the next two (2) years.

We are looking at expansion in service provision to those with Autism Spectrum Disorders by expanding our connections program to individuals in secondary school to

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increase the employment rate, the retention rate, and the likelihood that these individuals will have successful postsecondary outcomes.

We anticipate serving more individuals typically served in day habilitation and sheltered workshop settings as we work with the ***Employment First*** team to move individuals from these settings to community-based integrated employment.

ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement transition initiatives; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers earlier in the secondary settings. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit schools, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services. We will also be working to increase access to summer work experiences that include paid work in their communities.

Collaborative efforts will continue with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is to create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers that will be referred for community based integrated employment, and be able to utilize the waiver for long-term support.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Auburn University Center for Disability Research and Service were awarded a grant from Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for implementation of Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support model for Supported Employment. The Department of Veterans Affairs in Alabama is also included in the grant. This evidence-based program provides individualized placement and support for adults with serious mental illnesses as an essential and vital part of their recovery. IPS is currently underway in Alabama and will increase service provision to this underserved population.

Efforts will be made to increase the number of Project SEARCH sites.

We anticipate adding additional Supported Employment vendors next year as we try and expand services to those clients previously served in sheltered workshops who will be moving to community-based employment.

ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative, ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit schools, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services.

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Collaborative efforts will continue with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is to create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers who will be referred for community-based integrated employment, and who will be able to utilize the waiver for long-term support.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Auburn University Center for Disability Research and Service recently submitted a grant proposal to Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for implementation of the Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support model for Supported Employment in Alabama. Partners in the grant include Dartmouth University and the Department of Veterans Affairs in Alabama. This evidence-based program provides individualized placement and support for adults with serious mental illnesses as an essential and vital part of their recovery.

Goal 3. Expend 15% of the State's Federal allotment for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).

- Project SEARCH**:** Is a one-year transition program for students with disabilities in their final year of school. The program takes place in a business – typically a hospital – where there is total immersion in the workplace. Project SEARCH facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three internships to explore a variety of career paths. Competitive employment is the goal of Project SEARCH. There are currently 10 sites in Alabama and we will continue to work to add more sites to this program.
- Vocational evaluations**:** These evaluations help students identify their interests, abilities, aptitude, and values. Students begin to explore identified areas in terms of the anticipated growth of the targeted occupation; wages; employment opportunities; labor market in their areas; educational requirements; and knowledge, skills, and training required. The physical demands of the jobs selected are also identified. Vocational evaluations are purchased through Community Rehabilitation programs. ADRS plans to see an increase in the number of vocational evaluations administered to students with disabilities as all transition counselors have been encouraged to provide this service earlier in the transition process to assist students in setting transition/employment goals.
- Smart Work Ethics (SWE): – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This

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curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.

- Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training): Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.
- Jointly-Funded Job Coach: - ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS and LEA pay half). The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements. ADRS is currently collaborating with the Alabama State Department of Education (Special Education and Career and Technical Education) to expand these contracts.
- Connections: Connect the World Around Us: Connections focuses on teaching social skills within the classroom and real-world situations for students transitioning out of high school. This program is offered in the evening during the school year to high schools students and young adults who intend to pursue employment. ADRS is currently offering this program in two sites but is working to expand this program to locations across our state.
- Supported Employment: Supported Employment is a customer-driven approach that assesses individuals with the most-significant disabilities and assists eligible individuals in obtaining appropriate employment. Supported employment (SE) is offered by Vocational Rehabilitation Service in collaboration with several community rehabilitation partners throughout the state.
  SE uses Milestones to Employment (MTE) in connecting employers with valuable employees who care about their job.
- Youth Leadership Forum YLD): YLF provides students with disabilities the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and to gain knowledge and information regarding self-esteem, self-advocacy, career choice, independent living, and assistive technology.
- Counselor Salary and Benefits: ADRS will expend the majority of the required 15% federal allotment through services provided for students with disabilities. However, a portion of the transition counselor's salary/benefits will be used based on the percentage of time he/she spent providing pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. This time is captured by using the State of Alabama eStart program.

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Goal 4. Meet a minimum of four times per year with workforce development partners in order to increase interagency coordination and collaboration, improve services for all consumers, and increase outreach efforts to underserved populations.

ADRS has state office staff who attend regular meetings with other workforce development agencies in order to collaborate regarding services and ensure people with disabilities have representation in the state's workforce development planning.

Goal 5. Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.

The assessment of underserved populations carried out in the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment revealed that ADRS was adequately meeting its responsibilities in serving traditionally underserved persons of various types of disabilities and the most significantly disabled. However, ADRS continues to strive to improve service delivery to persons with the most significant disabilities, as well as youth, and persons with physical, cognitive, mental, and sensory disabilities. The only major area that specifically needs to be addressed beyond these ongoing efforts is that of minority population. In Alabama the traditional minority of Black or African American person is being served at a much higher percentage than the percentage in the general population. Other than White and Black or African American, there are very small populations of other racial minorities. However, the ethnic group of Hispanic has grown significantly and continues to grow, not only in Alabama, but nationally. The number and percentage of persons of Hispanic descent who are served by ADRS is extremely low. The percentage of persons served in FY15 identified as Hispanic was less than 1% of the total served, whereas the state Hispanic population is over 4%. Therefore, the agency recognizes the need to identify and serve people of Hispanic descent. The agency has established an account with Language Line Solutions to provide interpreting on a real time basis so staff can converse with non-English speaking consumers and minimize any language barriers. ADRS has a relationship with a company that provides translation services for the production of brochures and forms. The agency will contact various agencies serving Hispanics throughout the state, explain agency services, provide referral materials, and contact information. We will also maintain data on the number of Hispanics served to monitor progress on this issue.

Goal 6. Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of Assistive Technology in order to better meet the individual needs of consumers.

The agency has multiple strategies to provide access to technology services and devices on a statewide Basis during all phases of the rehabilitation process. To start the agency has a statewide network of degreed and qualified rehabilitation technology specialists. The team members are located strategically throughout the state so all staff have access to their expertise. This team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss among themselves, and with partner agency, staff various advances and new products in rehabilitation

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technology. These meetings provide vendors the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative pieces of technology to demonstrate to the team. This team will act as a training agent for other agency rehabilitation staff throughout the state. Team members will attend unit meetings throughout the state to discuss and demonstrate technology to frontline counseling staff. The team members will also continue to attend national conferences, such as the Assistive Technology Industries Association (ATIA) conference, where they will be exposed to innovative technology. The rehabilitation technology team will continue to present at various conferences throughout the year. Conferences they will attend and present at include the Alabama Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference, the Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference, the Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology), and other conferences as appropriate. As part of this statewide team of rehabilitation technology specialists, the agency also employs an assistive technology specialist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing assistive technology and an assistive technology specialist specializing in blind and low vision technology. Having this team of rehabilitation technology specialists provides a resource for counselors to purchase and utilize technology for consumers throughout the rehabilitation process, including evaluation, IPE development and implementation, training, and employment.

The agency also has a state of the art Adaptive Driving Program. The agency has ten (10) vehicles equipped with comprehensive adaptive driving equipment. These vehicles are used by two Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists and five Certified Driving Instructors who provide adaptive drivers training to people disabilities statewide. The program is unique in that through a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, one of the agency's adaptive driving staff has been certified to give the driver's license road test to our consumers and confer upon them a driver's license. In partnership with the UAB Center for Low Vision the agency's Adaptive Driving Program is now providing comprehensive training in bioptic driving. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that utilizes both the individual's general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the individual's far vision. This has been a very successful partnership and an avenue of independence for many individuals served by the agency.

A number of agency staff attended the annual Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference at Auburn University as well as the annual Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology) at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind.

(B)Support Innovation and Expansion Activities
ADRS will utilize consumer feedback to identify areas of needed improvement that will be used to support innovative change and expansion.

(C)Overcome identified barriers related to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state VR service program and the state supported employment services program.

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ADRS has committed additional staff to address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities in order to improve access to services. Additional staff have been added to expand and improve supported employment services for this population.

(P) Evaluation And Reports Of Progress: VR And Supported Employment Goals

Describe:
(1) An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
(A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
(2) An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
(A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.
(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

1(A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Goal 1 - The agency will increase by 20% the placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

ADRS closed 517 consumers with the most significant disabilities as rehabilitated in FY 2014. In FY 2015 the agency closed as rehabilitated 687 MSD consumers. This is an increase of 32%. Therefore, the agency significantly exceeded the goal of 20%. The strategy to accomplish this goal was a deliberate and methodical expansion of the service delivery system geared specifically at those persons with the most significant disabilities. ADRS expanded the number of supported employment providers and Project Search programs to meet the needs of this targeted population of consumers. Although not in an order of selection, ADRS management has made a commitment to utilizing our resources of staff, case service dollars and community partners to enable this population of consumers to enter and maintain competitive employment.

Goal 2- The agency will increase wages of consumers successfully rehabilitated to a level that will comply with RSA Indicator 1.5.

The average wages calculated for Indicator 1.5 in FY 2014 was $10.08 per hour. The wages calculated for FY 2015 average was $10.37. This constitutes a 3% increase in wages. However, the goal for FY 2015 was $10.54. ADRS outcomes were less than 2%

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short of the goal. This goal was not reached but progress was made in a positive direction. However, the Blind/Deaf section of the ADRS Combined Agency exceeded the standard of $10.54 by reaching an average wage of $13.87.

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Several factors impeded achievement of this goal. Due to the high unemployment rate and slow economy experienced over the past seven years, Alabama has lagged behind other states in available employment and wage growth. Entry-level wages for new workers have not grown while the average wages for those experienced workers in the work force have made minor gains. Therefore, many ADRS consumers who are entering the workforce for the first time are subject to these lower wages, which affects performance on Indicator 1.5.

(2) An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

(A)Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Goal Three: The agency will increase by 10% case service funds spent on consumers receiving supported employment services and increase by 10% the number of consumers participating in supported employment.

This goal was accomplished. The increase in those consumers receiving an assessment or service with supported employment was over 15% from 2014 to 2015. There was over a 19% increase in successful closures of consumers in supported employment. In terms of expenditures we also met our goal by increasing expenditures by over 10% for individuals receiving supported employment and by adding an additional 3 contracts for additional Project SEARCH sites.

Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals- The goal was to expand supported employment program including long term supports.

Many strategies were used to accomplish this above goals including: (1) concerted efforts by counselors who work with consumers with more significant disabilities, (2) an increased participation in projects like SEARCH and GATE, IPS Supported Employment, and,(3) working with students with more significant disabilities earlier in secondary education. .

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Although we accomplished our goals we still have the challenge in our state of individuals on the waiting list for waiver services that will require these services to be successful in employment. We have made strides, but it is still a challenge. Provider

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transformation is still a challenge for the ***Employment First*** effort. Difficulties exist in finding the resources to transform existing Medicaid funded day habilitation programs. We are receiving technical assistance to move forward with this effort.

(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

The agency achieved all indicators with the exception of Indicator 1.5, Average wage. Factors that negatively impacted the achievement of Indicator 1.5 include the following:

1.) ADRS serves a large number of transition cases that typically go to work at entry level wages. The data support this conclusion as 53.7% of all active cases were between ages 14-24 at application and 48.6% of all FY 15 successful closures fall in this age group at application. As with the general population of persons without disabilities, this age group typically goes to work at entry level wages and must obtain work experience or increased education or credentials in order to demand higher wages. The Blind/Deaf section easily exceeded the Indicator 1.5 wage threshold due to the fact that this population often enters into and completes higher education or vocational training in order to overcome their barriers to employment. The success rate with this population is evidence that vocational and or occupational training does result in improved wage outcomes.
2.) The economy of Alabama has been severely limited by the national economic crisis over the past seven years. Although 2015 showed some relief in the unemployment rate, wages in Alabama and nationally have remained stagnant. Therefore, increases in wages to meet the state's wage standard have not risen, especially for the entry level worker as described above.
3.) Alabama has in the past two decades invested heavily in attracting automotive manufacturing companies. In fact, Alabama is home to three manufacturing plants and their suppliers. This bumps up the state's average wage, which is a factor in calculating this indicator. Also, in Alabama the largest single employer is the University of Alabama in Birmingham medical center and its associated hospitals, clinics, and school. These highly paid professions serve to increase the average wage which is not readily available to person without the credentials to obtain the types of jobs offered in this work setting.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds were used to support activities of the State Rehabilitation Council.

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q) Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, And Extent Of Supported Employment Services

Include the following:

(1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

(2) The timing of transition to extended services

(1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) remains committed to the provision of quality services to individuals with the most significant disabilities through the provision of supported employment services. ADRS provides supported employment services through a collaborative/partnership effort with 38 service providers statewide in FY 2015. These providers cover all counties in the state. These providers offer services to individuals with a variety of significant disabilities without restrictions regarding disability type. The SE providers are distributed throughout the state in order to ensure maximum availability to those in need of supported employment to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment or advancement in employment. Service providers receive funds for the provision of supported employment through an outcome based payment system. Providers must submit evidence that each milestone has been achieved. Some milestones include consumer and employer satisfaction surveys. Consumer satisfaction is designed to reflect satisfaction with the job or identify any consumer concerns or issues. The employer satisfaction survey is designed to reflect the consumer's job performance, stability and training needs. Supported employment funds are distributed to each provider agency based on the milestone achieved by each individual served. Job skills training is provided to individuals on site at the work setting. Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible and is based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. In FY 2014 the SE program:

- 1,023 consumers were served in Supported Employment across the state.

- In FY 2014, 367 consumers were closed successfully employed. These individuals averaged just over 22 hours per week and earned an average of $7.82 per hour. When the consumers are stable in their employment and fully acclimated to their jobs extended services are provided. ADRS continues to seek methods to increase participation of individuals with all types of disabilities in supported employment programs. Initiatives for improving transition services for students with more significant disabilities are being implemented. This includes serving students earlier in their secondary education, procuring additional job coaches to support competitive integrated employment for students with more significant needs, and expansion of Project SEARCH across the state. We will

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continue to work with career and technical education to develop innovative programs that address internship and apprentice opportunities as well as certifications in employment areas, especially in high demand areas for our state. We will continue to work with Workforce development to identify and provide services to youth in the area, especially underserved youth and those with more significant disabilities. All these identified entities are a part of our Employment First efforts in Alabama.

- Efforts continued to collaborate closely with Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First)-The Network on Employment, Alabama Department of Mental Health, and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), to provide training to staff, transition job coaches, and Milestone's employees.

ADRS continues to expand services within the state to increase opportunities for individuals to access to supported employment services. All counties in Alabama all have trained supported employment providers to serve consumers in their area. Many of our community rehabilitation programs provided paid summer work experiences with employers in their local areas. Two additional staff members have been hired as Rehabilitation Specialists for Supported Employment to assist the counselors and providers with quality supported employment and to provide training as needed to both groups. The addition of this additional staff will assure that we are providing quality services to students, youths, and adults requiring supported employment. Regional refresher training on Discovery was recently completed. This will be utilized in the secondary school setting to assure better job matches, and more opportunities for internships and training to consumers requiring SE. The following initiatives have been implemented:

- Participated in the Boot Camp for new counselors that included information on Supported Employment, Milestones, Discovery and Project SEARCH for transition students.

- In collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, completed trainings with local mental health service providers and ADRS staff on moving consumers from facility based services to community based, competitive employment. This training helped participants gain a better understanding of application and eligibility process, services each agency offers, Medicaid waivers, SS implications, and work incentives. Since this training was first initiated, we have contracted with four mental health providers offering SE services. We continue to work closely with ADMH on Employment First. We are currently working on contracting with them for additional benefits planners to help support individuals who are seeking competitive, integrated employment.

- Collaborated with Alabama Association of Persons Supporting Employment First (AL-APSE) and Alabama Department of Mental Health to offer job coach training to new job coaches, job developers, school job coaches, mental health job

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coaches and case managers. This training is conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University and offered twice a year. For the last two years Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind sent local and regional staff personnel who serve those with sensory impairments.

- Expanded the GATE Project. GATE was designed to assist consumers in sheltered work or day habilitation who wish to do so move into real jobs in industry in the community. It is a partnership with our agency, the Department of Mental Health and local employers. This program is embedded in the workplace and gives the opportunity for those who will require extra time and coaching to learn a job. This program began with one provider and one employer in Northwest Alabama and we currently have 5 GATE Projects at this time. This unique program braids funds from the two agencies to secure the supports and training needed.

- Alabama currently has 10 Project SEARCH sites. This model, founded by Cincinnati's Children Hospital is an innovative, transition/work model for students with most significant disabilities. Two employment sites, utilizing two school systems, were piloted in August 2012, and the program has grown to 10 sites since that time. This collaborative effort involves the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health, and the State Department of Education, the Developmental Disabilities Counsel, ten local school systems and ten employers. Other school systems have expressed an interest in having this program and we expect to continue our expansion. We have a meeting with representatives for the Alabama Institute for the deaf and blind to discuss the possibility of a Project SEACH in their area.

- Alabama was one of seven states awarded a SAMHSA grant to provide evidence-based IPS Supported Employment at Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model. This evidence-based practice will be implemented at Chilton Shelby Mental Health (a very rural area) and at Altapointe Mental Health in Mobile (an urban area). We are currently working on a plan for sustainability and expansion.

- Connections is designed for students and youth who have social skills deficits, especially those with Autism. The program runs the entire school year and not only teaches social skill sin the classroom, it moves those skills into real world settings in the community to practice them. This year long social skills acquisition program is then followed by supported employment services. This program, offered by lakeshore in Birmingham, has been very successful, and was replicated last year in central Alabama. ADRS, lakeshore, and Auburn University submitted a grant earlier this year to research both programs. We are also currently working on expanding this program to several different areas throughout the state.

- The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provides a Supported Employment Administrator and two Supported Employment Specialists to

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monitor supported employment services and provide training and technical assistance. Each supported employment provider operates under a milestone/outcome-based program to ensure quality outcomes and appropriate employment options based on individual choice. Consumers are offered the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments to facilitate an informed decision regarding their employment goal. Job development is provided on an individual basis to locate employment based on the consumer's interests, skills, limitations and community living needs. Job coaching is also provided at the work site to ensure that the individual has the necessary training, skills and supports to work. Once the consumer is stable in the workplace, extended services are planned and implemented to protect the long-term success of the job. Consumer and employer satisfaction regarding the services provided are measured at the time of employment and again before case closure. Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These extended supports are provided at the completion of stabilization, during the successful rehabilitation Milestone and beyond ADRS case closure.

(2)The timing of transition to extended services.

The plan for Supported Employment specifies the services under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Extended services may include natural supports. If it is not possible to identify the source of extended support when the individuals plan for employment is developed, the counselor must describe the basis for the conclusion that there is a reasonable expectation that sources for extended support services will become available. Extended support services in Alabama, come from a variety of sources. These sources include the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support Project Search, grant funding, private funding, fund raisers and are included in contractual agreements with community rehabilitation providers who have supported employment programs. The plan specifies the services under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Services for SE often include service provision by other state or federal services. Services provided under an individualized plan are coordinated with other services provided under other individualized plans established for the individual. Vocational Rehabilitation presents at transition training on coordinating to match IEP's with IPE's. Coordinating with ADMH to assure that long term support efforts covered under the Medicaid waiver is part of the consumers IPE.

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (hereinafter referred to as "ADRS") is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA,[1] and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the ADRS agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[2], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[3], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the ADRS agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The ADRS has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The Commissioner of ADRS has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

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8.	The Commissioner of the ADRS has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services.
9.	ADRS, the agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	**Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	**Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement*:*** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	**Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*:*** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.. (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

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	(B) (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60. (d) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No) No (e) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No) No (f) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. Yes (g) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act . (i) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (l) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

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SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (SNAP E &T) and WORK PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 6(d)(4) and 6 6(o) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008

(OMB Control Number: 0584-0083)

(a) General Requirements: The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

(1) The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;

Name of Component: Job Search
Description of Component: Job Search is composed of several services offered through the Career Centers and is available to all ABAWDs who volunteer to participate in the offered component. All ABAWDs will not need all of the available services but will be assessed for determination of the services to most benefit the ABAWD in the job search process. Some of the services are provided in a group setting, while some are provided in individual interviews with Career Center staff.

The services offered under Job Search, and a description of each is as follows:

a. Career Center Orientation: Interview or meeting to orient client to Career Center services and provide information about the availability of, access to, and participation in services. May include tour of Resource Room, demonstration of Alabama Job Link (AJL), demonstration of self-assessment software and availability of Labor Market Information. Labor market information is important to recipients in the Job Search process, as it provides information about occupational demand, high wage– high demand jobs, education/skills required, wage data, etc. for the state and by geographic region.

b. Job Search**:** Interview to develop a plan for the client's job search. Includes assessment of client's work history, education, interests, supportive service needs, barriers to employment, and eligibility for services. Plan includes steps to achieve employment objective. Information on available jobs can be found on the ADoL Job Link system accessible in the Career Centers.

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c. Resume Preparation: Client is provided instruction on the content and format of resumes and cover letters and provided assistance in the development of both documents.

d. Job Shop: Short seminars to provide clients with information to improve their job-search knowledge and skills. Subjects will include: self-assessment, employment applications, resumes, employment interviews, and job search methods.

e. Referral for Training: Interviewer refers a client to educational or training services to develop competency in basic literacy skills or job skills in order to secure employment.

f. Individual Employment Plan: Interview with client who is determined not-job-ready to develop a plan to improve employability by addressing identified barriers to employment. Planning may include career exploration, education, training and/or job search activities.

g. Case Management: Interview to assist client's in resolving issues related to occupational choice, change or adjustment to include barriers to employment such as lack of educational achievement and/or basic skills proficiency, lacking or erratic employment history, family problems, or other factors precluding full employment

h. Referral for Support Services Referral for services not available from the one-stop partners to include food, shelter, health, transportation, veterans agencies, and financial counseling and services.

Geographic Areas Covered: All 10 counties

Anticipated Number of Work Registrants Who Will Begin the Component: 13,980

Targeted Population: All ABAWDs

Level of Participant Effort, or Number of Hours of Participation in the Component: average of 1.8 hours for staff time. Recipient time is dependent on individual effort and services utilized.

Duration: Between 1.4 and 3.8 hours of staff time, plus additional time recipient will spend on activities such as resume preparation and job search. Time spent by the recipient is estimated at approximately 16-20 hours.

Organizational Responsibilities: ADoL-ES staff will provide this service

Per Participant Cost of Participant Reimbursement: $0

Total Cost of the Component and Cost per Participant: The contractual cost of this component is $950,236, plus state agency staff and other costs of $203,481 and overall state agency E&T operational costs of $40,000, for an annual total of $1,193,717. This equates to an estimate of $85.38 per participant**.** Revisions will be made when better estimates of actual participants are obtained.

(2) An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;

OPERATING BUDGET – FISCAL YEAR 2016

Components	State Agency Costs		Contractual Costs	Participant Reimbursement (State plus Federal 50/50)		State Agency Cost for Dependent Care Services	TOTAL
	Salary & Benefits	Other Costs		Dependent Care	Transportation & Other Costs		
JOB Search	198,481	5,000	950,236		481,476		1,635,193
CC Orientation							
Labor Market Information							
Resume Preparation							
Job Shop							
Referral to Training							
Individual Employment Plan							
Case Management							
Referral to Support Services							
Total Component Costs							**1,635,193**
Overall State Agency E&T Operational Costs							**40,000**
Total State E&T Costs							**1,675,193**

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(3) The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;

An ABAWD waiver exists for the following counties, Barbour, Clarke, Choctaw, Conecuh, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox**.** The estimated individuals in these counties is 5,000, and the wavier is good through December 31,2016.

(4) The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;

All participants will be voluntary, and we are focusing in on ABAWDS.

(5) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

13,980 volunteers

(6) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;

Ten (10) counties are covered in the plan with additional plans to add services in other counties as the year progresses.

(7) The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

Electronic

(8) The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS–583;

Manual submission

(9) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i);

Alabama has and automated system that provides a non-duplicated count.

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(10) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs.

Alabama's participants are voluntary; noncompliance is not an issue.

(11) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;

Alabama contracts with DOL in ten (10) counties; formal interagency agreements are in place.

(12) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;

A letter has been sent to the Porch Creek tribal organization located Escambia County outlining our plans and asking for their input.

(13) If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and

Noncompliance is not an issue as participation is voluntary in Alabama.

(14) The payment rates for child care established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.

Child Care is not available in Alabama's E&T plan.

(15) The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.

The combined amount for Alabama is $481,476.

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(16) Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

Only transportation costs are reimbursed at $25.00 per year per participant

(b) Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)[5]: A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3-month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:

(1) Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;
(2) Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge;
(3) A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements;
(4) A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs;
(5) Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and
(6) Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement.

Alabama is not a pledge state

(c) Optional Workfare[6]: State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following:

(1) State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the Combined Plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan.
(2) If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses

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to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

Alabama does not operate an optional workfare program.

(d) Voluntary Workfare[7]: State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The amount of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.

Alabama does not operate a formal voluntary workfare program

(e) Comparable Workfare[8]: The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.

Alabama does not operate a comparable workfare program

(f) *Process[9]: The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.*

Alabama's SNAP E&T plan for FY 2016 is currently approved.

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(g) Plan Modifications[10]: If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.

Funding Disclaimer: *Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.*

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TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM (TANF)

(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(a) The State will conduct programs designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) to provide assistance and/or services to needy families with children through County Department of Human Resources located in the 67 counties in Alabama. Activities of these offices for programs 1 – 3 below include: accepting and processing applications for assistance; and as appropriate conducting reviews and redeterminations of eligibility, providing child support enforcement services, information and referral services, providing family intervention and preservation services and managing a program of work activities and requirements known as the JOBS Program. These programs are designed to end dependence on cash assistance and promote self-sufficiency. Special Projects may not necessarily be available on a statewide basis. Programs include:

1. Basic Assistance to Needy Families
    a. -Temporary Cash Assistance (limited to 5 years)
    b. -Work Program (included services to current and former recipients of cash assistance)
2. TANF Emergency Assistance
3. TANF (Direct) Child Welfare
4. Special Projects

(b) Requirements and Activities

The State will operate a welfare work program in compliance with Section 407 of Title IV-A of the Social Security Act and consistent with Alabama's approved Work Verification Plan. The program is known as the JOBS Program. All parents/stepparents, including teen parents, who are receiving assistance, are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. The assessment process includes screening for disability and language assistance needs. An Individual JOBS Participation (IJP) and Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) will be developed for these individuals. Individuals determined to be ready to engage in work will be immediately placed in work or work-related activities for up to 40 hours per week. After receipt of assistance for 24 months, all individuals not already participating in such activities will be required to engage in work activities, as defined in state policy.

(c) *Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act). Consistent with the required strategic elements discussed in section II (a)(2) herein, provide a specific analysis of how the State's workforce*

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development activities are addressing employment and training services for parents or caretakers receiving assistance.

The Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) is developed jointly by the FA grantee relative and the JOBS case manager. It outlines the responsibilities of the FA grantee in regards to the participation of all required family members and includes a copy of the Individual JOBS Participation (IJP) for each required family member. The IJP outlining work activities, supportive services and other family needs is developed jointly by the recipient and the JOBS case manager. Support services such as childcare, transportation, and work/participation expenses will be made available as needed to enable recipients to participate in work or work-related activities. Other services include information and referrals for domestic violence and substance abuse issues. The individual will receive reimbursement or payment of agreed upon expenses directly related to participation in such activities. Each recipient will be informed of the work requirements, what constitutes noncompliance, and the sanctions for non-compliance. If a recipient refuses or fails to cooperate with work requirements as set forth in his/her IJP, the family's benefits will be reduced or terminated as set forth in state policy unless good cause for the non-compliance, as defined in state policy, is established. No sanction for failure to work or participate in work-related activities will be imposed on any single custodial parent caring for a child under age 6 if the individual proves that s/he has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

Each non-deferred recipient will be placed in a work-related activity consistent with his/her IJP. Work activities may include:

- Subsidized/Unsubsidized employment
- On the job training
- Job Search
- Job Readiness Activities
- Community Employment Placement (work experience)
- Vocational education activities
- Job skills training
- Satisfactory attendance in high school or a course of study leading to a GED
- Education directly related to employment

For the duration of the recipient's involvement in work activities, the JOBS case manager will monitor component participation and provide assistance to participants with any problems or barriers.

Individuals who agree to treatment programs for drug, alcohol, or mental health reasons may be temporarily deferred from a work activity when the person is making a serious attempt to recover. Domestic violence victims will be deferred from a work activity when they are at risk of endangerment.

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Definitions:
Unsubsidized Employment: This is paid employment for either wages or salary where no part of the pay is subsidized by TANF or any other public programs.
Work Experience: In Alabama this activity is called Community Employment or CEMP. CEMP is a work activity, performed in return for welfare that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment. Placements are designed to help prepare the client to obtain unsubsidized employment by allowing him/her to develop a current work history and establish references for future employment seeking efforts as well as develop and improve marketable skills. Placements will be in both non-profit and for-profit businesses. Placement in for-profit businesses will have shorter time frames (maximum of three months) than placements in non-profit businesses (maximum of six months).
On-the-Job-Training: In this component a public or private employer hires the TANF client full-time where parts of the wages are subsidized, usually by a governmental entity such as Department of Labor. While employed in the OJT position, the client engages in productive work while receiving training in knowledge and skills essential for adequate job performance. The client is compensated at a rate comparable to that of other employees performing the same or similar jobs, but at no less than minimum wage.
Job Search and Job Readiness: **Job Search** is assigned in increments lasting no more than two weeks. The client is expected to complete a number of serious contacts with potential employers and must also register with the Employment Service. The daily number of required contacts is determined by the case manager based on the client's specific circumstances and the geographic area. The case manager will randomly contact employers turned in as job contacts to verify that an application was submitted and/or an interview was conducted. **Job Readiness** is an intensive, short-term component, consisting of formal classroom training designed to prepare the client for successfully seeking and maintaining employment. Activities focus on pre-employment preparation and are aimed at helping the client overcome barriers that might preclude employment. Typical activities include application completion, interview skills, ways to locate job openings, general workplace expectations, and the behaviors and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. This activity also includes substance abuse, mental health and rehabilitation counseling for clients who are otherwise employable.

Vocational Educational Training: This is organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training including a baccalaureate or advanced degree. These courses should provide individuals with technical skills and academic knowledge needed for success in current or emerging employment sectors. It also includes any formal instruction in a skill or trade traditionally referred to as job skills training, determined by the JOBS staff to be other than purely academic in nature, that prepares the client for a vocation. For example, technical programs designed to prepare a client for a specific occupation,

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including nursing, plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics, welding and barbering. The training is limited to education that leads to useful employment in a state recognized occupation. Training is available to clients through WIA, vocational/technical schools and some colleges and universities. Training includes courses for any state licenses, certificates, and/or degrees.

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment: This is training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. It includes training or education required as a prerequisite for employment or to advance or adapt to changing demands of current employment. Such training and education will be provided through educational and training organizations. This activity also includes all activities described above as vocational education and any four-year bachelor's or advanced degree programs at any State certified college or university.

Education Directly Related to Employment for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency: This is education related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer. It includes basic education and ESL, and where required as a prerequisite for employment, education leading to a GED or high school equivalency diploma in any educational program approved by the Alabama Department of Education.

Satisfactory School Attendance for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency: Individuals in this activity must be attending an educational facility with the goal of achieving a high school diploma or certificate of high school equivalency. In addition, the student must be considered a "student in good standing". The student must have regular attendance and the activity must be considered feasible for the student.

Subsidized Public or Private Sector Employment: This is paid employment funded with TANF or other public dollars in the public or private sector. In all cases, the employer is reimbursed by DHR or other public programs for the gross wages paid by the employer to the employee. In addition, subsidized public and private sector employment in Alabama may be provided through college work study programs that meet the guidelines.

(d) Pursuant to Code of Alabama Title 38, Section 38-2-6 information/case records of program participants is considered confidential and shall not be subject to public use or inspection. The release and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance through the Family Assistance Program is limited in scope by the purpose/program for which it is released/disclosed. Such release/disclosure is only permissible as follows:

- in connection with programs operated under Title I - Aid to the Aged; Title IV-A -Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Title IV-A

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- Block grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Title IV-B - Child Welfare Services; Title IV-D - Child Support and Establishment of Paternity; - Title IV-E - Foster Care (FCMP) and Adoption Assistance; Title X - Aid to the Blind; Title XIV
- Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled; Title XVI - Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled; Title XVI - Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Title XIX - Medicaid; or Title XX - Block Grants.

- in connection with services provided by other entities integral to and consistent with the administration of public assistance pursuant to state laws under written agreements with the Department of Human Resources.

- in connection with the administration of other federal or federally assisted programs providing assistance in cash, in-kind, or services, directly to individuals on the basis of need.

- at the request of state, local or federal law enforcement authorities searching for fugitive felons or individuals violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law (current address only).

- in connection with a public audit.

- in connection with the investigation of problems related to misuse of funds issued by the Department of Human Resources.

- at the request of the client under certain limited conditions as specified in department program manuals.

- in connection with the investigation of program fraud under certain conditions as specified in department program manuals.

- at the request of grand juries.

(e) The Department of Human Resources partners with the Alabama Department of Public Health which serves all women of child bearing age and the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (ACPTP) for pregnancy prevention efforts. The mission of the ACPTP is "Leading Alabama in adolescent reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention with an emphasis on positive youth development." To further the mission, the ACPTP has adopted priorities as well as vision and value statements. The mission, vision and value statements as well as priorities and other information about the Campaign can be found on the ACPTP website at www.acptp.org.

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Our goal specifically targeting teen pregnancy is to maintain out of wedlock teen births to at least 5% below the national average as published by the National Center for Health Statistics.

In regard to the overall issue of out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention, as part of the JOBS Program client assessment the case manager provides discussion and information about the impact of additional children as it pertains to the goals of personal responsibility, parenting and family support. Through these discussions it is our goal to provide individuals with sufficient information and assistance to move families from welfare to work without additional pregnancies during receipt of assistance and until such time as the family is stable. These activities in conjunction with our fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives provide the foundation for success in this area.

(f) The Department of Human Resources has developed and issued pamphlets containing information regarding the legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape to be distributed by Alabama Fatherhood Programs administered by the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama as part of the educational activities of these programs which are specifically targeted at non-custodial males. TANF funded Fatherhood programs number 21 throughout the state. Additionally, these materials are used in the educational activities of the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Further, these pamphlets are generally available in Alabama Departments of Public Health statewide. Staff of the Department of Human Resources distributes the pamphlets as appropriate to individuals applying for or receiving Family Assistance and in other program areas as deemed necessary.

TANF workers are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate service staff. This activity specifically includes the circumstances of girls under the age of 16 having sex with males who are at least 16 years old and at least two years older than the female.

The Department of Human Resources participated on the Council on Violence Against Women in the development of the Alabama State Plan, Responding to Domestic and Sexual Violence, to assist in promoting systemic change and improving responses to victims and perpetrators of such violence. This council membership included judicial, law enforcement, prosecution, health care, education, social services and mental health representatives. The 2010 State Plan can be viewed at www.acadv.org.

(g) Spending Restrictions Policies and Practices

Statement of Policy:
Use of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for merchandise or a service from an automated teller machine (ATM) or point of sale (POS) device physically located in liquor, wine or beer

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stores, casinos or other gambling establishments, strip clubs, tattoo or body piercing facilities or facilities providing psychic services is prohibited. Such use constitutes an unauthorized EBT transaction. Use of any portion of the FA benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction to purchase alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets is also prohibited. Purchase of any of these items is referred to as unauthorized FA expenditures.

Definitions:
Unauthorized EBT Transaction: Use of an EBT card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for the purchase of merchandise/goods or services from an ATM or POS device physically located in a liquor, wine or beer store, gambling establishment, strip club, tattoo or body piercing facility or a facility providing psychic services.

Liquor, wine or beer store: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily alcoholic beverages.

Gambling establishment: A retail establishment offering casino, gambling or gaming activities as the primary purpose of the establishment.

Strip Club: Any retail establishment providing adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

Tattoo or body piercing facility: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily tattoo or body piercing services.

Psychic services facility: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily psychic services.

Unauthorized FA expenditures: Use of any portion of the benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets.

Alcoholic beverages: Any alcoholic, spirituous, vinous, fermented, or other alcoholic beverage or combination of liquors and mixed liquor, a part of which is spirituous, vinous, fermented, or otherwise alcoholic, and all drinkable liquids, preparations or mixtures intended for beverage purposes, which contain one-half of one percent or more alcohol by volume, and shall include liquor, wine and beer.

Tobacco products: Any product that contains tobacco such as cigars, cigarettes, pipe and chewing tobacco and associated paraphernalia.

Lottery ticket: Any ticket purchased for a game of chance operated by a state government such as instant lotteries, general lotteries and lotto.

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Practices:
Educate clients; investigate reported violations; and impose penalties on FA recipients.

Client Education
Clients are educated about the spending restrictions as follows: mandatory discussion of the prohibition by the eligibility worker with all new applicants; public information materials which state the prohibition to include program summarized eligibility rules, client EBT brochures (under revision), automated client notices of case action, the program applicant/recipient affirmation and agreement statement which requires client certification of understanding and agreement to adhere to the prohibition in writing. The prohibition language is posted on the Department website and is being added to the EBT client portal in the future. Further recipient grantee relatives must acknowledge in writing understanding of the rule as part of the Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) under the JOBS Program as discussed in section (c) above.

Financial Penalties
(1) For the first instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a one-month period.
(2) For the second instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a three-month period.
(3) For the third instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit may continue to receive benefits if otherwise eligible, but the grantee relative is permanently disqualified from receiving benefits as a grantee relative, and, if included in the assistance unit is permanently disqualified to be a member of the assistance unit. Payment to the assistance unit will be made to another relative living in the home or other protective payee pursuant to Department operating guidelines. The disqualified grantee relative may continue to receive benefits for other eligible assistance unit members for a temporary period while appointment of another grantee relative is being processed.
(4) In addition to penalties in (1) – (3) above, the recipient must reimburse the Department as follows: For unauthorized EBT transactions, the amount withdrawn and/or used; for unauthorized FA expenditures, the amount of the purchase. Reimbursement in the full amount must be made before the assistance unit can again receive benefits following a period of disqualification as described in (1) and (2) above or before another relative living in the home or a protective payee can be approved to receive as described in (3) above.

(5) Client Opportunity for Review of Case Action – See section (k) below.

(h) Benefit Access and Fee Information
Benefit Access-Recipients can access FA benefits at any ATM or POS device at any location with such a device other than the prohibited locations. EBT cards are not accepted in state owned liquor stores known as Alcoholic Beverage Control

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(ABC) stores. To ameliorate an identified situation of unauthorized EBT transactions, the client will be referred to the Client Help Desk provided by our Contractor who is required to provide Customer Service, toll free via a 1-800 number for benefit access information as well as other account information. As part of the delivery of Customer Service, our Contractor is required to provide information 24/7 about POS/ATM site locations where benefits can be accessed. The Contractor must provide general information to clients regarding stores and ATMs. In order to do this the Contractor maintains a database and tracks retailers providing cash back and ATMs that accept the Alabama EBT cards. The Contractor must ensure that no cash client travel any further than 15 miles to any cash access location (either retailer or ATM). Further, if the Contractor is informed of the fact that there is no location within 15 miles or less to provide cash services they will make an effort with assistance from the Department to look into the businesses that are in the area and see if a location is willing to provide the service. If there are no businesses that can or will do so, then the Contractor would inform the Department of why and provide the closest business that will. According to information from the Department EBT Office, to date there has not been an instance where the "15 miles or less" rule could not be met.

Information about benefit access, lost and stolen cards, customer service, pin numbers, etc. is explained to clients during the application interview and is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website. Other Department materials contain customer service contact information.

Fee Information-The first two cash ATM withdrawals in a month are free. Any subsequent ATM withdrawals in the same month incur a fifty cents ($.50) fee. Recipients can receive cash back when using their EBT cards for purchases and incur no transaction fee. Information regarding fees is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website.

(i) Families moving into the State from another State will be treated the same as other families under the program. Therefore, the policies and procedures of the Family Assistance Program applicable in a county will be applied uniformly to all residents of the State (County) whether current or new.

(j) Citizens and qualified non-citizens are eligible to the extent permitted under federal law, Title IV of Public Law 104-193, as amended. Recipients must be citizens, qualified aliens who entered the United States before August 22, 1996, qualified aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 who are excepted from the 5-year bar or aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 and have been in "qualified alien" status for at least 5 years. Victims of severe forms of trafficking are eligible for federally-funded TANF benefits to the same extent as refugees. Aliens who (or whose child or parent) have been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S. are eligible under certain circumstances consistent with Federal law as specified in program operating manuals.

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(k) Eligibility rules of the Department of Human Resources will be uniformly applied in all cases in a county. The determination of need and amount of assistance for all applicants and recipients will be made on an objective and equitable basis and all types of income and potential income will be taken into consideration in the same way except where otherwise specifically authorized by State or Federal law or the Administrative Code of the Department of Human Resources or as stated in program operating guidelines issued by the State Department of Human Resources, Family Assistance Division. The State will adhere to prohibitions and requirements of Section 408 of Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Pursuant to subparagraph (B) of Section 408(a)(10) Good cause exceptions to subparagraph (A) of Section 408(a)(10) include absence due to medical reasons, school attendance, visits, conducting business, participating in Job Corps or vocational training.

Client Opportunity for Review of Action Taken
Procedures for client review of case action taken provide for three options for review (1) a conference with the County Department of Human Resources, (2) a State Department of Human Resources case record review and (3) a fair hearing conducted by the State Department of Human Resources. A request for options 2 and 3 must be in writing and submitted to either the County or State Department. Information about these opportunities as well as instructions regarding how to request and where to send the request is provided to clients as general information on all automated system notices generated and mailed to clients at award, termination or change in circumstances. If a system notice is not sufficient to explain case action a manually prepared case action form is completed and mailed which also contains the general information in regard to a review of case action described above. The summarized eligibility requirements pamphlet for the Family Assistance Program contains similar language and is required to be given and explained to all applicants and as needed to recipients during the interview process. Rules of review for special projects may vary dependent on the project and would be included in informational materials as appropriate.

(l) The State does not intend to fund a special initiative for training/employment of individuals providing direct care in a long-term facility or in other occupations providing eldercare. However, on a case-by-case basis FA cash assistance recipients can receive assistance/services while pursuing training/employment to provide such eldercare as part of their IJP and FRP as discussed in section (c) above. Assistance/services in this regard include payment for short term training to obtain classification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), supplies, uniforms, equipment, etc. Further, the Department has partnered with a centrally located technical school and Baptist Health to provide support for a grant to fund such training. If awarded, referrals from our JOBS client pool can be accepted from 24 surrounding counties.

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(m) Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7)

Work Program: Non- assistance expenditures for current and former recipients of cash assistance as well as certain needy applicants of cash assistance so as to maintain children in their own homes and end the dependency of needy parents by promoting work. Services include information and referral, case management short-term non-recurrent benefits as discussed in 45CFR 260.31, day care, transportation and other work and training services.
Financial Eligibility Criteria: Family's gross income is less than 200% of the HHS federal poverty guidelines by family size.

TANF Emergency Assistance (Formerly AFDC-EA with provision date of August 21, 1996): Assistance with paying for shelter or other emergency living expenses during a investigation of abuse and (non-assistance) services which include information and referral, case planning and case management, counseling and other support activities to normalize family functioning to or on behalf of a needy child 1) who is under the age of 21 and to any other member of the household in which he is living provided that such child is (or, within 6 months prior to the month in which such assistance is requested, has been) living with any of the relatives specified in section 406(a) (1) of the Act and further clarified in 45 CFR 233.90(c)(1)(v) in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home; 2) who has been removed from his/her home or is at risk of such removal and 3) whose emergency did not arise from his refusal or refusal of such relative with whom he lives without good cause to accept employment or training for employment.

Financial Eligibility Criteria: Annual family income is lower than two times the state's estimated median income level (as published by HHS) for a family of three.

Special Projects:
Eligible Families: Non-assistance expenditures for services including information and referral to needy parents/families such as short-term non-recurrent benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31, day care, transportation and work and training services, statewide food distribution network activities and pro-family activities expected to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock births as well as encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy two parent families including after school activities for teens, fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives, mentoring and literacy programs and domestic violence/drug

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abuse/prevention/education programs. Additional non-financial criteria, if any, are dependent on the project plan.

Financial Eligibility Criteria: Child's, individual's (including pregnant women), or family's gross income can be up to 300% of the HHS poverty guidelines by family size. Additionally, the family's receipt of other means tested benefits/services is sufficient to convey categorical financial eligibility as well as receipt of benefits/services from an entity (organization, state agency, etc.) or program whose client population is largely low income.

Pro-Family Activities for Other Than Eligible Families: Non-assistance in the form of non-federal cash and in kind qualified expenditures by third parties for individuals and families pursuant to 45 CFR 263.2(a) (4) (ii). Program specifics including non-financial eligibility criteria, if any, are contained in written agreements/contracts between the Department of Human Resources and the third party and in project plans as applicable. These benefits and services are provided without regard to financial need or family composition.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:	
1.	Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D.
2.	Operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program in accordance with part E, and certify that the State will take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance;
3.	Alabama Department of Human Resources is the agency responsible for administering the programs in all political subdivisions of the State. Alabama Department of Human Resources is the agency responsible for supervising the program. Assure that local governments and private sector organizations: (A) Have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and (B) Have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.
4.	Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a Tribal Family Assistance plan approved under Section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program

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	funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.
5.	Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage.
6.	Screen for and identify domestic violence by establishing and enforcing standards and procedures to: (A) Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; (B) Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and (C) Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, child support cooperation requirements and work requirements, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

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SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

I. Economic Projections and Impact

(a) Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)) Alternately, States may discuss this in the economic analysis section of strategic plan, if submitting a Combined State Plan.

The American workforce will shift dramatically in the years ahead. Many projections indicate by the year 2020, there will be more Americans over the age of 65 than 18 years or under. Alabama will be affected by this workforce shift. The mature worker is a resource that states cannot afford to lose. As Thomas Nelson, Chief Operating Officer at AARP said, "The mature workforce is undoubtedly one of the greatest untapped resources of developed countries. Engaging these workers should be of the highest priority." Alabama could not agree more. ADSS and its partner agencies will strive to train and develop our mature workers to take advantage of these future employment opportunities.

According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Labor Market Information Division (LMI), the following are the top ten occupations that may potentially employ workers age 55 and older. This data is based on a 2011 Occupation/Employment Survey.

- Food Preparation and Serving Workers
- Cashiers
- Waiters and Waitresses
- Retail Salespersons
- Truck Drivers
- Janitors and Cleaners
- Nurses Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants
- Secretaries
- Registered Nurses
- Cooks

Many of these occupations, including food preparation, cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and retail sales start at the lower end of the pay scale. However, ADSS and its partner agencies will seek to place older workers in higher paying jobs where possible, including truck drivers, secretaries, and nurses.

(b) Describe how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained

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and the types of skills training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

LMI projections indicate that Alabama will be substantially impacted by the "graying" of its population over the coming decade. In fact, its aging rate will outpace developments in most other states and the nation as a whole. The pool of persons ages 55 and older is projected to grow by 30% over the next ten years, compared to only a 4% growth rate for the 16-54 age group. Persons age 55 and older will account for nearly 75% of the projected increase in the nation's working-age population in the next decade, a historically unprecedented development. Alabama will be a part of this dramatic shift in the workforce.

What does this mean to the employment situation for older workers in Alabama?
It means tremendous opportunity for seniors who want to stay in the workforce, or re-enter it after having retired. Many leading national corporations like Home Depot and CVS have discovered the value of the older worker, and have put programs in place to keep older workers on staff, or hire them back as consultants. Those companies that choose to ignore this "age wave" will struggle to keep their workforce intact in the very near future. Due to the decrease in the number of young people entering the workforce, jobs will be there for older workers who want to work.

These demographic and labor force changes in Alabama in the coming decade will pose a number of important challenges for the state's private and public sector employees and the workforce development system as a whole. In the years ahead, most employers will have to substantially increase the number of older workers on their payrolls and restructure their hiring practices to accommodate greater numbers of older workers.

Some of the strategies we will utilize include the following:

- Provide a single point of entry through our 350 plus Senior Centers in the state, who will work closely with the One Stop Career Centers.
- Develop training for employers that clearly defines the benefits of retaining mature workers.
- Conduct statewide outreach to mature adults to create a new way of thinking about retirement, and to make individuals aware of the educational opportunities available to the mature worker.
- Analyze possible disincentives that exist in the current system that would discourage the involvement of older Alabamians.

The Alabama Department of Senior Services SCSEP program will strive to improve the employability of our seniors, and extend the work lives of older Alabamians, especially the economically disadvantaged.

(c) Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the

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types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations LMI Division has provided a "New Hires by Industry" report which lists the top ten industries employing workers 55 and older in Alabama.

The top ten industries are the following:

- Administrative and Support Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Ambulatory Health Care Service
- Food Services
- Specialty Trade Contractors
- Truck Transportation
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- General Merchandise Stores
- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers
- Construction

Alabama has analyzed the state's occupations projections. We identified those occupations providing significant employment opportunities for SCSEP participants due to growth or high turnover. In identifying these occupations, ADSS considered the profiles of the SCSEP participants being served, including their employment history, educational level, and work skills as well as the particular challenges of those most-in-need. Consequently, Alabama concentrated on occupations requiring short-term or moderate-term on-the-job-training.

Overall, Alabama's workforce will increase an annual average growth of 1.35 percent, which is slightly higher than the nation's 1.23 percent projected growth. Many of the occupational titles appropriate for SCSEP participants are in growing industries. For example, healthcare occupations will continue to grow at a fast pace due to the aging of the state's population. Healthcare and social assistance employment will continue to grow over the next decade. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.
Other industries exhibiting significant growth are the office and administrative support occupations, food services, and retail.

State Grantee will work collaboratively to address issues ensuring host agency assignments are truly providing skills training to meet the needs of both participants and employers.

Sub-grantees will continue to utilize the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), in partnership with the participant and host agency supervisor, ensuring community service employment assignments are providing skills training that meet the needs of the

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participant and host agency. Sub-grantees will monitor participants at least once every six (6) months at their community service employment assignments. During those visits, sub-grantee staff will review and update the IEP with both the participant and host agency supervisor.

Sub-grantees will continue to monitor the training to ensure participants will be prepared for unsubsidized employment through the acquisition of transferrable skills in demand by local employers. In addition, where applicable, sub-grantees, in partnership with participants, will develop IEPs that combine community service employment with other permissible training (e.g., classroom training or on- the- job experience (OJE) in the private for-profit sector) as funding permits.

While realizing some seniors may not be best suited for many of the manufacturing and construction jobs in the state, there will be other opportunities for mature workers to "back fill" jobs in industries showing significant growth. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.

Alabama's continued economic growth cannot be realized without including mature workers in workforce planning and training efforts.

II. Service Delivery and Coordination

(a) Provide a detailed description of what actions will be taken to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. Alternately, States may discuss this in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of its placement in the document, this section must include plans for:

1. **Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))**
2. **Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))**
3. **Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))**

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4. **Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))**
5. **Actions the State will take to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)**
6. **Efforts the State will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.**

Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP with WIOA Title I programs

SCSEP is a mandated WIOA partner. Alabama's SCSEP looks forward to improving our coordination and collaboration with Alabama's WIOA during the next four years by looking to implement the following strategies to benefit SCSEP participants:

1. Identify training for seniors in soft and occupational skills including those seniors with disabilities.

2. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify financial assistance and financial planning supportive services for SCSEP participants;

3. Work with the WIOA and One Stop System to identify senior friendly user technology and identify resources to secure the technology, such as WorkKeys, as a career readiness tool for participants;

4. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify and encourage SCSEP participant participation in work-related training and education activities;

5. Identify literacy resources in Alabama and work to build partnerships and improve coordination of these resources with WIOA and SCSEP; encourage participation by SCSEP participants in these programs.

Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the state under other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))

SCSEP state grantees are co-located with the Area Agencies on Aging and the Regional Planning and Development Commissions/Councils of Governments (COGs). The AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's have networks of partners, stakeholders, sub-grantees and member governments that are ideal locations for training and employment. A traditional partnership is reflected in the United Way Agencies that have been a major source of both training and employment. New and emerging partners are the community

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foundations that are assuming a regional character that approximate the regional service areas of AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's. The community foundations are creating networks of partnerships that they fund; that overlap the SCSEP, AAA, Regional Commission and COG partnerships; and that have the potential of being a source for training and employment. SCSEP is a part of an emerging trend of regionalism and networking that has become the new template for both public and nonprofit agencies.

The purpose of SCSEP is to provide training opportunities for older individuals who want to re-enter the workforce. Gaining additional or enhanced job skills improves their employability. Job training is provided by host agencies that are either 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organizations or government agencies. SCSEP provides valuable training opportunities while increasing the capacity of these host agencies to fulfill their missions.

The mission and goals of SCSEP and its many host agencies overlap the mission and outreach of other OAA funded activities and programs. For example, one of the primary missions of OAA funded entities is to be the single-point-of-entry (or "no wrong door") for older or disabled consumers. Frequently, consumers have needs that can only be met monetarily. The network of host agencies working with SCSEP enhances the capacity of the aging network to meet these needs and make good referrals to host agencies that may provide direct or indirect financial assistance. In addition, the consumer may see employment as an option to meet income needs.

Many OAA activities are coordinated under the Aging & Disability Resource Center, (ADRC) including training, cross-training, and outreach. The following actions will be taken to enhance the partnership between OAA (AoA, CMS) funded programs, host agencies, and other community partners:

***Goal*:** To coordinate SCSEP activities with the activities of other OAA funded programs

Objective 1: ADSS will take the lead to encourage intra-agency cross-training that will increase staff members' knowledge of all OAA funded programs and activities, thereby increasing the coordination of services and activities.
Objective 1.1: ADSS will develop training materials for each OAA funded program.
Objective 1.2: ADSS will provide cross-training opportunities and also develop testing to gauge the success of cross-training. Training may be in the form of webinars, seminars, joint-program meetings, etc. Testing may be web-based, multiple choice, standardized, or other forms.
Objective 1.3: ADSS will implement team meetings as needed, where Project Directors, Program Managers, Program Coordinators, and other staff can discuss planned activities, program needs, and client needs.

By facilitating communication among programs and program coordinators, ADSS will ensure that activities get the maximum "bang for the buck." For example, if the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is planning an outreach, then SCSEP can participate in this outreach or, at the very least, provide intake forms or materials for distribution to its target population. Another example: if SCSEP is planning a job fair and wants

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assistance with publicity, the nutrition program can include a flier to the senior center managers or include an article in the monthly nutrition newsletter.

Objective 2: ADSS will take the lead to encourage inter-agency cross training among its major partners.

All grantees will continue to develop partnerships and collaborate with other public and private entities that bring quality and valuable resources to the table, for the benefit of the participants. We have working relationships with faith-based organizations in the community serving low-income individuals who need supportive services, including training and employment. As we learn of other agencies that benefit our participants, we will engage with them to establish partnerships that advance each of our missions.

Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans) (20 CFR 641.302(i))

ADSS will continue to coordinate with partner agencies to enhance services to older Alabamians. Some examples of programs and partners that serve our seniors include the following:

The Alabama Department of Human Resources operates the JOBS Program to help recipients of Family Assistance (FA) find and keep jobs. This includes supportive services such as transportation and clothes. This help is available to all recipients of FA regardless of age. In addition, many counties have a JOBS Task Force where they pull together civic and faith-based groups, employment agencies and employers to help individuals get jobs. These groups are open to any interested individual, program or agency and participation is encouraged.

Job readiness classes funded by DHR are available in a variety of counties and are open to anyone below 200% of the federal poverty line. These classes vary in length from a few days to four weeks and cover a wide range of topics. Emphasis is on how to find a job and the soft skills needed to keep a job.

The Adult Protective Services Division and County Departments work to protect elderly and disabled adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to prevent unnecessary institutionalization.

DHR also partners with the Job Access Reverse Commute grant (JARC). DHR currently provides TANF match money to both the Department of Transportation and ADSS to provide transportation to low-income Alabamians.

Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, medical, and health care, education, and other community services and amenities. Efficient and affordable transportation services provide seniors independence to quality of life activities.

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Currently SAFETEA-LU, the federal transit law requires projects selected for financial assistance under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom (NF), and the Elderly Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs be derived from a coordinated transportation plan. Coordination plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Plans are developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public. The Alabama Association of Regional Councils has produced twelve coordinated transportation plans that include all of the regional councils respective planning areas. Plans are updated every four years.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is the designated state unit recognized by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to deliver independent living (IL) services to older adults who are blind in the State of Alabama. The ADRS has a long history of providing rehabilitation teaching services for seniors who are blind. Within ADRS, the Older Alabamians System of Information and Services Program, referred to as the OASIS Program, provides IL services to older adults with visual impairments.

The OASIS Program is designed to meet the needs of both rural and urban segments of the population of elders who are visually impaired throughout Alabama. The overall goal of the OASIS Program is to enhance the level of independence among the State's elderly population who are blind or visually impaired. To be eligible for the OASIS program individuals must be age 55 or older, reside in the State of Alabama, and be blind or functionally visually impaired.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), the largest division within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, helps Alabamians with disabilities achieve independence through employment. VRS provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist adults with disabilities in becoming employed. To be eligible for VRS services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment and must be able to benefit from services in terms of going to work. For Alabamians with disabilities, VRS represents much more than a monetary return. Much like the SCSEP program, VRS helps clients gain employment, which creates pride, dignity and independence for our seniors.

The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Volunteer Service coordinates the AmeriCorps State program and also works closely with local faith-based and community organizations particularly those involved in disaster preparedness and response. Through the network of AmeriCorps State programs annually hundreds of volunteers are engaged in communities across Alabama serving to meet critical needs.

AmeriCorps programs engage people of all ages and they actively recruit people with disabilities. Other national service programs operating in the State of Alabama include Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA.

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Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

Older workers and the pre-existing programs authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA), including Alabama's SCSEP, are now considered part of Alabama's comprehensive workforce development system. Alabama's SCSEP is an integral partner in the Alabama workforce development delivery system. This participation offers an unprecedented opportunity to assess the needs of mature and older workers in a unified and coordinated manner, at a time when those workers represent a dominant portion of the workforce.

Older workers are likely to need and seek workforce development services in order to allow them to remain in the workforce at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP participation in Alabama's workforce development delivery system affords new opportunities to improve services to older workers overall.

For those who need to remain part of (and even participate in training and retraining activities) the state's civilian labor force, their ability to use the workforce development system effectively will be critical to improving their skills and remaining in the labor force at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP plans to continue participation in Alabama's major labor market and job training initiatives.

Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the One-Stop delivery system and the steps the state will take to encourage and improve coordination. (20 CFR 641.335)

All SCSEP operators in Alabama shall, to the extent feasible, establish and maintain cooperative relationships and working linkages with other employment and training programs, to include activities conducted under the Workforce Investment Act and with affiliated agencies concerned with senior citizens. A major objective of coordination is to avoid the duplication of services and expand employment opportunities for senior workers. It is also desirable to provide a variety of services and training opportunities that respond to the needs of senior workers by linking them with services and programs provided by the Area Agencies on Aging.

To make certain the State Plan is inclusive and as comprehensive as possible, organizations engaged in older worker activities and employment services for older workers were invited to provide information on their activities that would be pertinent to workforce development. Local senior worker programs will be encouraged to work collaboratively with WIOA One-Stop Centers to maximize the effectiveness of the training and placement process.

ADSS is a partner in the Workforce Investment Board's delivery of workforce development services. Entities responsible for WIOA activities will continue collaborating to create a delivery system that enhances access to services and improves employment outcomes for individuals receiving those services. SCSEP participants train at many of our One Stop Career Centers. Several of our SCSEP project directors are

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represented on the local boards. The WIOA included SCSEP as a required partner in the One Stop delivery system to ensure older workers have access to information about the range of employment related services available to them.

An "umbrella" or "blanket" Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being used to define the roles and responsibilities of the Career Center (One-Stop) partner agencies for the provision and improvement of employment and training services to Alabama citizens residing within the 65 county Alabama Workforce Investment Area (AWIA). The MOU is between the Alabama Local Workforce Investment Board and the Career Center partners, including ADSS. It establishes guidelines for the partners to create and maintain cooperative working relationships. The blanket MOU, being more general in nature, works best to set direction while allowing flexibility.

The WIOA intends that all job seekers and persons looking to further their careers will be able to access the employment, education, training, and information services they need at Career Centers in their neighborhoods. The Centers offer core services (available to all adults with no eligibility requirements), intensive services (available to those individuals who are unable to find jobs through core services alone), and training services.

In this age of limited resources, it is essential for programs to ensure they are not duplicating the efforts of others, and are using funds in the most effective and efficient manner. Some of the ways our programs cooperate to provide the best employment services possible for the older population are through joint planning sessions, information sharing, recruitment, cross referral of training, joint training, and development of a network of community service providers for older persons.

(2) **Describe the long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (Alternatively, the State may discuss this in the State strategies section of strategic plan if submitting a Combined State Plan.)**

Engaging Employers

SSAI's sub-grantees have well-established partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce. Sub-grantees often attend meetings in order to network with local business representatives. Through training provided by SSAI, sub-grantees regularly get on a Chamber's agenda to engage employers by promoting both SCSEP and job ready participants. In PY2014, SSAI Field Support Program Officers introduced an Employer Outreach Kit to a pilot group of sub-grantees. The kit includes both three-minute and ten-minute talking points, a PowerPoint presentation, general presentation tips, suggested wording for an elevator pitch, and advice on how to handle both cold and warm calls with employers. This kit has been proven to save a great deal of preparation time and has increased sub-grantee staff confidence about engaging employers. Further improvements to the kit will be made as we expand its use in future program years.

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To promote employer outreach, SSAI Program Officers also work with sub-grantees to identify other employer organizations in order to increase the visibility of SCSEP. For example, SSAI promotes sub-grantee engagement with local chapters of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a professional association of human resources professionals from various employers. These professionals are usually involved with hiring and tend to be focused on ensuring a diverse workforce, including mature workers. In addition, many of these SHRM chapters have a committee of volunteers willing to give their time to nonprofits. They can be a great resource for educating participants about what their companies look for in a new employee, helping prepare for interviews, and writing résumés that will get read.

Other SSAI employer outreach training focuses on showing sub-grantees how to approach the hidden job market by establishing relationships with their local, county and state economic development councils and accessing their press releases of future or growing business announcements. SSAI staff trains sub-grantees to approach these employers with the goal of establishing relationships as business partners. Job Development training of sub-grantees will remain multi-focused. One area of focus will continue to promote the identification and targeting of local employers by using the Internet, especially in rural areas. Another focus will be on the basics of how to conduct employer outreach. The training to be provided includes group activities, role plays, and videos about job development. Another area of focus will be to provide technical assistance geared towards developing advanced networking skills of both sub-grantees and SCSEP participants.

Furthermore, as we increase employer engagement, SSAI will also increase exploration of on-the-job-experience (OJE) as a method of expanding employer engagement. While OJE has not been widely utilized by our sub-grantees in the past, the Program Officers will actively promote OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers.

Preparing Participants for Unsubsidized Employment

SCSEP Program Officers will further expand sub-grantees capabilities to use a multi-pronged approach to prepare participants for unsubsidized jobs. SSAI Program Officers develop turnkey tools that a sub-grantee can use when meeting with participants. For example, a presentation has been developed on how to navigate a job fair that a sub-grantee can deliver at a participant meeting. Additionally, Program Officers provide sample agendas and activities, as well as facilitate job club meetings at sub-grantee locations. Program Officers are often asked to present at participant meetings. Topics may vary and can include interviewing techniques, résumé writing tips, approaching the hidden job market, using social media in a job search and completing online job applications.

SSAI has developed and launched a new tool to increase the support SSAI sub-grantees offer participants. SSAI launched a web-based job application practice tool for SCSEP participants across its partnership network. This tool provides a safe and comfortable

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opportunity for a participant to practice completing an online job application. Tips are provided, and participants can save multiple versions of the application and customize them to fit jobs of interest. An opportunity to try uploading a document is also a part of the experience. Once the application is completed and "submitted," the participant receives an email that provides them a copy of their application. Participants are advised to review with their Project Director the information they have entered. In this way, the sub-grantee staff are provided an excellent opportunity to coach on information that should or should not be submitted to an employer. The participant can also print their own copy of the application they submitted. An additional value of this is that the participant can use this copy as a reference when completing an application in the future. The initial feedback during a pilot phase was quite positive. SSAI continues to train its sub-grantees on how to use the tool effectively.

Employer Outreach Staffing

All SCSEP Grantees in Alabama use local project directors to network with employers, business organizations, and community groups.

Seeing Employers as Customers

To bridge the divide between the business and education/social service spheres, Grantees emphasize their commitment to assisting employers to find and hire workers with the needed skills and qualities. They ask employers to describe the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and qualities they are looking for in new hires. Grantees may also consult with employers about how SCSEP can bypass job application hurdles. Understanding the hiring process helps build relationships over time with private sector employers in local targeted industries. Grantees also promote the qualities possessed by many older job seekers that employers seek:

- Commitment to doing quality work;
- Strong customer service orientation;
- Getting along with other employees;
- Dependability;
- Able to pass a drug test; and
- Willingness to learn.

Once employers' needs are defined, staff evaluate whether any area participants have the needed skills and are job-ready. If so, they are able to promote the skills and competence of participants as trained workers who will add value to the company.
Strategies for Engaging Employers

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Grantees will carry out the following actions:

Pursue partnerships with employers that:

1. Are host agencies that may have job openings for individuals with the same or similar skill requirements;
2. Have successfully employed participants;
3. Are interested in hiring older workers, based on the local knowledge of Boards, business organizations, and others in the community; or
4. Are identified in online labor market information as major employers in local targeted industries.
5. Attend Chamber of Commerce and board meetings and other economic development organizations when possible to:
6. Expand their employer networks;
7. Find out which employers are hiring; and
8. Contact employers to find out the skills and qualities needed to be successful in these jobs.

(3) **Describe the long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))**

SERVICE TO MINORITIES

Targeted recruitment efforts must be incorporated into program operations to increase minority enrollments if identified as a concern based on data contained in the quarterly progress report. Additional recruitment efforts in minority communities could include advertising in minority newspapers, canvassing local venues to promote the program by displaying brochures or posting fliers, speaking to minority groups and organizations, and communicating with faith-based organizations that are frequented by minority members of the community.

To address underservice and disparities in outcomes, SSAI developed its *Analysis of Sub-grantee Service to Minorities* in PY14. This report provides, at the sub-grantee level, the breakdown of service to minorities by race and ethnicity. Specifically it reports (1) the number served during a specific time period, (2) the Census Bureau's estimate of SCSEP-eligible people by subgroup, (3) the SCSEP percent served by subgroup, (4) the numerical difference between the SCSEP-eligible percent and those served by subgroup, and (5) subgroups who are notably underserved. This report provides an easy-to-understand and data-rich analysis of where the sub-grantee needs to focus. Further, it facilitates more focused dialogue and recommended actions between SSAI and sub-grantee staff. Staff and sub-grantee reaction to the report has been positive and they indicate that it is making a difference. As one staff said, ensuring service to minorities "has become a much bigger focus for me this year over the prior year….With the newly

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developed SSAI reports, it has allowed me to provide more detailed and informed assistance to sub-grantees individually and in group meetings." This tool enables SSAI staff to provide its sub-grantees more support and targeted enrollment technical assistance.

Some of the interventions that have resulted in increased service to minorities that are being replicated include: use of multi-lingual participant staff (e.g., Spanish), enlisting and partnering with host agencies that serve underserved subgroups and referral programs among current participants who are part of an underserved subgroup. One sub-grantee asked its minority participants to refer family members and friends who might qualify for SCSEP. Similar interventions are being implemented to promote employment among minority SCSEP participants. Specifically we are promoting job development and job fairs that focus on minority-owned businesses and inviting minority business persons to speak at SCSEP workshops

(4) **Provide a list of community services needed and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location(s) of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)**

(5) **Describe the long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))**

(6) **Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))**

III. Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution. States must:

(a) Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by Title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

Alabama is comprised of sixty-seven counties with a 2015 population estimate of 4,858,979 residents. The most populated counties include Jefferson, Mobile, Madison, Montgomery, and Shelby County. Fifty-one of the 67 counties in Alabama meet the threshold for persistent unemployment, which is met when the annual average unemployment rate for a county is more than twenty percent higher than the national average for two out of the last three years. The following counties have persistent unemployment indicating a significant barrier to employment:

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Barbour County, AL
Bibb County, AL
Bullock County, AL
Butler County, AL
Calhoun County, AL
Chambers County, AL
Choctaw County, AL
Clarke County, AL
Clay County, AL
Cleburne County, AL
Coffee County, AL
Colbert County, AL
Conecuh County, AL
Coosa County, AL
Covington County, AL
Crenshaw County, AL
Dale County, AL
Dallas County, AL
DeKalb County, AL
Escambia County, AL
Etowah County, AL
Fayette County, AL
Franklin County, AL
Geneva County, AL
Greene County, AL
Hale County, AL
Henry County, AL
Houston County, AL
Jackson County, AL
Lamar County, AL
Lauderdale County, AL
Lawrence County, AL
Lowndes County, AL
Macon County, AL
Marengo County, AL
Marion County, AL
Mobile County, AL
Monroe County, AL
Montgomery County, AL
Perry County, AL
Pickens County, AL
Pike County, AL

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Randolph County, AL
Russell County, AL
Sumter County, AL
Talladega County, AL
Tallapoosa County, AL
Walker County, AL
Washington County, AL
Wilcox County, AL
Winston County, AL

Rural Areas

Forty-five percent of the state's SCSEP-eligible population is rural. SCSEP's definition of *rural* is based on Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes, defined at the census tract level. Forty-three of Alabama's 67 counties have 100 percent rural populations.

Rural Service Delivery Challenges and Strategies to Address These Challenges

Grantees' greatest obstacles to providing SCSEP services in rural areas and assisting participants to find unsubsidized jobs are all related to shortages: of resources, services, and jobs, particularly in more isolated areas.

Lack of Adequate Transportation

Lack of adequate transportation significantly hinders SCSEP service delivery in rural areas. Area Agencies on Aging have identified transportation as the number one priority need for seniors in their annual plans. The minimal transportation available in small towns is on-demand assistance geared toward persons with disabilities and to taking people to doctor appointments.

Although the majority of SCSEP participants drive their own cars, for those who do not have cars or are no longer able to drive, the lack of transportation poses a significant barrier to SCSEP participation and to finding and retaining unsubsidized employment.

Strategies that Grantees will employ to address rural transportation needs include the following:

- Seek to place participants and rotate participants in community service assignments as close as possible to their residences.
- Seek host agency assignments that have transportation resources. Grantees will contact school districts and childcare networks/facilities to determine in which rural areas the school bus is a feasible alternative. For example, if community service assignments with a school district or child care facility are feasible and appropriate for participants' career goals, Grantees will seek to negotiate with agencies to enable participants to use the same bus or van

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transportation provided for children to travel to and from their community service assignments Faith-based organizations providing community services may be able to serve as host agencies and provide transportation.

(b) List the cities and counties where SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

		State Grantee Allocations			Total National Grantees Allocations		
	PY 16 Total ED Based on Census	PY 15 State Grantee Allocation	PY 16 State Allocations	PY15-PY16 Change	PY 15 National Grantee Allocation	PY 16 National Grantee Slots Available	PY15-PY16 Change
Alabama	**810**	**165**	**165**	0	**645**	**645**	**0**
Autauga County, Alabama	6				7	6	**-1**
Baldwin County, Alabama	25	5	6	1	15	19	**4**
Barbour County, Alabama	6				8	6	**-2**
Bibb County, Alabama	4				4	4	**0**
Blount County, Alabama	10	2	2	0	8	8	**0**
Bullock County, Alabama	2				3	2	**-1**
Butler County, Alabama	6				7	6	**-1**
Calhoun County, Alabama	22	5	5	0	18	17	**-1**
Chambers County, Alabama	9	3	3	0	7	6	**-1**
Cherokee County, Alabama	6				5	6	**1**
Chilton County, Alabama	8	2	2	0	6	6	**0**
Choctaw County, Alabama	4	2	2	0	3	2	**-1**
Clarke County, Alabama	6	3	2	-1	6	4	**-2**
Clay County, Alabama	3				3	3	**0**
Cleburne County, Alabama	3				4	3	**-1**
Coffee County, Alabama	8	3	3	0	6	5	**-1**
Colbert County, Alabama	10	2	2	0	8	8	**0**
Conecuh County, Alabama	5	1	1	0	3	4	**1**
Coosa County, Alabama	3	1	1	0	2	2	**0**
Covington County, Alabama	8	2	2	0	8	6	**-2**
Crenshaw County, Alabama	4				4	4	**0**
Cullman County, Alabama	16	3	3	0	13	13	**0**
Dale County, Alabama	9	2	2	0	6	7	**1**
Dallas County, Alabama	12	4	3	-1	10	9	**-1**
DeKalb County, Alabama	15	4	3	-1	14	12	**-2**
Elmore County, Alabama	7				8	7	**-1**
Escambia County, Alabama	9	2	2	0	7	7	**0**

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Etowah County, Alabama	21	5	5	0	16	16	**0**
Fayette County, Alabama	4	1	1	0	4	3	**-1**
Franklin County, Alabama	6	1	1	0	6	5	**-1**
Geneva County, Alabama	6	2	2	0	5	4	**-1**
Greene County, Alabama	4	2	2	0	2	2	**0**
Hale County, Alabama	4	1	1	0	4	3	**-1**
Henry County, Alabama	5	2	3	1	2	2	**0**
Houston County, Alabama	18	5	6	1	11	12	**1**
Jackson County, Alabama	12	2	2	0	11	10	**-1**
Jefferson County, Alabama	107	26	26	0	72	81	**9**
Lamar County, Alabama	4	2	2	0	2	2	**0**
Lauderdale County, Alabama	15	3	3	0	13	12	**-1**
Lawrence County, Alabama	7				7	7	**0**
Lee County, Alabama	16	3	3	0	11	13	**2**
Limestone County, Alabama	11	2	2	0	10	9	**-1**
Lowndes County, Alabama	3				3	3	**0**
Macon County, Alabama	5	2	2	0	4	3	**-1**
Madison County, Alabama	35	5	6	1	25	29	**4**
Marengo County, Alabama	6	2	2	0	4	4	**0**
Marion County, Alabama	6	2	2	0	6	4	**-2**
Marshall County, Alabama	16	3	2	-1	17	14	**-3**
Mobile County, Alabama	71	17	16	-1	52	55	**3**
Monroe County, Alabama	7	2	2	0	4	5	**1**
Montgomery County, Alabama	30				31	30	**-1**
Morgan County, Alabama	18	5	5	0	12	13	**1**
Perry County, Alabama	4				4	4	**0**
Pickens County, Alabama	6	2	2	0	6	4	**-2**
Pike County, Alabama	7				6	7	**1**
Randolph County, Alabama	7	1	1	0	6	6	**0**
Russell County, Alabama	13	2	2	0	9	11	**2**
St. Clair County, Alabama	14	2	2	0	11	12	**1**
Shelby County, Alabama	15	2	3	1	10	12	**2**
Sumter County, Alabama	4	2	2	0	2	2	**0**
Talladega County, Alabama	16	2	2	0	14	14	**0**
Tallapoosa County, Alabama	9				7	9	**2**
Tuscaloosa County, Alabama	24	5	5	0	18	19	**1**
Walker County, Alabama	14	3	3	0	12	11	**-1**
Washington County, Alabama	3				5	3	**-2**
Wilcox County, Alabama	4	2	2	0	2	2	**0**
Winston County, Alabama	7	1	1	0	6	6	**0**

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(c) Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

SCSEP staff counsel sub-grantees monthly as to the status of the variance and provide technical assistance to ensure that the sub-grantee will serve the number of authorized positions per county by June 30, 2016. SCSEP staff confers with sub-grantees on issues related to service such as: recruiting new host agencies; conducting outreach to attract applicants to the program; and figuring out program operations issues that may be impacting enrollment of new participants. For example, SSAI staff is working with sub-grantee Jefferson County Commission to recruit new Host Agencies in Jefferson County.

SCSEP staff members look to review both the total variance as well as the "snapshot variance" taken from SPARQ at the end of each quarter. For example, Morgan County, which is served by North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, currently has thirteen (13) participants enrolled for twelve (12) authorized positions; however, the service level since July 1, 2015 for Morgan County is over 100%. In such cases, more emphasis will be placed on enrolling participants in counties which have been underserved, such as Cullman County, also served by NARCOG, in which only eight (8) participants have been served for thirteen (13) authorized positions.

(d) Explain the State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

1. **Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.**
2. **Equitably serves rural and urban areas.**
3. **Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)**

Section 508 of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments requires grantees to seek an equitable distribution of program resources and participant slots throughout the state. Therefore, equitable distribution (ED) is a cooperative effort, and each grantee in the state participates in the process. Alabama fully embraces the equitable distribution of SCSEP positions and has worked closely with the national sponsors to implement a plan that addresses under-served and over-served counties in the state.

ED within each state is based on the latest Census information about the percentage of poor elderly in each county. The data comes from the American Community Service (ACS), which incorporates the 2010 Census for population counts and age. The equitable distribution report of SCSEP positions by grantees in the state provides the information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of people being served in Alabama. The report reflects both under-served and over-served areas and contains information on counties served, distribution factors, equitable shares, current number of positions, and increases or decreases in participant slots.

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ADSS serves a coordinating role and ensures equitable distribution of employment through Title V SCSEP with the national contractors and local project directors. ADSS allocates Title V funds to Councils of Local Government and Area Agencies on Aging for local SCSEP administration.

With the continued cooperation of the national grantees, ADSS will coordinate any slot transfers necessary to meet equitable distribution, and will continue to coordinate this process.

Any county slot adjustments will be made only after approval by DOL. ADSS will continue to work with the national grantees to move slots from over-served to under-served counties. Since there are no excessively over-served or under-served counties in Alabama, equitable distribution will be achieved in the time frame required, with no disruption to participants.

(e) Provide the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))

County	Number of Persons 55+	Number of Persons Age 55+ and <125% FPL	Percent Age 55+ who are <125% FPL
Autauga	10,495	1,470	14.0%
Baldwin	49,915	4,750	9.5%
Barbour	7,070	1,900	26.9%
Bibb	5,150	1,000	19.4%
Blount	14,460	2,585	17.9%
Bullock	2,385	689	28.9%
Butler	5,520	1,625	29.4%
Calhoun	29,490	5,350	18.1%
Chambers	9,805	2,060	21.0%
Cherokee	7,575	1,440	19.0%
Chilton	10,220	1,910	18.7%
Choctaw	4,225	1,295	30.7%
Clarke	6,935	2,050	29.6%
Clay	3,080	570	18.5%
Cleburne	4,015	1,060	26.4%

County	Number of Persons 55+	Number of Persons Age 55+ and <125% FPL	Percent Age 55+ who are <125% FPL
Henry	4,925	900	18.3%
Houston	24,830	4,135	16.7%
Jackson	14,845	3,195	21.5%
Jefferson	155,820	24,090	15.5%
Lamar	4,280	990	23.1%
Lauderdale	24,880	3,850	15.5%
Lawrence	8,495	1,570	18.5%
Lee	22,305	3,500	15.7%
Limestone	16,855	2,745	16.3%
Lowndes	3,110	660	21.2%
Macon	5,510	1,350	24.5%
Madison	69,910	7,030	10.1%
Marengo	5,585	1,520	27.2%
Marion	8,670	2,140	24.7%
Marshall	22,085	4,865	22.0%

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Coffee	11,690	1,930	16.5%
Colbert	15,600	2,395	15.4%
Conecuh	3,900	1,105	28.3%
Coosa	3,305	703	21.3%
Covington	11,120	2,290	20.6%
Crenshaw	3,975	950	23.9%
Cullman	21,265	4,095	19.3%
Dale	11,015	1,885	17.1%
Dallas	10,670	3,410	32.0%
DeKalb	17,140	4,980	29.1%
Elmore	15,970	2,000	12.5%
Escambia	9,365	2,135	22.8%
Etowah	28,160	4,890	17.4%
Fayette	5,255	1,250	23.8%
Franklin	7,710	1,880	24.4%
Geneva	7,610	1,710	22.5%
Greene	2,255	809	35.9%
Hale	4,260	1,405	33.0%

Mobile	92,245	16,630	18.0%
Monroe	5,825	1,580	27.1%
Montgomery	47,705	7,305	15.3%
Morgan	28,875	4,340	15.0%
Perry	2,600	790	30.4%
Pickens	5,510	1,780	32.3%
Pike	6,950	1,450	20.9%
Randolph	6,480	1,445	22.3%
Russell	12,070	2,660	22.0%
St. Clair	18,640	2,835	15.2%
Shelby	36,160	2,695	7.5%
Sumter	3,170	1,029	32.5%
Talladega	20,065	4,345	21.7%
Tallapoosa	12,265	1,840	15.0%
Tuscaloosa	36,535	6,240	17.1%
Walker	19,345	3,945	20.4%
Washington	4,290	1,330	31.0%
Wilcox	3,060	1,070	35.0%
Winston	7,110	1,685	23.7%

(f) Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

1. **Reside in urban and rural areas within the State**
2. **Have the greatest economic need**
3. **Are minorities**
4. **Are limited English proficient.**
5. **Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))**

The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

Reside in urban and rural areas within the state

About 90% of Alabama's total land surface is considered rural, with 54 of 67 counties counting being classified as rural. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 41% of the total population lives in these rural areas.

It is the goal of all grantees operating the SCSEP program in Alabama to serve rural and urban areas equitably. While we are managing to provide services in each of the rural counties we serve, it is becoming increasingly more of an issue, due to the economy. More time is required to work with those residing in rural counties, due to the increased travel time needed to reach these participants. We are working to partner with

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community- based organizations and state agencies in rural areas to provide services that would benefit our seniors.

Because education is a key element to gainful employment, we will encourage partnerships with universities, community colleges, and local communities to work with sub-grantees in rural areas to provide better training mechanisms, including online classes and distance learning. A major focus will include changing the public's negative attitude and stereotypes about older workers through education and best practices programs; and promoting the advantages of hiring older workers, especially in rural areas, to public and private sector employers.

Rural and urban SCSEP participants in Alabama need greater transportation options. Access to transportation has a direct impact on a participant's ability to secure and retain employment.

In a related initiative dealing with rural/urban populations, ADSS is working with the Federal Transportation Administration on the United We Ride (UWR) program, because transportation is a huge barrier for seniors in general and particularly for low-income seniors who want to work.

Have the greatest economic need

Greatest economic need means the need resulting from an income level at or below the poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (42 U.S.C. 3002(23).)

- According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 18.9% of individuals in Alabama were below the federal poverty level, as compared to 15.6% nationally. The average monthly earnings in 2014 for people in Alabama was $3,626 as compared to $4,457 nationally.
- For Alabamians over 65 years of age, the most recent numbers report that 11.9% percent are at or below 100% of the Federal poverty line. Attachment 1 (with county information provided from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Decennial Census) shows the breakdown of SCSEP slots allocated to each Alabama county as compared to the total population of people over the age of 65 who are at or below the Federal poverty line. The SCSEP eligibility age is 55 years of age and older, and this population represents approximately 26.1% of Alabama's population, versus the 65 years and older population which represents an estimate of 13% of the population. This would indicate that there is a greater need in each service area across the state.

Attachment 1- County Poverty Levels /SCSEP Slots

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	All Grantees	State Grantees	National Grantees	Total Population over 65 years of age	11.9% of 65 years and older who fall within poverty line	Percent of Slots for Age Eligible pop under 100% poverty line (65 years)
Alabama	**810**	**165**	**645**	672,383	80,014	1.04%
Autauga	6	0	6	6,797	809	0.87%
Baldwin	25	6	19	31,928	3,799	0.55%
Barbour	6	0	6	3,959	471	1.70%
Bibb	4	0	4	3,027	360	1.11%
Blount	10	2	8	8,651	1,029	0.97%
Bullock	2	0	2	1,433	171	1.76%
Butler	6	0	6	3,531	420	1.67%
Calhoun	22	5	17	17,198	2,047	1.17%
Chambers	9	3	6	5,769	687	1.46%
Cherokee	6	0	6	4,794	570	0.88%
Chilton	8	2	6	6,189	736	1.09%
Choctaw	4	2	2	2,585	308	1.63%
Clarke	6	2	4	4,265	508	1.77%
Clay	3	0	3	2,578	307	0.98%
Cleburne	3	0	3	2,403	286	1.40%
Coffee	8	3	5	7,427	884	1.02%
Colbert	10	2	8	9,594	1,142	0.88%
Conecuh	5	1	4	2,437	290	1.38%
Coosa	3	1	2	1,489	177	1.69%
Covington	8	2	6	7,078	842	1.19%
Crenshaw	4	0	4	2,225	265	1.51%
Cullman	16	3	13	13,051	1,553	1.09%
Dale	9	2	7	6,906	822	0.97%
Dallas	12	3	9	6,283	748	1.87%
DeKalb	15	3	12	10,063	1,197	1.59%
Elmore	7	0	7	9,859	1,173	0.68%
Escambia	9	2	7	5,828	694	1.30%
Etowah	21	5	16	16,584	1,973	1.06%
Fayette	4	1	3	3,161	376	1.33%
Franklin	6	1	5	4,846	577	1.21%
Geneva	6	2	4	4,767	567	1.23%
Greene	4	2	2	1,463	174	2.30%
Hale	4	1	3	2,451	292	1.71%
Henry	5	3	2	3,151	375	1.07%
Houston	18	6	12	15,150	1,803	0.94%
Jackson	12	2	10	9,112	1,084	1.20%

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Jefferson	107	26	81	87,637	10,429	0.98%
Lamar	4	2	2	2,733	325	1.23%
Lauderdale	15	3	12	15,865	1,888	0.90%
Lawrence	7	0	7	5,185	617	1.13%
Lee	16	3	13	13,199	1,571	0.95%
Limestone	11	2	9	10,671	1,270	0.94%
Lowndes	3	0	3	1,694	202	1.49%
Macon	5	2	3	3,071	365	1.64%
Madison	35	6	29	42,173	5,019	0.62%
Marengo	6	2	4	3,455	411	1.46%
Marion	6	2	4	5,672	675	1.19%
Marshall	16	2	14	14,124	1,681	1.19%
Mobile	71	16	55	54,460	6,481	1.13%
Monroe	7	2	5	3,641	433	1.38%
Montgomery	30	0	30	27,843	3,313	0.97%
Morgan	18	5	13	17,153	2,041	0.88%
Perry	4	0	4	1,680	200	2.00%
Pickens	6	2	4	3,328	396	2.02%
Pike	7	0	7	4,311	513	1.17%
Randolph	7	1	6	3,919	466	1.50%
Russell	13	2	11	6,876	818	1.34%
St. Clair	14	2	12	11,478	1,366	0.95%
Shelby	15	3	12	21,970	2,614	0.46%
Sumter	4	2	2	2,062	245	1.63%
Talladega	16	2	14	11,759	1,399	1.21%
Tallapoosa	9	0	9	7,450	887	0.79%
Tuscaloosa	24	5	19	21,495	2,558	0.98%
Walker	14	3	11	11,132	1,325	1.21%
Washington	3	0	3	2,618	312	1.60%
Wilcox	4	2	2	1,768	210	1.90%
Winston	7	1	6	4,403	524	1.34%

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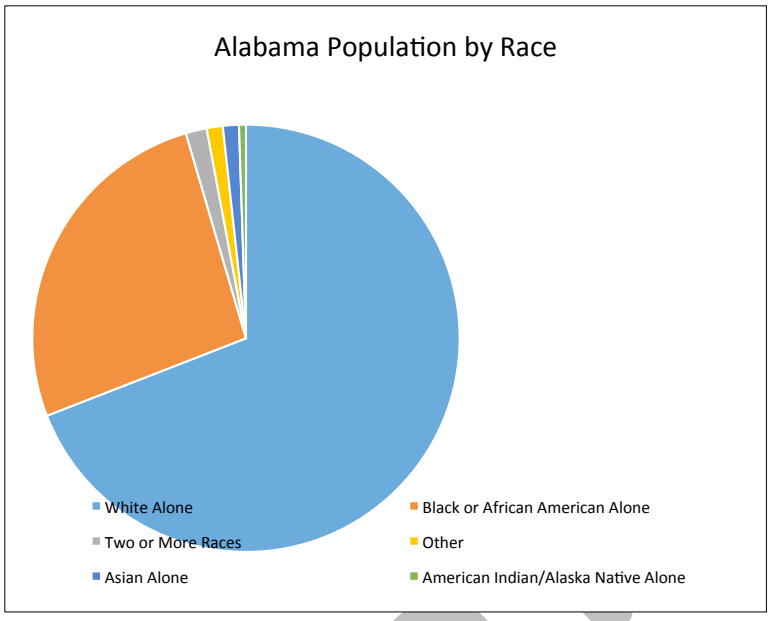
Are Minorities

- According to the Resident Population by Race and State 2010 Census Statistics, the race of Alabama residents is broken up by the following:



Alabama Population by Race, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	
White Alone	3,327,891
Black or African American Alone	1,269,808
Two or More Races	76,428
Other	58,618
Asian Alone	58,322
American Indian/Alaska Native Alone	25,181

Statewide, the Latino or Hispanic population grew 145% since the last U.S Census, adding 109,772 people to the state's population, and nearly 78,000 people 65 years of age and older. Latino's now make up 4.0% of the population, compared with 1.7% as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. The largest increases in Latino population were in Jefferson, Madison, and Shelby counties, specifically in more urban geographic areas. The average age of the Hispanic population in Alabama is 23.7 years of age, indicating that the flux has not occurred within the 55 and older population as rapidly as the under 55 years of age population.

To address the growing Hispanic population in Alabama, Senior Service America Inc. (SSAI) received funding from the AARP Foundation for a Latino/Hispanic Elders Peer

Community Interpreters project. This project focuses on three unmet needs: (1) the needs of low income 50+ Hispanic workers at risk due to prolonged unemployment and financial insecurity; (2) the need of our publicly funded social service and workforce development systems to substantially improve their outreach and service to Hispanics; and (3) the need to develop policies that would support "Community Interpreters" as a critical element of a larger plan to reduce the impact of Limited English proficiency as a barrier to employment and services.

SSAI's "Community Interpreters" project recruits, trains, deploys, and provides ongoing support to a minimum of 25 low income 50+ Hispanics who serve as Community Interpreters in 18-22 social service and workforce development agencies in greater Birmingham, AL, and Charlotte, NC. The goal of this project is for the peer Community Interpreters to increase the number of unserved, unemployed, and underemployed 50+ Hispanic workers accessing available employment and social services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, African American's represent 26.5% of the state's population, however the concentration of African Americans in certain counties over others shows the significant differences in geographic distribution of the population by race.

The Asian population in Alabama remains low at 1.2% across the state.

Are limited English proficient

This population has not been active in SCSEP in Alabama, with 1% of the population currently being served in the state being classified as limited English proficiency.

Have the greatest social need (20 CFR 641.325(b).)

Greatest social need means the need caused by non-economic factors, which include: Physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, which restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks or threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently. (42 U.S.C. 3002(24)).

- The number of people in Alabama who have not attained a high school diploma was 17.4% in 2014 while the national number was 13.6%, and the number of people with a Bachelor's degree or more was 23.1% compared to 29.3% nationally. In 2010, the total number of people over 65 in Alabama with no high school diploma was 20.5%, while the percentage of SCSEP participants in Alabama being served by Easter Seals who do not have a high school degree or equivalent was 24%.
- According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Years estimates, there are a total of 376,525 Veterans residing in Alabama, which is about 7.8% of the total Alabama population. According to

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the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System, 10% of the State and Easter Seals SCSEP participants are classified as Veterans.

(g) Describe the steps taken to avoid disruptions to service for participants to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Older individuals often feel vulnerable during times of change. SCSEP grantees in Alabama will make every effort to avoid participant disruptions by reassuring participants and their host agencies that a change of grantee in a particular area will not affect participants' SCSEP enrollment. Although the schedule for participants' receipt of their paychecks may vary somewhat from Grantee to Grantee, the mailing and direct deposit of participant paychecks will continue on a regular, dependable schedule.

Changes in Grantee and/or Grantee Service Area

DOL allocates SCSEP-subsidized community service positions to each county using a formula based on the number of individuals ages 55 and older with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level in each county. Participants may need to be transferred to a different Grantee if Grantees agree to trade counties to consolidate their service areas and improve the efficiency of their operations.

National Grantee service areas are changed or realigned by DOL. When there is a change of Grantee or Grantee service area, the state will proactively seek to avoid a disruption in service for participants and host agencies.

Changes in the Number of Positions in a County

Other situations may occur where positions in a county may need to be increased or reduced over time, including these situations:

Census updates on SCSEP-eligible population in counties, such as occurred in 2012, affect the equitable share, or number of positions allocated to a county;

Grantees seek to improve the equitable balance in counties by shifting enrollments from over-served areas to under-served areas.

Strategies to Avoid Participant Disruption

When there is a change in Grantee and/or Grantee service area, the SCSEP State Coordinator will direct the following actions:

- Host a conference call with the grantees involved to ensure that they develop a transition plan and timetable for:

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- informing participants and host agencies in advance;
- transferring records;
- holding orientations for participants and host agencies;
- and supporting continuity in administrative and programmatic functions.

When positions need to be shifted from over-served to under-served counties, Grantees will carry out the following actions:

- Use a gradual approach to redistribute the slots via attrition; and
- Encourage and work intensively to assist job-ready participants in over-served counties to find unsubsidized employment.

A Transition Plan will be implemented that has proven effective in ensuring minimal disruption to participants, host agencies, and the community. Alabama has experience in exchanging service areas with national sponsors. We have worked through and enjoyed smooth transitions. The process includes Notification of Change, Right of First Refusal, Notification to Participants, Record of Transfer, and Participant Placement.

Primary consideration is given to participants when decisions must be made about re-distribution of program positions. Unsubsidized employment is the optimum method for avoiding disruptions to participants in the program, and this policy is applied to the greatest extent possible.

No participants will be terminated for purposes of moving positions to coincide with any new census data or change in grantees. Instead, increased efforts will be made to assist participants through other local SCSEP sponsors, and to aggressively work with participants to obtain unsubsidized employment.

The state will follow the Department's recommendation of a "gradual shift that encourages participants in subsidized community service assignments to move into unsubsidized employment to make positions available for eligible individuals in the areas where there has been an increase in the eligible population."

In addition, ADSS will not transfer positions from one geographic area to another without collaboration between all grantees and approval by the Department of Labor. This collaboration between ADSS and national grantees allows for smooth transitions for SCSEP participants, with minimal disruption of service.

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TABLE A: SCSEP Income Eligibility 125 Percent of Poverty		TABLE B: Poverty Levels 100 Percent of Poverty	
Number in Family	**Annual Income Limits**	**Number in Family**	**100 Percent of Poverty**
1	$14,850 **$1,237.50**	1	$11,880
2	$20,025 **$1,668.75**	2	$16,020
3	$25,200 **$2,100.00**	3	$20,160
4	$30,375 **$2,531.25**	4	$24,300
5	$35,550 **$2,962.50**	5	$28,440
6	$40,725 **$3,393.75**	6	$32,580
7	$45,913 **$3,826.08**	7	$36,730
8	$51,113 **$4,259.42**	8	$40,890
For families of more than eight, add $5,200 for each additional member.		For families of more than eight, add $4,160 for each additional member.	
Source: Federal Register, Vol. 81, January 25, 2016, pp. 4036-4037. These limits are retroactive to that date.			

Single Member Family
$14,850/12= $1,237.50

Two Member Family
$20,025.00/12= $1,668.75

(Includable income for the twelve (12) months preceding application or recertification or six (6) months annualized must be used.) See Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 12-06 for a list of includable income. Income must be re-certified at least once every twelve (12) months.

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