

# WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

# UTAH'S PLAN

## 2024–2028



Utah State  
Board of  
Education  
Adult  
Education

    
STATE WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



DEPARTMENT OF  
**WORKFORCE  
SERVICES**

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## Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, integrate service delivery across programs, improve service delivery efficiency, and ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is requiring States to plan across core programs and to include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of workforce needs within each State and fosters the development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, to address the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

### Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan: a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))<sup>1</sup>

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support its strategic vision and goals, as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>2</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission, if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

## I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary

### a. WIOA State Plan Type

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a combined plan.

### Combined Plan Partner Program(s)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

No

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Yes

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

#### b. Plan Introduction or Executive Summary

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The vision of WIOA is to achieve and maintain an integrated, job-driven workforce system that links our diverse, talented workforce to U.S. businesses and improves the quality of life for citizens. This is accomplished by:

- The needs of businesses and workers driving workforce solutions.
- The workforce system supporting strong regional economies.
- One-Stop Centers (AJCs) providing first-rate customer service to job seekers, workers and businesses.

This is reflected in WIOA's overarching goals:

- Increase access to education, training and employment, particularly for vulnerable populations and people with barriers to employment
- Create a comprehensive, high-quality workforce by aligning workforce investment, education and economic development
- Improve the quality and labor-market relevance of workforce investment, education and economic development efforts
- Promote improvements in the structure and delivery of services
- Increase the prosperity of workers and employers
- Reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation

### Utah's Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, need to succeed in the workforce.

### Partners

The role of the core partners is to ensure services are coordinated, aligned, and complementary so job seekers can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs. Core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

Utah's WIOA partners are responsible for workforce and economic development through the collaboration of programs, initiatives, and services that create a seamless, customer-focused

one-stop delivery system. Utah's required partners collaborate and align their services to enhance access for job seekers and businesses.

Required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans' job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- Migrant and seasonal farmworker
- National Farmworkers Jobs program
- YouthBuild
- Indian and Native American programs

#### Statewide Input

Utah's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), through committee work, led the development of Utah's Combined Plan. The board members directly participated in the development of Utah's vision and goals, providing the base for the strategies, activities and services outlined in the plan. Input for the plan was solicited from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, local government, employers and elected officials. Utah's plan was presented at a virtual town hall meeting and was available online for public comment. Utah's State Workforce Development Board and agency partners have worked closely together to implement the goals from the 2020 plan. The relationships and connections built since Utah implemented its first plan in 2016 have influenced the development of the 2024 plan and the 2026 plan modification. All partners have established a clear understanding of their roles and of collaborative strategies to continually improve services and positively impact Utah's workforce system.

#### Strategic Plan

Utah's plan includes strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships and its resources to implement strategies that support operations in providing services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's workforce partners receive annual updates about Utah's economic condition.

Workforce development activities include:

- Identifying targeted industry sectors and occupations; aligning programs and services to support them; and encouraging involvement from business and education partners

- Setting collaborative performance goals, sharing information and data and working together to resolve problems and address gaps
- Collaborating and coordinating training, marketing and feedback
- Utilizing existing committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate
- Holding regular SWDB and committee meetings as required by Utah's plan

## 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 to align workforce development programs with 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. Where requirements identify the term "populations", these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, youth and others that the State may identify.

### 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.

#### 1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

##### 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.

This must include—

###### I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

###### II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

### III. 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.

Utah's strategic plan and vision are based on analysis of the state's current, post-pandemic economy and workforce. The state's economy has recovered from the pandemic and exhibits similar characteristics to the pre-pandemic economy. Some structural changes remain from the pandemic, like an increased amount of teleworking, but that does not significantly alter the need for and distribution of occupations. Telework changes the location of a work environment, but not necessarily the functions expected from the work environment.

Utah identifies four major economic areas within the state: the Wasatch Front (Utah's principal urban area), the Bear River Area, the Eastern Region, and the Central and Southwest Area. The latter three have enough distance or dissimilarity from Utah's urban core to warrant their own regional identifications.

Since 82% of the state's employment is embodied in the Wasatch Front, the overall state profile serves as a proxy for the profile of that urban core. Analysis is provided for the other three areas where appropriate.

#### Economic Summary

The 2024 Utah economy operated as a full-employment economy. Finding labor in substantial numbers can be a challenge for employers. The unemployment rate was 3.2%, and employment growth averaged around 1.5%, slightly below Utah's long-term annual growth average. Strong wage gains have continued since the end of the pandemic, speaking to a tight labor market. This is an expected outcome within a full-employment economy.

The available labor supply is limited, as 3.2% unemployment would suggest. Yet the economy has still found enough new labor to maintain above-average employment growth for the past several years. Labor in-migration plays a primary role in keeping job growth above what a 3.2% unemployment rate might otherwise suggest. Yet the labor market is tight, causing employers to be aggressive, and sometimes frustrated, in seeking labor. This situation creates job opportunities. As a result, this is an excellent environment for people with barriers to employment to find a job.

To provide perspective on Utah's economic achievements, Utah has outperformed nearly all other states since the onset of the COVID pandemic in early 2020. When looking at each state's percentage employment gain compared to February 2020, Utah is second in the nation in percentage growth. Utah's employment level is 13.5% higher than it was before COVID hit. Only Idaho has had greater job gains, at 14.3%.

Utah's employment gains and trajectory are not unusual for this state. Between 1980 and 2000, Utah's employment base grew by 100%. Between 2000 and mid-2025, it has grown by 65% for an average annual rate of 2.1%; and this includes time spent within three major recessions. Collectively, for seven years, those recessions added no net new jobs to the Utah economy. Therefore, that 65% growth occurred across a collective 18-year period.

Internal population growth is Utah's foundation for employment expansion and success. Utah has the youngest median age in the nation, giving it the nation's youngest labor force. Utah's large average family size makes for a continuous flow of new workers aging into the labor force. There are more young workers in the state than old. Therefore, the economy is always expanding to accommodate this continuous maturing of the population into the labor force.

Additionally, Utah lies in the middle of America's strongest in-migration region, the underpopulated Rocky Mountains. For most of America's development, the mountain states were underutilized, as mountains were a barrier to an industrial economy's development. Flat land, rivers, lakes and oceans transported the era's industrial physical products. Mountains presented a challenge for this type of activity. But with the advent of the technological economy, barriers have been removed and the economic door is wide open for the mountain states to experience their full potential.

By mid-2025, the labor force participation rate in Utah returned to slightly below its pre-pandemic level. Workers who were enticed to join the labor force during the recovery from the pandemic, a time marked by high wages, flexibility and bargaining power for workers, have fewer incentives to stay in the softening labor market.

The high inflation of 2022 and early 2023 continues to slowly abate, pushed down by Federal Reserve interest rate hikes. The high interest rates also drove down the level of job openings, helping bring labor demand and supply closer to a balance. The ratio of openings to unemployed workers in Utah is nearing equilibrium at 1.3 jobs per unemployed worker.

### Economic Outlook

High inflation and rapid interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve in 2022 and 2023 stoked concerns about a potential recession. More recently, increased tariffs and the likelihood of slower population growth are concerns for the state's economy and labor market. Thus far, the Utah and national labor markets have shown remarkable resistance with low unemployment rates and continued job growth. The expectation is that if a recession were to occur in the near term, it would be mild and shallow with minimal job losses.

In the long run, evidence indicates that Utah's economic position is favorable and forwardly optimistic. It has shown itself to be one of the nation's best-performing state economies across the past 30 years. There are internal and external drivers of this performance and both are expected to remain as primary Utah economic influences moving forward. The internal factor is that Utah has one of the nation's highest birth rates. Utah's internal demographics do not mirror the national trends. The national profile has the baby boom generation as a major portion of the labor force, and that segment will be exiting during the next 20 years. The nation is rapidly approaching zero labor force growth because of this demographic deficiency. Utah, on the other hand, over the next 20 years can add two children to its labor force for every one baby boomer who leaves the labor force. This demographic statistic is Utah's internal economic driver.

The external support is centered around Utah's geographic location. Utah is located in the middle of America's strongest in-migration region, the relatively underpopulated Rocky Mountains. Across the past 30 years, four Intermountain West states, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada and Utah, have seen their economies grow by 100% or more. There is a collective economic synergy surrounding this region, and Utah lies at the center of it.

### Economic Overview

Utah's economy has returned to a state of strong annual job growth accompanied by low unemployment rates. As of June 2025, the unemployment rate has remained below 3.3% since 2021, indicating a full-employment economy and making for tight labor markets.

The post-Great Recession Utah labor force participation rate (the percent of all persons ages 16 and older who are either working or looking for work), declined due to structural demographic forces and is unlikely to return to the highs of the pre-Great Recession era. In Utah, the rate was around 72% for the 20 years prior to the Great Recession. The participation rate lowered to 67% during the

recession as workers became discouraged or disassociated from the weakened job market. Yet over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020, as the economy significantly improved, the participation rate rose only to 68.5%. The natural aging of the population is the force behind Utah's lower participation rate. Prior to the Great Recession, only 11% of Utah's over-16 population was 65 years and older, that being a segment of the 16-and-over population that naturally has a low participation rate. With that age group's percentage increasing to 16% of the 16-and-older population by 2020, the Utah labor force participation rate's potential is likely to remain below the previous 72% level going forward. With the extraordinarily tight labor markets present in the post-COVID economy, the labor force participation rate inched up to nearly 70%, a level not seen since 2009, driven by increased participation among prime-age workers, ages 25-54. In 2024 and 2025, the labor force participation rate has declined slightly to a more typical rate, coming closer to 68%.

Utah's employment-expansion industrial distribution is as broad as it is strong. Mining is largely the only sector with a less than rosy outlook going forward, although mining employment grew by 15% from 2020 to 2025. The oil and gas industries ebb and flow with the mining sector's seemingly perpetual volatility. The only sector with employment declines from 2020 to 2025 was the retail trade industry, while the information, financial activities, and trade, transportation and utilities sectors saw only minimal growth.

The remaining industrial sectors have grown significantly across the five years from 2020 to 2025, ranging from 11% for professional and business services to 16% for leisure and hospitality and 24% for construction. A sector like manufacturing, nationally considered in decline, expanded its employment footprint in Utah by 12%.

Utah has experienced the same urban-centric post-Great Recession expansion experienced nationally. Utah has an urban-dominated economy, as 88% of the state's employment is found within its metropolitan statistical areas (including Logan and St. George).

The economic and social disruptions of the pandemic provided an opportunity for many workers to relocate. Often this meant leaving larger cities for smaller cities and rural areas, a migration further enabled by the rise of remote work during the COVID and post-COVID era. As a result, Utah's regions with smaller populations experienced high growth rates in the years immediately following the pandemic. As the economy continues to recover, population trends in the state's rural Eastern region have declined, with population having expanded only 1.7% in that region from 2019-2024. The scenic Southwest and Central region experienced growth of 14.5% in its population base, and the Bear River region expanded by 9.0%, both of which outpaced the state's 8.5% rate. The highly urban Wasatch Front region expanded by 8.1%, just slower than the state's growth.

## Regional Profiles

### Bear River Area

The Bear River Area comprises Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties along the state's northern border, making up 5.3% of Utah's employment base. Cache County has the largest employment base in the area and is the core of the Logan Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Franklin County, Idaho. Cache County makes up 69% of the Bear River Area's employment base. Box Elder County sits west of Cache County and comprises 30% of the Bear River Area's employment base, and has strong attachments to the Ogden metropolitan area to its south. Rich County is a small, rural county that accounts for 1% of the Bear River Area's employment base.

The Bear River Area contributes to the state's overall strong economic environment. The employment base has grown by 0.9% over the past two years (early 2023 to early 2025) and by 9.9% in the last five years (2020 to 2025).

An economic feature of this area is its significant manufacturing presence. Manufacturing makes up 21% of the area's employment. While manufacturing is somewhat of a declining industry at the national level, this region's manufacturing employment has remained relatively steady over recent years, increasing by 5.5% from 2020 to 2025. Since this area also has a strong agricultural presence, much of the manufacturing employment is in food production, a segment of manufacturing that tends to be economically more stable than non-food manufacturing.

The education sector is another significant employer, accounting for 16% of the employment base. Utah State University, an agricultural-founded university, is the backbone of this employment.

Retail trade, healthcare, leisure and hospitality, construction, and professional and technical services round out the other top employment sectors. Across 20 major industry sectors, only the administrative support/waste management, information, finance and insurance and agriculture sectors have lost jobs from 2020 to 2025.

The economic impact of the pandemic was somewhat tempered in this economic region.

Manufacturing, a significant portion of this region's employment base, was not heavily impacted by the pandemic. In fact, manufacturing employment has increased by 12% from 2020 to 2025. The region has enjoyed big job gains in several manufacturing industries over this time period, including chemical, transportation equipment, food, wood products and paper manufacturing.

### Eastern Region

Utah's Eastern Region spans the north-south axis mostly along the border with Colorado. It is a seven-county conglomeration whose commonality is geographic isolation from Utah's urban center. It has vast areas of uninhabited land, extensive public land ownership, several Native American reservations, stunning landscapes yielding national parks, monuments and recreation areas, and a general lack of industrial diversity.

The area has two micropolitan centers: Vernal, in the geographic area called the Uintah Basin, and Price, near the center of the state. Moab is another town that serves as the regional center for the area's southeastern corner.

While the geography spans nearly half the state, the Eastern Region makes up only 2.8% of Utah's employment base. This is down from 2.9% in 2018. Despite its declining share of overall state employment, the region has still grown, expanding its employment base by 11.9% from 2020 to 2025.

The region's economic performance is tied to the energy sector. Oil, natural gas, and coal production are significant economic features. The Uintah Basin segment, comprising Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties, is centered in Vernal and produces oil and natural gas. Oil and gas employment in the Uintah Basin had a volatile five years from 2020 to 2025, but overall is up 11%. This growth contributed to an impressive 5-year rate of overall employment growth in the Basin, which expanded by 17% from 2020 to 2025. Changes in oil and gas employment affect other sectors such as construction and trucking, as these industries are linked to and support the region's energy production. Trucking jobs are up 22% over the last five years, while construction jobs rebounded in 2025, nearly doubling from a slump in employment in 2020.

The Eastern Region's Castle Country segment, spanning Carbon and Emery counties and including the city of Price, continues to be a coal and electricity-production economy. The five years from 2020 to 2025 saw the overall employment level increase by around 450 jobs, for an average annual jobs growth rate of 0.7%. This rate is slower than the state's 2.4%, but is weaker since coal mining and coal-burning power plants have not been on a favorable trajectory given the escalating concerns related to climate change.

The region's two southern counties, Grand and San Juan, are heavily dependent on tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic treated each differently. Grand County is home to two national parks and is more easily accessed than San Juan County. San Juan is less well known and less visited because its landscape was only recently designated a national monument. Visitor centers and corresponding infrastructure are not in place, and major highways are far away. Therefore, Grand County fully rebounded more quickly from the pandemic downturn, with job levels in 2022 higher than pre-pandemic. San Juan County has had a slower recovery from COVID. Job numbers surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2023, with the leisure and hospitality sector still about 4% smaller than it was in 2019.

Overall, the leisure and hospitality industry is the Eastern region's dominant employment focus, with about 15% of total employment. It is not a particularly well-paying industry, and the employment is often seasonal, but it is vibrant. Healthcare and social assistance account for another 12% of employment, while retail trade and education account for 11% and 10% of the region's employment base, respectively. These tend to be stable and exhibit less seasonal employment as their clientele is largely the local population. Due to the area's national parks and monuments, the public administration sector has an outsized, but positive presence of 9% of the employment base.

The region's mining employment trend is noteworthy. Prior to COVID, the mining industry accounted for 11% of the region's employment base in 2019. Declines in this industry's employment during 2020 and 2021 dropped it to 9%. Most of this occurred within the Uintah Basin's oil patch. The employment decrease is primarily due to transitory workers who follow work across the nation's oil patches, so many of the dislocated workers do not remain in the region. The industry recovered in 2022, adding around 500 jobs in support activities for mining, accounting for 10% of the region's total 2022 employment base and 11% of 2023's total employment base.

The pandemic had a negative impact on the Eastern Region. The initial shutdown of the movement of people largely brought the oil industry to a standstill. This resulted in the shutdown of the oil patch of the Uintah Basin, and oil and gas jobs there remain well below pre-pandemic levels. The coal country in the area's central portion was relatively untouched by the pandemic. The area's two southern counties are heavily tourist dependent. For the first several months, the pandemic virtually closed these economies. When people began traveling by car to the national parks, things changed from bad to good, particularly in Grand County. In the COVID era, Grand County benefited from significant in-migration and now has total employment 14% above its pre-COVID level. San Juan County's isolation played against it, as it did not see the tourism volumes that Grand County did. However, employment has rebounded over the past two years, and at the beginning of 2025, total employment was 7.5% above 2019 levels.

### Central/Southwest Region

Utah's Central/Southwest Region spans a large portion of Utah. It consists of 10 counties and includes the St. George Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the Cedar City Micropolitan Statistical Area. Apart from these cities, the remainder is extensively rural, but does include the four regional communities of Delta, Kanab, Richfield and Ephraim. Like the Eastern Region, it is isolated from Utah's metropolitan heart, with vast areas of uninhabited land, extensive public land

ownership, three national parks, national monuments and recreation areas, and a general lack of industrial diversity, except for the St. George MSA.

The region comprises 8.6% of the state's employment base, up from 8.0% in 2020. The area has shared in the state's strong employment growth over the past five years, largely but not exclusively from the strength of the St. George MSA (Washington County). This is one of the nation's fastest-growing counties. Its warm, sunbelt climate and desert red rock scenery are major attractions.

The region's economy has grown by 7% over the past two years and by over 21% over the past five years. The growth is primarily in the region's southwestern portion, but the mostly rural central portion is faring better than the neighboring rural Eastern Region because it does not rely on the volatile energy sector.

Leisure and hospitality (tourism) is the region's leading industry, comprising 15% of the employment base. Paralleling that is another 13% in retail trade employment. Healthcare (14%) and education (12%) are also large employment areas, with an additional strong presence in construction (10%).

The St. George MSA accounts for 58% of the region's employment base. The Cedar City Micropolitan Statistical Area, comprising Iron County, adds another 17%. Together they account for 75% of the region's employment base. Employment expanded by 16% in the St. George MSA from 2020 to 2025, and by 25% in Iron County.

The pandemic had mixed effects on this area. Tourism initially shut down the area during the pandemic's first three months, then it came roaring back. With its close proximity to California, the region's natural beauty and national parks, visitors came to this region in droves.

#### Industry Demand

Industry demand in Utah is broad-based because employment growth has occurred across all industrial sectors, with the exception of physical retail trade. In evaluating 96 industrial sectors within Utah, only 15 contracted employment during the five years ending in the first quarter of 2025.

In industries that have expanded employment, several prominent sectors are construction-related. This coincides with Utah's strong economic expansion. However, construction can be volatile when the economy softens. This industry is more sensitive to the ups and downs of the business cycle than many other sectors.

Healthcare has its share of industry units represented among the best performers. As the population increases in number and age, healthcare expansion is a natural consequence. Computer sectors also have a strong presence. Since Utah is highly urbanized, it follows that it would have a healthy, vibrant technology sector.

#### Occupation Demand

The occupational mix is somewhat different from that of industries. Occupations are found throughout the industries and are more numerous than the industries. While an industry may be shedding particular types of occupations, it may be making gains through other occupations.

When evaluating 608 occupations in Utah from 2019 to 2024, 243 have lower employment than five years ago, and 16 have employment unchanged. That leaves 349 with increases. Across the 22 major

occupational classifications, only one had significantly less employment in 2024 than in 2019: sales and related occupations declined by 9,290 jobs. Much of this displacement is related to automation.

While the construction industry is growing in Utah, that does not mean individual construction-related occupations cannot be declining. This is the case with production occupations within Utah's growing manufacturing sector.

One theme emerging for most declining occupations in Utah is that they require only a basic amount of education. This makes it expedient for public workforce agencies to be aware of such declines and to caution those they serve and advise about such occupations.

The following list of occupations has increased their employment base by 2,000 or more positions from 2019 to 2024.

List of Highest-Growth Occupations

11-2021	Marketing Managers
11-2022	Sales Managers
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers
11-9021	Construction Managers
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists
13-1111	Management Analysts
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary
29-1141	Registered Nurses
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
41-3091 and Travel	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services,
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents

43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
43-9061	Office Clerks, General
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2061	Construction Laborers
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers

#### Impact of IIJA, IRA, and CHIPS Act on Labor Force and Occupational Demand

As of early 2025, Utah continues to experience low unemployment rates and high job-growth demand. With Utah's workforce fully employed, the acts are likely to have redistributive effects on the labor market – that is, labor will undergo some movement across industries and occupations, moving from lesser skill and wage settings upward toward areas targeted by these laws.

The IIJA and IRA's substantial investments in infrastructure are likely to increase demand for labor in the construction industry, especially highway, street, and bridge construction (NAICS 2373). Occupations such as construction workers, civil engineers, and project managers will be in increased demand for development and maintenance of roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

The IIJA is a comprehensive infrastructure bill, and its manufacturing-related priorities are embedded in the broader context of creating jobs, enhancing economic competitiveness, and modernizing the nation's infrastructure. Several IIJA priorities are likely to increase the demand for labor in the manufacturing sector. The IIJA provides funds to improve the country's electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, including the deployment of EV charging stations nationwide. It seeks to modernize the country's transportation infrastructure, which should stimulate demand for the manufacturing of materials related to road construction and safety. The Act's support of energy efficiency measures and resilience against climate change is likely to stimulate demand for manufacturing energy-efficient materials and technologies. The Act's provisions regarding water infrastructure should increase manufacturing demand for products related to drinking water improvement and wastewater systems. A variety of occupations in the manufacturing sector will be

necessary to meet the increased demand from these various infrastructure investments – from front-line technicians to engineers to project managers and supervisors.

The IIJA and IRA both allocate substantial spending to green and renewable energy projects and electrical grid improvements. The state is likely to see an increase in demand for solar and wind energy technicians, and for professionals specializing in energy efficiency and grid resilience. The IIJA has already helped fund a major transmission line project between Utah and Nevada, as announced by the US Department of Energy in October 2023 (<https://www.energy.gov/gdo/transmission-facilitation-program-first-round-selections>). Additional IIJA projects will increase demand for utility and electrical grid operators as well as engineers, project managers and construction workers.

In the manufacturing sector, the CHIPS Act will increase demand for engineers, researchers, and technicians with expertise in semiconductor manufacturing. Utah's existing tech workforce may find new opportunities as the semiconductor industry expands. The Act is already being felt in Utah, with the February 2023 announcement by Texas Instruments of an \$11 billion investment in a semiconductor fabrication plant expansion in Lehi that will provide hundreds of jobs (<https://business.utah.gov/tax-credits/texas-instruments-to-build-new-chip-factory-in-lehi-bringing-hundreds-of-jobs-to-the-state/>). Utah's existing Silicon Slopes tech hub may experience a boost from the CHIPS Act's emphasis on research and development, with knowledge spillovers helping to foster innovation and growth. The region is likely to see increased demand for software developers, engineers, and technology professionals.

Changes to patterns of industry and occupational demand brought about by these acts are likely to increase the demand for education and training. Occupations related to vocational training, online education, and workforce development may experience growth as individuals seek to acquire new skills aligned with emerging industries.

## Regional Analysis

### Bear River Area

#### Industry Demand

The area's strong employment growth has created an array of industries that are currently in demand. There are a handful of industries that have lost employment over the five years from 2020 to 2025, including administrative and support services, information, finance and insurance, nursing and residential care facilities, plastics and rubber products manufacturing and truck transportation. Large gains in wood products, paper, chemical, food manufacturing, retail trade, professional and technical services, specialty trade contractors and transportation equipment have countered these losses.

Professional and technical services are making gains in the region. Scientific research and information technologies are expanding, largely in the Logan MSA.

The region's economic growth is also spurring construction gains, particularly among specialty trade contractors, which include industries like roofing, framing, painting, plumbing and masonry.

Education employment is trending upward, at both the university and K-12 levels, as the population increases.

#### Occupation Demand

Given that over 32% of the area's employment is found in manufacturing and education, it is not surprising that much of the occupational distribution is centered around these two industries. The area has a higher than average occupational presence (based on location quotients) in the production and education occupations. Production occupations have added new employment over the past five years, while educational occupations have dipped slightly.

Areas with average or slightly above average occupational presence include architecture and engineering occupations, construction and extraction, building and grounds maintenance, life, physical and social sciences, office and administrative support, management occupations, and arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations. All have added jobs over the past several years, with the management occupations growing the most quickly.

One area where the region lacks a strong occupational presence is in healthcare practitioners and healthcare support occupations. The lower-paying healthcare support occupations have grown in the region over the last five years, while the number of healthcare practitioners and technical occupation jobs has also increased, but at a slightly slower rate. Another area where the region has relatively low occupational presence is sales and related occupations. The region has actually shed jobs in this category in recent years.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 175 or more positions from 2019 to 2024.

#### List of Highest-Growth Occupations

13-1151	Training and Development Specialists
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
43-9061	Office Clerks, General
47-2031	Carpenters
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers

#### Eastern Region

## Industry Demand

The relatively slow employment growth over the five years from 2020 to 2025 is in line with the slow growth in the important mining sector. The industries with the fastest growth were construction, manufacturing, finance and insurance, and management of companies and enterprises. The growth in the manufacturing sector was especially impressive, as it outpaced the rates of growth in all other regions and the state, which have had slowing growth over recent years.

The information, wholesale trade, and utilities were the only industries that shed jobs over the last five years. With population growth limited, jobs in education and retail trade were flat over the last five years as well. The leisure and hospitality industry, which is one of the largest employers in the region, saw significant employment growth, though the rate of growth was modest.

## Occupation Demand

The region had an overall employment gain from 2020 to 2025, albeit at a slower rate than the state. Most occupational classes gained employment, although there were notable contractions in the personal care and services occupations, including fewer childcare workers, hairdressers, residential advisors, and amusement and recreation attendants. There are more occupations that have gained employment than those that have lost; but the handful of occupations that contracted lost a lot of employment.

Noted gains include healthcare support occupations, construction, business and financial, food preparation and serving, computer and mathematical, and transportation and material moving occupations.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 175 or more positions from 2019 to 2024.

### List of Highest-Growth Occupations

11-2021	Marketing Managers
11-1021	General and Operations Managers
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks
43-9061	Office Clerks, General
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters

47-2061	Construction Laborers
47-2111	Electricians
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General

### Central/Southwest Region

#### Industry Demand

Due to the region's robust employment growth, led largely by the St. George area, nearly all industrial sectors have added jobs. The lone exception is the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector, which is not a large industry sector in this area.

In St. George's expanding economy, the accommodation and food services, healthcare, and construction industries have seen the largest growth. The healthcare and construction sectors especially are sensitive to, and expand with, an increasing population. Retail trade and professional and business services are rapidly growing industries in the area. Local population growth fuels retail trade expansion, as does neighboring-area population growth and tourism activity, as St. George is southwest Utah's regional fortress.

St. George is surrounded by sparsely populated rural areas, so consumers from surrounding and even far-flung Utah communities come to St. George for retail purchases. In addition, a major interstate highway runs through the community, providing a steady stream of travelers who patronize retail amenities. The interstate highway is not just an economic feeder for St. George, but is an economic lifeline for various smaller communities as the interstate moves northward through rural territory toward Salt Lake City.

Interstate travel, coupled with three national parks in the region, has contributed to accommodation and food services being both a prominent industry and a significant employer over the period.

Driven by the population increase, the education industry is also adding noticeable numbers of jobs. Education and manufacturing jobs in the Central/Southwest region have expanded by 2,050 and 1,600 positions, respectively, from 2020 to 2025. The remaining industries have also added sizable job gains, including the professional and technical services sector, which increased by over 1,300 jobs.

#### Occupation Demand

Of the 186 occupations measured in the St. George MSA, 130 showed some growth over the five years from 2020 to 2025.

The occupational growth contains a mixed message. Of the major occupation groups identified with the most new jobs added, average wages are lower than average wages for all occupations. These include transportation and material moving, building and grounds cleaning occupations, food preparation and serving, and office and administrative support occupations. Higher paid occupational groups that have large job gains in the region include management, business and

financial, and healthcare practitioners. Construction occupations had large gains as well; these jobs tend to pay a wage on par with the region-wide average.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 275 or more positions from 2019 to 2024.

#### List of Highest-Growth Occupations

25-1194	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary
29-1141	Registered Nurses
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
31-9092	Medical Assistants
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
41-2011	Cashiers
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
43-9061	Office Clerks, General
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2061	Construction Laborers
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers

#### Emerging Industries

Economies are continually ebbing, flowing and churning. As some industries or occupations wane, others emerge. One technique for evaluating emerging industries or occupations is to look for an increase in an industry's or occupation's share of the all-industry or all-occupation total over time.

Summarizing the data for Utah shows that the professional, scientific, and technical services industry and several construction segments lead the way. Emerging construction industry segments include specialty trade contractors, construction of buildings, and heavy and civil engineering construction.

Other industry segments that have grown more quickly than overall state employment, and thus increased their employment share, over the last five years include ambulatory health care services; couriers and messengers; merchant wholesalers in durable goods; manufacturing of food, beverages, transportation equipment, electrical equipment and appliance, and wood products; data processing; and financial securities and investments.

### Emerging Occupations

Occupations ebb and flow within the various industry sectors. While some occupations may fade or actually be replaced by computerization or automation, other occupations emerge to counter the void. Overall, the occupational mix grows and some occupations emerge to more or expanding prominence than others.

Focusing on emerging patterns, the major occupational categories that show noticeable growth include transportation and material moving occupations, management occupations, business and financial occupations, construction and extraction, computer and mathematical, food preparation and serving, and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations.

The following list of occupations has increased their share of the state's total occupational mix by 0.1% or more from 2019 to 2024.

### List of Emerging Occupations

11-2021	Marketing Managers
11-2022	Sales Managers
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers
11-9021	Construction Managers
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists
13-1111	Management Analysts
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
25-1199	Postsecondary Teachers, All Other
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
41-3091 and Travel	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services,
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents

43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2061	Construction Laborers
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers

### Regional Analysis

#### Bear River Area

##### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as those whose share of the area's employment base is growing rapidly, and in the Bear River area, multiple industries meet the criteria.

Bear River's largest employment gains have come in transportation equipment manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, ambulatory health care services, and specialty trade contractors. The manufacturing sector has a strong presence in this area, and other emerging manufacturing segments include paper, wood products and chemical manufacturing. Other emerging industries in the goods domain include merchant wholesalers in durable goods and building construction. In the services domain, management of companies, social assistance, personal and laundry services, and couriers and messengers have all added substantially to their share of employment. Repair and maintenance and educational services have also expanded their regional employment share.

##### Emerging Occupations

Occupations conform to the industry mix in the Bear River area. Manufacturing is a large part of the region's industry base, but it is becoming a smaller part of total employment in the region, so it is not surprising that production occupations have a smaller share of total employment in 2024 than in 2019. Emerging occupational groups include management occupations, business and financial operations, transportation and material moving, office and administrative support, construction and extraction and healthcare practitioners. Other major occupational categories with several emerging occupations include food preparation and serving and architecture and engineering.

The following occupations have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.12% or more from 2019 to 2024.

List of Emerging Occupations:

11-2022	Sales Managers
11-9021	Construction Managers
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
17-2199	Engineers, All Other
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
43-9061	Office Clerks, General
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2111	Electricians
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
51-3011	Bakers
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
51-5112	Printing Press Operators
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators

53-1047 First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors

53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

53-7065 Stockers and Order Fillers

### Eastern Region

#### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as industry subsectors whose share of the area's employment base is growing rapidly. This encompasses nearly 20 industries in the Eastern Region.

Collectively, manufacturing, professional and business services, construction, and financial services are the major sectors making gains in overall employment share. Within these large super sectors, specialty trade contractors, machinery and computer and electronic product manufacturing, ambulatory health care services, administrative and waste services, support activities for mining, and hospitals have seen the largest job gains. This represents mostly industries that serve demand from the local population, and are not based on customers or demand derived from outside the region.

#### Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupation gains can be categorized within management, business and financial, construction and extraction, transportation and material moving, food preparation and serving, healthcare support occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance.

Occupations on the following list have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.15% or more from 2019 to 2024.

#### List of Emerging Occupations:

11-2021 Marketing Managers

13-1151 Training and Development Specialists

35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food

35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant

35-2021 Food Preparation Workers

35-3011 Bartenders

37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners

43-4051 Customer Service Representatives

43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks

47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers

47-2031 Carpenters

47-2061	Construction Laborers
47-2111	Electricians
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General

### Central/Southwest Region

#### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as industry subsectors whose share of the area's employment base is expanding measurably, outpacing total employment growth.

Given the large and rather balanced industry growth, emerging industry segments are scattered across the industry spectrum. Construction, professional and business services, other services, and manufacturing supersectors lead the way in gaining employment share in the region. With the significant population growth the region has experienced in the last five years, it is unsurprising that construction is identified as an emerging industry. Within the construction sector, specialty trades contractors and the construction of buildings industries experienced the biggest gains in employment share.

The high-paying professional, scientific, and technical services industry added over 1,300 jobs in the region over the last five years, reflecting an influx of professionals relocating to the area.

Manufacturing segments that have expanded their employment share over the last five years include machinery, chemical, and food manufacturing, primary metal manufacturing, and electrical equipment manufacturing.

Other industries that have expanded their employment share include administrative and support services, ambulatory health care services, wholesalers of durable and nondurable goods, social assistance, amusement and recreation, couriers and messengers, repair and maintenance, food and beverage stores, and management of companies.

#### Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupation groups in the region include business and financial operations, educational instruction and library, construction and extraction, office and administrative support, and building and grounds cleaning. Even in occupation groups with a declining share of total employment, there are emerging occupations, including misc. assemblers, construction managers, real estate agents, and fast food cooks. The variety of emerging occupations reflects a regional economy expanding broadly across sectors and occupations.

Occupations on the following list have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.15% or more from 2019 to 2024.

#### List of Emerging Occupations:

13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors

25-1194	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary
31-9092	Medical Assistants
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
39-3091	Amusement and Recreation Attendants
41-3091 and Travel	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services,
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2061	Construction Laborers
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
53-1047 Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers

### Employers' Employment Needs

One of the most important occupational groupings is STEM-based occupations. The common theme is the need for elevated education, high intellect, dynamic thinking, problem solving, good management and organization skills, proficiency in the mathematical and science disciplines, superior communication skills with clear and detailed expression and attention to detail. These attributes can take years to obtain and expend extensive economic resources. These are skills and occupations that put an economy on the leading edge of innovation, growth, relevance, and opportunity.

Given Utah's robust growth across industries that employ a significant amount of STEM occupations, this implies the state is generally finding its needed labor supply. There is a general dialogue from the employer community that it would like to have more available workers, which implies that the Utah job growth rate has the potential to be even higher if there was an all-satisfying labor pool of workers with STEM-based skills and proficiencies.

Yet there are occupational classifications, based upon lower education requirements, that have their own critical needs and perceived shortages. These may largely be considered the greater economy's support or infrastructure occupations. Their appeal is offering living-wage compensation to people who don't have the means to achieve higher education.

Due to the immediate economic need of those seeking social assistance, some job training programs are designed to rapidly move people into any occupation. Other training is designed for workers who have the luxury of taking the next step: moving up the wage ladder with jobs that can pull them toward a more middle-income existence. Occupational projections are produced every two years by the Department of Workforce Services' Workforce Research and Analysis Division, along with occupational median wage measures. This information serves as the primary tool for sorting occupations by pay, educational requirements, and job outlook. Specific targeting of various training programs or initiatives can be analyzed and supported with this traditional labor market information.

Traditional labor market information can be augmented by "real-time" labor market information. This entails reviewing electronic job board postings and compiling summary statistics. Lightcast is the real-time labor market information tool utilized by the Department of Workforce Services. This offers a look into the quantity and types of jobs employers are currently offering. Advertised occupations can be sorted by the quantity of job ads, geographies, income levels, educational requirements, certifications, and desired hard and soft skills. Some of these variables are not assessed within the traditional labor market information tools provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment and Training Administration, so these real-time labor market tools have added value to this type of analysis.

Utah gains insight from Lightcast into the skills, credentials and licenses that Utah employers are currently seeking through job postings. These can be isolated to the job advertisements in Utah's various regions, and also to specific industries and occupations. Utah's utilization of this information makes it possible to include skills, credentials and licenses in Utah's WIOA plan evaluation.

The following are the top skills and certifications in Utah, as analyzed by Lightcast over the first six months of 2025. Given that top soft skills appear much more frequently in job postings than hard skills, one could conclude that soft skills are often more critical to employers than hard-skill credentials.

### Soft Skills

Communication

Customer Service

Management

Sales

Operations

Leadership  
Detail Oriented  
Problem Solving  
Writing  
Planning  
Interpersonal Communications  
Coordinating  
Professionalism  
Organizational Skills  
Time Management  
Multitasking  
Marketing  
Project Management  
Scheduling  
Research  
Verbal Communication Skills  
Troubleshooting (Problem Solving)  
Merchandising  
Teamwork  
Presentations  
Cleanliness  
Self-Motivation  
Positivity  
Accountability  
Selling Techniques

#### Hard Skills

Lifting Ability  
Microsoft Office  
Microsoft Excel  
Computer Literacy

English Language

Auditing

Fine Motor Skills

Typing

Microsoft Outlook

Workflow Management

Accounting

Good Driving Record

Mathematics

Finance

Data Analysis

Microsoft PowerPoint

Warehousing

Nursing

General Mathematics

#### Certifications

Valid Driver's License

Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification

Registered Nurse (RN)

Food Handler's Card

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification

Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

Security Clearance

Secret Clearance

First Aid Certification

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification

CDL Class A License

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Board Certified/Board Eligible

Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

Teaching Certificate

Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)

ServSafe Certification

Basic Cardiac Life Support

Forklift Certification

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certified

Project Management Professional Certification

Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP)

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

## B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

### I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

### II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

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

### III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

#### Employment and Unemployment

Utah's strategic plan and vision are based on an analysis of the state's current economy and workforce, which has fully recovered from the pandemic. The pandemic was a temporary interruption of Utah's economy that did not alter the underlying trend variables that have influenced it over its recent history. There appear to be some structural changes remaining from the pandemic, like an increased amount of teleworking, but that does not significantly alter the need for

and distribution of occupations. It will change the location of the work environment, but not necessarily the functions expected of it.

Since the low point after the Great Recession, the size of the Utah labor force has been on a steady climb. The labor force measures around 1,845,800 in June 2025. Over the previous 10 years, the labor force has increased steadily at a rate of around 2.4% per year, adding a total of 385,400 potential workers.

The Utah labor force is the youngest in the nation. Utah has the nation's lowest median age and, correspondingly, the youngest labor force. A young labor force implies a greater percentage of the population active in the labor force. Utah also generally has a lower unemployment rate than the national average, which has been the case for the majority of the last several decades.

As of June 2025, the Utah employment-to-population ratio is at 65.8%. This means that of the 16-and-older population (which is considered the age range of the potential labor force), 65.8% is employed, representing a full recovery from the COVID-induced low of 60.7% in April 2020, though it has fallen slightly over the past two years. Utah's current rate is also higher than the national average of around 60%, but is lower than Utah's pre-Great Recession rate of 70%.

The Utah labor force is currently characterized as fully employed. Its mid-2025 unemployment rate stood at 3.2% and has been below 3.5% since January 2021, after reaching a COVID-recession high of 10.0% in April 2020. Unemployment was below 3.0% for over two years, from mid-2021 to early 2024, and while it has crept up slightly over the past couple of years, it remains a low rate.

Utah's labor market began softening slightly in late 2023 and early 2024, but it remains tight. Unemployment has risen somewhat since the incredibly low rates seen in 2022, and labor force participation has dropped to a more sustainable proportion. The unique conditions of the post-pandemic economy, when a high demand for labor significantly pushed up wages, encouraged workers who otherwise would have remained out of the labor force to enter it. With the return to a more normal economy, those strong incentives have faded, and labor force participation has returned to a rate more commonly seen in Utah's recent history.

The overall drop in labor force participation in Utah is due to a decline in male participation. The female participation rate has held mostly steady, changing only marginally from 61.8% in 2023 (the height of post-pandemic labor force participation) to 61.9% in 2025. The male participation rate fell from 77.7% to 75.1% over the same time period.

The following table and written analysis provide an overview of workforce data, including labor force participation by age, education and race as well as discussion of data for individuals with barriers to employment, in particular, individuals with disabilities.

Type	Quantity	Source
Poverty	216,719	Poverty and below; 18+Population ACS Table S1701
American Indian and Alaska Natives	74,533	ACS Table B02010
Native Hawaiian	2,482	ACS Table B02016
Individuals with Disabilities	371,156	ACS Table S1810
Youth with Disabilities	40,010	0 to 17 Population; ACS Table S1810

Type	Quantity	Source
Older Individuals	726,359	WIOA definition of "Older" is 55 and over, ACS S0101
Homeless Individuals	2,404	HUD 20242 Point-In-Time Homelessness, Annual Assessment Report
Foster Care	111,337	ACS Table B09018
English Learners	28,518	ACS Table S1602, number of Households
Low Levels of Literacy	341,574	National Center for Educ. Statistics PIAAC (14%) and the ACS for ages 16-74
Substantial Cultural Barriers	8,154	Department of Workforce Services, number of clients self-identified as having cultural barriers at time of enrollment / initial service
Migrant Farmworkers	1,207	WIOA definition is migrant farm workers 2017 Ag Census Table 7
Individuals within 2 Years of TANF Exhaust	8,208	Department of Workforce Services, number of clients who enrolled in a WIOA program or received an initial Wagner-Peyser service between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2024 and are within two years of exhausting TANF benefits at the time of enrollment / initial service
Single Parent	76,852	ACS Table B11003
Single Parent - male	22,285	ACS Table B11003
Single Parent - female	54,567	ACS Table B11003
Long-term Unemployed	9,300	Six months or longer, Current Population Survey data
Displaced Homemaker	81,672	Single female in the labor force ACS Table S2302
Veterans	109,653	ACS S2101
Veterans - male	101,263	ACS S2101
Veterans - female	8,390	ACS S2101
Veterans - Gulf War (2001+)	34,277	ACS S2101
Veterans - Gulf War (1990)	27,230	ACS S2101
Veterans - Vietnam	37,364	ACS S2101
Veterans - Korea	5,064	ACS S2101
Veterans - WWII	1,118	ACS S2101

Type	Quantity	Source
Veterans 18-34	9,901	ACS S2101
Veterans 35-54	26,077	ACS S2101
Veterans 55-64	16,801	ACS S2101
Veterans 65-74	23,646	ACS S2101
Veterans 75+	33,228	ACS S2101
Veterans with any disability	32,102	ACS S2101
Education - Less than high school	144,219	ACS S2101
Education - High School	461,141	ACS S2101
Education - Some College/Associates	676,087	ACS S2101
Education - Bachelors Plus	798,718	ACS S2101
Labor Force	1,845,760	BLS LAUS June 2025
Labor Force - Participation Rate	68.0%	BLS LAUS June 2025
Labor Force - Employed	1,786,305	BLS LAUS June 2025
Labor Force - Unemployed	59,455	BLS LAUS June 2025
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	BLS LAUS June 2025

ACS = American Community Survey 2019-2023, U.S. Census Bureau

CPS = Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

BLS LAUS = Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The labor force participation rate is lower among both males and females with disabilities, as identified in the Current Population Survey by respondents' self-reporting on six types of physical or cognitive difficulties. These include difficulty with hearing, vision, memory, physical ability, personal care and mobility. For the 12 months ending in July 2025, the labor force participation rates for those with disabilities registered at 37.9% for males and 27.6% for females (compared to 79.2% and 65.1%, respectively, for those without disabilities). These rates are essentially unchanged from 2022 levels. Typically, work opportunities for those with disabilities increase when the overall labor force is fully employed.

Workers with disabilities are more likely to be employed in part-time positions. In 2025, 61% of workers with disabilities were employed full-time, compared to 73.5% of workers without disabilities. Trends in full-time versus part-time employment for workers with disabilities have shifted noticeably in the years since the COVID pandemic. The proportion of workers with disabilities employed in full-time positions has increased since 2020, but is down from a high of around 74% in late 2023. The increase in full-time employment prevalence among workers with

disabilities during 2021 to 2023 is reflective of the historic labor shortages that have benefited the employment prospects of individuals who face barriers to employment.

The Utah labor force is predominantly male at 55%, with females at 45%. The white population is the largest racial group in the labor force at 92%. The Hispanic community makes up 16% of the Utah labor force. That cohort has a 75.9% labor force participation rate. The male Hispanic participation rate is 80.9% compared to the overall Utah all-male rate of 75.1%. The female Hispanic participation rate of 70.8% is also higher than the all-female participation rate of 61.9%. The male participation rate among Hispanic men has fallen since before the pandemic, while it has risen for Hispanic females. The male rate has decreased from 85.5% in 2019 to 80.9% in 2025, and the corresponding female rate has increased from 60.2% to 70.8%.

Overall labor force participation rates are similar in 2025 to pre-pandemic rates. All age groups saw increases in labor force participation in the years following the pandemic, but as the labor market has softened slightly, participation has returned to a rate more comparable to the pre-COVID rate. In 2019 Utah had a labor force participation rate of 68.5%, and through the first six months of 2025 the rate was 68.3%.

Data on labor force participation among youth with disabilities is limited, but the difference in labor force participation rates among those with disabilities versus those without disabilities is apparent in the Current Population Survey data. This data shows that the labor force participation rate for teens ages 16 to 19 with a disability was approximately 26% in 2025 versus 50% among teens without a disability. Both groups have shown declines in labor force participation rates since 2022, when the rates stood at approximately 37% and 55% for those with and without disabilities, respectively.

Employers have offered substantially higher wages for the group of youngest and least skilled workers in recent years amidst tight labor markets. Labor force participation among prime age workers (25 to 54 years old) has increased nearly two percentage points from 2019 to 2025, rising from 81.8% to 83.5%. The 55-64 age group had one of the most noticeable increases in labor force participation (68.9% to 73.9%), implying older adults are more reluctant or less able to retire. Two age categories showed only marginal changes in labor force participation: the 20 to 24-year age group (79.7% fell slightly to 79.2%), and those aged 65 years or more (19.7% to 21.1%).

Labor force participation rates across educational attainment levels (of those 25 years and over) were similar in 2025 and 2019. Those with less than a high school education exhibited the largest increase in labor force participation, up 6.1 percentage points from 53.9% in 2019 to 61.0% in 2025. Individuals with a high school education became slightly less likely to participate in the labor force, falling from 65.0% to 64.6%. Those with some college or an associate degree saw a moderate increase from 65.1% to 66.3%; and those with a bachelor's degree or higher exhibited an increase from 72.0% to 74.2%.

While the participation rate of individuals with less than a high school diploma saw the largest growth since before the pandemic, it also had the largest decline in total population. In 2019, 5.9% (around 111,000 people) of Utah's adult population had less than a high school degree, while in 2025, only 4.7% of the adult population (100,000 people) had less than a high school degree. This indicates that some people without a high school degree returned to school and earned a GED or another higher education credential. It's possible that these people were struggling to find employment and thought it worthwhile to obtain more education to aid in their career goals.

The largest percentage of the Utah labor force is the 25 to 34-year-old grouping, at 24%. The 35 to 44-year-old group comprises 20%, the 45 to 54-year-old group makes up 18%, 20 to 24-year-olds

comprise 13%, and those aged 65 or more comprise 5% of the labor force. Teens aged 16 to 19, as mentioned above, make up 6% of the labor force. The overall Utah labor force is young in comparison to the national average. Just over 58% of Utah's labor force is between 20 and 44 years old, while that same percentage at the national level is closer to 53%. Workers aged 55 and older account for 17.9% of Utah's labor force and 22.8% of the national labor force.

Unemployment rates vary across demographic groups, but are all within a few percentage points of the overall statewide rate. The increased labor availability due to elevated labor force participation is quickly being employed in the expanding state economy. The statewide unemployment rate in mid-2025 is 3.2%. By selected demographic groups, the values are 2.9% for males, 4.1% for females, 3.0% for white males, 6.3% for white females, 3.4% for Hispanic males, and 4.9% for Hispanic females. The number of long-term unemployed persons, who have been unemployed for more than six months, stood at 9,300 in mid-2025. This level is up significantly from 5,400 in mid-2024, but still quite a bit lower than the 12,600 long-term unemployed in mid-2021.

Among veterans, the unemployment rate fell from 2.4% in 2019 to 2.0% in 2023, indicating that veterans in the labor force are fully employed. Labor force participation among Gulf War era I and II veterans remained nearly the same pre- and post-pandemic, from 80.2% in 2019 to 88.0% in 2025. Each of these participation measures exceeds those of the non-veteran population, which rose from 66.9% to 68.5%.

Concerning poverty, approximately 9.0% of the state's total population has an income less than 100% of the poverty level. The rate is the same for the working age segment (ages 18-64).

Utah's poverty rate ebbs and flows over the economic cycle, but over time it remains largely within a 8%-10% range.

Poverty spreads through society in unequal distributions. Race and ethnicity are often a critical dissector. Utah's population is 80% white, and the poverty rate with this group is 7.7%. This is by far the lowest poverty rate by race in the state. All other racial groups have poverty rates above the statewide average. The highest is the American Indian community, with poverty at 19.8%. The American Indian community accounts for about 2% of Utah's population. However, this community is concentrated in rural counties throughout the state, accounting for a sizable portion of the total population base in those areas. Counties with relatively high concentrations of American Indian residents include Uintah (Ute tribe) and San Juan (Navajo).

The African American community in Utah makes up 1% of the population base (37,140) and carries a poverty rate of 16.1%.

The Asian community makes up 2.5% of Utah's population base (83,215) and carries a poverty rate of 12.8%, a large increase from previous years.

In Utah, those of Hispanic or Latino origin are 16% of the population base (537,986) with a poverty rate of 13.1%.

Education levels also emerge as a poverty segmentation. These range from 3.8% for adults (25+) with a bachelor's degree or higher, to 15.8% for those with less than a high school education.

The statewide labor force participation rate was 70.2% in 2023. For the American Indian community, it was slightly lower at 68.4%. Labor force participation often occurs due to the need to generate income. In Utah, mineral royalties and other transfer payments can be a high proportion of the American Indian community's income stream. Therefore, that community's need for payroll employment as an income source may be less critical due to these non-payroll income streams. This situation may play into the lower-than-average Native American labor force participation rate.

Of the 843,200 families in Utah, 19.4% (163,615) are single-parent families. Within that single-parent classification, 66.1% are single-parent females (108,103), and 33.9% single-parent males (55,512). Of the 108,103 who are female single householders, half have children under 18 in their family. Of the 55,512 male single householders, 40.1% have children under age 18 in their household.

### Labor Market Trends

Throughout U.S. history, the economic labor supply has expanded nationally with above-replacement internal population growth coupled with new in-migrants to produce an ample labor supply. For the first time in the nation's history, the steady expansion of labor supply is beginning to slow.

As the nation's aging Baby Boom generation exits the labor force, it is leaving in its wake a smaller labor pool. With the exodus of that generation, which made up a large portion of the workforce, the national economy is becoming more reliant on international in-migration to provide the workforce necessary to support the economy. With a slowing population growth rate from 2017 to 2021, there were concerns of major impending labor shortages, but an uptick in population growth from 2022 to 2024 has helped assuage these concerns. The majority of in-migration to the state in 2022, 2023 and 2024 has been from international migration, as domestic migration to Utah from other states has declined. Natural increase of the population during this period has remained low and in decline.

The forces producing the nation's current labor force dynamics began more than 70 years ago when the Baby Boom generation emerged. At this time, the U.S. population was nearly four-to-one pre-labor age population to retirement-age population. The Baby Boom generation was a sizable mass, and the nation was about to experience a large injection of young labor.

The working-age population largely establishes the size of economic activity. As the Baby Boom generation began to enter the labor market, both the United States and Utah economies needed to expand to absorb and employ this group. The Baby Boom generation was poised to significantly expand both economies.

By 1980, the Baby Boom generation had aged into the U.S. economy, and the expected economic expansion was underway. However, economies don't expand overnight, and initially, the unemployment rate was high and available unskilled labor was substantial. Utah's experience has differed from the nation's because of its population dynamics. Utah's Baby Boom generation was supplemented by large population echo booms, which were less pronounced nationally. That contrast set the stage for Utah's young labor force and the nation's current demographic shifts.

By 2020, the Baby Boom had stretched the U.S. economy to its fullest extent. To maintain the economy at this expanded size after the Baby Boom's departure, there must be a sufficient quantity of youthful labor.

An economy's size is correlated with the available labor force size. With sufficient additional labor, an economy can grow. Conversely, an insufficient labor supply can constrain or even reverse economic growth. If more workers age out of the labor force than enter it, the labor supply shrinks. When this situation occurs, the initial stage is announced with a low-skill labor shortage, as the backfill of available labor is insufficient. In recent years, certain industries—especially those not requiring specialized skills—have begun to experience hiring challenges. While not yet widespread across all sectors, these shortages could become more common if labor force growth slows further.

The overall United States' population growth rate slowed sharply in 2021, when the Census Bureau reported an increase of just 0.1%, "the slowest rate since the founding of the nation." This was due

to a combination of factors—international in-migration had slowed dramatically during the pandemic, and natural increase had neared zero, with the number of annual deaths nationwide approaching the number of annual births. The trend of a slowing natural increase is expected to continue as the population ages, eventually leading to a natural decline of the population when deaths outpace births. On the other hand, the sharp decline in international migration has rebounded strongly, offsetting much of the slowdown in natural increase. This renewed migration flow is currently the primary driver of U.S. population growth.

The size of the Baby Boom generation pushed the United States' labor market and economic output to a historical peak. As more Baby Boomers retire, they will continue to support economic consumption, even as they exit the production side of the economy. In the long term, ensuring there is enough productive labor to meet economic demand will be a key challenge for the economy to avoid national and regional labor shortages. While the pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in certain parts of the labor market, the nation's capacity to attract and integrate new workers—both domestically and internationally—will play an increasingly central role in maintaining economic vitality.

Labor is a churning reservoir. It follows the money upward. The U.S. has always found an adequate supply of low-skilled labor to backfill this upward kinesis. This need for low-skill labor can be seen in the high engagement of Utah teenage workers in the labor force. Teens are exhibiting high levels of labor force participation, with employers turning to this lower-skilled age cohort to fill many positions. A large majority of teenage workers are employed in the retail trade and accommodations industries in occupations commensurate with their relative lack of work experience and advanced skills. As of late 2024, the industry most reliant on youth workers ages 14 to 18 was food services and drinking places (approximately 21% of all workers in this industry). In arts, entertainment and recreation, 10% of workers were ages 14 to 18 and 7% of retail trade employees were in this age range.

The nation's current demographic profile implies that a backfill of teen labor will lessen with time, and employment in low-skilled jobs will need to be replaced from an alternative source as natural increase slows and the population ages. International in-migration could prove to be the solution needed.

### Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The most recent five-year estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey report that the Utah population ages 25 and over is educated in the following proportions:

Less than high school: 6.7%; High school: 22.5%; Some college, no degree: 24.1%; Associate's degree: 9.8%; Bachelor's degree: 24.3%; Graduate/professional degree: 12.6%. A past headline of an internet article stating "More People are Underemployed Now than in 2000" is not a surprising conclusion. The main reason is that the overall labor force in Utah (and the nation) is overeducated relative to the economy's occupational mix and minimum education requirements. This is a good mismatch (over education) to have as the alternative would hinder the economy. For the underemployed, this can be a frustrating situation, but for the economy as a whole, it is not an economic drag.

Pairing the percentage of Utah occupational employment with the same educational classifications shows the educational disparity:

### Statewide

Education	Percentage of 25+ Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	6.7%	20.8%
High school	22.5%	38.5%
Some college, no degree	24.1%	8.9%
Associate's degree	9.8%	2.3%
Bachelor's degree	24.3%	24.6%
Graduate/professional degree	12.6%	3.9%

These percentages indicate there could be a large cohort of underemployed people. For example, in Utah the occupational mix currently asks for 4% of the Utah population to carry a graduate or professional degree to meet the hard skills of the occupational mix. Yet nearly 13% of the Utah population carries a graduate or professional degree. All of the levels of educational attainment other than the bachelor's degree level show an over-education of the workforce related to the demands of the occupational mix. One can see that a sizable percentage of the population must fall "backward" from their education attainment in order to find a job.

#### Bear River

Education	Percentage of 25+ Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	6.5%	25.7%
High school	24.0%	40.0%
Some college, no degree	25.8%	7.5%
Associate's degree	8.0%	1.4%
Bachelor's degree	23.3%	22.8%
Graduate/professional degree	12.3%	2.5%

#### Eastern

Education	Percentage of 25+ Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	9.3%	29.9%
High school	32.9%	39.0%
Some college, no degree	27.8%	8.8%
Associate's degree	10.6%	1.4%
Bachelor's degree	13.2%	19.1%
Graduate/professional degree	6.2%	2.0%

### Central/Southwest

Education	Percentage of 25+ Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	6.4%	30.3%
High school	24.4%	37.0%
Some college, no degree	26.5%	10.3%
Associate's degree	12.1%	1.4%
Bachelor's degree	19.6%	18.1%
Graduate/professional degree	11.0%	2.8%

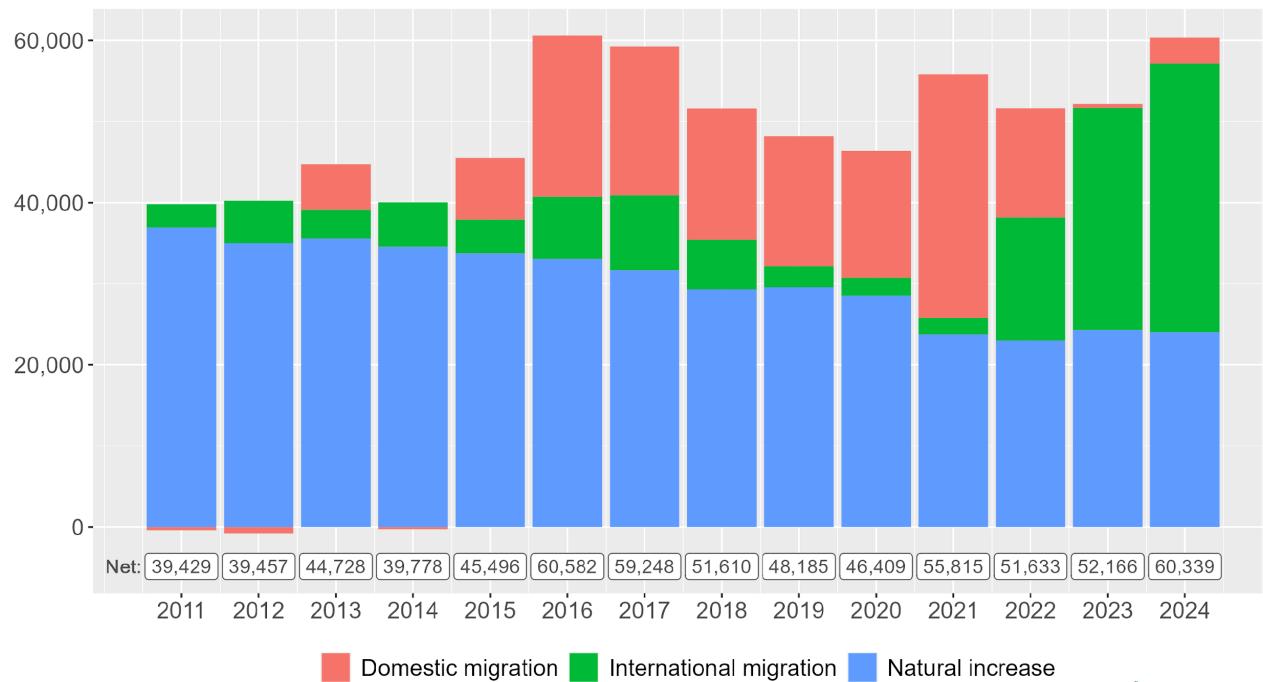
Across these areas and in education attainment, those with graduate/professional degrees display the largest mismatch between the education attained and the education required. Only in the Eastern region does the demand of the occupational landscape for workers with bachelor's degrees or higher (21.1% of jobs) exceed the educational attainment of the regional workforce (19.4% with bachelor's degrees or higher).

This general "over education" of the labor force would imply that the skills needed to fuel the overall Utah economy are there. It is also hard to argue with Utah's economy, which is one of the fastest growing in the nation post-Great Recession, and is not finding enough workers or skills to satisfy the economy's needs.

### **C. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.**

Utah's high rate of job growth, averaging 2.8% annually over the past ten years, is a testament to a high level of success in meeting the hiring, education and skills needs of the economy. High levels of in-migration from other regions – mostly other U.S. states but also some international migration – have been instrumental in expanding the state's supply of labor. Where any shortfalls of the workforce exist in meeting the economy's needs for hiring, education and skills, the state has generally been able to attract new labor from other regions, as shown in the figure below.

## Utah: Components of population change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division



### Utah Components of Population Change

At a more detailed level of analysis focusing on individual occupations, skills and education, shortfalls can exist. Examining changes in earnings by occupation is one way to identify such shortfalls. Occupational earnings reveal preferences of the labor market for different types of educational and skills attainment, and the rate of change in occupational earnings reflects the relative balance of supply and demand for these skills.

The laws of supply and demand tell us that when labor market demand for an occupation outstrips available labor supply, that occupation's earnings will increase. When an occupation's pay grows at a pace faster than the average statewide pace, this signals a relative scarcity of labor for that occupation. As such, occupations with high rates of pay gains are indicative of areas of opportunity for workforce skills and education development.

Following this logic, ranking occupations by rates of pay increases is a reasonable way to assess areas of opportunity for skill and education development to meet the economy's needs. For 593 occupations in Utah, rates of pay increase from 2019 to 2024 were calculated and ranked. The top 20% of occupations were retained as the set most likely constrained by labor scarcity. Expanding the labor supply for these occupations would bring the supply closer to the suspected labor market demand.

The skills and education requirements of these labor-scarce occupations skew heavily toward the lower end of the educational-requirement spectrum. Nearly two-thirds (60%) of the occupations on the list have either no formal educational requirement or require only a high school education. In contrast, only 23% need a bachelor's degree while 12% require a professional or graduate degree.

For the occupations with lower educational requirements, on-the-job training is often sufficient to competently perform occupational duties. Most of these jobs don't have any requirements for prior work experience, and the requirements that do exist are minimal. This indicates that the lower educational occupations that are in high demand, as shown by the fastest increasing wages, are not struggling to find workers because they don't meet a list of onerous requirements, but because it's a competitive labor market.

For higher-skilled occupations on the list, a large proportion are in the production, health care and STEM fields, reinforcing the importance of expanding workforce skills and education in these domains.

Following the method described above, the selected labor-scarce occupations, grouped by educational requirement levels, are listed below. Areas of opportunity exist to meet the economy's hiring needs by expanding the skills and educational attainment of the state's workforce in these labor-scarce occupations.

#### Professional and Graduate Degrees

11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary
15-2041	Statisticians
19-1021	Biochemists and Biophysicists
21-1015	Rehabilitation Counselors
23-1012	Judicial Law Clerks
23-1023	Judges, Magistrate Judges, and Magistrates
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary
29-1011	Chiropractors
29-1041	Optometrists
29-1131	Veterinarians
29-1215	Family Medicine Physicians
29-1218	Obstetricians and Gynecologists
29-1223	Psychiatrists
29-9091	Athletic Trainers

Medical, educational, and STEM fields dominate the list of labor scarce occupations with high educational requirements. Notable on this list are medical and mental health professionals, law occupations and postsecondary teaching occupations.

#### Bachelor's Degrees

11-1021	General and Operations Managers
11-1031	Legislators
11-3031	Financial Managers

11-9031	Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare
13-1075	Labor Relations Specialists
13-2061	Financial Examiners
13-2071	Credit Counselors
15-2011	Actuaries
17-1012	Landscape Architects
17-2111	Health and Safety Engineers, Except Mining Safety Engineers and Inspectors
21-1029	Social Workers, All Other
21-1091	Health Education Specialists
21-1092	Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School
25-2058	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term
27-1022	Fashion Designers
27-2022	Coaches and Scouts
27-3011	Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys

A theme of occupations related to education and STEM fields can also be seen in this list of labor scarce occupations requiring a bachelor's degree.

Associate's Degrees or Some postsecondary Training and Certification

17-3019	Drafters, All Other
17-3027	Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians
27-4014	Sound Engineering Technicians
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2051	Dietetic Technicians
29-2053	Psychiatric Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
31-1131	Nursing Assistants
31-9011	Massage Therapists
33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers
33-2011	Firefighters

39-5094	Skincare Specialists
49-2097	Audiovisual Equipment Installers and Repairers
51-9162	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers
53-2012	Commercial Pilots

Services related to personal and health care predominate on this list of labor-scarce occupations with moderate educational requirements. Many of the occupations on the list require STEM competency, and many have a protective services or architecture and engineering focus.

High School or less

27-1019	Artists and Related Workers, All Other
27-2021	Athletes and Sports Competitors
27-2023	Umpires, Referees, and Other Sports Officials
29-2081	Opticians, Dispensing
33-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives
33-2022	Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant
39-7010	Tour and Travel Guides
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents
43-5031	Public Safety Telecommunicators
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers
47-4031	Fence Erectors
47-4090	Miscellaneous Construction and Related Workers
47-5081	Helpers--Extraction Workers
49-3022	Automotive Glass Installers and Repairers
49-3091	Bicycle Repairers
49-9096	Riggers
51-2031	Engine and Other Machine Assemblers
51-2051	Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
51-4034	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic

51-4193	Plating Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
51-6041	Shoe and Leather Workers and Repairers
51-6093	Upholsterers
51-7011	Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters
51-7099	Woodworkers, All Other
51-8092	Gas Plant Operators
51-9124	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators
51-9191	Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders
51-9194	Etchers and Engravers
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
53-6051	Transportation Inspectors
53-7072	Pump Operators, Except Wellhead Pumpers

This list of labor-scarce occupations with low formal educational requirements has been selected to reflect jobs requiring specialized skills that are learned on the job, either through moderate or long-term job training. Occupations in the production and construction major occupational groups are prominent.

## 2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

### A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required<sup>6</sup> and optional one-stop delivery system partners.<sup>7</sup>

[6] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

## B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

### C. State Workforce Development Capacity

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Utah's Combined Plan includes an analysis of its workforce development activities, including education and training in the state, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers, as identified above.

Utah's workforce development activities include the education and training activities of the core programs, one-stop center (AJC) required partner programs and other partners.

Utah's Governor, Spencer Cox, has established the Built Here Second Term Strategic Plan to highlight his team's goals and strategies that support and address the state's workforce development needs. Below are the plan's goals, outlining three that will be prioritized. The goals are:

- People: A future of health and opportunity for every Utahn.

Create a thriving Utah where every individual can fully engage in the pursuit of happiness. By fostering innovation, supporting education, improving health and wellness, and promoting community progress, we empower our people, seek out healthy living, and ensure that every person can contribute to and benefit from the state's growth and prosperity.

- Place: Neighborhoods and communities where the American Dream thrives.

Foster a vibrant, sustainable, safe environment that enhances the quality of life for all residents and visitors, ensuring Utah thrives as a hub of innovation, natural beauty, family, economic opportunity, and cultural richness. We preserve the state's unique pioneer spirit, promote responsible growth, and support initiatives that contribute to long-term prosperity and community well-being.

- Prosperity: An economy that celebrates entrepreneurs, rural Utah, education, and the spirit of service.

Advance Utah's role as a beacon of prosperity and freedom, leveraging its rich natural resources, innovative spirit, and strong community values. We promote sustainable growth, economic resilience, and quality of life for all residents, ensuring that current and future generations experience the benefits of a vibrant, prosperous state.

Utah is known as the most family-friendly state in the nation, and Governor Cox is committed to keeping it that way. In 2022, Governor Cox announced the formation of a new Office of Families and hired a senior advisor tasked with finding ways to strengthen families so children have better outcomes. Families are a key social institution, and the governor understands that when families are nurtured, stronger communities are built, which improves the quality of life for all.

Governor Cox is committed to ensuring Utah's economy and its residents remain strong and resilient. He understands the government's role in the economy and will continue to keep taxes in check, support business-friendly policies and regulatory reform and focus on workforce development. The governor knows that helping businesses to grow, investing in

Utah children's education, expanding opportunity, taking care of those in need and building infrastructure in both urban and rural Utah will benefit the state's economy and its people far into the future.

Utah's governor understands the importance of access to high quality and affordable health care. He is focused on promoting innovative ways to cut health care costs, addressing the social factors that can adversely affect health, preventing disease through healthy lifestyles, and increasing mental health resources and suicide prevention efforts.

Governor Cox recognizes that the state's future depends on the well-being and education of children. Every investment made in schools will pay dividends, not only for individual success, but for society as a whole. He's also committed to adjusting how Utah schools are funded. Right now, those who live in lower-income school districts pay higher taxes but receive less than half the per-student funding than those living in the wealthiest school districts. The quality of a child's education should not be dictated by their zip code. In addition, Governor Cox is focused on creating new pathways for students entering the workforce. By expanding access to college and technical classes in high school, apprenticeships and relevant workforce-aligned programs at technical colleges and universities, Utah can prepare today's students for the jobs of tomorrow.

Governor Cox grew up in rural Utah and his family has lived and farmed in Sanpete County for six generations. Because he innately understands the needs of Utah's rural areas, Governor Cox is committed to bringing residents in every part of Utah access to the support necessary for prosperity. He advocates for more investments in water conservation and measures to ensure water security and preserve the Great Salt Lake. He supports farmers and ranchers by investing in more efficient agricultural water systems and promoting Utah agriculture. He endorses an "all of the above" approach to energy policy, pushing for more oil and gas production, more mining of critical minerals, more charging stations for electric vehicles and more development of wind, solar, geothermal and nuclear power sources. Utah has been a long-time leader in expanding broadband, which will help create jobs and new economic development opportunities, and Governor Cox will continue to find ways that aid rural businesses, schools and residents.

In Fall 2025, Utah unveiled plans to bring a nuclear hub to Brigham City, Utah. Through a partnership developed with Operation Gigawatt, Hi Tech Solutions, Holtech International, Utah universities, and state and local governments, Utah will increase manufacturing employment and skills development opportunities. This partnership is strategically aligned with key national priorities, specifically by advancing American energy security and innovation. Utah will work to ensure that families and businesses have access to reliable, affordable energy - powering essential infrastructure from homes and farms to rapidly expanding data centers that drive global leadership in artificial intelligence (AI).

#### Education & Training

#### Utah System of Higher Education

The Utah System of Higher Education consists of 16 public colleges and universities, which include:

Eight technical colleges providing technical education certificate programs and occupational skills: Bridgerland Technical College, Davis Technical College, Dixie Technical College, Mountainland Technical College, Ogden-Weber Technical College, Southwest Technical College, Tooele Technical College, Uintah Basin Technical College

- Two community colleges, providing technical education certificates and associate degree programs, occupational skills, and academic programs leading to transfer certificates and associate degrees: Salt Lake Community College, Snow College
- Four regional universities, providing academic certificates, associate and bachelor's degrees, and limited master's degrees: Southern Utah University, Utah Tech University, Utah Valley University, Weber State University
- Two research universities, providing bachelor's and graduate degrees, and research: the University of Utah, Utah State University (Utah State University also provides technical education and community college roles in southeastern Utah)

These public institutions provide the majority of higher education programs and services within the state. They serve as economic levers for the state through research, teaching and service, and career and technical education. Institutions work closely with local business and industry leaders to develop and deliver career and technical education certificate and associate degree programs specifically tailored to local workforce needs, utilizing employer advisory committees and employer partnerships for internships and placement, equipment or program support and more. Institutions are focused on workforce development, career counseling, internship services, apprenticeships and career employment. Institutions maintain close association with each other and with high schools to ensure pathways and educational opportunities are available to students. Collectively, these Utah System of Higher Education institutions serve over 215,000 students.

USHE's technical colleges are accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Each program is accountable for meeting benchmarks annually for student completion (60%), placement (70%) and licensure (70%), validating relevance and alignment with industry needs. Most programs are offered in a competency-based format, providing opportunities for students to receive credit for prior learning experience. This increases the efficiency and affordability of training for students. Many programs include pathways that support transfer opportunities, encouraging students to continue their education between secondary and postsecondary institutions.

In addition to institutional accreditation, institutions offer programs that require, or electively seek, programmatic accreditations and approvals. Such programs are held to rigorous standards of compliance, performance and student outcomes. Many programs prepare students for industry credentials, including certification and licensure. These approvals and student attainment of credentials provide third-party validation of program quality and alignment with industry needs.

Utah System of Higher Education institutions provide opportunities for secondary students to access and progress in postsecondary education while in high school. Students can complete college coursework tuition-free, with nominal fees, through dual enrollment at a technical college or concurrent enrollment at a degree-granting institution.

Under the direction of the Utah Board of Higher Education, the Utah College Advising Corps has expanded to serve 89 high schools during the 2021-2022 school year, with the intention to expand to support every high school with high-quality college advising by 2024-2025.

USHE's technical education institutions administer a state-funded program titled Custom Fit, which provides and supports training designed to aid in retention and expansion of Utah companies, attract new businesses to the state, and meet employers' specific educational needs. Companies pay 50-70% of the costs for short-term employee training. In fiscal year 2022, 1,894 companies and 20,180 employees were served by Custom Fit training.

### Utah Adult Education

Utah Adult Education plays an important role in workforce development as a partner. Utah Adult Education provides three core services, including:

- Literacy instruction for students with academic levels below the ninth grade
- High school completion through a 24-credit secondary diploma or completion of the GED®
- English Language Acquisition for multilingual students

Adult education empowers out-of-school individuals ages 16 and above to become self-sufficient by gaining the skills necessary for postsecondary education and training, employment and personal success. Utah Adult Education assists adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed for success in college, employment and self-sufficiency while completing a secondary education and basic literacy instruction. Utah Adult Education also partners with community resources to ensure students have access to needed resources.

Utah Adult Education provides services to over 20,000 students annually through 40 programs located across the state. Thirty-seven programs reside in school districts, and three programs are community based organizations. Adult education services are provided to students residing in the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison and the Utah State Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City. In addition, adult education services are offered to students in 25 county jails located across the state.

Utah Adult Education providers partner with employers to provide services tailored to the needs of employers. Partnerships with Ultrudent, Proxima, and Quality Electrical Services are all examples of effective partnerships that aid workforce development. Adult Education pre-apprenticeship and Integrated Education and Training programs accelerate students' pathways to sustainable wages and personal success.

### Utah State Board of Education (K-12)

Public secondary education (K-12) is a vital partner in meeting the state's overall education and training objectives. Educating the children of Utah prepares them for postsecondary education and the workforce. In addition, there are programs and partner programs that directly support this transition, including:

- College and Career Awareness: Explores and prepares students for college and career pathways, focusing on jobs that are high skill and high demand, as well as satisfying and financially rewarding
- Career and Technical Education: Creates pathways to lifelong career success for every secondary student by providing him or her with the technical skills and academic knowledge needed to prepare for future employment and/or a successful transition to postsecondary education
- Work-Based Learning: Provides sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or simulated environments at an educational

institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

- Career and Technical Education Pathways: A pathway is a sequence of courses within a student's area of interest. A pathway connects from high school to college for a certificate, a degree and/or career. Pathways help students prepare for college and career by offering appropriate academic and skill development, concurrent enrollment courses that meet degree requirements and earn state and industry certifications.
- Concurrent Enrollment and agreements with postsecondary institutions: The purpose of Concurrent Enrollment is to provide a challenging college-level experience for students in their last two years of high school. Course offerings in math, science, social studies, language arts, fine arts, humanities, world languages, career and technical programs, and education have been implemented in high schools throughout the state.
- Advanced Placement program: Offers high school students worldwide the opportunity to take college-level courses while attending secondary school. Advanced Placement courses are invariably more rigorous than other high-school offerings.

## **Department of Workforce Services Divisions**

### Workforce Development Division

The Department of Workforce Services' employment exchange system supports workforce development. The core of our mission is cultivating a workforce led by industry, with a top priority of implementing industry-driven strategies that align the skills and knowledge of Utah's citizens with the critical needs of employers. Whether an American job seeker is in the beginning phases of choosing a career or needs a better job, the Department of Workforce Services provides an integrated system of online and in-person services. This coordinated employment exchange system leverages technology and labor market information (LMI) to streamline access to training, education and other resources. This commitment helps secure reliable talent pipelines, enabling the necessary flexibility and innovation required to effectively fuel Utah's economic engine. The Workforce Development Division continues to provide a variety of virtual resources for individuals, including online workshops and virtual job fairs. Additional workforce development tools and activities include:

- Career coaching and planning
- Job readiness preparation
- Job matching
- On-the-job learning opportunities
- Business development and partnerships
- Economic data

### Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR)

The Department of Workforce Services' Utah State Office of Rehabilitation provides Vocational Rehabilitation services designed to support individuals with disabilities in reaching their career and educational aspirations. This encompasses a broad range of tailored interventions, including counseling, training and other supportive measures. Through these services, individuals are empowered to navigate challenges, enhance their capabilities and confidently enter into the

workforce or academic settings. Services offered include vocational counseling and guidance, aiding in acquiring secondary and postsecondary credentials, equipping individuals with workplace readiness skills, providing on-the-job training, aiding in job development and placement, as well as offering supported and customized employment pathways. At the heart of these initiatives is a commitment to promoting independence and economic self-reliance.

## **Department of Workforce Services Programs**

### Veterans Initiatives

Veterans and eligible spouses receive Priority of Service as the American veteran transitions from the United States military or any time they seek employment services from the Department of Workforce Services to gain or improve their employment status. Priority of Service includes all DOL funded programs. Veteran and Military Employment Services, a partner of this Combined plan, supports veterans in their reintegration process as they transition from the military to the civilian workforce. The Jobs for Veteran State Grant (JVSG), funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Veteran Employment and Training Services, provides individualized career services for veterans and eligible spouses who have significant barriers to employment and other eligible groups. These services are provided in one-stop centers (AJCs) by disabled veterans outreach specialists (DVOPs) and local veterans employment representatives (LVER) staff. The LVER works with employers to assist them in understanding the benefits, resources and available candidate pool of veterans. The LVER regularly engages with the AJC staff to help them know how to connect to their services and supports. The Department of Workforce Services monitors and engages veteran customers in an effort to reduce the duration of veterans on the unemployment rolls and to help veterans on state-provided Medicaid seek Veterans Administration medical benefits.

The Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) program helps veterans, National Guard members, Reserve members, and spouses by gaining licenses, certifications, short-term credentials or training, tools and equipment leading to new employment or maintaining existing employment. This offers Utah's military veterans and their spouses an alternative pathway for upskilling designed to lead to self-sufficiency and to fill talent shortages in priority industries. The Utah Patriot Partnership program is an employer recognition program for those businesses that actively seek to employ and retain veterans, currently serving American military members, and spouses.

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)

Utah has the advantage of integrating programs such as TANF and SNAP in its one-stop delivery system. These programs help provide access to a greater number of job seekers who can meet employers' immediate workforce needs. Connecting recipients of these programs with career and training services increases their employment opportunities.

Utah's TANF cash assistance program is referred to as the Family Employment Program. Program participants work with an employment counselor to remove barriers and obtain employment. Employment counselors engage participants in activities such as career counseling, job search assistance, training support, on-the-job training and assistance in accessing resources. Participants also have access to Licensed Clinical Therapists who provide mental health services to assist these job seekers in obtaining employment.

Utah's SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program combines career services through our online labor exchange system with case management by employment counselors throughout the state. During a job seeker's first month of participation in SNAP E&T, they complete an online evaluation to determine their job preparation needs and attend a SNAP E&T virtual workshop presented by SNAP E&T employment counselors. The online evaluation determines workshops to

help them, identify transferable skills, build a resume, create well-crafted answers to interview questions, draft a marketing message, etc. The virtual workshop orients job seekers to the requirements of the SNAP E&T program. Participants have virtual appointments with their employment counselor in order to create an employment plan, learn to use the online labor exchange system to search for employment opportunities and discuss their needs. The employment counselor will assist the job seeker with community resources, training opportunities and job referrals as appropriate. The goal of this dual approach is to assist the job seekers to reconnect with the workforce and increase their employability through training services.

#### Medicaid Programs Offered to the Community

On July 4, 2025, HR 1, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA), was signed into law. The bill included more than 21 Medicaid reforms. Most of the bill's provisions will take effect beginning in the fall of 2026 or later. Utah Medicaid is currently reviewing the bill, analyzing it for impacts and estimates, and preparing for future programmatic changes.

Benefits will stay the same for the large majority of kids, adults with disabilities, and pregnant and postpartum women. However, the new law will make some noncitizens ineligible for Utah Medicaid starting in the fall of 2026.

Utah's State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) will continue to be an option for qualifying children through June 2028.

#### Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs

The Utah Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs is part of the Department of Workforce Services. The duties of the Commissioner include promoting and educating the public about apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, coordinating and collaborating with key stakeholders and providing an annual written report of apprenticeship program activities and recommendations for improving apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs to the legislature.

The overall goals are to:

- Increase awareness of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults as a valuable pathway to success
- Promote apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship opportunities to employers as a valuable talent recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy
- Identify high-quality apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs and best practices that can be shared

By identifying, expanding and promoting high-quality industry-driven apprenticeship programs, the department will assist in developing a qualified workforce to meet the hiring demands of Utah employers.

Utah Code 35A-6-102 defines registered apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship. Standardized definitions help key stakeholders use a common language and message, resulting in the development and expansion of high-quality programs. Standardized definitions support the state's goal of promoting apprenticeship programs as a viable career pathway to success for both youth and adults. To provide a wide variety of programs available, the Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs continues to work with key stakeholders to further diversify industry representation.

## **Housing and Community Development**

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Division serves communities across the state, aiming to bolster local capacity, finance essential services and infrastructure, and maximize resources for vital community initiatives. Whether it's funding a rural water system project or aiding low-income households with utility expenses, HCD's objective is to support communities and their economies by backing local infrastructure endeavors, affordable housing projects, and the delivery of fundamental community services, including utility aid, weatherization, emergency food assistance, and assistance for local anti-poverty initiatives. HCD oversees a diverse range of federal and state grants, thereby extending funding opportunities to numerous Utah communities while also providing the requisite training and technical support to help these communities access funding.

## **Unemployment Insurance (UI)**

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a joint state and federal program that provides economic stability to Utah's workforce. Contributions are collected from Utah employers through the state unemployment program to exclusively pay benefits to unemployed workers.

Through the program, individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own may receive temporary cash benefits to help bridge the gap between jobs. In addition, unemployment insurance keeps money circulating in the economy during a downturn, keeps workers out of poverty and lessens the pressure on other state social services programs.

### **Help for Employers**

- Register employers and monitor compliance
- Determine if employer accounts are subject to unemployment contributions
- Collect employer contributions and overpayments for unemployment benefits
- Post jobs and report new hires online
- Identify worker misclassification

### **Help for Claimants**

- File claims and collect information
- Determine eligibility for benefit
- Assess liability for employers
- Monitor compliance
- Facilitate re-employment

## **Workforce System Partners, Programs and Initiatives**

### **STEM Action Center**

Created in 2013, the Utah STEM Action Center is Utah's partner in promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education through the identification and support of best practices and leveraging of resources across education, industry, government and community partners to support economic prosperity. Their vision is to bring STEM to every Utah home, school and community to build a brighter future for Utah.

## State Workforce Development Board

Utah's governor has created specific, attainable goals relevant to the economy of today and tomorrow. In doing so, he created priorities and action items to guide and challenge his cabinet. The Department of Workforce Services executive director and the State Workforce Development Board accept leadership roles in this call to action. Collaboration and partnership are the keys to achieving these goals. Department of Workforce Services executives, agency staff, community and business partners, and State Workforce Development Board members serve on various boards, committees and workgroups that target the governor's goals. This includes partnering and contributing to the One Utah Summit.

## Career Pathways

Career pathways are the culmination of partnering agencies and educational institutions in Utah working together to create a world-class workforce. Key characteristics of career pathways include:

- High-quality education and training that aligns with the skill needs of the industry
- Contextualized instruction for a specific occupation or occupational cluster that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual
- Clear goals for individuals seeking to improve their situations
- Stackable credentials
- Necessary supports that remove barriers and allow individuals to move towards earning a family-sustaining wage
- Multiple entry and exit points that allow flexibility as individuals explore educational and career opportunities

## Data Systems & Warehouses

An important part of the workforce development system is collecting and reporting data to measure outcomes and performance. Utah agencies, including the Department of Workforce Services, Adult Education and the Utah System of Higher Education, collect and analyze data to produce required state and federal reports.

## The Utah Data Research Center

The Utah Data Research Center conducts research to inform public policy initiatives, providing the platform for policymakers, practitioners and the general public to make data-informed decisions. Data are integrated from:

- The Utah Department of Commerce
- The Utah Department of Health
- The Utah Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education
- The Utah State Board of Education

The data provided from partner agencies constitute the "P20W" pipeline. P20W captures the behavior of individuals from early childhood through primary and secondary schools and higher

education, and finally as they enter and move about the workforce. The data is stored on an annual basis and are considered a longitudinal set, allowing for the study of long-term patterns.

The research provides objective insights into public policy queries to help decision makers find meaningful and impactful solutions to the issues facing the state of Utah. The Utah Data Research Center leverages technology resources to create efficiencies in the exchange and release of data between agencies and external requestors.

### Talent Ready Utah Program

The Talent Ready Utah Program is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry, education, and economic development to better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. It is a collaborative partnership among:

- The Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education
- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- The Utah State Board of Education
- The Utah State Legislature
- Utah Department of Commerce
- Utah Employers

Talent Ready Utah provides funding to public postsecondary educational institutions to develop, implement or expand educational programs that are responsive to regional and statewide industry needs, serving high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. Talent Ready Utah also provides support to public schools to develop, implement or enhance work-based learning partnerships and connect them to postsecondary institutions. Some Talent Ready Utah programs are:

- Pathway programs, a partnership between education and industry, prepare students with credentials needed to advance quickly in various industries, opening doors to successful careers and continued educational opportunities. Pathways participants develop skills to start their career in a growing industry, earning a sustainable family wage while continuing their education debt-free.
- Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection (TRAC) is a youth apprenticeship program that provides meaningful work experience for students engaged in learning the skills they need for a successful career. Students split their time between the classroom and workplace, applying knowledge through a hands-on learning routine. As part-time employees of our TRAC partners, students earn a wage pursuing their education toward a high-paying career. By linking industry and education, the TRAC program creates a model that benefits both students and businesses. The TRAC program engages students beginning in high school.
- Utah Works provides short-term training for companies that need to hire employees quickly. Industry partners design the program and select which courses and training are required. In partnership with the Utah System of Higher Education, Talent Ready Utah provides the custom-designed training to fill those in-demand positions.

- Utah Adopt a School offers businesses opportunities to engage dynamically in Utah's K-12 schools to foster an ecosystem of support, innovation, and career exploration for student success and access to opportunity.

#### The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity works to retain and recruit companies and bring more high paying jobs to Utah. In addition, they work with industries, Utah regions, communities and nonprofits to implement strategic economic development plans and reinforce Utah's diverse, prosperous economy. They utilize federal and state resources and private sector contracts to cultivate economic prosperity for all Utahns. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity manages programs and initiatives supporting:

- Business Incentives
- Federal Opportunity Zones
- International trade and diplomacy
- Rural Utah communities
- Tourism and film production
- Utah entrepreneurs and businesses

Additionally, this office works to create sustainable advantages around emerging and mature sectors. The state convenes constituents and organizes strategies to support and build specific industries in its robust and diverse economy. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity has identified five Targeted Industries. They include:

- Tech (AI, Quantum, Blockchain)
- Aerospace and Defense
- FinTech
- Life Sciences and Healthcare
- Energy and Minerals

#### Indian Training and Education Center

The primary program design of the Indian Training and Education Center includes investing in participant services that promote talent development for long-term employment and greater earnings potential rather than quick placement in a minimum wage job with no opportunity for advancement. The Indian Training and Education Center focuses on education and training because they are the best ways to prepare participants to enter the workforce and enable individuals to find and keep jobs that provide a living wage, allowing them to support themselves and their families. Services include:

- Adult Basic Education
- Occupational Skills Training
- High School Services
- Job Search Assistance

- Self-Service Activities
- Supportive Services
- Follow-Up Services

#### Futures Through Training - Utah Farmworker Program

Since 1992, the Utah Farmworker Program, administered by Futures Through Training (FTT), has been a beacon of hope for eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. This program empowers individuals to achieve economic stability and enhance their quality of life through education, skills development, and targeted financial assistance.

Core services provide essential funding for secondary and postsecondary education, industry-recognized credentials, and support for vital employment needs such as tools, clothing, and transportation. Participants benefit from personalized career counseling, job readiness training, and job placement support, paving the way for sustainable employment outcomes.

Through these united efforts, FTT's Utah Farmworker Program not only strengthens our agricultural workforce but also inspires long-term self-sufficiency among farmworker families, fostering a brighter future for all.

#### Senior Community Service Employment Program

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Participants also have access to employment assistance through one-stop centers (AJCs).

Senior Community Service Employment Program participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. The program provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. Participants work an average of 20 hours per week and are paid the highest of federal, state or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Participants must be at least 55, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the America Job Center system.

#### Job Corps

Established in 1964 by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Job Corps is primarily a residential program with an open entry and exit. There are 123 Job Corps across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Approximately 50,000 are served each year between the ages of 16 and 24. Job Corps' Mission is to educate and train highly motivated young people for successful careers in the nation's fastest-growing industries. Key benefits include:

- Career technical training in high-growth industries
- Students can earn a high school diploma or the equivalent, or college credits
- Tuition-free to eligible individuals, including housing, meals, basic medical care, a living allowance, hands-on training, and career preparation
- Transitional support services, such as help finding employment, housing, and transportation
- Graduates enter the workforce or an apprenticeship, go on to higher education, or join the military

#### YouthBuild

The Ogden-Weber Technical College YouthBuild has been in operation since 2011 and was transferred to the Ogden School District in 2025. It is a pre-apprenticeship program that serves 40 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 per year. It is funded by a competitive Department of Labor YouthBuild grant. It is one of 260 programs nationally and internationally. To qualify for the program, a youth must be a high school dropout or be referred by a high school counselor. Additionally, a youth must fit a qualifying factor which includes low-income, youth or adult offender, child of an incarcerated parent, youth in or aging out of Foster Care or youth with a disability.

YouthBuild is a workforce development program that provides students with the opportunity to gain a high school diploma or equivalent and obtain a certification in construction, comprised of six National Center for Construction Education and Research certification units. Students are also trained with hands-on work experience with the construction of Low-Income housing. This work experience comes in the form of constructing Tiny Homes and remodeling housing for the unhoused. YouthBuild students receive wrap-around services, including case management, transportation, childcare subsidies, incentives and pay for their time in training. Many students are co-enrolled with the WIOA youth training program, the Ogden-Weber Technical College, Weber Adult Education and AmeriCorps.

The focus of YouthBuild is to prepare youth to be leaders in their own lives and to contribute to their communities while they prepare for placement in employment, apprenticeships, postsecondary education, the military or a full-time AmeriCorps service term. Supportive services for postsecondary education or employment continue for one year after a student leaves the YouthBuild program. Case management stays in contact with students to provide job placement services, supportive services, resources and mentoring.

#### Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program

Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program helps seniors 55 years of age and older achieve economic independence and improve their lifestyle through job training and employment services. The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a community service and work-based job training program. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program offers free job placement services through paid individualized training opportunities.

Participants gain experience and skills they need to stay active, supplement their income and contribute to their communities, while the workforce gains a pool of highly motivated, reliable workers with useful skills and valuable life experience.

The program provides services to employers and local community agencies as well, through access to pre-screened candidates, assistance with workplace diversification and tax credits, along with

job-related follow-up and coaching. Employers can partner with the program for possible reimbursement of the first 30 days of wages for program participants through On-the-Job Experience.

#### Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)

The mission of the Utah Division of Child and Family Services is to keep children safe from abuse and neglect through the strengthening of families. This is accomplished with individualized, trauma-informed, community-based services that are both safety driven and family driven, and the funding of domestic violence shelters and outreach services.

#### Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction

Utah workforce system partners work together to support reentry efforts for intensive and high-risk offenders. This program is funded by a Second Chance Act grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Partners include Utah Courts, Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Utah Governor's Office and community support.

Workforce Services is coordinating with local jails and the state prison to provide workshops on job searching and career exploration to individuals within one year of release. CleanSlate offers expungement services and partners with local agencies to help individuals connect with this resource. Workforce Services also participates in regular resource and career fairs with the Utah Department of Corrections.

#### Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative

The Department of Workforce Services participates in the Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative (UAMMI). This group brings together public, private, community, industry and education partners to assure growth and sustainability of one of Utah's most important manufacturing clusters. The Utah Legislature recently provided an investment to formalize the UAMMI structure and begin programming for and building the UAMMI solution/innovation centers.

#### Utah Health Workforce Advisory Council

In 2022, the Utah Health Workforce Advisory Council (HWAC) was established as an advisory council within the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (UDHHS or DHHS). The council has members from both state and private entities, including the Department of Workforce Services. The council provides recommendations to strengthen the health workforce, comments on legislation related to the health workforce and provides guidance to state entities on health workforce matters.

#### The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Utah's WIOA plan has been successfully implemented over the years because it is built upon the state's strong workforce development system. State leaders from the governor's office, the state legislature, government agencies, public education, adult education and higher education entities at the state and local levels strive to improve Utah's economic environment. These entities continue to communicate and streamline information sharing in a variety of ways. Working together to implement the WIOA plan has enhanced and strengthened existing partnerships that were already strong and collaborative.

Strengths include:

- Successful re-certification of comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) and affiliate one-stop centers (AJC).
- Active and committed State Workforce Development Board and committee members.
- The Department of Workforce Services' ability to successfully deliver integrated services statewide, including many of the core and mandatory programs under WIOA.
- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, housed within the Department of Workforce Services and has staff co-located in several comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC).
- Strong collaboration among all the core partners, including all WIOA programs housed within the Department of Workforce Services and Adult Education.
- Continual improvement of an integrated workforce system that shares information and data among key partners such as Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Online, 24-hour access to many services.
- A high level of expertise at the operational level via the core partners' staff, which, along with the commitment to help people, provides a strong base to build and develop partnerships
- The Department of Workforce Services and many of its partners developed virtual tools and resources that are available for individuals who need them.
- Increased career pathway opportunities that accommodate the needs of individuals with barriers such as single parents, low income individuals, English language learners, individuals who have been incarcerated and individuals with disabilities.

Utah foresees certain challenges in this implementation, including:

- Establishing sufficient resources and funding sources.
  - Increased pressure on the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC).
  - Level of effort required to develop and maintain strong partnerships.
- Achieving the emphasis on transition-age youth and the 15% funding requirement.
- Attaining the Eligible Training Provider performance data required from education and training providers.
- Lacking diverse education opportunities at the operational level for customers outside the Wasatch Front economic corridor.
- Helping partners with the implementation of WIOA related initiatives at the operational level.
- Educating the general public on WIOA resources for those who need services.
- Raising awareness of Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) services available to Veterans.
- Staff turnover.

## Workforce Development Capacity

Department of Workforce Services' structure and partnerships are able to efficiently and effectively meet Utah's workforce needs. Through the one-stop center's (AJC's) certifications, Utah has identified that we are able to provide workforce development activities effectively through our established partner collaborations, including veteran services, as outlined in section A. Utah's state workforce system partners continually evaluate and analyze their capacity to meet state needs. While most of this analysis is accomplished by individual organizations reviewing their own capacity, core partners in the local comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) have started to evaluate their capacity, as partners, as they coordinate and align services to improve service delivery. When gaps are identified, they reach out to required partners or other community partners to ensure that job seeker, student, client and business customer needs are addressed.

### b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

#### 1. Vision

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

#### 2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.<sup>9</sup>

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

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[9] Veterans, unemployed workers, youth and any other populations identified by the State.

#### 3. Performance Goals

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

#### 4. Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment, which may include evaluation findings, and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

##### Vision

Utah's combined plan includes the state's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting business needs to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

##### Goals

Utah's goals focus on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations. Utah's goals support meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers. The goals align with the Utah Governor's priorities to build a sustainable future for current and future generations of Utahns, giving equal opportunities for all. They address the State's challenges with growth, with an emphasis on enabling a future with Utah's children and grandchildren nearby.

##### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic opportunity, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities
- Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate, and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), to continually improve service to individuals and provide those seeking assistance receive a service or an effective referral
- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to utilize current labor market information and performance data to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that supports diverse local economies throughout the state

##### Goal Focus: Employers

Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources
- Reaching out to employers to help design career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and postsecondary education
- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of learning opportunities
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector
- Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and encouraging a well-trained talent pipeline for employers in order to increase their competitiveness

#### Goal Focus: Education and Training

Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on the real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate clear connections for students to join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors
- Educating partners on the educational offerings available and encouraging partners to recruit and make referrals for WIOA targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment
- Developing programs and strategies that help high school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs and providing education so that all partners are aware of the programs
- Utilizing short-term postsecondary Career and Technical Education certificate programs that link to recognized industry credentials, including a subset of certificate or degree programs (stacked and latticed credentials) to provide efficient pathways for students to achieve additional educational credentials
- Encouraging core and required partners to align, coordinate, and collaborate as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC)
- Providing work-based learning experiences in safe and professional settings that can better prepare individuals to access postsecondary and workforce opportunities

#### Goal Focus: Workforce

Utah will offer education and training options that teach skills and competencies required to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships will assist job seekers in obtaining sustainable employment and employers with recruiting and retaining quality employees. This will involve:

- Increasing awareness of the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing competency-based supplemental preparation or training that is accessible in dynamic ways for current workers seeking to upskill or access training
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting and developing workforce-aligned skills for individuals' future success
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development, including apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeships, work-based learning, customized training including established pathways through postsecondary education systems that highlight competency and reduce repetition
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to employed, underemployed, and unemployed individuals
- Ensuring current labor market information is accessible to individuals and assists them in making decisions related to skill and credential attainment, occupational wages, and jobs in demand

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that target populations with barriers to employment have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Ensuring partners have strong relationships at the local level, so education partners connect targeted populations to community services that support them
- Partnering to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that connect targeted populations to services and ensure best practices are implemented to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and messaging to target populations
- Ensuring partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies in serving targeted populations
- Providing support for vulnerable families so that children have better opportunities for success
- Expand homeless prevention efforts through workforce partner coordination, leveraging resources, and supporting the process for individuals to attain affordable housing opportunities

#### Performance Goals

Utah's performance goals will be established in the state's combined plan as required.

#### Assessment

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

The overall effectiveness of Utah's workforce development system in relation to its strategic vision will be assessed through performance measures, meeting its negotiated outcomes, and recertification of affiliate and comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC). Specifically, the performance measures related to employment, education and training, and supportive services:

Employment after the second quarter exit

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

Employment after the fourth quarter exit

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

Median earnings in the second quarter after exit

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

Credential attainment rate

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Measurable skills gains

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Effectiveness in serving employers

Effectiveness will also be assessed in terms of the membership of the State Workforce Development Board and its committee members. Each committee will maintain an action plan with goals that support Utah's state plan. Committees will report activities and accomplishments to the Board. In general, committee goals will focus on collaboration, partnering and building connections and relationships among partners and businesses in key industries throughout the state. The committees will incorporate economic information, individual agency goals, and performance data into their action plans.

## Goals

### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic development, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to provide current labor market information and performance data to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that supports diverse local economies throughout the state.
  - Assessed by: Completion and distribution of the data-driven economic assessment of statewide workforce needs and performance measure outcome reports from core partners. The Operations Committee will oversee the development and completion of the annual economic assessment and performance measure reports. This is an ongoing activity since labor market information and performance measures are presented to the State Workforce Development Board and its committees annually.
- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Agencies and partners assess their projects and programs related to supporting and promoting key occupations and industries to inform decision making and program improvement. They share this information at the state and local levels to inform decision making and program improvement. Part of the overall assessment includes effective partnering and leveraging resources. This is an ongoing activity.
  - Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC), to continually improve service to Utahns and ensure that

anyone who comes to the office for assistance receives a service or an effective referral.

- Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will be required to demonstrate progress related to this goal. State Workforce Development Board committees will have goals in their action plans that relate to this goal and they will show the work they are doing to support it. This is an ongoing activity.

#### Goal Focus: Employers

Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by utilizing and leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process and the Employment Engagement Workgroup. One-stop centers (AJCs) will be required to demonstrate how they collect and share feedback from surveys and reports, and use the information to make decisions and implement improvements. This is an ongoing activity.
- Reaching out to employers to help design career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and postsecondary education.
  - Assessed by: The education system in Utah, at all levels, is supported by Occupational Advisory Committees that provide guidance regarding the education system's classes, programs of study and career pathways in terms of employer needs. This information may be shared with partners at the local level. In addition, the Utah State Board of Education is working with a contractor to analyze job market and job outlook data to align educational programs with economic needs. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of training opportunities.
  - Assessed by: Agencies and education partners assess their ability to promote work-based learning and recruit organizations to provide these experiences. The partners will share this information with State Workforce Development Board committees. This will also be assessed by the one-stop (AJC) certification process. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector.
- Assessed by: The State Workforce Development Board will describe recommendations or steps taken to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector. The core and required partners will work toward aligning marketing and outreach activities. The recommendations will be implemented and measured using individual agency standards all partners currently have in place. This is an ongoing activity.

- Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement.
  - Assessed by: The Operations Committee will oversee the quality and quantity of survey responses and other feedback received. Implementation of the new business customer survey began in December 2023. Outreach to existing and potential employer customers is ongoing. The survey questions will be reviewed by Fall 2027 to determine if they are providing needed information for improvement. This is an ongoing activity.
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and a well-trained talent pipeline for employers in order to increase their competitiveness.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process. One-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate that they understand labor market information and how they provide the information to individuals.

#### Goal Focus: Education and Training

Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on the real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate clear connections for students to join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors
  - Assessed by: All partners assess their projects and programs that support and promote talent pipelines in targeted industry sectors. They share information at the state and local levels to inform decision making and program improvement. It will also be assessed through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification process in terms of how partners are working together to align, collaborate and support talent pipelines in targeted industry sectors. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partners are aware of the educational offerings available and are recruiting and making referrals for WIOA-targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through Utah's Partner Referral System. The system tracks referrals and outcomes for each office and includes all core and required partners. One-stop centers (AJCs) can use the system reports to provide insight about the effectiveness and appropriateness of partner referrals. This is also assessed through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification processes. This is an ongoing activity.
  - Developing programs and strategies that help high-school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs and ensuring that all partners are aware of the programs.
    - Assessed by: The number of students concentrating and completing Career and Technical Education programs. It will also be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process, where partners demonstrate

that all staff are trained and understand where to find information about partner programs. This is an ongoing activity.

- Core and required partners are aligning, coordinating and collaborating as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC)
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate how they are aligning, coordinating and collaborating to implement and support career pathway initiatives. They will show how they are connecting to and supporting projects that support targeted occupations and industries. This is an ongoing activity.

#### Goal Focus: Workforce

Workforce Utah will provide education and training options that provide the skills and competencies required to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships will enable job seekers to find sustainable employment and employers to recruit and retain quality employees. This will involve:

- Increasing awareness of the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing supplementary preparation and/or training
  - Assessed by: Utah will explore utilizing performance measurement options, such as the number of core partner customers who receive supplementary training and have successful job placements. These reports will be presented to the State Workforce Development Board annually when they become available.
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting
  - Assessed by: The required performance measures will be used to assess the effectiveness of partners working together to help job seekers understand what they need to do to meet employer needs. In addition, assessment will be provided through the recertification process as comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) show the work partners are doing related to this goal. These reports will be presented to the State Workforce Development Board annually.
- Partners will coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development including apprenticeship, work-based learning, customized training.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop (AJC) recertification process, as one-stop centers (AJCs) demonstrate how they are coordinating and collaborating to develop career pathways that support skill development. This is an ongoing activity.
  - Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach to employed, underemployed, and unemployed individuals
    - Assessed by: Surveys and other feedback tools and methods that partners use to determine whether individual needs are met. These reports will be

shared during the one-stop center (AJC) partner meetings and recertification. Partners will share information with the State Workforce Development Board. This is an ongoing activity.

- Current labor market information is accessible to individuals to inform them about skills, credentials, wages, and jobs in demand
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) certification process. One-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate that they understand labor market information and how they provide the information to individuals.

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that targeted populations with barriers to employment have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Ensuring partners have strong relationships at the local level so education partners connect these populations to community services that support them.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process, as one-stop centers (AJCs) demonstrate how they are working together to help education partners connect the priority population to needed services. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that connect these populations to services and ensure best practices are implemented to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and messaging to target populations.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) describe strategies they are using to connect these populations to services. They must also show how they are developing and implementing best practices to provide access to services, coordinate outreach methods and messaging to target populations. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make adjustments to outreach strategies in serving target populations.
- Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) describe their processes of continuous improvement, which includes program efficacy to make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies for target populations. This is an ongoing activity.

#### c. State Strategy

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes

registered apprenticeship. "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also, describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities regarding weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

Utah's strategies take into account its economic, workforce, workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in the section above. Utah's Combined Plan includes strategies to achieve its overall vision and goals for its workforce development system. The strategies are flexible to accommodate the state's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a). The plan includes specific strategies to address the needs of populations described in Section (a). The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships, and its resources to implement strategies that support operations to provide services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has standing committees to ensure Utah's goals and vision are met. These include Youth, Apprenticeships, Services to Individuals with Disabilities, Career Pathways, and Operations.

### Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

### Goals

#### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic development, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to ensure current labor market information and performance data are utilized to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that supports diverse local economies throughout the state.
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board committees will use the economic assessment of statewide workforce needs to make recommendations. The State Workforce Development Board and its committees will receive an annual report on Utah's statewide and regional economies and partner performance measures. The Department of Workforce Services staff provides current information on its website, presentations and training, and responds to data requests for workforce system partners as needed. Labor market information is incorporated

into staff training for all core partners. Labor market information and performance data are available to and used by partner leaders at all levels to make decisions.

- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities.
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee, which has representation from business and all core and required partners, has incorporated this into the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process. The committee supports the maintenance of the WIOA Partner infrastructure MOU and to leverage resources to promote this goal. The MOU was reviewed and updated in July 2024. Core partners coordinate at the local level to support mutual at-risk individuals in education and employment goals that align with key industries and occupations. Committees and partners support and promote opportunities in these sectors by sharing information about initiatives and projects during meetings and networking events. This is an ongoing activity.
- Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate, and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), to continually improve service to individuals and ensure that anyone who comes to the office for assistance receives a service or an effective referral.
  - Strategy: Overall strategies include setting collaborative performance goals, sharing information and data and working together to resolve problems and address gaps. It also includes collaborating and coordinating on training, outreach and feedback. Partners will utilize existing committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate. The State Workforce Development Board and its committees hold regular meetings, as required by Utah's plan. Partner responsibilities are clearly outlined so they can be held accountable or responsibilities can be adjusted as needed. These are ongoing activities.
    - The State Workforce Development Board committees provide a forum for workforce system partners to share information, promote best practices, and develop recommendations. Information is shared with the full State Workforce Development Board
    - Comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) partners continue sharing information and refining the current referral process
    - The Data and Reports Workgroup, functioning under the Operations Committee, will continue to identify and pursue opportunities to streamline the application process and reduce redundancies, facilitating a smoother experience for customers
    - Core partners will continue to explore opportunities to co-locate core program partners and services
    - Workforce system partners will work together to set performance goals, share information and work together to resolve problems and address gaps

- State Workforce Development Board committees and comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) leadership support processes for sharing information among partners to provide a more holistic experience for the target populations and provide seamless services
- State Workforce Development Board committee members visit one-stop centers (AJCs) to help identify best practices and gaps in services and make recommendations for alignment of partner resources
- Core partners continue to collaborate and align procedures for one-stop center (AJC) recertification
- The core partners, housed under the Department of Workforce Services, continue to meet monthly to coordinate, align, and integrate policies. In addition, the Workforce Development Division coordinates policy with the Eligibility Services Division
- The Operations Committee assesses and provides feedback on partner coordination and streamlined service delivery

#### Goal Focus: Employers

Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by utilizing and leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee employer engagement workgroup will review the core partners' employer engagement practices. They will explore ways to meet employers' workforce needs and to work on the goals of industry partners, including:
    - Partner alignment and coordination in educating employers about individuals with barriers, with a focus on targeted industries
    - Partners are engaging with employers and high demand industries needs are being addressed within each of the economic regions
    - Partners leverage the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's coordination with employers
    - Identifying ways all partners can participate in supporting industry boards at the secondary (K-12) and postsecondary education levels

- Identifying ways partners can coordinate, align with and utilize Workforce Development Division workforce development specialists, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's business relation specialists, labor market information and UWORKS labor exchange system to support employer needs
- Developing recommendations for a process to coordinate efforts to understand employer needs from a full workforce development system point of view, coordinating all partner efforts as well as considering new methods
- Exploring the development of a plan for coordinating and collaborating core, education and economic development partners' outreach to employers
- Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee gathers information on activities regarding career pathway projects and makes recommendations for replicating successful activities, sharing information and providing support when gaps are identified. The committee works to help partners align and coordinate with existing employer education pathway efforts, such as Technical Education Advisory Committees. This is an ongoing activity.
  - The Career Pathways Committee will support partners' outreach to employers for assistance in designing career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and postsecondary education
- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of training opportunities
  - Strategy: Leveraging partner communication channels to promote available internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training that companies provide, as well as contacting companies interested in providing these types of training opportunities. Examples of current strategies include:
    - Supporting workforce system partner conferences, such as Women in Trades
    - Collaborating and aligning outreach to at-risk individuals and companies
    - Workforce system partners and State Workforce Development Board supporting organizations that promote work-based learning, such as the Electrical Training Alliance
    - Workforce system partners sharing information and promoting events such as job fairs, mentoring activities and training workshops
    - Training partner staff to refer job seeker customers to work-based learning opportunities and to refer interested employers to partners who can help them establish work-based learning opportunities

- Core and required partners coordinating and collaborating on outreach and marketing to the business sector
  - Encouraging employers and other workforce system partners to post work-based learning opportunities on jobs.utah.gov
- Strategy: The Operations Committee will review current employer work-based learning strategies. They will explore new ways to meet employers' workforce needs through work-based learning opportunities, including:
  - Ensuring all partners are aligned and coordinated in educating employers about work-based learning opportunities including engaging individuals with barriers in these opportunities.
  - Exploring ways all partners can leverage the Utah System of Rehabilitation's current coordination with employers to educate them on work-based learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
  - Identifying ways all partners can coordinate, align with and utilize the Workforce Development Division's workforce development specialists, Utah Office of Rehabilitation business relations specialists, labor market information, and UWORKS labor exchange system to support employer needs through work-based learning opportunities.
  - Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement.
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and a well-trained talent pipeline for employers to increase their competitiveness
  - Strategy: The workforce system partners, under the guidance of the Operations Committee, will continue to align, coordinate and leverage resources for employer outreach. The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will extend these efforts to the local level so partners can work together to provide these services to employers in their communities.

#### Goal Focus: Education and Training

Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on the real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate connections that help students join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors
  - Strategy: State Workforce Development Board committees, working with partners such as the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, will support steps for

developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors. Committees and partners support state legislative efforts in targeted industry sectors, such as Utah Works and Silicon Slopes. This is an ongoing activity.

- All partners are aware of educational offerings available and are recruiting and making referrals for WIOA-targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment
  - Strategy: The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will develop strategies at the local level that support this goal, including utilizing and supporting the Partner Referral System. This is an ongoing activity.
- Developing programs and strategies that help high-school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs and ensuring that all partners are aware of the programs
  - Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee works with the Youth Committee to identify ways to support comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) efforts to connect high school students to education and career pathways. The committees work together to establish best practices and make recommendations to local partner leadership. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring core and required partners are aligning, coordinating and collaborating as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC)
  - Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee coordinates with Talent Ready Utah Program initiatives to share information with partner staff and educate them on how they can support these initiatives.

#### Goal Focus: Workforce

Utah provides education and training options that build the skills and competencies to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships enable job seekers to find sustainable employment and employers to recruit and retain quality employees. This will involve:

- Increasing awareness of the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing supplemental preparation and training
  - Strategy: Through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification process, core partners demonstrate alignment and coordination of job readiness skill-building activities and resources for customers. The State Workforce Development Board reviews efforts through the recertification process and makes recommendations for improvement. This is an ongoing activity.
  - Strategy: The Department of Workforce Services, Utah State Board of Education, Division of Services to People with Disabilities and community providers collaborate to support students with the most significant disabilities to access work readiness training and employment prior to graduating from high school. This is an ongoing activity.
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting

- Strategy: The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) develop strategies at the local level that support this goal. Business customer surveys are distributed and shared with partners. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partners will coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development including apprenticeship, work-based learning and customized training.
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, as well as the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), provide a forum for sharing information, aligning and collaborating, and developing best practices. Career Pathway committee members plan to visit comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) to gather information regarding best practices that can be shared statewide. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and to employed, underemployed and unemployed individuals
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, as well as the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), provide a forum for sharing information, aligning, collaborating, and developing best practices. Career Pathway committee members plan to visit comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) to review best practices that can be shared statewide. This includes encouraging individuals to create an account on jobs.utah.gov to support their job search. This is an ongoing activity.
- Labor market information is accessible to individuals to inform them about skills, credentials, wages, and jobs in demand
  - Strategy: The Department of Workforce Services staff provide information on its website, presentations and training, and respond to data requests for all workforce system partners as needed. It is incorporated into staff training for all core partners. This is an ongoing activity.

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that targeted populations have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Partners have strong relationships at the local level and are educated on community services available to support individuals with barriers to employment
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board committees enhance partnerships by convening stakeholders, sharing ongoing efforts during regularly scheduled meetings, and compiling comprehensive one-stop best practices regarding strengthening partner relationships and connecting target populations to community services. This is an ongoing activity.
    - Partner staff statewide use the Partner Referral System for direct referrals and follow-up

- Partner staff are educated on programs and services offered at the one-stop centers (AJCs)
- Partners are developing and implementing comprehensive strategies that connect target populations to services and implement best practices to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and create messaging to target at-risk target populations
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee will oversee the Partner Referral System. The committee will:
    - Oversee improvements to the referral pathways and processes to help one-stop centers (AJCs) provide consistent and seamless services for mutual customers. This will be an ongoing activity accomplished through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process.
    - Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will: encourage referrals and client interventions at any point of entry, refine career pathways to meet the needs of at-risk populations through engagement with employers, focus on high-demand industries, and strengthen connections with postsecondary and training institutions. These are ongoing activities.
- Partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies in serving targeted populations
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee oversees the evaluation of core and required partner performance expectations and makes recommendations for continuous improvement that will be implemented and assessed through required performance measures. This is an ongoing activity.

Utah's strategies take into account its economic, workforce, workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in the section above.

Utah's Combined Plan includes strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The strategies are flexible to accommodate the state's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a). The plan includes specific strategies to address the needs of populations described in Section (a). The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships, and resources to implement strategies that support operations to provide services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to changing and/or adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has standing committees to help meet Utah's goals and vision. These include Youth, Apprenticeships, Services to Individuals with Disabilities, Career Pathways and Operations.

Utah's Career Pathway Committee's goals and activities include:

- Providing a forum for partners from around the state to exchange ideas and share best practices, explore how they can align, share resources and collaborate.
- Making recommendations that include the Six Key Elements of the Career Pathways Toolkit and requirements by WIOA Section 101(d)(3)(B), (D) to the State Workforce Development Board regarding how the Board can best support a coordinated and collaborative state career pathway system.

- Supporting Utah's sector strategies aligned with the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity industry clusters, including supporting career pathway initiatives that align with targeted industries and occupations in demand and coordinating these initiatives with comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) career pathway efforts.
- Referring to and using the definitions of "career pathway" in WIOA Section 3(7) and "industry sector or occupation" in WIOA Section 3(23).
- Establishing workgroups to explore and provide recommendations to the State Workforce Development Board regarding the potential benefits of cohort training program models that support key occupational clusters and industry sectors.
- Providing ongoing support of one-stop center (AJC) activities, including partnering with education to meet the needs of underserved populations and individuals living in rural areas.
- Coordinating and sharing career pathway information with the local school districts, Youth and Apprenticeship committees and promoting services available to youth at one-stop centers (AJCs).
- Coordinating with Career and Technical Education partners to support one-stop center (AJC) access to Career and Technical Education programs and pathways, including promoting work experience opportunities and providing outreach for these programs to partners, businesses, students, and job seekers.

Utah uses a variety of strategies to align the core programs, one-stop center (AJC) partners and other resources to achieve integrated customer services consistent with its strategic vision and goals. The Operations Committee oversees these strategies, their goals and activities include:

- Creating workforce development activities in response to gaps identified in the state's workforce analysis, including creating workgroups as appropriate.
- Setting collaborative performance goals, sharing data and working together to resolve problems and address gaps.
- Collaborating and coordinating on training, outreach and feedback by utilizing existing committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when appropriate.
- Supporting the one-stop recertification process and overseeing the recertification criteria.
- Ensuring all core and required partners have representation on the committee, as well as representation from State Workforce Development Board business members.
- Supporting the maintenance of the WIOA Partner Infrastructure MOU.
- Overseeing strategies to engage education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.
- Overseeing core partners' efforts to utilize a braided funding model to leverage existing resources in providing services for common customers.
- Common performance outcomes are reported to the State Workforce Development Board annually.

- Overseeing core partners' efforts to explore sharing information and refining referral processes. This includes working toward the development of a common point of entry for individuals to access a universal collection application that connects to all core partner systems with the intent of streamlining the process and eliminating duplication.
- Overseeing efforts to explore additional opportunities for co-location of core program partners and services.
- Coordinating with other committees.

Utah's Youth Committee provides information and assists with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The committee includes employers and community-based organizations with demonstrated records of success in service-eligible youth. The committee's goals and activities include:

- Sharing information and providing best practices for one-stop centers (AJCs) related to placing at-risk youth in internships, work-based learning, apprenticeships, and supporting their employment goals.
- Establishing a workgroup to explore ways to improve employers' participation in work-based learning forums and developing innovative ways to inform at-risk youth, including youth with disabilities, of opportunities available to them.
- Holding regular committee meetings to create a forum for sharing information, collaboration and connecting with external committees working to serve youth so groups can align their efforts.
- Committee members regularly receive current information on career and education planning resources and Career and Technical Education pathways.
- Inviting core and required Career and Technical Education partners to report efforts to enhance, align and coordinate partnerships, best practices and recommendations for improvement, so they can be shared with comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs).
- Sharing information about opportunities to increase access to pre-employment transition services and other work readiness programs geared toward youth with disabilities and other barriers.

The Apprenticeships committee's goals and activities include:

- Supporting State Apprenticeship Five-Year Plan Goals, including State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) goals.
- Increasing utilization of apprenticeships among employers.
- Expanding access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations and underserved communities.
- Developing infrastructure to effectively support long-term growth.
- Modernizing data tracking, reporting, system integration and utilization.
- Contributing resources to Utah's apprenticeship website.
- Supporting and participating in Utah's Apprenticeship Week activities, K-12 summer and winter conferences, and other partner events.

- Leveraging partner funding resources to support participants in apprenticeships.
- Supporting comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) with apprenticeship program resources.
- Supporting participation in the National Governors Association Policy Academy to Advance Youth Apprenticeship.
  - Reducing logistical, regulatory and financial barriers to employer participation.
  - Leveraging existing resources and identifying new resources for youth apprenticeship program development, growth and sustainability.
  - Using data to inform program development, implementation and accountability for continuous improvement in outcomes for students and employers.
  - Solidifying a statewide governance structure for youth apprenticeship.
- Providing a forum for partners to share information, identify best practices, and collaborate, including employers, education partners such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), Talent Ready Utah, Utah System of Higher Education and community-based organizations.

The Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee provides information and assists with operational and other issues related to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. The population of individuals with disabilities is broad, including all spectrums of physical and mental disabilities and specific populations like veterans. The committee goals and activities that support the population of individuals with disabilities and Utah business partners include:

- Supporting programmatic and physical access to the services, programs and activities of the one-stop delivery system.
- Supporting the delivery of one-stop center (AJC) staff training regarding accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Making recommendations to one-stop center (AJC) staff for providing job search assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Coordinating with other committees to provide mentoring events for youth with disabilities, job fairs, and state sponsored internships.
- Aligning partnerships such as Business Relations and Choose to Work.
- Improving connections with Career and Technical Education partners to share resources and support initiatives that increase opportunities for youth and work-based learning.
- Exploring opportunities to further align, connect, and collaborate on current services provided to employers, such as educating employers about barriers to employment that individuals with barriers face.

### III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

## a. State Strategy Implementation

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include–

### 1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

Utah's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) continues to actively implement Utah's WIOA plan. The successful implementation is primarily due to the enthusiastic, active chair and the Executive Committee members. The Utah SWDB members and committees have a strong supportive structure established through Utah law, bylaws ([BYLAWS STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD](#)) and support from partner agency leadership and staff. The State Workforce Development Board reviewed and approved updated bylaws in April 2025. In addition to Guiding Principles, Statutory Requirements, application processes, etc., the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) has the opportunity to:

- Implement innovative strategies by focusing on employer engagement, strengthening core programs, dissemination of best practices and promoting effective use of technology to enhance service delivery.
- Establish and maintain standing committees. The two required committees are Youth and Services to Individuals with Disabilities. There are three additional committees, which include Career Pathways, Operations and Apprenticeships committees.
- Improve system alignment and connections by serving youth with disabilities and aligning career pathways and industry and sector partnerships.
- Support established and new career pathway initiatives as well as industry and sector partnerships, using its influence on secondary education reform initiatives where career pathways are emerging, and in leveraging business and industry groups to establish sector partnerships.
- Support skills development programs through a representative of a joint labor-management partnership in the SWDB contingent to validate pre-apprenticeship and skills development bridge program offerings for entry into state-approved apprenticeship training.
- Access local labor market analysis. The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) is responsible for completing a comprehensive analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor market trends, educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.
- Define criteria and recertify one-stop centers (AJCs). One-stop centers (AJCs) are the public face of the workforce system. They are the central connecting point for all of the programs and services that must be coordinated and aligned to successfully meet the goals of Utah's Plan.
- Engage community systems by convening, brokering, and leveraging with business, community, education, and agency partners.
- Evaluate performance measures designed to measure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the one-stop and youth service delivery systems.

- Explore ways to leverage and partner with opportunities brought about by the IIJA, CHIPS and IRA.

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) led the development of Utah's Combined Plan and is guided by the vision, strategy, and goals of the plan, which are below.

### Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

Strategies:

- Focus on achieving Utah's vision and goals.
- Utilize data, partnerships and resources as a foundation to implement strategies to support operations in providing services to individuals and employers.
- Commit to adjusting strategies to meet the state's current workforce needs.
- Workforce development activities include:
  - Identify targeted industry sectors and occupations; align programs and services to support them; and encourage involvement from business and education partners.
  - Set collaborative performance goals, share information and data and work together to resolve problems and address gaps.
  - Collaborate and coordinate on training, marketing and customer feedback.
  - Utilize existing and external committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate.
  - Hold regular Board and committee meetings as required by Utah's plan.

The State Workforce Development Board utilizes the agency, community, education and employer partnerships:

Partnerships:

Core partners coordinate employment and training services to help complement services so that individuals can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs.

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- One-Stop Partners

Comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) partners are responsible for creating a seamless, individual-focused delivery system; collaborating and aligning services to enhance access for individuals and businesses.

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans' job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
- Indian Training Education Center
- YouthBuild

There are clear responsibilities outlined for State Workforce Development Board members:

The Board members shall act in the best interests of the State of Utah. The following are outlined expectations and commitments of each member:

- Attendance and Punctuality: Members attend quarterly Board meetings and designated committee meetings. The State Workforce Development Board and committee chairs shall start and conclude each meeting in a timely fashion. A minimum of five hours each quarter is the expected quarterly commitment of each member. The implementation and maintenance of the state's Combined Plan may require more hours from committee chairs and active committee members.
- State Workforce Development Board Meeting Schedule: The meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each quarter. The board meets from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated. The location of the SWDB meetings is announced and meeting materials are sent to members in advance and posted on the website at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/index.html>
- Committee meetings: The committee chairs schedule meetings as often as necessary. The frequency depends on the work the committee is engaged in. The committee meetings could be held monthly for a set period or at least once each quarter.
- The Executive Committee meets at least quarterly, usually on the day of the full Board meeting.

The State Workforce Development Board members join committees and workgroups:

Committees

There are five committees under the State Workforce Development Board:

- Youth

- Services to Individuals with Disabilities
- Operations
- Career Pathways
- Apprenticeships

The chairs from all five committees serve on the Executive Committee.

The committee chairs have clear expectations:

- Attend State Workforce Development Board Meetings and report on committee work.
- Become familiar with the Combined Plan, specifically sections and goals that relate to the committee work.
- Attend Executive Committee meetings, held prior to the Board meetings, to assist with agenda items, receive information and reports from partners, approve proposals, report on committee work, and coordinate with other chairs.
- Hold at least one committee meeting quarterly.
- Oversee committee workgroups and monitor progress on assignments.
- Utilize agency staff to answer questions and provide support to the committee.
- Reach out to colleagues and associates in their organizations, networks and communities to promote, collaborate and attain feedback on committee work.
- Represent their committee members.

The State Workforce Development Board committee members have clear responsibilities:

- Provide reports and make recommendations to the Board. The Board will approve recommendations and provide feedback to the committee.
- Determine whether a workgroup should be established to complete a goal. If a workgroup is created, the committee will provide instructions and deadlines to clarify the assignment. The committee will also receive feedback and approve work on assignments and recommendations.
- Attend and participate in committee meetings.
- Utilize their networks to promote, collaborate and attain feedback on committee work.

Committees can create temporary work groups of experts, operations staff, employers and other stakeholders to assist them in meeting their goals.

- Workgroups can be short-term or long-term.
- Workgroups can overlap across committees.
- Workgroup members can be anyone from the public, private or nonprofit sectors as appropriate.

#### Utah's Workforce Development System

The governor, in accordance with Section 106(d) of WIOA, retains and designates Utah as a “Single State Local Area.” Utah is well situated and prepared to continue delivering integrated workforce services and will align its governance and administrative structure to set policy direction and establish realistic performance goals. The State Workforce Development Board serves as the advisory body to provide guidance, oversight and evaluation to ensure programs remain fully responsive to Utah’s economic development and labor market needs. State agencies with core and required programs will continue, in a coordinated approach, to implement specific workforce development programs through the integrated services delivery systems within local areas.

In terms of section 101(d) of WIOA, the State Workforce Development Board will assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the Combined Plan through committees overseen by the State Workforce Development Board and chaired by State Workforce Development Board members that fulfill assignments related to these activities. The Board reviews and approves Utah’s Combined State plan, including all modifications during committee meetings, full Board meetings, and email communications.

The State Workforce Development Board leads the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in Utah through its regular meetings and its Board-led and core and required partner staffed committees by:

- Identifying barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
- Developing strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.
- Creating strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system.
- Developing and expanding strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Developing and continuously improving the one-stop delivery system, which includes providing assistance to one-stop operators, one-stop partners, and providers with planning and delivering services. This also includes training services and supportive services to ensure effective delivery of services to workers, job seekers and employers.
- Developing strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system.
- Establishing and updating comprehensive state-adjusted levels of performance to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state as required under section 116(b).
- Identifying and disseminating information on best practices, which includes:
  - The effective operation of one-stop centers (AJCs) relating to business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment.

- Training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis and the effective use of direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure an individual's prior knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences, and evaluate such skills and competencies for adaptability, to support efficient placement into employment or a career pathway.
- The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state's one-stop delivery system described in section 121(e), including the development of policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of entities carrying out one-stop partner programs within the one-stop delivery system, including approaches to facilitating equitable and efficient cost allocation in the system.
- The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to-and improve the quality of-services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system, including such improvements to:
  - Enhance digital literacy skills as defined in section 202 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20U.S.C. 9101); referred to in this Act as "digital literacy skills".
  - Accelerate the acquisition of skills and recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.
  - Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals.
  - Technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas.
- The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measurement and reporting processes to improve coordination of services across one-stop partner programs.
- The preparation of annual reports is described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 116(d).
- The development of statewide workforce and labor market information (LMI) system is described in section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act.
- The development of such other policies that may promote statewide objectives for, and enhance the performance of, the workforce development system in the state.
- Explore ways to leverage and partner with opportunities brought about by the IIJA, CHIPS and IRA.

## 2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

### A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

### Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

The lead state agencies responsible for administering each core program included in Utah's plan will implement the outlined strategies.

Utah's core partners are funding activities to implement the state strategies. The activities are aligned across core programs. Core partners are committed to:

- Continuing to maximize existing infrastructure to explore opportunities to further a common registration and data repository. This is a long-term project that will be developed and implemented as resources and opportunities are available.
- Utilizing a braided funding model to leverage existing resources in providing services for common customers. These efforts will be ongoing including referrals and client interventions at any point of entry (Workforce Development Division, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's or Adult Education), and the alignment of education and training programs with career pathways, employer needs, high demand industry and postsecondary and training institutions with a focus on targeted populations. This is an ongoing activity.
- Providing cross-training to core and required partner staff to increase awareness of programs and services that are available to continue increasing co-enrollment. Utah will continue to explore expanding case management system interfaces with core partners to identify common or mutual clients. Staff training will be ongoing, and recommendations for expanding case management system interfaces will be reported to the Operations Committee by the Data and Reports Workgroup.
- Supporting the criteria for the certified one-stop centers (AJCs) by serving on the Operations Committee, which oversees the recertification criteria. This is an ongoing process as one-stop centers (AJCs) are recertified every three years and the recertification criteria are reviewed and updated every two years (The most recently updated criteria were formally approved by the Board via vote in January 2025).
- Core partners are represented on all State Workforce Development Board committees.
- Exploring opportunities for additional co-location of core program partners. The Operations Committee will lead the efforts to explore additional opportunities for co-location of core program partners and services and make recommendations to the State Workforce Development Board.
- Utilizing the Partner Referral System to enhance partner referrals. Partner staff will use the system to make referrals and new employees will receive training on the system.
- Identifying existing career pathway initiatives to foster collaboration and alignment. Career pathway development and initiatives for the key occupations and target industries are the priority.

#### B. Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

#### Alignment with Activities outside the Plan

The strategies outlined in (A) will be aligned with the programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other partners as appropriate, facilitating coordination of and avoiding duplication among these activities. Workforce system partner activities, including those outside the plan, will be aligned as part of the recertification process.

The State Workforce Development Board committees have representation from business, core and required partners. These committees are responsible for ensuring that one-stop programs and services are aligned, coordinated and non-duplicating. The committees are also responsible for identifying issues and making recommendations to work toward resolving them. This includes:

#### Education & Training

- Utah System of Higher Education (USHE), which includes postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Adult Education
- Utah State Board of Education (USBE), which includes CTE

#### Department of Workforce Services Divisions

- Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
- Workforce Development Division
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)

#### Workforce System Partners, Programs & Initiatives

- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- STEM Action Center
- Utah State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)
- Representation from the SWDB-Career Pathways Committee
- Veterans and Military Initiatives
- Employment First Initiative
- Choose to Work (CTW)
- Talent Ready Utah
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)
- Community Services Block Grant
- Job Corps
- YouthBuild
- National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program

- Indian Training Program
- Medicaid Community Engagement

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will reach out to transportation, energy and other agency partners and grant recipients for the CHIPS, BIL and IIJA grants to coordinate with overall workforce development goals and leverage funding.

#### Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

Utah has awarded many grants funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The grants awarded support the goals of Utah's WIOA plan by investing in the state's workforce infrastructure. Utah's State Workforce Development Board will work toward receiving information on the grant awards that involve workforce needs and partner with recipients as appropriate. The WIOA partner network, including the Board, will offer support to employers who are pursuing grant money. Opportunities to explore or utilize are:

- Offer assistance to employers to access training and employment opportunities to provide opportunities to underrepresented populations and those with barriers to employment.
- Where appropriate, provide funding to offset the cost of employment, education and on-the-job learning expenses for apprentices participating in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Jobs developed as a result of IIJA are accessible to individuals with barriers to employment.
- Share best practices for increasing job quality and accessing wraparound services provided by partners.
- Align efforts with economic development partners, including the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity.
- Engage with the activities of the National Semiconductor Technology Center as it develops apprenticeships and other workforce development programs and replicate best practices.
- Monitor the activities being funded by the Workforce and Education Fund at the National Science Foundation and replicate best practices as appropriate.
- Provide Adult Education, Title II services, such as workplace literacy programs on-site and contextualized to the employer's needs and Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that accelerate a student's pathway to meaningful jobs by providing adult education services concurrently with workforce preparation and occupational training.
- Create workplace literacy and IET programs coordinating with Adult Education, Title II partners, specifically for students acquiring English skills, to expand the qualified workforce that better meets the demands created through IIJA, CHIPS, and IRA. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) funds can be used to provide workplace literacy and IET programs for multilingual students who are learning English, and these funds provide additional opportunities to meet employer demands.

#### Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Workforce Services participates in regular meetings discussing the state's implementation of the federal Broadband Equity Access & Deployment Program (BEAD). The actual infrastructure implementation will not occur in Utah until 2026 at which point Workforce Services will assist

employers in meeting the program recruitment process for the qualified workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment through utilizing the job board and other employer resources.

#### Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

The IRA is being dispersed through benefits to prescribed populations and industries in Utah. For example, Medicare enrollees may have experienced lower drug prices as a result of the IRA, as the bill allows Medicare to negotiate directly on pharmaceutical drugs and caps the amount that Medicare enrollees are allowed to spend out-of-pocket on drug costs. In addition, drug manufacturers are required to issue rebates to Medicare if they raise drug prices faster than inflation. IRA also extends premium subsidies for individuals enrolled in health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces.

Consumers, through state-administered rebate programs and tax credits, may save on electrification of home appliances, energy-efficient retrofits and new and used electric vehicle purchases. Corporations may benefit (through tax credits, grants, and loans) in manufacturing renewable energy products and clean vehicles, as well as from the construction of manufacturing facilities to support clean technology.

The Governor's office is exploring the implementation of a variety of state grants, including building code updates, open space acquisition, greenhouse gas reduction, air pollution mitigation, zero-emission vehicles, drought response for western states, state energy programs and communities divided by past road construction.

Workforce Services will partner and support these inflation reduction initiatives.

#### Digital Equity Act

Utah's Digital Connectivity plan has a Digital Equity Plan component. The vision of the plan is to realize a Connected Utah where all are invited to participate in modern society through access to affordable high-speed internet, reliable devices and training to safely achieve digital independence. The plan has five strategic goals:

- Create a digital inclusion community of practice.
- Create multiple pathways for digital independence through flexible programs that fit the diverse needs of Utah residents.
- Ensure longevity by prioritizing projects with a high likelihood of ongoing local investment for ongoing project maintenance.
- Maximize local resources by standardizing programs that recycle, refurbish and redistribute existing devices.
- Define true affordability for covered populations and incorporate this recommendation into the state's minimally acceptable affordable internet plan for BEAD projects.

#### American Job Centers

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) will focus on targeted populations to assist them with career opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and abilities, which overall, increases the available local workforce talent.

The Utah Commissioner of Apprenticeships prompts and educates the public on apprenticeship opportunities, coordinating and collaborating with the department and key stakeholders and providing an annual written report of apprenticeship program activities to the legislature.

Overall goals are: to increase awareness of apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults as a valuable pathway to success; promote apprenticeship opportunities to employers as a valuable talent recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy; and share best practices.

By identifying, expanding and promoting high-quality industry-driven apprenticeship programs and scaling Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based learning models, we will assist in developing a qualified workforce to meet the hiring demands of Utah employers. By aligning education and training programs to build career pathways, the workforce system helps alleviate talent shortages and supports Utah's economic growth.

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) offer annual cross training opportunities to the core and required partner staff who work directly with the public. Training will be scheduled when a need is identified by any of the partners in addition to bi-annual coordination meetings, which review referrals for accurate and timely information for targeted populations. Recommendations for enhancements or expanding the case management system interfaces that relate to the functions of the local one-stop centers (AJCs) will be submitted to the state Data and Reports Workgroup.

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) will continue to work closely with local career pathway development efforts and initiatives. This includes working closely with Career and Technical Education partners. In addition, the one-stop centers (AJCs) are developing strong partnerships through existing workgroups to coordinate local and high demand industries' needs with postsecondary institutions.

Local one-stop centers (AJCs) are exploring workshops on Artificial Intelligence literacy and will partner with Governor Cox's Pro-human AI initiatives to ensure Utah's workforce is AI ready.

To enhance career awareness, counseling and exploration for WIOA Youth, Utah initiated a virtual reality career exploration program. This program allows youth to safely experience various careers, reducing risk for employers by enabling exploration before workforce entry or education. The use of virtual reality provides a technology-driven platform relatable to youth. This project aims to: deliver engaging career exploration services to youth, incentivize youth who complete career exploration modules, provide tools for outreach efforts to encourage at-risk youth to engage with WIOA youth services and explore the potential of these modules as preparatory training for on-the-job learning or apprenticeships. Virtual reality headsets are available at local one-stop centers (AJCs) throughout Utah. Employment counselors provide WIOA youth opportunities to explore careers. The headsets can also be brought directly to career fairs and youth partner programs. After completing a career exploration simulation, youth receive career coaching from employment counselors and, if appropriate, are connected to relevant resources.

### C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

#### Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

Partners will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, individual-centered services, which include access to transportation, referrals to physical and mental health assistance, housing assistance, child and dependent care and income support, including supportive services to individuals and populations identified in Section II(a)(1)(B). The activities will conform to the statutory requirements of each program. This will occur through one-stop center (AJC) partnerships, other partnerships, recommendations from State Workforce Development Board committees, and additional assignments sponsored by the Board as outlined throughout this plan.

Utah's core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Utah's required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans' job counseling, training and placement services (JVSG)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- YouthBuild
- National Farmworkers Jobs Program
- Indian Training Program

All core and required partners have a representative who serves on the Operations Committee, which is charged with implementing the recertification process and collecting and analyzing information for the one-stop requirements. Through committee work, the partners identify and act on opportunities to align and coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality customer-centered services, as well as supportive services, to at-risk individuals including populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B) of this plan. The Operations Committee is also charged with recommending training and outreach strategies that are further developed and implemented by the partners as appropriate. Training core partner staff and developing outreach strategies to targeted groups will help services be received by individuals in need. In section II(a)(1)(B) Utah has identified the following:

- Workforce Development partners, including the Workforce Research and Analysis Division, will coordinate where appropriate, with the IIJA, CHIPS and IRA partners to recognize the workforce needs for the identified industries, including required job skills, credentials and licenses. Education partners will collaborate to scale up and develop training programs including apprenticeships, to support workers entering these occupations, such as semiconducting manufacturing. As training programs are developed, criteria for the Eligible Training Provider List will be considered.
- Utah will focus on disengaged individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Utah will work to increase training opportunities for English language learners (ELL). The number of refugees entering the state is expected to continue rising over the next few years. This has increased the number of ELL students enrolling in Adult Education programs and more employers reaching out for help in providing English training for individuals, which has increased ELL services across the state. Some Adult Education Programs are extending ELL services to employers by offering courses in the workplace, increasing English language proficiency and workplace literacy.

The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Partner Referral System for one-stop centers (AJC). One-stop center (AJC) partners (which include all core, required and additional partners) have the ability to create information sheets that include descriptions of the services they provide, basic eligibility requirements, and referral processes related to their programs. The information sheets are accessible through the system to all partner operations staff. They can also make, receive, and monitor referrals. Partners can create reports to evaluate processes and track referrals. The system supports coordination to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services.

Utah's one-stop centers (AJCs) have all been certified and will go through the recertification process every three years. An important part of this process includes evaluating how well the one-stop center (AJC) partners, in each office, are coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The one-stop center (AJC) demonstrates how it is achieving these goals for State Workforce Development Board members.

Utah's Job Corps, Adult Education and Senior Community Services Employment Program have staff co-located in some one-stop centers (AJC) across the state. This enables staff for these programs to provide "warm handoffs" and effectively coordinate resources. One-stop centers (AJCs) continue to explore ways to have partner staff present at the physical location. For example, in some offices, Adult Education has a staff member spend time at the one-stop center (AJC) on a specific day each week to meet with customers or core partner staff meet regularly to coordinate services for specific customers. In addition, each one-stop center (AJC) has partner meetings at least every six months to coordinate activities and resources at the local level to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B).

Utah's governor, the State Workforce Development Board, and WIOA partners utilized the 2026 planning process to facilitate partners in leveraging and aligning efforts and resources as Utah awards and implements grants received from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Many of the jobs that may be created through the grants will require some type of postsecondary credential and the state's WIOA partners are well-positioned to assist workers in

accessing the good jobs created by IIJA investments and businesses in attracting workers. Utah's State Workforce Development Board and other WIOA partners continue to proactively explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships with education, economic development, state and regional transportation and energy agencies, community-based organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors and the business community. This will help ensure consideration of opportunities to leverage the state's WIOA funding to support the activities of the partnerships.

Utah's workforce development partners recognize that federal investments, strategically tied to prevailing wage and Registered Apprenticeship requirements, will decisively elevate job quality in energy industries. These grants can incentivize the expansion of workforce training pathways and accelerate the alignment of education and training programs with industry demand, supporting domestic manufacturing and content requirements. Utah will assess how the investments may expand the manufacturing and energy industry sectors in the state and consider the development of industry-specific strategies that incorporate career pathways into related jobs for the incumbent workforce and youth entering the workforce.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation continues to present webinars and at conferences, collaborating with partners from the Workforce Development Division, Division of Services for People with Disabilities, the Utah State Board of Education (this includes Adult Education and Career and Technical Education partners), and the Divisions of Substance Use and Mental Health in an effort to enhance and demonstrate partnerships and collaboration among agencies serving transition age youth across the state.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services partners with the Utah Department of Corrections to support the implementation of the Second Chance Grant. At the local level, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Workforce Development Division, Adult Education, and other partners participate in the discharge phase. Workforce Services staff participate in prison Release Day to provide information about services and resources available for offenders and their families.

The Utah Homelessness Council was enacted by law in 2021, as outlined in Utah Code. The Council, supported by the Utah Homelessness Coordinator and the Utah Office of Homeless Services, is responsible for providing final approval for the homeless services budget, strategic plan and award of funding for the provision of homeless services. Members are identified in Utah Code or appointed by the Governor. Funding for homeless services comes from multiple state and federal sources. In addition, the Council is responsible for the review of local and regional homelessness plans, and cooperates with the Local Homeless Councils as designated by the Utah Homeless Network.

The Council ensures that services provided to individuals experiencing homelessness are utilized in a cost-effective manner and works to facilitate a better understanding of homelessness. Funding is devoted to programs that provide resources and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Contracts are awarded to providers based on need, diversity of geographic location, coordination with or enhancement of existing services and the use of volunteers.

The Department of Workforce Services provides access to Licensed Clinical Social Workers at all one-stop centers (AJCs). Individuals who need these types of services set up appointments to meet with social workers.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services contracted with subject matter experts to deliver three modules of youth career counseling training to Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Division staff. Training topics included mentoring, coaching, motivational interviewing, techniques to address barriers, engaging with youth and trauma-informed care.

The Workforce Development Division provided Careeronestop.org training to staff. The training focused on ways to use the valuable tools and resources to assist virtually every customer. It also highlighted the benefit of creating an individual account to save and access helpful information.

The Workforce Development Division provided domestic violence training to all employees who work directly with customers. Their supervisors and managers also received the training. The training was provided virtually for the Eligibility Services Division and in person for staff in our one-stop centers (AJCs). The training included general domestic violence information, statistics, intervention techniques, victim support strategies, and reporting responsibilities. The Workforce Development Division, Clinical Services leadership team conducted the training.

To reduce barriers and assist TANF cash assistance recipients in obtaining higher paying jobs, the Upward Mobility Project was created by the Workforce Development Division. As part of the project, participants attend school full-time in targeted high demand occupations that pay high wages. While attending school, participants receive holistic support from their employment counselor including assistance in paying for housing and utilities. After completion of their training, participants are aided in obtaining employment.

#### D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

##### Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Partners will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services, to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities will conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Services to employers are provided in one-stop centers (AJCs) by workforce development specialists. The local veterans employment representatives (LVER) partner with workforce development specialists throughout the state to help in marketing veterans and sharing resources to encourage employers to hire veterans and participate in the Utah Patriot Partnership.

The Operations Committee will coordinate with the other committees to develop recommendations for aligning the Workforce Development Division, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and other required partner services for employers.

The Operations Committee will receive reports on partners' current employer engagement processes. They will explore ways to better meet employers' workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry partners, including:

- Partners are aligned and coordinated in educating employers about individuals with barriers, with an emphasis on the targeted industries.
- Core, required and optional one-stop partners collaborate.
- Core, required, and optional one-stop partners are not duplicating services.

- Partners are engaging with employers and high demand industries' needs are being addressed within each of the economic regions.
- Exploring ways all partners can leverage the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's business relations services and resources.
- Identifying ways all partners can participate in promoting employer boards utilized by Career and Technical Education at the secondary (K-12, Utah State Board of Education) and postsecondary education levels (UTECH, Utah System of Higher Education).
- Developing recommendations for a process to coordinate efforts to understand employer needs from a full workforce development system point of view, coordinating all partner efforts, as well as new methods.
- Facilitating coordination and collaboration among core partners, education partners and economic development partners, for effective outreach to employers.
- Reporting to the State Workforce Development Board on the status of recommendations, implementation of recommendations and review of performance measures.

The Operations Committee provides recommendations to the appropriate agencies, groups and the State Workforce Development Board.

#### E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

##### Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Utah's strategies will engage its community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Utah's strategies engage state education and training providers, including the Utah System of Higher Education and its eleven technical education institutions, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The Department of Workforce Services serves as a resource to its Utah System of Higher Education partners. Department of Workforce Services employees serve on education advisory boards. Utah educational institutions rely on the Department of Workforce Services' labor market information and employer outreach efforts to inform their decisions regarding curriculum and program adjustments.

Career centers exist at every Utah System of Higher Education institution. The institutional career centers offer job posting services, workforce development training, career advice, workplace readiness training and more. Many of these institutional programs supplement their services through collaboration with the Department of Workforce Services. Agency colleagues sit on center advisory boards, share updated résumé or job search practices and curriculum materials, serve as

guest speakers and frequently partner at every institution on activities from career exploration days and high school leadership workshops to college and community job fairs and outreach events to veterans, minorities and other underserved populations. Utah will explore ways to build stronger connections between core partner counselors and postsecondary career resource counselors, including Disability Resource Centers, to provide opportunities for access to all services the partners offer.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and the Utah System of Higher Education will collaborate to enhance postsecondary education access for individuals with disabilities. Each district office of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and the Disability Services Office at higher education institutions will continue to appoint staff liaisons. These liaisons will act as agency representatives, organize local coordination initiatives, address challenges, and identify best practices. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Services Office liaisons will meet throughout the school year to organize cross-training and ensure the established referral pathways between programs are functional and utilized. Disability Services Office staff and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation counselors exchange information, according to applicable laws, to facilitate evaluating individual client needs, providing appropriate accommodations or auxiliary aids and engaging in educational goal planning.

#### Talent Ready Utah Program

Talent Ready Utah is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry, education, and government to better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. It is a collaborative partnership among:

- The Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education
- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- The Utah State Board of Education
- The Utah State Legislature
- Utah Department of Commerce
- Utah Employers

Talent Ready Utah provides funding to public postsecondary educational institutions to develop, implement or expand educational programs that are responsive to regional and statewide industry needs, serving high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. Talent Ready Utah also provides support to public schools to develop, implement or enhance work-based learning partnerships and connect them to postsecondary institutions. Some programs that operate from Talent Ready Utah are Pathways, Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection and Utah Works.

The Talent Ready Utah is intended to increase the number of individuals who earn industry-recognized credentials, develop career pathways with multiple entry and exit points for students along the postsecondary education continuum and create systemic change by establishing processes and programs that better connect education, the workforce and employers.

Utah has awarded grants with funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). A grant awarded to the Workforce Expansion for Electric Vehicles (WeEV) Project supports the goals of Utah's WIOA plan by investing in the state's workforce infrastructure. Weber State University (WSU), Utah Clean Air Partnership (UCAIR), Utah Clean Cities Coalition, Utah Office of Energy

Development (OED), Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) and the Utah Department of Government Operations are developing an Electric Vehicle (EV) technician program.

Program partners are pursuing federal infrastructure funding through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO) Program Wide Grant program. Local funds will be leveraged with federal funds to expand the reach of the program. The WeEV project is based on a "train the trainer" model, curriculum, and proof of concept for working with disadvantaged communities and industry. Through WeEV, WSU plans to scale its EV technician program to include more students and expand to other campuses. This training pathway allows students to familiarize themselves with EV maintenance and repair, helping prepare them for when they enter the workforce. Tools, EVs and safety equipment will be purchased for participating training programs in order to provide students with practical hands-on training using current equipment.

#### F. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

##### Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Aligning, coordinating and establishing collaboration among the core and required partners will increase customer access and referrals to programs, leading to completion of stackable and marketable credentials as well as postsecondary opportunities. This includes supporting educators to leverage technology for innovative and personalized instruction and increasing access to the internet and devices for students and families. Utah's secondary, postsecondary, Adult Education, Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, and other core and required partners are working together to provide opportunities for individuals to have access to postsecondary education and training. The strategies outlined in this plan will enhance and support those efforts, such as coordinating data systems, working with members of the Education and Training Provider List, coordinating career pathways projects, including pathways in infrastructure, energy and manufacturing. Activities in the plan support continual improvement of integrated service delivery, including improving access for the rural areas of the state.

The Department of Workforce Services currently serves as a resource to the Utah System of Higher Education partners. Department of Workforce Services employees serve on advisory boards throughout the state. Utah educational institutions rely on the Department of Workforce Services' labor market information and employer outreach efforts to inform their decisions regarding curriculum and program adjustments. The one-stop center (AJC) partners, including Workforce Development Division staff, receive information about federal and state scholarships, grants and student loans. They know which of their education partner contacts can assist individuals with these resources.

Career centers exist at every campus of the Utah System of Higher Education. The institutional career centers offer job posting services, workforce development training, career advice, workplace readiness training, and more. Many of these institutional programs supplement their services through collaboration with the Department of Workforce Services. Agency colleagues may sit on center advisory boards, share updated résumé or job-search practices and curriculum materials,

serve as guest speakers and frequently partner at institutions on activities from career-exploration days and high-school leadership workshops to college and community job fairs, and outreach events to veterans, minorities and other underserved populations.

The Utah Board of Higher Education oversees 16 state aid programs to improve access and affordability for students. State aid programs include needs-based programs, scholarships awarded based on academic achievement, and industry-specific awards. The Board also works with industry to provide a needs-based Promise Partner scholarship to employees and dependents of contributing companies. The Board extends the use of state aid funds by leveraging company funds to make higher education more affordable for students throughout the state.

The Utah State Board of Education continues to engage with and fund other education and training providers through the competitive funding process. Local community-based organizations partner with school-based programs to consolidate efforts while providing coursework and workforce preparation activities to eligible participants.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation collaborates with postsecondary training programs to eliminate programmatic and accessibility barriers for individuals with disabilities. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation staff receives cross training and information from local higher education institutions about credential attainment requirements. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation provides counseling on postsecondary opportunities to individuals with disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to improve access to credential attainment. Utah State Office of Rehabilitation offices and each institution of higher education Disability Services Office will designate staff liaison assignments to serve as agency representatives, organize local efforts, communicate problems and develop best practices. These liaisons will meet throughout the school year to organize cross-training and encourage staff use of established referral pathways between programs. Disability Services Office staff and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation counselors exchange information, according to applicable laws, to facilitate evaluating individual client needs, providing appropriate accommodations or auxiliary aids and engaging in educational goal planning.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation maintains partnerships with private training providers and supports private training programs. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has a system for approving private training programs in order to fulfill client informed choice for selection of training services and training program providers. Private training providers continue to be an invaluable source of niche subject education that helps Utah State Office of Rehabilitation clients reach their individual employment goals commensurate with their abilities, interests, strengths, and priorities.

Partners engage other education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. The Education and Training Provider List supports education and training providers as partners in the workforce development system by publicly disseminating the list of approved providers with information on quality, job-driven training programs. It supports informed consumer choice by providing provider costs and performance outcomes. The criteria on the Eligible Training Provider List supports quality training for occupation in demand.

An example of one way Utah has approached improved access to postsecondary credentialing has been with behavioral health workers. The Utah Department of Commerce's Office of Professional Licensure reviewed the requirements and processes for behavioral health workers. From their review, they made recommendations to allow more flexibility in supervision hours that focus on enhancing clinical skills and create an alternative path to obtaining the necessary supervision

hours. Additionally, they are exploring creating career ladders that translate lower-level licenses or certifications that can transition into higher-level licensures. These efforts have resulted in legislation that was proposed during the 2024 general session. By exploring these innovative approaches, Utah will continue to better meet the workforce needs of the state.

The State Workforce Development Board committees will continue to explore ways to build stronger connections between core partner staff and postsecondary career professionals, including Disability Resource centers, to provide customer access to all services provided by partners.

The Apprenticeship Committee is working to improve access to registered apprenticeship programs and expand the types of apprenticeships available to job seekers and students. The committee's top priorities include expanding awareness and expanding apprenticeships in education services, healthcare, manufacturing, cybersecurity and information technology. Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship efforts in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) implementation are also a priority. In addition, the committee is coordinating with the Career Pathways Committee to align their recommendations. This is an ongoing activity.

The Career Pathways Committee plans to connect with local one-stop center (AJC) partners to identify best practices and gather information to explore opportunities for improving alignment, collaboration and gaps. This information will be used to support recommendations for developing career pathways that support Utah's targeted industries. This is an ongoing activity.

The Career Pathways Committee will include in its ongoing analysis, a description of the state's strategies that engage education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. This includes sharing and discussing Career and Technical Education state plans between state workforce and education agencies.

The Talent Ready Utah Program is represented on the Career Pathways Committee. The Talent Ready Utah program is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry and education to better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations.

The Talent Ready Utah Program is intended to increase the number of individuals who earn industry-recognized credentials, develop career pathways with multiple entry and exit points for students along the postsecondary education continuum and create systemic change by establishing processes and programs that better connect education, the workforce, and employers.

The Career Pathways Committee will explore opportunities to develop strategies to increase access to postsecondary credentials working with all of Utah's workforce development partners:

- Education
  - Utah System of Higher Education (includes postsecondary Career and Technical Education, and Talent Ready Utah)
  - Adult Education
  - Utah State Board of Education
- Department of Workforce Services
  - Vocational Rehabilitation

- Unemployment Insurance
- Workforce Development Division
- Workforce Research and Analysis
- Veterans and Military Initiatives
- Employment First
- Choose to Work
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Community Services Block Grant
- Other state agencies and organizations
  - The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
  - Unified Economic Opportunity Commission
  - STEM Action Center
- Required partners
  - Job Corps
  - National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
  - Senior Community Service Employment Program
  - YouthBuild

#### G. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

##### Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Activities defined in (A) will be coordinated with the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Economic Development Corporation of Utah, Governor's Unified Economic Opportunity Commission, and local economic development organizations' activities and strategies. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity is an active member of many of the committees, workgroups and projects described throughout this plan. They serve on the State Workforce Development Board, which ensures their participation in coordinating activities between the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, core partners, and required partners.

##### Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors Act

Utah's workforce development policymakers and partners consider the following principles recommended by federal partners when developing an application for the Semiconductor Incentives program:

- Regional collaboration potential, including developing partnerships responsive to employer needs, employer commitments to hire and provide on-the-job training, worker equity and inclusion, and industry-recognized competencies and registered apprenticeships.
- Supplementary state investment.
- Stakeholder and community engagement.

Utah plans to identify employers in pursuing incentives such as:

- Leveraging business outreach efforts to raise employer awareness about the workforce requirements and services that can help them access, establish, or improve training programs to better meet demand.
- Providing funding to offset the cost of employment, education and on-the-job learning expenses for apprentices participating in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Helping employers access training and employment opportunities so that underrepresented populations and those with barriers to employment can benefit from opportunities.
- Sharing best practices for increasing job quality and access to wraparound services.
- Aligning proposals with activities and principles from successful Good Jobs Challenge grant applications, including regional competitiveness and inclusive economic growth; equitable job opportunities for underserved populations and communities; worker-centered, employer-led workforce training systems; and integrating diverse, local stakeholders into workforce training partnerships.
- Aligning with economic development partners.
- Engaging with the activities of the National Semiconductor Technology Center as it develops apprenticeships and other workforce development programs and replicate best practices.
- Monitoring the activities funded by the Workforce and Education Fund at the National Science Foundation and replicate best practices.

Utah has been actively promoting the goals of initiatives such as CHIPS and plans that benefit its workforce development system including education, business, and job seekers.

Utah's Intermountain Critical Materials Consortium (ICMC), a collaborative group of industry partners led by the Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative (UAMMI), which is developing a regional strategy to advance the production and manufacturing of critical minerals needed for clean energy technologies, many of which lack any domestic production presence. This group has received a Strategy Development Grant (SDG), which has been awarded as a part of the Tech Hubs program authorized by the passage of the CHIPS and Science Act. Led by UAMMI, ICMC comprises 43 private industry partners, 8 universities, Workforce Services and other local and state entities. This consortium will be a top global leader in processing critical materials, which are essential components of emerging technologies.

The University of Utah launched the Utah Network for Integrated Computing and Semiconductor Research and Education (UNICOS), an organization that consists of state-wide partnerships among higher education, government agencies and business to help develop Utah's semiconductor workforce and increase its access to key technological infrastructure.

Partnerships enabled through UNICOS will expand access to tools and subsidize operating costs, reducing the need for local academic institutions and industry members to independently purchase and maintain expensive equipment. The goal of UNICOS is to become a research platform that fosters collaboration between academic and private sector scientists and engineers across the state. The University of Utah's Utah Nanofab, a lab space that serves researchers and companies, will support UNICOS' educational arm, the Utah Semiconductor Training Center. Students and employees across Utah will have opportunities for hands-on learning with Nanofab faculty and technical staff. Before training onsite, UNICOS will offer a certificate program with "stackable" classes aimed at providing a solid foundation for students interested in careers in this area, as well as for professionals without semiconductor backgrounds who are looking to transition into the industry.

UNICOS' academic partners will also develop curricula with content beginning in high school through Ph.D. level classes to help prepare the next generation of Utah's semiconductor workforce. The academic partners include Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University, Utah State University, Utah Tech University, Brigham Young University, Salt Lake Community College, Snow College, Weber State University, and Mountainland Technical College.

Industry partners participating in the UNICOS network, including Micron, Lockheed Martin, L3Harris, Merit Sensor, Silicon Technologies, Inc. and Blackrock Neurotech.

Utah supports workforce and economic development in the semiconductor industry with both state and federal funds. The Utah Legislature created the Economic Development Tax Increment Finance (EDTIF) corporate incentive program in 2005 and the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity utilizes federal, state and private sector resources to administer programs.

Guidelines from the 2022 legislative session focus on creating jobs throughout Utah while recognizing the unique challenges in the state's urban and rural areas. The Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors Act (CHIPS) is dispersed through the EDTIF corporate incentive program in Utah.

The Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity awarded Texas Instruments Incorporated (TI) a post-performance tax reduction for its new semiconductor factory in Lehi, Utah. The corporate incentive is part of the state's Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) program. As part of the agreement, Texas Instruments committed to add up to 800 new, high-tech manufacturing jobs over the life of the agreement, plus thousands of indirect construction and support jobs, with an anticipated facility production start date in 2026. Groundbreaking and construction for the new facility in Lehi, Utah began in late 2023. The Department of Workforce Services is working with Texas Instruments to develop registered apprenticeship programs. Texas Instruments is partnering with the Alpine School District to improve student opportunities to focus on building a local talent pipeline.

### IIJA Grant Awards

Utah's workforce development partners will explore ways to partner with entities awarded grants through IIJA to align workforce development and provide other support.

A qualified workforce is necessary to complete these projects. The Department of Workforce Services and its partners have made it a priority to support pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs to develop the workforce needed. There are currently a large number of infrastructure-related apprenticeship programs in the state and the department is working with key stakeholders to develop more as needed to support these workforce needs.

Below are projects WIOA partners are currently involved with. This list will expand as grants are awarded.

Red Rocks DAC Hub is a Geothermal Energy-Driven Direct Air Carbon Capture and Sequestration Hub in Southwest Utah, Fervo Energy Company intends to establish the Red Rocks DAC Hub in southwest Utah. Fervo's geothermal and carbon sequestration exploration and resource characterization activities suggest that more than 10 gigawatts of high-quality, economically exploitable geothermal resources are available in southwest Utah, which could translate into storage potential of up to 100 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

- The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and the Utah Office of Energy Development's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Phase I project actively implemented a competitive grant program (RFA Phase 1), which was awarded beginning August 15, 2023. The first contracts were awarded on October 26, 2023. Since that time, Utah's NEVI Team has successfully executed public contracts with key industry partners, including PiBeclot, Maverik and PacificCorp. The Utah NEVI program also commissioned five National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) compliant charging sites along Utah's alternative fuel corridors.
  - Locations: Moab, Snowville, Layton, Ivie Creek and Coalville
- The project seeks to create public-private partnerships to fund the installation of NEVI-compliant fast direct current electric vehicle (DC EV) chargers in 15 site areas along Utah's interstate highways and US-6/US-191. Each private partner will be responsible for initial financing, installation, operation and maintenance of the chargers for five years.
- The Department of Workforce Services has developed various registered apprenticeship programs in partnership with Fervo Energy, Southern Utah University and Elemental Impact (a non-profit) to support the work of these projects. Fervo has also become a group program intermediary sponsor to manage the apprenticeships for their subcontractors. The program focuses on subsurface operations, providing training in areas such as geothermal directional drilling and well completions. The primary goal is to provide a career pathway for college students and to transition skilled professionals, particularly from the oil and gas industry, into high-wage, clean energy careers in Southwest Utah.

In July and August 2025, the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) was awarded two separate grants by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These two grants focus on the purchase of 15 new battery-electric buses (BEBs), 25 replacement low-emission CNG buses and the necessary fueling infrastructure to replace diesel buses. This funding is targeted specifically for routes in high growth areas of Salt Lake County, to help serve the region's disadvantaged communities. The project will help reduce the agency's carbon footprint and improve air quality.

- UTA currently has several registered apprenticeship programs.

#### b. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section **II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

1. The State operating systems that will support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.).

## State Operating Systems and Policies

Utah's Combined Plan includes an Operational Planning Elements section that supports Utah's strategy and system-wide vision described in Section II(c).

Utah's operating systems that support coordinated implementation of state strategies include:

- Labor Market Information

The Workforce Research and Analysis Division gathers data regarding the economy. Its mission is to generate accurate, timely and understandable data and analyses to provide knowledge of ever-changing workforce environments that inform sound planning and decision-making. Staff collect information describing the Utah labor market, including wages; employment projections by industry, occupation and area; cost of living; employment and unemployment; labor force characteristics; career trends; and industry trends. The Department of Workforce Services, the State Workforce Development Board, core partners and other partners utilize the workforce information collected in planning and decision-making to determine job growth areas, skill gaps, income and wage data, migration, demographics, cost of living and career-exploration opportunities. This information is critical in determining the targeted industries and occupations while working with partners in business and education to ensure needed skills training is available.

Additionally, information collected is used to assist individuals in making informed career choices. This information is available to customers through the Workforce Research and Analysis page of the Department of Workforce Services website at [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). The Department of Workforce Services works closely with individuals, employers and workforce system partners to make information meaningful and practical for end users.

- Data Collection Systems:

- UWORKS is an integrated case management system. It is a web-based system used by the Department of Workforce Services to support self-service individuals by providing access to information and services that help them obtain employment. It tracks mediated staff services, allowing employment counselors to easily manage cases and assist individuals reach their employment goals. This system captures funding source requirements, training-provider details and youth-provider information, allowing for program accountability and resource scheduling. The system supports both self-service and mediated job seekers and employers. Because of the different types of users supported, the system accommodates multiple system entry points, multiple levels of security and the ability to seamlessly transfer job seekers or employers from self-directed to staff-assisted.
- The Electronic Resource and Eligibility Product (eRep) is the system used to determine supportive service program eligibility for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.
- eShare is Utah's data repository system that collects information from several systems and allows for one central location for service providers who are determining intensive and training service eligibility through UWORKS to gather required customer information.
- eClient is an electronic imaging system used to hold and view documents for all customer types.

- myCase is an Internet-based system that allows customers to ascertain the status of their case.
- Interactive self-service and mediated-service systems called Contributions Automated Tax System (CATS) and Comprehensive Unemployment Benefits System (CUBS) are used to collect data and process all services offered by the Unemployment Insurance Division, including the collection of wage data and new hire information from employers.
- eReports is the data reporting system the Department of Workforce Services uses to provide detailed information about customer activities and outcomes, providing administrators, managers, front-line staff and program staff with supplemental tools to manage performance outcome attainment. The eReports system has access to the following systems: CUBS, CATS, UWORKS, and eRep.
- The Department of Workforce Services' Data Warehouse contains data and could house additional data used to support the strategies of the State Plan.
- Adult education data are collected through a relational web-based database. As students move throughout the state (currently 40 program sites with multiple sites), their data follows them in real time. All reporting elements defined by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) to meet the needs of WIOA reporting are built into the database and will be shared with and made accessible to core partners through secure portals. The statewide adult education student information system provides adult educators and the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services staff with effective and valid data to enhance program improvements, ensuring successful student outcomes.
- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's Vocational Rehabilitation program utilizes the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) for data collection. AWARE is a fully integrated, comprehensive case-management system that the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation utilizes for documentation, caseload management, budget and expenditures, and outcome reporting. It collects client information covering the life cycle of a case: application, trial work experiences, eligibility, plan, job readiness, employment and closure. AWARE is continually updated to reflect the required WIOA requirements for the Rehabilitation Service Administration's Case Service 9-11 Report. All data collected in AWARE is readily available for automated reporting. In addition, AWARE currently interfaces with the UWORKS case management system to enhance collection and integration between core programs and activities.
- The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Partner Referral System for comprehensive one-stop partners. All partners can create information sheets about their programs that are accessible to operations staff. They can also make, receive, and monitor referrals. Partners can create reports to evaluate processes and track referrals.
- The Utah Data Research Center houses data from multiple state agencies to enable the longitudinal research of Utahns. It is the only entity that can match identities in cross-agency data of this magnitude. This allows researchers to analyze Utahns over time as they enroll and graduate from school and participate in the workforce.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (for example, co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.

Utah's policies support the implementation of its strategies. In addition, Utah has created one-stop criteria and an Infrastructure MOU that provides guidelines and requirements for one-stop partner contributions to Utah's one-stop delivery system. Utah's Infrastructure MOU was updated in July 2024 and includes co-location agreements between the Department of Workforce Services and the Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education. The partners will meet and conduct the four-year review to update the Infrastructure MOU by July 1, 2028. The Operations Committee of the State Workforce Development Board, which includes representation from all core and required partners, oversees the development of one-stop criteria, so all partners have the opportunity to participate in the process. All core and required partners participate in maintaining information for the Partner Referral System that is used in one-stop centers (AJCs). Attachments include: Utah's current MOU IFA and one-stop certification criteria.

Attachments:

[WIOA Infrastructure Agreement 25-MOU-0001.pdf](#)

Attachment C - One Stop Certification Criteria (included as part of the WIOA Infrastructure MOU Agreement)

Each of Utah's core partner programs encourage program co-enrollment to meet the holistic needs of participants. Participants who may be eligible for any partner programs are referred to the appropriate programs through the partner referral system. Also, staff are encouraged to contact the partner agency to inform them of the referral, accompany the participant to an initial meeting and continue to collaborate with the partner program to coordinate services. All core partner programs encourage participants to complete a registration on Utah's labor exchange system. Through using this universal intake, the registration information, other data, including services provided, is then shared behind the scenes with each program to help improve the quality of services and reduce duplication.

### Utah's Partner Referral System Requirements

#### Overview

The Partner Referral System was created to support and improve one-stop centers' (AJCs) ability to refer individuals to partners and track outcomes. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires all partner staff to be trained and knowledgeable about all programs and services offered in the one-stop centers (AJCs).

The Partner Referral System is used by partners of local one-stop centers (AJCs) that have been certified as affiliates or comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs). This includes all WIOA core and required partners and any additional partners as defined by the local office. The additional partners participate in the certification process, receive Partner Referral System training, and agree to attend local partner meetings. Partner responsibilities related to the system include:

- Maintain Partner Information Sheets
- Maintain staff access to the system and update information

- Make referrals to other partners
- Receive and respond to referrals from partners
- Review reports
- Maintain the organization's contact information

The Partner Referral System supports staff knowledge about partner programs by providing information sheets for each partner that display:

- Partner name and description
- Services provided
- Eligibility criteria
- Referral process
- Contact information
- Notes (additional information)

The Partner Referral System supports “warm hand-off” referrals because individuals receive information about the referrals they receive, the referrals are accepted by a partner and the referrals can be tracked. One-stop centers (AJCs) can access reports to help them continually improve referral processes. They can review the reports at their partner meetings.

#### Partner List:

The role of the core partners is to coordinate and align complementary services so job seekers can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs.

Core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Utah's WIOA partners are responsible for workforce and economic development through the collaboration of programs, initiatives, and services that create a seamless, customer-focused one-stop delivery system. Utah's required partners collaborate and align their services to enhance access for job seekers and businesses.

Required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans' job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- National Farmworkers Jobs Program
- YouthBuild
- Indian Training Center

Additional partners include:

- Any partners that participate in the certification process, train their staff on all of the partner's services and programs, and attend the one-stop center's (AJC) partner meetings.

Comprehensive One-Stop Center (AJC) Certification Policy & Procedure Processes

11100 Comprehensive One-Stop Certification Policy & Procedure Process

[https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS\\_Employment\\_and\\_Business\\_Services\\_Manual.htm#t=11000\\_One-Stop\\_Certification%2F11100\\_Comprehensive\\_One-Stop\\_Certification.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS_Employment_and_Business_Services_Manual.htm#t=11000_One-Stop_Certification%2F11100_Comprehensive_One-Stop_Certification.htm)

Effective: 11/01/2017

Updated 03/20/2020

Comprehensive One-Stop (AJC) Recertification Policy & Procedure Process

11300 Comprehensive One-Stop Recertification Policy & Process

Effective: 05/01/2021

[https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS\\_Employment\\_and\\_Business\\_Services\\_Manual.htm#t=11000\\_One-Stop\\_Certification%2F11300\\_Comprehensive\\_One-Stop\\_Recertification\\_Policy\\_Procedure\\_Process.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS_Employment_and_Business_Services_Manual.htm#t=11000_One-Stop_Certification%2F11300_Comprehensive_One-Stop_Recertification_Policy_Procedure_Process.htm)

Comprehensive One-Stop Center (AJC) Policy Requirements (Based on TEGL 16-16 Section 9 - American Job Center Certification)

- WIOA requires the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) to establish objective criteria and procedures for certifying its American Job Centers (20 CFR 678.800, 34 CFR 361.800, and 34 CFR 463.800). The certification process establishes a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in American Job Centers across a State. The certification criteria allow States to set standard expectations for customer-focused, seamless services from a network of employment, training, and related services that help individuals overcome barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment. The State Workforce Development Board must establish objective criteria and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvements of American Job Centers. The Comprehensive One-Stop Certification process will need to be conducted at least once every three years (20 CFR 678.800, 34 CFR 361.800, and 34 CFR 463.800). The SWDB must review and update the criteria every two years as part of the review and modification of the planning process.

- Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) shall align and coordinate services for all core and required one-stop partners available in the area.
- All comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) must provide:
  - A physical location where job seekers and employers can access the programs, services and activities of all one-stop partners
  - At least one title I staff person physically present in the one-stop center (AJC)
  - Career services
  - Access to training services
  - Access to employment and training activities
  - Access to programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners, including the Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act
  - Workforce and labor market information
  - WIOA partner services to customers with no fees attached

### 3. State Program and State Board Overview

#### A. State Agency Organization

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

Utah became the first state in the nation to consolidate employment and public assistance programs by creating the Utah Department of Workforce Services in 1997. Workforce Services and its partners assist individuals in preparing for and finding jobs, meeting workforce needs of Utah businesses, administering temporary assistance, and providing economic data and analysis.

Workforce Services and its partners work on initiatives such as intergenerational poverty, homelessness, affordable housing, supporting refugees, helping rural communities, serving veterans and individuals with disabilities, and getting Utahns trained and back to work.

Led by Workforce Services, the governor's WIOA designee and the State Workforce Development Board, Utah's WIOA partners work together at the state and operational levels to coordinate programs and serve customers. This is primarily accomplished through the state's one-stop center (AJC) partnerships, where staff strive to continually improve services and accessibility, meet individual needs and accomplish successful outcomes for Utahns in their communities. Utah's Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Veterans Services (JVSG) and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs are housed within Workforce Services and deliver services throughout the state. The Utah State Board of Education provides administrative authority over adult education for the state. The State Workforce Development Board certifies the one-stop centers (AJCs) every three years with criteria it reviews and approves every two years. Organizational charts can be found at:

Department of Workforce Services and Utah State Board of Education Organization Charts:

 2026 Plan Org Charts

[USBE Org Chart](#)

- The Workforce Development Division (WDD) director reports to a Workforce Services deputy director. The WDD director oversees economic service areas and program administration of WIOA. WDD supports the workforce with training, education and other resources. This is accomplished each day in any one of the one-stop centers (AJCs) that stretch across every region of Utah, providing a home base for job seekers and employers. The one-stop centers (AJCs) are strategically embedded directly within the communities they serve and are staffed by compassionate professionals eager to connect employers and soon-to-be employees. Each center offers a multitude of programs specifically designed to create industry-led workforce solutions to assist diverse job seekers. Employment counselors administer these programs and market services, making a difference in the lives of individuals, families and employers.
- The WDD director oversees operational managers who administer Veterans Services within the Workforce Development Division of Workforce Services. Veteran Services plays an important role in supporting American veterans in their search for meaningful employment. Veterans are provided with tailored job search assistance, career counseling, training and education, resume and interview assistance and other resources so they are able to succeed in the civilian workforce.
- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) director reports to the same Workforce Services deputy director as WDD. The USOR director oversees the operational managers who administer Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) statewide. VR staff are co-located in many one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state. USOR assists individuals with disabilities in obtaining meaningful employment, integrating into the community, improving accessibility and increasing independence in their daily activities. Support is provided to business partners in their efforts to hire people with disabilities and improve workplace accommodations.
- The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) provides administrative authority over Utah Adult Education. The Adult Education coordinator is supervised directly by the Career and Technical Education Director and monitors all Adult Education programs receiving Title II funding. USBE utilizes a comprehensive grant system that tracks the grant process, including applications, awards and reimbursements. Local Adult Education staff are co-located at the Cedar City one-stop center (AJC) and regularly visit many one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state. Adult Education provides transformative, learner-centered, high-quality, evidence-based education that leads to sustainable employment and personal success. Assistance is provided to adults so they can become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency while completing a secondary education.

B. State Board

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board

consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

## Utah State Workforce Development Board

### Introduction

On July 22, 2014, H.R. 803, the "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" was signed into law. This replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amended the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This also created the State Workforce Development Board.

The Utah State Workforce Development Board's principal assets are its informed and dedicated members. Partner organizations are grateful for the business, community and government leaders who volunteer their time, knowledge and expertise to Utah's workforce development efforts.

### Governor's Vision and Board Mission

Governor Cox and the State Workforce Development Board's vision anticipates a dynamic state with a richly diversified economy that is attractive to both employers who create and sustain jobs and individuals who bring knowledge and skills to those jobs. The Board supports its vision, mission and commitment to taxpayers through its partnership of state and local government, business, economic development, and community organizations. Based on direct partner input and data, the board guides the strategic alignment of programs, resources and services with employer needs, creating a strong workforce development system for Utah.

### Governor's Vision for Utah

Be a state where residents are happy, safe, healthy and successful. A place where we can grow old surrounded by the people we love and live peaceably in the most beautiful state in America. A place where we realize the good that comes from doing things together as ONE UTAH.

### State Workforce Development Board Mission

To strengthen Utah's workforce development system to meet employer needs through innovative strategies that keep pace with economic change.

### Commitment to Taxpayers

To provide quality, accountable and streamlined services that connect a world class workforce with employment.

### Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the Board in lending support to the vision, mission and commitment to taxpayers:

- The State Workforce Development Board understands the key current and future workforce needs of business and industry.
- Workforce partnerships are formed between business, local government, education, community partners and economic development organizations to address and identify key needs.
- The Board serves as a convener of diverse stakeholders who will actively participate and collaborate with all partners, both public and private. Solid partnerships are keys to success.

- The Board will adopt a common set of key workforce development data elements, goals, measures and a continuous improvement process among the six core programs.
- Training resources focus on programs that prepare and connect unemployed workers with high quality training to get good jobs, stay employed and meet the needs of employers.
- The Board, led by business, focuses a significant portion of its workload on labor market demand trends and issues, which shape the jobs of today and influence the opportunities of tomorrow.

#### Statutory Responsibilities

The State Workforce Development Board oversees strategic direction for the six core partners of WIOA. Board members are appointed by the Governor and have the following statutory functions:

- Provide leadership in the development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers and job seekers, through industry and sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the Combined State plan.
- Assist in the development of strategies to support the use of career pathways to include low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.
- Review the statewide policies and programs and make recommendations on actions that should take place to align workforce development programs in the state with the six core programs.
- Coordinate the planning and delivery of workforce development services with the six core programs and other mandatory partners.
- Assist in the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system and one-stop delivery system in the state.
- Designate one-stop operator (the Department of Workforce Services is currently Utah's designated one-stop operator).
- Assist in the development and updating of comprehensive state performance accountability measures to assess the effectiveness of core programs in the state. This includes approving criteria and eligibility of training providers, as well as publishing performance outcomes on training providers.
- Develop an annual report.
- Assist in the development of strategies for technological improvements to improve the quality of services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system.
- Improve the understanding and visibility of state workforce service efforts through external and internal marketing strategies.
- Perform other responsibilities within the scope of workforce services as requested by the Legislature, the Governor or Governor's designee.

#### Member Responsibilities

The State Workforce Development Board members shall act in the best interests of the State and the following is expected of each member:

- Attendance and Punctuality

Attend quarterly State Workforce Development Board meetings and designated committee meetings. The State Workforce Development Board and committee chairs shall start and conclude each meeting in a timely fashion. A minimum of five hours each quarter is the expected quarterly commitment of each member.

- Meeting Schedule

The Board meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each quarter. Committee meetings are typically held quarterly on days and times that work best for the members. The full board meets from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated. The location of meetings is announced and meeting materials are sent to members in advance and posted on the website.

- Participation

Beyond attendance and punctuality, each member should prepare for the meetings by reviewing pre-meeting materials and contacting resources for further information and opinions, as necessary. To increase collective effectiveness, each member should contribute their knowledge and expertise to substantive State Workforce Development Board issues. A candid expression of ideas and opinions among colleagues, as well as respect for differences and similarities, will foster success.

- Committees Participation

Each member of the State Workforce Development Board should actively participate on his/her designated standing committee.

- Access to Resources

Beyond preparing for and participating in State Workforce Development Board activities, each member should be prepared to tap into other available resources to carry out the State Workforce Development Board mission, including professional networks, technical support, etc.

- Per Diem and Travel Expenses

State Workforce Development Board members who are not public members, state or local government members, or higher education members, may receive per diem and travel expenses at the rates established by the Division of Finance pursuant to Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107.

- Conflict of Interest

The State Workforce Development Board exists for purposes that transcend personal, professional and corporate self-interests. Consequently, any board member who may have a conflict of interest must announce such potential conflict prior to voting on an affected issue.

Board Member Name	Organization
Tyler Low	Cache Valley Bank
Deanna Hopkins	Enbridge
Richard Fullmer	Associated General Contractors of Utah

Board Member Name	Organization
James Jackson III	Salt Lake Community College
Debra Fiori	PROG Holdings, Inc.
Matt Loo	American Land Consulting/Engineering
Spencer Loveless	Dustless Technologies & Merit3D
Celina Sinclair	Utah Tourism Association
Whitney Harris	RAM Aviation, Space & Defense
Stacey Taylor	Deer Valley Resort
Michelle Hill	Clyde Companies, Inc.
Megen Ralphs - Chair	Leavitt Group Enterprises
Lucio Gallegos-Notario	Big-D Construction
Laurel Timmins	Savage
Tannen Ellis Graham	Diabetes & Endocrine Treatment Specialists
Shawn Newell	Waves Enterprises, LLC
Geoff Landward	Utah System of Higher Education
Vacant	Salt Lake Community College
Shawn Milne	Cache County
Jeff Worthington	Utah AFL - CIO
Vacant	Utah Electrical Training Alliance
Jeremy Haslam	UA Local 140
Jordan Leonard	Emery County Commissioner
Tracy Gruber	Department of Health and Human Services
Sarah Brenna	Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
Gary Harter	Department of Veterans and Military Affairs
Sherry Stevens	Gov. Office of Economic Opportunity
Casey R. Cameron	Department of Workforce Services
Molly Hart, Ed.D.	Utah State Board of Education
Steven L. Olson	Wells Fargo Bank
Lauren Navidomskis	Lantern House

## Board Activities

The Department of Workforce Services had statutory authority to serve as the administrative entity for the State Council of Workforce Services. During the 2017 Utah State Legislative session, the state code was amended to align with changes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), found in 29 U.S.C. Section 3101 et al. The Department of Workforce Services will retain the administrative oversight of the State Workforce Development Board. During the 2025 Utah State Legislative General Session, the requirement for representation from a member of the Utah House of Representatives and the Utah State Senate was eliminated (H.B. 412, Section 15, 35-1-206).

The governor, in accordance with Section 106(d) of WIOA, retains and designates Utah as a "Single State Local Area." Utah is well situated and prepared to continue delivering integrated workforce services and will align its governance and administrative structure to set policy direction and establish realistic performance goals. The State Workforce Development Board serves as the advisory body to provide guidance, oversight and evaluation to ensure programs remain fully responsive to Utah's economic development and labor market needs. State agencies with core and required programs will continue, in a coordinated approach, to implement specific workforce development programs through the certified one-stop centers (AJCs) in local areas.

In terms of section 101(d) of WIOA, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the state plan through committees overseen by the board and chaired by members that fulfill assignments related to these activities. The board reviews and approves Utah's Combined State plan, including all modifications during committee meetings, full board meetings, and email communications.

The State Workforce Development Board, <https://jobs.utah.gov/edo/statcouncil/index.html>, leads the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in Utah including, through its Board-led core and required partner staffed committees:

- Identifying barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
- The development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services including: access to transportation, referrals to physical and mental health assistance, housing assistance, child and dependent care, and income support to enter or retain employment.
- The development of strategies for providing effective [State Workforce Development Board \(SWDB\)](#) outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system.
- The development and expansion of strategies to meet the needs of employers, workers and job seekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships focused on in-demand sectors and occupations.
- The development and continuous improvement of the one-stop delivery system, including providing assistance to one-stop operators, one-stop partners, and providers with planning

and delivering services, including training services and supportive services to support effective delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers.

- The development of strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system.
- The development and updating of comprehensive state-adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state as required under section 116(b).
- The identification and dissemination of information on best practices, including best practices for:
  - The effective operation of one-stop centers (AJCs) relating to the use of business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment.
  - Effective training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis, and effectively use direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure an individual's prior knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences, and that evaluate such skills and competencies for adaptability, to support efficient placement into employment or career pathways.
- The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the State's one-stop delivery system described in section 121(e), including the development of policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of entities carrying out one-stop partner programs within the one-stop delivery system, including approaches to facilitating equitable and efficient cost allocation in the system.
- The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to and improve the quality of services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system, including such improvements to:
  - Enhance digital literacy skills as defined in section 202 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20U.S.C. 9101); referred to in this Act as "digital literacy skills".
  - Accelerate the acquisition of skills and recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.
  - Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals.
  - Technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas.
- The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measurement and reporting processes to improve coordination of services across one-stop partner programs.
- The preparation of annual reports described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 116(d).
- The development of a statewide workforce and labor market information system described in section 15€ of the Wagner-Peyser Act.
- The development of such other policies as may promote statewide objectives for and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the state.

The State Workforce Development Board will oversee its committees to ensure that recommendations include implementation and evaluation plans that clearly articulate specific actions, milestones and ongoing assessment.

The State Workforce Development Board has the support of agency staff. Agency staff from the core and required partners are available to provide support to the committees. This includes:

- Assisting with committee meetings
- Providing information
- Leading workgroups (in the temporary absence of the chair or co-chair)
- Ensuring appropriate membership on workgroups
- Recommending goals for the committee
- Reporting agency updates to the committee

The State Workforce Development Board members have a clear understanding of participation requirements:

Beyond attendance and punctuality, each member should prepare for meetings by reviewing pre-meeting materials and contacting resources for further information and opinions, as necessary. To encourage collective effectiveness, each member should provide his or her knowledge and expertise on substantive State Workforce Development Board issues. A candid expression of ideas and opinions among colleagues, as well as respect for differences and similarities will foster success.

Each member of the board should actively participate on his/her designated standing committee.

The State Workforce Development Board members have access to resources:

- Beyond preparing for and participating in board activities, each member should be prepared to tap into other available resources in order to carry out the board's mission, including professional networks, technical support, etc.
- The State Workforce Development Board may receive per diem and expenses to support their activities:
  - State Workforce Development Board members who are not public members, state or local government members or higher education members may receive per diem and expenses at the established State of Utah rates (e.g. only the pre-approved State rate amounts will be reimbursed for hotels and meals) established by the Division of Finance pursuant to Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107.

#### 4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

##### A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and

improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

### Assessment of Core Programs

Utah core programs will be assessed annually based on the state performance accountability measures described in Section 116(b) of WIOA. Assessments include the quality, effectiveness and improvement of programs. Under the leadership of the Operations Committee, a workgroup with representation from the core partners will meet to define the performance accountability measures and sources of data, and how the information will be used for improvements. Utah will utilize previous performance measures as base measurements. The committee's recommendations will require approval from the State Workforce Development Board.

The Operations Committee will oversee the Data and Reports workgroup to develop a dashboard report of all core partner performance measures to be shared with community stakeholders, including the State Workforce Development Board, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), and Utah State Board of Education. The dashboard will be updated with performance data quarterly as it becomes available for federal reporting. The Operations Committee and the Data and Reports workgroup will meet as needed to review and refine the dashboard reporting procedure.

A determination of each of the core partners' successes will be measured by their ability to meet or exceed their agency's targets as set by Labor, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education and Rehabilitation. Annually, the core partners will be expected to self-evaluate their outcomes at a state and economic service area level and take measurable action(s) to improve data/service outcomes. For example, Adult Education will provide technical assistance by evaluating program effectiveness through monthly desk audits of program data with each service provider. Each program is reviewed tri-annually at a minimum, or as needed as determined through a risk assessment process. Adult Education's annual state professional development plan is based on program statuses, outcomes and issues. Annually, each of the core partners will work with the Operations Committee to create a report for the State Workforce Development Board on successes and a plan defining program improvement.

Utah's performance accountability measures for the core programs shall consist of the primary indicators of performance for activities provided under the adult and dislocated worker programs authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B, the program of adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II, the H. R. 803—48 employment services program authorized under sections 1 through 13 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) (except that sub clauses (IV) and (V) shall not apply to such program), and the program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741), shall consist of:

- 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 obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within one year 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.
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).
- The primary indicators of performance for the youth program authorized under chapter 2 of subtitle B shall consist of:
  - The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.
  - The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
  - The primary indicators of performance described in sub clauses (III) through (VI) of subparagraph (A)(i).

Utah has established levels of performance for each of the corresponding primary indicators of performance described in paragraph (2) for each of the programs described in clause (ii). Performance outcomes will be discussed with the Operations Committee to ascertain improvement strategies. Performance indicators will be negotiated with each federal government agency. The final agreed-upon targets will be a result of performance data, regional data and federal agencies' recommendations. Core programs will define processes that will be used to increase/improve future state outcomes.

The programs included under clause (i) are:

- The youth program authorized under chapter 2 of subtitle B
- The adult program authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B
- The dislocated worker program authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B
- The program of adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II
- The employment services program authorized under sections 1 through 13 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.)
- The program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741)

Utah has identified expected levels of performance for each of the required primary indicators of performance for each of the programs described in clause (ii) for the first two program years covered by its plan.

Utah will reach an agreement with its federal liaisons for each indicator described in clause (iii) for each of the programs described in clause (ii) for each of the first two program years covered by its plan. In reaching the agreement, Utah and its federal agency liaisons shall take into account the levels identified in its plan under clause (iii) and the factors described in clause (v). The levels agreed to shall be considered to be Utah's adjusted levels of performance for its program years and shall be incorporated into Utah's plan prior to the approval of the plan.

All Utah core partners and their federal liaisons shall reach an agreement, prior to the third program year covered by Utah's plan, on levels of performance for each indicator. The levels agreed to shall be considered to be Utah's adjusted levels of performance for Utah's program and shall be incorporated into the plan as a modification to the plan.

Using funds authorized under a core program and made available to carry out this section, Utah will conduct ongoing evaluations of activities carried out in the state under each core program. Utah will conduct the evaluations in order to promote, establish, implement and utilize methods for continuously improving core program activities in order to achieve high-level performance within, and high-level outcomes from the workforce development system.

The evaluations conducted shall be designed in conjunction with the State Workforce Development Board and state agencies responsible for the administration of the core programs and shall include analysis of customer feedback and outcomes, and process measures in the statewide workforce development system. The evaluations shall use analytical and statistical methods that are reasonably feasible.

Utah core partners will annually prepare, submit to the State Workforce Development Board and make available to the public (including by electronic means), reports containing the results of evaluations conducted under this subsection, to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system.

#### B. Previous Assessment Results

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e., the two-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

##### Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs

Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs. Utah's one-stop delivery system partner program services included in the plan will be assessed each year.

- Adult Education conducts monthly desk monitoring, tri-annual evaluations and on-site monitoring. Programs prepare and submit annual program improvement plans used by state staff as a tool to evaluate program needs and levels of improvement.
- The Department of Workforce Services has an internal Program Review Team that randomly audits operations' work including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and JVSG. Operation program support provides edits and targeted support and training. The Workforce Development Division has defined monthly outcomes goals and conducts an annual risk assessment. Additionally, the Department of Workforce Services undergoes an annual single state audit.
- The Unemployment Insurance Division has defined monthly outcome goals with quality checks, and its Program Services team provides targeted support and training. Assessment will occur through the State Quality Service Plan process with the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.
- Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a tri-annual needs assessment, prepares annual district and quality assurance plans, conducts random and targeted client record reviews, and has an internal compliance officer.

- The State Workforce Development Board assesses continual improvement and ensures that one-stop centers (AJCs) meet the required criteria during the one-stop recertification process. Criteria are attached.
- The Veteran and Military Employment Services group meets regularly to assess and improve service delivery to veteran customers, community partners and employers.

#### Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding two-year period (i.e., the two-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Below are the results of assessments of the core programs' effectiveness during the preceding two-year period for the core partners. Utah plans to utilize its workgroups and State Workforce Development Board committees to adapt its strategies based on assessment results. These activities will be significant as comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) are certified throughout the state.

#### Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education Previous Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	37.90%	33.64%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	35.61%	35.91%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$6,933	\$6,600
Attained a Secondary School Diploma and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit	61.60%	58.76%
Attained a Secondary School Diploma and Employed within one year of exit	11.41%	11.38%
Attained a Postsecondary Credential while enrolled or within one year of exit	33.33%	30.99%
Attained any credential (unduplicated)	65.01%	63.13%

#### Department of Workforce Services, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Previous Assessment Results

Every three years, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) collaborate to develop and conduct a thorough statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities in Utah. The Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA), conducted triennially, was completed in 2023. The CSNA recommendations are outlined in the Vocational Rehabilitation program section. USOR utilizes a comprehensive approach to leverage data for managing the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. In addition, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation reviews current performance on a quarterly basis, analyzing performance on common performance measures, in addition to other relevant data points such as employment outcomes, wages at closure, timeliness of eligibility and plan development and the rehabilitation rate. Performance reports are run at the statewide, regional, and district levels to provide a comprehensive picture of performance throughout the state. To help inform the overall quality of the services being delivered, customer satisfaction surveys are available and results are reviewed quarterly to guide work moving forward. The insights derived from this information play a pivotal role in shaping USOR's goals, priorities, and strategies, ultimately enhancing vocational rehabilitation services in Utah.

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	51.7%	54.1%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	50.0%	51.4%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$5,474	\$5,019
Credential Attainment Rate	39.1%	38.0%
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	57.1%	56.1%

### Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Division Previous Assessment Results

The Workforce Development Division monitors achievement of WIOA Performance outcomes for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, Wagner-Peyser and JVSG. Progress towards performance outcomes are reviewed quarterly and as needed targeted support is provided to ensure program goals are being met and data is captured accurately.

#### WIOA Adult Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	72.1%	75.4%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	71.3%	72.8%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$8,922	\$8,187
Credential Attainment Rate	74.1%	66.7%
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	57.9%	43.2%

#### WIOA Dislocated Worker Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	82.2%	78.1%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	79.2%	79.2%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$12,249	\$11,737
Credential Attainment Rate	76.9%	63.7%
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	52.6%	39.3%

#### WIOA Youth Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	79.1%	82.4%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	79.1%	76.2%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$5,507	\$5,624
Credential Attainment Rate	57.3%	60.9%
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	62.5%	44.5%

### Wagner-Peyser Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	61.9%	65.9%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	62%	66%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$8,407	\$8,570

### JVSG Assessment Results

Primary Indicators of Performance	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2023
Employment Second Quarter after exit	61.1%	62.3%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	59.6%	59.2%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$10,532	\$11,241

As the State Workforce Development Board and core partners move forward to accomplish the goals outlined in Utah's Combined Plan, they will address the performance of required partners.

All core partners are developing goals and priorities within the plan that meet the objectives of common performance measures.

In addition, supporting the strategies outlined in this plan, Utah's core partners will develop processes to continually provide technical assistance to operations, evaluate funding, identify areas of weakness and provide corrective intervention as needed. This is an ongoing activity and will include enhancing the system, guiding policy, establishing a system for continual improvement of activities, and exploring how to manage performance assessments with required partners.

Utah will use performance data as targets. The core partners will analyze the performance data, review the one-stop system annually, meet the State Workforce Development Board certification requirements, conduct customer satisfaction surveys, review accessibility and cultivate continuous improvement efforts. The Operations Committee will oversee the presentation of analyses to the State Workforce Development Board as they become available. This is an ongoing activity.

As Utah implements new methods to evaluate customer satisfaction, existing customer feedback mechanisms will be used, and continuous improvement will take into consideration the indicators of performance. Accessibility for individuals with disabilities will be evaluated, and restraints will be addressed as they arise.

#### C. Evaluation

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the

evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

### Evaluation

The Operations Committee will make recommendations regarding evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs. The recommendations will include how the projects will be researched, coordinated and designed in conjunction with the State Workforce Development Board and core partners. The recommendations may also describe how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by federal liaisons under WIOA. As required and determined by the core partners, data will be made available for effectiveness analyses as defined by both Labor, Rehabilitation, and Education guidance for program improvement and compliance purposes.

Examples of topics may include whether Utah strategies are successfully meeting the needs of key demographics, the effectiveness of implemented policies and procedures, and the impact of service delivery methods.

The State Workforce Development Board committees will assess and report on the effectiveness of the plan's goals and our ability to meet negotiated performance levels each year. The State Workforce Development Board will provide direction as needed to ensure that Utah's plan is implemented and meets the needs of the state.

The State Workforce Development Board will coordinate with core and required partners to review opportunities for program research and evaluate programs. Workforce Services plans to utilize the Social Research Institute at the University of Utah for continued program evaluation.

## 5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### A. For Title I Programs

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

#### i. Youth Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

#### ii. Adult and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

#### iii. Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) and Based on Data and Weights Assigned

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

### B. For Title II

#### i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

Utah's eligible agency, the Utah State Board of Education, will host a competition in the Spring of 2026 to award competitive multiyear (defined as a minimum of two years) grants for the provision of Adult Education services. Available funds (82.5%, of which a minimum of 10% will be allowed for corrections education and other institutionalized individuals) will be awarded to programs meeting Utah State Board of Education - Adult Education defined competition standards for the purpose of developing, implementing and improving adult education within Utah. Awards will be made based on application merit as measured on a scoring rubric. Programs will be required to show demonstrated effectiveness to be considered eligible for funding. To demonstrate effectiveness, applicants will be required to submit data showing successful level gains within the top three quartiles of the state in reading/writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition (where applicable). Applicants will also have to submit data showing effectiveness in transitioning students to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. Eligible programs will then submit applications containing information regarding the thirteen considerations required in Section 231(e) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and in compliance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C. Completed applications will be reviewed and scored by multiple readers, including portions of the application that will be read by members of the State Workforce Development Board, as required by 34 CFR, part 463.21 (Subpart C).

Utah State Board of Education - Adult Education state staff will then review the application scores and determine awards in compliance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C. Applicants not funded will have the opportunity to appeal the Utah State Board of Education's decision through an appeal hearing. Following the hearing, if desired, an applicant has the right to appeal to the Secretary of Education (defined in 34 CFR 76-401) for a final decision.

State adult education funds provide basic adult education services to all regions of the state. This allows federal funds to be used for the provision of additional services to students, such as career navigators, Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, increased services to students who are incarcerated, and expanded English language acquisition programs. Title II funds are distributed to eligible providers based on the evidence of need provided throughout the application process. For instance, if the funds are used to provide services to incarcerated students, the eligible provider would need to demonstrate the need for those funds beyond state funding already allocated to programs. Similarly, programs not eligible to receive state adult education funding must demonstrate the need for those services through data such as enrollment statistics and census data.

- ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

Utah will continue to provide direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds through a public announcement for potential funding opportunities. The Utah State Board of Education provided direct and equitable access to all eligible providers utilizing the following process (this activity was completed in Spring of 2023 based on guidance released by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education):

- Issue a Notice of Availability: Notification of competition will be released through the posting of legal notices in Utah newspapers. An email blast will be released at the same time to all known potential providers. In addition, notification of a competition will be posted on the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education website.

- **Process:** A Technical Assistance Webinar will be held as announced in the legal notice. Completed Demonstrated Effectiveness applications will be submitted to the Utah State Board of Education on the assigned date and time. State staff score applications according to published scoring rubrics to determine eligible providers. Full grant applications will be sent out to all programs determined eligible through the Demonstrated Effectiveness application. Completed full-grant applications will be submitted to the Utah State Board of Education on the assigned date and time. State staff will conduct a cursory review by looking for compliance and completeness of the defined basics that all applicants must complete. Any applicant whose application is found incomplete will be notified that they are ineligible to be considered for competition.
- **Evaluation of Applications:** Members of the State Workforce Development Board will read and score portions of the application. The Utah State Board of Education will assemble a panel of community readers to review the applications. A readers' resource packet will be utilized to assess and score the applications based on a defined scoring rubric. Readers will be trained on the processes on a predetermined date. All applications will be read and scored a minimum of three times by independent readers. Scored applications will be ranked and weighted for funding by a predetermined date. A preliminary announcement of a pending award will be made after the competition, with the final award being announced and funded based on receipt of the state's award letter from the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education.

### C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided 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.

Utah has one designated state unit for Vocational Rehabilitation services that encompasses all populations and activities. The Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program administered through the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation of the Department of Workforce Services is a combined Vocational Rehabilitation program that serves individuals who are blind as well as individuals of all disability types statewide. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation distributes Vocational Rehabilitation program funds to 10 district offices at the beginning of each budget year. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation uses a formula allocation as the methodology to initially distribute Vocational Rehabilitation program funds throughout the state to regional districts. The criteria for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's formula allocation is based on regional service needs and program performance accountability.

## 6. Program Data

### A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of 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.

Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

- 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

Data Alignment and Integration Using a common identifier, Utah is committed to work toward aligning and integrating its workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs and education through postsecondary education. Utah plans to continue making the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

- 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

Utah's core partners currently share information about common customers who are served by Department of Workforce Services programs and services through interfaces. The core partners are consistently working to identify and enhance opportunities for data sharing and system interfaces. These efforts aim to streamline intake and service delivery, as well as track participation across all programs.

- iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required 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

Utah will continue researching how the State Workforce Development Board can assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs, including unemployment insurance. This includes considerations related to the design and implementation of common intake, data collection and describing how alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals and employers. The Data and Reports workgroup will continue to report information to and receive feedback from the Operations Committee regarding these efforts.

- iv. Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

Utah plans to develop and produce the reports required under Section 116, performance accountability system [WIOA Section 116(d)(2)]. Utah's core partners, the State Workforce Development Board and chief elected officials, will establish and operate fiscal and management accountability information systems based on guidelines established by the secretaries of labor and education. Utah currently meets fiscal and management accountability requirements. Utah will continue to monitor and make adjustments, as needed, to meet requirements.

#### 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 performance indicators.

#### Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

The State Workforce Development Board oversees the assessment of Utah's ability to meet the goals set in the negotiated performance measures. The Operations Committee will evaluate the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or who are entering or remaining in employment. The core partners will share data to help identify and remediate gaps to enhance customer experience. The Operations Committee's Data and Reports Workgroup maintains the report incorporating data from partners working with participants exiting programs and training/education programs.

#### 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. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

##### Use of Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data

Utah currently uses Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data to evaluate performance accountability for Adult, Dislocated Workers, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Unemployment Insurance wage records are currently used and shared with appropriate partners (covered by MOUs) as a source for workforce and labor market information consistent with federal and state law. Utah's plan to align, share and integrate data is addressed under Program Data (6)(A) above.

#### 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.

##### Privacy Safeguards

Utah incorporates privacy safeguards into its workforce development system. Currently, Utah conducts required annual staff training and utilizes required release/waiver forms. Utah must strictly adhere to the state's interpretation of FERPA and follow the Department of Technology Services' established security processes and policies for all of its systems and databases.

The following safeguards are in place for the workforce development system:

- Data is contained in a secure database maintained by the Utah Department of Workforce Services following Utah Department of Technology Services information technology standards. Data is backed up on secure servers, and firewalls are evaluated on an ongoing basis by a security team. All data access is password protected. Individuals accessing the database are required to update their password at least every 60 calendar days.
- Access to computer programs is only available to staff on a need-to-know basis, based upon the employee's role with a division. Staff no longer associated with a particular role or division are denied access. Supervisors are required to review employees' access every 90 days.
- Through contact with their counselor or Department of Workforce Services staff, customers can access their records in the database.
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer line and only as allowed by Federal and State law.

The following safeguards are in place for adult education students:

- Data is contained in a secure database maintained by the Utah State Board of Education following Utah Department of Technology Services information technology standards. Student identifiable data is scrubbed from the development and training databases; data is backed up on secure servers nightly and firewalls are evaluated on an ongoing basis by a security team. All data access is password protected. Individuals accessing the database are required to update their password every 90 calendar days.
- Access by programs is only available to staff on a need-to-know basis, meaning that not all service providers have access to the database. Staff no longer associated with a program are denied access upon termination.
- Through contact with their adult education counselor, students can access their records in the database. Students must sign a release of record to release any of their records to the Department of Workforce Services, other agencies or individuals. On an as-needed basis, students may ask appropriate staff to run reports specific to their education (e.g. class schedule, Student Education/Occupation Plan, grade transcripts and testing reports).
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer line and only with records whereby students have given permission. Data returned for reporting purposes is only an aggregate count and not personally identifiable.

The following safeguards are in place for general education students: parents have access to their student's education records and the right to protect the student's rights to privacy by limiting the availability of student records without parental consent. Utah follows FERPA guidelines in ensuring that rights including:

- The ability to inspect and review education records relating to the student maintained by the school the student attends or has attended.
- The right to challenge and require the school to amend an education record concerning the student that is inaccurate or misleading or in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- The right to require the school to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information, subject to specific exceptions.
- Notifying parents, and students eighteen years of age or older, of the above rights.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation follows privacy safeguards in accordance with state and federal laws and professional ethics, which require the protection of personally identifiable information specific to Vocational Rehabilitation:

- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation maintains policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of all clients.
- Personally identifiable information obtained by the Office of Rehabilitation, its employees or agents concerning individuals applying for or receiving services is not disclosed without the prior written consent of the individual or the individual's legal representative, except as required for the administration of programs or services.
- All client information related to the vocational rehabilitation program is maintained by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation in the secure AWARE case management system, in accordance with the standards established by the Utah Department of Technology Services.

- Access to the AWARE case management system is password protected. Access to the system requires pre-approval. Access to information in the AWARE system is based upon employees' roles within the division.
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer interface and only as allowed by Federal and State law.

#### 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

A. Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons 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.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

#### Priority of Service for Veterans

Utah will provide Priority of Service to all employment and training programs that are funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. The Department of Workforce Services ensures the provision of priority of service with the following:

All one-stop center (AJC) staff wear a magnetic badge that states "Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?"

- All one-stop center (AJC) staff are trained to screen and identify potential covered persons. The question "Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?" is asked of every individual upon initial contact.
- Individuals who self-register online on the Department of Workforce Services website as a potential covered persons for priority of services are contacted by email and telephone. They are encouraged to visit their closest one-stop center (AJC) for eligibility and services and are also provided the opportunity to receive assistance virtually via workshops and one-on-one assistance electronically. In the labor exchange system, veterans are able to easily identify and apply for jobs with employers that participate in the Utah Patriot Partnership. This program indicates an employer that has committed to giving hiring preference to veterans, military members and their spouses.
- Small desktop posters asking covered persons to identify are displayed at intake counters in the one-stop centers (AJCs).
- The Department of Workforce Services Publication 07-107, which provides an overview of the services for which they receive priority and a description of the application for those services, is distributed in the job connection areas of every one-stop center (AJC) and given to individuals once they identify.
- The question "Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?" is displayed as part of a looping presentation on a television in the job connection areas of all one-stop centers (AJCs), encouraging covered individuals to self-identify.

This provides individuals with multiple opportunities to self-identify their covered person status or to share the information about priority of service to family members, friends or neighbors.

One-stop center (AJC) staff provide priority of service to job seekers by:

- Ensuring individuals register for services that reflect their status as a covered person.
- Placing individuals at the top of a waiting list for a service if the service from the Department of Workforce Services has limited or restricted access (If there is no waiting list for that service, a waiting list is created with the individual at the top of the list).
- Providing services or referring an individual to the appropriate internal or external pathway for a service (if the service is not limited or restricted, the one-stop center (AJC) staff provides services or refers the individual to the appropriate internal or external pathway for that service).
- Placing all qualified persons at the top of an employer's applicant list upon completion of a job match request, meaning the covered person receives referrals to open job announcements over non-covered persons.
- Utilizing the DVOP Eligibility Triage Form with individuals claiming military service. This form identifies those veterans who have a significant barrier to employment, ensuring only job seekers meeting eligibility requirements are referred to a DVOP worker. Individuals who are interested in receiving DVOP services can meet with a worker virtually, over the phone or in person. They will then review the eligibility criteria, complete the triage form and make the appropriate referral to the local DVOP via the UWORKS case management system.
- Ensuring veterans who are determined to have a significant barrier to employment are referred to the DVOP for individualized career services through our internal referral system. This system alerts the DVOP worker of the referral and provides information to connect them to the referred veteran or eligible spouse to provide individualized services.
- Referring individuals to services through WIOA title I and Wagner-Peyser or other services as appropriate.

Native American job seekers in Utah have access to Department of Workforce Services programs and services through local one-stop centers (AJCs) and online services offered through [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists are assigned to the one-stop centers (AJC) nearest to Native American reservations and have developed relationships with tribal leadership to provide tribal member veterans and spouses priority of service.

Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

The Department of Workforce Services monitors its priority of services for veterans by visiting a required percentage of one-stop centers (AJCs) to ensure priority of service is provided to veterans and their eligible spouses. The Department of Workforce Services is audited by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Education and Training Services every three years. In addition, onsite visits at one-stop centers (AJCs) are conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Education and Training Services State Director, and the Department of Workforce Services leadership to verify that priority of service is provided to veterans and their eligible spouses.

Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

All customers who engage with Workforce Services and self-identify as a veteran or spouse of a veteran are screened for eligibility and are given a copy of the DVOP Eligibility Triage Form. If they meet eligibility requirements, they are referred to a local DVOP or consolidated staff for the provision of services. Referrals are tracked through the case management system.

#### 8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This must also include a description of compliance by providing staff training and support to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

##### Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Utah's one-stop service delivery system complies with the requirements of Section 188 of WIOA and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 to provide physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. As required by 29 CFR §§38.51, 54 and 55, the Department maintains a nondiscrimination plan and annually reviews its programs and activities for compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions in WIOA and 29 CFR 38, which includes monitoring for accessibility for customers with disabilities.

For physical accessibility, the Department of Workforce Services conducts annual on-site risk reviews of one-stop centers (AJCs) and administrative offices. These reviews are conducted to monitor physical accessibility and identify any potential physical hazards for customers and employees. The Utah Division of Facilities Construction and Management also conducts audits and inspections of AJCs, which include ADA compliance.

For programmatic accessibility, the Department of Workforce Services provides free aids and services, as well as reasonable modifications, so individuals with disabilities have meaningful access to the one-stop delivery system. Department Policy 1109 provides the procedure for assisting customers with disabilities and processing disability accommodation requests. All Workforce Services staff receive annual training about this policy. Additionally, the Department of Workforce Services designates one of its staff attorneys as the Equal Opportunity Liaison and Customer ADA Officer to provide a point of contact to review disability accommodation requests and provide guidance to Department staff working with customers with disabilities.

In addition, every one-stop center (AJC) has Licensed Clinical Social Workers onsite or available for individuals who need access to these services.

Regarding technology, all core partners' public websites, including all applications for programs and services, are Section 508 compliant. The Utah Department of Technology Services evaluates, tests and surveys all Department of Workforce Services technology services for compliance. The Utah State Board of Education also has technical teams that monitor compliance.

The Operations Committee sets the comprehensive one-stop recertification criteria to reflect the requirements outlined in section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). The recertification criteria assess the one-stop center's (AJC) current compliance with accessibility laws. It also examines the one-stop

center's (AJC) strategies and goals for continual improvement in its efforts to remove programmatic accessibility barriers.

#### 9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

##### Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

Utah will ensure each one-stop center (AJC) meets the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals through established procedures, staff training, resources and other materials.

Specifically, the Department of Workforce Services, as part of its Nondiscrimination Plan, has a Language Assistance Plan that assesses the language needs of the LEP individuals in Utah seeking services, how it provides language assistance and how it provides notice of language assistance to LEP individuals.

Each AJC prominently displays a Babel Notice that explains in multiple languages that interpretive services are available and how to request those services. The Department of Workforce Services has vendors who provide interpretive and translation services, including on-demand interpretation. All Department staff complete annual training about language assistance, including the steps to follow when they encounter an LEP individual. Any forms or publications that contain vital information about WIOA programs are either translated or the information is conveyed orally to an LEP individual in their primary language, allowing them to be aware of WIOA programs and apply for them.

Adult Education provides interpretative services as needed. Necessary educational documents are available in the predominant foreign languages. Clients in need of English Language Learners (ELL) services are referred to adult education programs that offer ELL services appropriate to their needs.

### IV. 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.

#### Coordination with State Plan Programs

Utah's workforce system partners worked together to develop Utah's 2024 Combined State Plan and updates to the 2026 modified Combined State Plan. Stakeholder collaboration, review, and comment are critical to the process of creating Utah's Combined Plan. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has assisted the governor in the development, implementation and modification of Utah's State Plan and has convened programs, required partners and stakeholders to contribute to the plan. The Workforce Research and Analysis Division of the Department of Workforce Services provided assistance with labor market data, relevant evaluations, existing research, and analysis during the planning process.

The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, which include core and required partners, created the plan's vision and goals. The State Workforce Development Board approved the vision and goals. The committees developed strategies and assessments for each goal that connect to their committee action plans.

Core partner staff reviewed and provided the content for the first draft of the plan while required partner staff reviewed assigned sections. The second draft of the plan was sent out to the State Workforce Development Board and core and required partners for review. It was also posted on core partner websites for 30 days and presented at one virtual town hall meeting for public comment.

The final draft was approved by the State Workforce Development Board.

All workforce system partners participated in the review process, including approval from the State Workforce Development Board and from all core and required partners. The updated plan was posted for public input on partner websites for 30 days and one virtual town hall meeting was held for public comment on January 14, 2026 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

#### V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
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.	Yes

## 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.

### Program-specific Requirements for 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

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

B. Describe the process and policy 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

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

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

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

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

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

## 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

State policies for the statewide workforce development system can be found in the Workforce Development Division Policy Manual on the Department of Workforce Services website at [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS\\_Employment\\_and\\_Business\\_Services\\_Manual.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS_Employment_and_Business_Services_Manual.htm)

B. Describe how the State intends to use the Governor's set-aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.

Utah has centralized several functions for the governor's set-aside funding, such as finance, audit, human resources and UWORKS to create efficiencies by reducing overhead costs at the local level. The state has been able to absorb these costs, allowing more funds to be used on career services and training for customers.

Utah also utilizes the governor's set-aside funding to disseminate the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and other information on program services, accessibility, employer services and success stories highlighting effective service delivery strategies. Funding is also used to conduct research and evaluation, provide technical assistance to one-stop partners to meet the goals of the state plan, support the State Workforce Development Board, develop staff and monitor services.

Up to 25% of Dislocated Worker funds are reserved for Rapid Response activities and Additional Assistance funding to local areas. Funds provide rapid response services to as many companies and workers as possible, regardless of the size of the event, either through a formalized coordination with the state Dislocated Worker Unit when layoffs impact 15 or more workers, or through a local-area response provided by local workforce development specialists when layoffs impact less than 15 workers. Additional Assistance funds are used when local areas have a significant increase in the number of dislocated workers needing assistance due to layoffs and closures, and the local area does not have adequate formula funds to meet the needs.

The Dislocated Worker Unit is housed within the Workforce Development Division Program and Training at the Department of Workforce Services. The team includes the state Rapid Response coordinator, Dislocated Worker program specialist, Trade Adjustment Assistance program specialist

and the state program specialist over the Eligible Training Provider List, ensuring coordination and the ability to design and deliver comprehensive services to dislocated workers. The Dislocated Worker Unit follows up on all WARN notifications.

Local workforce development specialist staff play an important role in Rapid Response by building and maintaining relationships with employers, which is key to receiving early notification of planned layoff or closure events. This allows critical time to plan for and customize services to specific events and workers' needs. During layoff or closure events, local workforce development specialist staff become part of Rapid Response delivery by coordinating with the Dislocated Workers Unit and delivering services as appropriate. This includes collaborating with core and required partners to quickly reconnect affected workers with employers seeking their skill set. The Dislocated Worker Unit gathers and tracks layoff and closure data and disseminates Layoff Notification Records used by the Department of Workforce Services management, area directors, workforce development specialist staff, Unemployment Insurance and the Workforce Research and Analysis team. This helps to plan for and potentially avert layoffs or minimize the impact to workers by matching workers to available jobs, sponsoring job fairs, linking workers to job-search workshops and providing Dislocated Workers and other appropriate career services. Rapid Response services, along with the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and the Eligibility Assessment program, have shortened and prevented periods of unemployment of dislocated workers.

Utah's Rapid Response program implements early intervention strategies that create opportunities to engage employers, community partners, economic development agencies and training providers to avert the negative impacts of layoffs by quickly moving workers from layoff to employment or training. During Rapid Response workshops, worker information is gathered to register them in UWORKS, expediting access to services. The UWORKS system identifies Rapid Response services, career services, company information and layoff or closure data; employment and training counselors use it to determine WIOA Dislocated Worker eligibility. Utah is also working to implement layoff-aversion strategies to address at-risk companies and workers in target populations with barriers to employment.

C. 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.

Local staff work closely with the Department of Workforce Services administration and the state Dislocated Worker Unit to provide Rapid Response services to local areas and to coordinate dislocation events, including disaster situations. Through ongoing partnerships developed with local agencies, businesses and community partners, the Dislocated Worker Unit and workforce development specialist staff can respond immediately to emergency dislocations, including local-area disaster situations. Depending on the severity of the disaster, including FEMA-approved disasters, Dislocated Worker Unit and workforce development specialist staff are prepared to work independently or with first responders to conduct a preliminary assessment of the area to determine the need for funding to meet the career and training needs of individuals impacted by dislocation events, including coordinating services and providing temporary housing and other support needs of individuals displaced by such events.

The Department of Workforce Services executive director reports directly to the governor, ensuring coordination of necessary FEMA assistance or the need to apply for National Dislocated Worker

Emergency Grant (DWEG) funds to address needs as a result of a disaster or national emergency. The Dislocated Worker Unit will assist in the development of and application for National Dislocated Worker Emergency Grant funding, which may include funding to temporarily hire displaced individuals to provide humanitarian assistance and to clean up and repair facilities and lands. This includes career and training services to enhance the skills of the impacted individuals, better positioning them for employment after the completion of temporary disaster relief.

Department of Workforce Services provides coordination between Rapid Response and other program services, including Unemployment Insurance emergency disaster funds, and has an emergency plan in place to address communication and information technology backup of case management systems as well as a staffing plan to address these events so critical services will not be disrupted.

**D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.**

The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to respond to unforeseen disruptive events including natural disasters, to ensure that essential functions are resumed in a timely manner. This plan is a guideline that delineates and coordinates agency efforts to continue mission-critical essential functions immediately following the onset of a significant emergency. Within this plan, the agency's essential functions are identified, roles and procedures for implementing the plan are presented, along with identification of any applicable delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession. Rapid Response staff follow the procedures outlined in the COOP in the affected area(s) to ensure employers and affected individuals have access to Rapid Response workshops, apply for WIOA, job search assistance, connect to public assistance, and layoff aversion services.

**E. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) and ensures the provision of appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A) and TAA Section 221(a)(2)(A) .)**  
This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide 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 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 and how the state will ensure the provision of appropriate career service to workers in the groups identified in the petition (TAA Sec. 221(a)(2)(A)).  
NOTE: until the TAA PROGRAM is reauthorized, the requirements to provide rapid response and appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a petition has been filed is not applicable.

As of July 1, 2022, the TAA program is federally under termination status and new petitions are not currently being certified until the program is reauthorized. All affected workers under previously certified petitions can continue to receive services. If and when TAA is reauthorized, new petitions will be certified and services provided to impacted workers.

**b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements**

## 1. Work-Based Training Models

If the State is utilizing work-based 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.

### Work-Based Training Models

The Department of Workforce Services uses work-based training models, including on-the-job training, internships, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships. Each of these work-based training models provides participants with the opportunity to quickly develop occupational skills and expertise in their area of training. Additionally, while they are acquiring new skills and improving their existing ones, they may also be earning a wage. Workforce development specialists reach out to employers to connect interested participants with appropriate opportunities.

Workforce Development Division career and education counselors and the Office of Apprenticeship monitor work-based learning to assist the participant in progressing and meeting their goals as well as the needs of the employer. Both workforce development specialists and employment counselors monitor the training experience to assist the customer in increasing their skills and support the employer in providing safe and equitable work. Also, employers on the Utah State Workforce Development Board are informed about the different types of work-based training and provide valuable input in terms of workforce deficits they believe are not being addressed through traditional training programs that might be resolved through work-based learning programs. As these deficits are identified, workforce development staff and other appropriate staff work to develop strategies to help address employer needs, including helping to develop an apprenticeship model to resolve the labor shortage.

Work-based learning programs allow employers to play an active role in developing the participant's training plan. In close collaboration with the workforce development specialist and the participant's career and education counselor, employers tailor the training plan to meet both their business needs and the participant's occupational and professional development interests.

Additionally, if an employer participates in an on-the-job training or a Youth Employment Internship Opportunity (EIO), they are eligible to receive wage reimbursements while the participants are in training. Workforce Development Division staff work with employers and customers to ensure customers are meeting the needs of the employers and employers are providing appropriate training to customers. If concerns are identified, staff provide mediation and support.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation develops and improves the diversity and availability of alternative training models and options. Examples include on-the-job training, work-based training, apprenticeships, internships, temporary work experiences, Supported Employment (SE), Supported Job-Based Training (SGBT) and customized employment. The diversity of options allows individuals and counselors to customize a unique set of services to meet individual employment and training needs. These training pathways are supported through partnerships with other agencies, including employers, WIOA core and required partners, Utah State Board of Education, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD).

## 2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

## **Registered Apprenticeship**

The Apprenticeship Committee, a subcommittee of the State Workforce Development Board, includes core and required partners. It is a goal of this committee to support the expansion of industries that utilize apprenticeship programs. As these opportunities are developed further, the Department of Workforce Services will provide awareness and promote them to individuals.

Utah's labor exchange system allows for registered apprenticeship opportunities to be posted in UWORKS. This enhances individuals' access to registered apprenticeship opportunities and assists employers in identifying qualified candidates for openings. These openings also appear on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) if the sponsor has elected to be included on it.

The Department of Workforce Services is coordinating with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) to identify registered apprenticeship sponsors to help continue growing the Eligible Training Provider List. In addition, the Department of Workforce Services is collaborating with the Apprenticeship Subcommittee of the State Workforce Development Board to better understand the needs of employers utilizing registered apprenticeships and any barriers they face. In addition, the Department of Workforce Services will assist employers in connecting to the Office of Apprenticeships and prepare them to register their program. This will increase the opportunities for job seekers to participate in apprenticeship programs.

The Department of Workforce Services was awarded State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Base and Competitive grants. The purpose of these grants are to increase apprenticeship utilization among employers, expand access to registered apprenticeship opportunities for all, particularly underrepresented populations and underserved communities (including rural), develop infrastructure to effectively support long-term growth and modernize data tracking, reporting, system integration and utilization. Utah now has a Registered Apprenticeship Five-Year State Work Plan, which directly aligns with the governor's Utah Home Plan and the WIOA Combined State Plan. Utah will initially focus on education services (K-12 teachers), the care economy (healthcare, childcare, long-term care), supply chain (transportation, biomanufacturing, and advanced manufacturing), and technology/cybersecurity (cybersecurity software development, programming). Registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship efforts in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act implementation will also be a priority.

The Department of Workforce Services is on the state team for the National Governors Association (NGA) Youth Apprenticeship Policy Academy (PAYA). The Utah State team seeks to align youth apprenticeships as a strategy to streamline and align postsecondary education with workforce needs, expand opportunities for all Utahns to access high-quality careers, including rural Utah, in the economic future of the state. Serving underrepresented youth and underserved communities are a priority. By connecting employers with a skilled workforce, Utah will better meet the evolving needs of the labor market while offering valuable career pathways for students.

In August 2021, the Department of Workforce Services launched <https://apprenticeship.utah.gov>. This website contains information and resources for both job seekers and employers to learn more about apprenticeships. The website and resources are updated as needed.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation supports individuals' pursuit of apprenticeship opportunities, including registered apprenticeships, and engages with employers for the purpose of developing apprenticeships that meet an individual's employment goals. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation works directly with employers and postsecondary education institutions and coordinates with the Office of Apprenticeship.

### 3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Utah's procedure for training provider eligibility, including initial and continued eligibility, and the process for including registered apprenticeship programs on the Education and Training Provider List, are on the Department of Workforce Services website at: [http://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/8700\\_Training\\_Providers/8700\\_Training\\_Providers.htm](http://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/8700_Training_Providers/8700_Training_Providers.htm)

Workforce Services partners with the Utah System of Higher Education, which includes technical and community colleges, to share information on state initiatives and training programs statewide and locally, as appropriate. Training provider and program data is gathered for programs that are on the Eligible Training Provider List and are eligible for WIOA training services.

During initial eligibility, training providers are required to provide the following aggregate program performance data for every graduating class in the last full school year for every student per Policy 8711 Initial Eligibility: Training Program Requirements, which includes:

- Total number of students receiving training in the program of study
- Total number of students who exited the program in the last program year
  - Exit is defined as any student who completes the program, withdraws or transfers out of the program
- Total number of students who completed the program in the last program year
  - Credential Attainment results are calculated based on program information
- Total number employed in the second quarter after exit
- Average earnings in the second quarter after exit
- Median earnings in the second quarter after exit

If the training provider has not previously collected employment placement and earnings data or their program has not had a graduating class, Policy 8711 Initial Eligibility: Training Program Requirements outlines options to be initially approved for the Eligible Training Provider List while working to obtain required data before a program has continued eligibility.

During continued eligibility, training providers are required to timely submit program cost information and accurate performance reports including all data listed above. Training providers must submit all required information before the end of the continued eligibility renewal window, or they will be immediately removed from the Eligible Training Provider List. This window is determined based on the training provider type and how the training provider's performance data is submitted. All continued eligibility requirements are included in Policy 8720 Continued Eligibility: Training Providers. Additionally, Policy 8731 Loss of Eligibility: Training Providers outlines provider and program violations and steps taken after a violation.

Workforce Services partners with the Utah Systems of Higher Education to obtain accurate performance data for the Eligible Training Provider programs it oversees.

To ensure training programs are related to in-demand industries, provide access to students in rural areas, lead to a recognized credential and are accessible to individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, requirements are reviewed by Workforce Services staff during continued eligibility as stated in Policy 8720 Continued Eligibility: Training Providers.

**Specific Policy & Form Links:**

Policy 8705 Registered Apprenticeships Training Providers, updated policy can be viewed at this link: [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/870\\_0\\_Training\\_Providers/8705\\_Registered\\_Apprenticeships\\_Training\\_Providers.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/870_0_Training_Providers/8705_Registered_Apprenticeships_Training_Providers.htm)

Policy 8710 ETPL Initial Provider Eligibility viewed at this link: [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/870\\_0\\_Training\\_Providers/8710\\_Initial\\_Eligibility\\_Training\\_Provider\\_Requirements.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/870_0_Training_Providers/8710_Initial_Eligibility_Training_Provider_Requirements.htm)

Policy 8711 - ETPL Initial Eligibility - updated policy can be viewed at this link: [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/870\\_0\\_Training\\_Providers/8711\\_Initial\\_Eligibility\\_Training\\_Program\\_Requirements.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/870_0_Training_Providers/8711_Initial_Eligibility_Training_Program_Requirements.htm)

Policy 8720- ETPL Continued Eligibility Training Providers - updated policy can be viewed at this link: [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/870\\_0\\_Training\\_Providers/8720\\_Continued\\_Eligibility\\_Training\\_Providers.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/870_0_Training_Providers/8720_Continued_Eligibility_Training_Providers.htm)

Policy 8721 - ETPL Continued Eligibility Training Programs - updated policy can be viewed at this link: [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/870\\_0\\_Training\\_Providers/8721\\_Continued\\_Eligibility\\_Programs.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/870_0_Training_Providers/8721_Continued_Eligibility_Programs.htm)

4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor for the Adult Priority of Service requirement in WIOA section 134 (c)(3)(E) that requires American Job Center staff, when using WIOA Adult program funds to provide individualized career services and training services, to give priority of service to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners).

Utah will implement and monitor the priority for public-assistance recipients, other low-income individuals or individuals who are deficient in basic skills in accordance with the requirements of WIOA Section 134(C)(3)(E). Department of Workforce Services will provide priority of service to WIOA Adult customers by focusing enrollments on individuals in target populations who are either low income, recipients of public assistance or basic-skills deficient. Basic-skills deficiency will be verified with a referral from Title II Adult Education or English Language Acquisition program or the individual's current enrollment in Adult Education Services, including English Language Learner and Basic Education programs. Individuals who do not meet these criteria will be referred to other assistance programs. In addition, current adult education assessments can be used as a measurement of basic skills.

To ensure the priority of service is implemented and monitored regularly, Utah uses a combination of policy, technology and internal audit.

5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs

Utah's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs:

Funds may be transferred between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs through a written request to the program manager, which must be approved by program and policy management and the finance manager before the transfer can be completed. Department of Workforce Services management considers the following to determine if there is an increased need for Dislocated Worker or Adult funding:

- Available funds to transfer
- The area's participant demographic
- Obligation and expenditure levels

6. Describe the State's policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).

Utah policy requires co-enrollment for TAA customers with WIOA Dislocated Worker, if eligible. If the TAA participant is not co-enrolled, there must be a narration explaining what has prevented the participant from being enrolled in WIOA. This is completed during the eligibility process.

This policy is available for review at any time, and employment counselors are reminded of the co-enrollment requirement during TAA staff training or coordination meetings. The policy can be found at

[https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000\\_Training\\_Programs/8300\\_Trade/8305\\_Eligibility/8305-1\\_Program\\_Co-Enrollment\\_Trade.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/8000_Training_Programs/8300_Trade/8305_Eligibility/8305-1_Program_Co-Enrollment_Trade.htm)

7. Describe the State's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)

All TAA case managers are cross trained in WIOA case management. The department's case managers provide both TAA and WIOA services to help the participant receive all eligible benefits and services.

8. Describe the State's process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

Utah's TAA program information is available on the department's website and pamphlets about the TAA program are available in all one-stop centers (AJCs). TAA policy and procedure is available to all one-stop center (AJC) staff. All one-stop center (AJC) staff are trained on available programs, including TAA, as part of mandatory training.

#### c. Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. States must-

1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts 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.<sup>11</sup> Further, include a description of how the State assists local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.

<sup>11</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

While Utah has a single State Workforce Development Board, criteria have been developed to award grants for youth workforce investment activities. The state-developed criteria will include evaluating the provider's ability to engage youth in the service elements that the provider is offering; collaborating with organizations and community partners regarding the specific qualifications necessary in order to provide the service elements that the provider is contracted to offer; and licensing or certifying the provider and staff who will be working directly with the youth that they are serving. Criteria will also include a description of evidence-based program models or practices and the process the provider uses to collect and utilize customer feedback. This will help ensure that information is provided on whether performance accountability measures are met based on the primary indicators of youth program performance.

As Utah is a single area state, the State does not assist local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.

2. Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving equitable results for out-of-school and in-school youth. Describe promising practices or partnership models that local areas are implementing and the state's role in supporting and scaling those models within the state for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

Utah's definition, as defined by law, for not attending school as defined in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) is as follows: Out-of-school youth means a student 16-24 years old who is not attending any school, excluding Adult Education, Job Corps or YouthBuild. This includes youth aged 16-24 years old who have not graduated from high school and are no longer enrolled in a K-12 program of instruction. In-school youth means a student 14-21 years old who is attending a traditional K-12 program of instruction, an alternative school setting, an Adult Education program (when an alternative school setting is not available for the customer to attend) or a postsecondary education program.

Utah's strategies to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth, as described in 129(a)(1)(B), include leveraging and aligning core programs and other available resources:

- Target out-of-school youth at the eligibility process, increasing the number of out-of-school youth receiving funds and services. (This creates a balance between Vocational Rehabilitation's goal of serving more in-school youth by providing services to those with disabilities while in-school and then transitioning over to Workforce Development services once they are considered out-of-school).
- Strategies for retaining customers once they enroll, by providing effective assessment interviews that address each customer's individual goals, skills, abilities, barriers, concerns and feedback to create a career pathway for each youth that is specific to their educational and employment goals.
- Strategies for higher completion rates of secondary and postsecondary training as well as leadership development activities that help prepare youth for entering the workforce, which also includes increased opportunities for youth to participate in paid and unpaid work experiences that lead to more options for permanent employment.

- Assistance with skill upgrade needs and remediation, especially for those who are basic skills deficient or English Language Learners (ELL) through more engaged connection and referral to Adult Education Services, Vocational Rehabilitation services for those with disabilities and access to resources through higher education institutions, as we work with those on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for specific in-demand occupational training programs.

3. Describe how the State assists local workforce boards in implementing innovative models for delivering youth workforce investment activities, including effective ways local workforce boards can make available the 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2); and explain how local areas can ensure work experience, including quality pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, is prioritized as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy.

Utah will use funds to carry out the Youth Program elements described in WIOA section 129(C) (2). Staff will assess each individual to see that the appropriate elements are provided based on specific circumstances and to meet performance outcomes. Monitoring the use of each service provided as well as the outcome of each service element. Utah will make each of the 14 service elements available through in-house implementation, referring to outside agencies, community partners, businesses and agencies. All 14 elements are available and being offered to each youth in the program. Funds will be used to provide:

- Support needed to complete secondary school education, including Adult Education, alternative high school education, packet completion or high school equivalency credential preparation, including tutoring with eligible tutors to assist with both secondary and postsecondary educational completion (This will be made available through referrals, connection and follow up with the youth to ensure they are getting the access to educational assistance that they need).
- Support to assist individuals with enrolling, attending, and completing Adult Education services, and alternative education services, which may include paying for high school equivalency credential practice tests and the supplies needed to complete their educational goals (This will be made available through referral and resource connections through Utah State Board of Education as well as other providers of secondary and GED completion services).
- Paid employment opportunities for youth that have an academic and occupational component, which may include summer employment and other opportunities available throughout the school year, such as internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training (This will be made available through employer collaboration).
- Training support to youth customers who are eligible under an Individual Training Account (ITA) for tuition and required training-related supplies. (Funds will also be used to support youth customers in pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and custom fit training. This will be made available by ensuring youth are aware of postsecondary training options through customer choice, utilizing the Eligible Training Provider List).
- Support individuals completing leadership development activities, including, but not limited to, job search and life skills workshops, conferences, and team building activities.
- Funding for reasonable expenses required for participation in training and employment activities, provided and monitored by Workforce Development through a Training and Support Card.

- Referrals and connections to fee-for-service providers who offer mentoring to students either on a one-on-one or group basis.
- Individual counseling, family counseling, trauma counseling, substance abuse counseling and intervention, mental health counseling and medication management. WIOA Youth are eligible to receive free mental health services from Workforce Services licensed clinical therapists.
- Budgeting workshops, courses and activities.
- Entrepreneurial skills training, as a direct payment to the provider for the courses being offered to the individual.
- Career assessments for individuals during appointments with staff to guide them through appropriate career pathways.
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training (staff will assist youth with educational searches on a one-on-one basis to help customers determine the best fit for them in completing training).

4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

Utah policy meets the criteria specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). According to Workforce Development policy, individuals who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment will include out-of-school youth who are Native American, refugees, victims or witnesses to domestic violence, child of an incarcerated parent or any other type of abuse (at any point in time in their lives), who have identified substance-abuse issues (within the last year). For in-school youth, this will include customers who are refugees, disabled, currently in Foster Care or aged out of Foster Care.

#### 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 include—

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. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

There were no comments from the public comment period or the town hall meeting that represented disagreement with the Plan.

The Department of Workforce Services is the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds, as determined by the governor.

Utah will use funds to carry out the youth program elements described in WIOA section 129 (C). Staff will assess each individual to provide the appropriate elements based on specific circumstances and to meet performance outcomes. Youth with disabilities are provided with appropriate activities and support through the WIOA Youth program and referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Youth counselors work together to meet the needs of youth and accomplish appropriate youth program activities.

4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners are outlined in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and One-Stop Partner MOU and Common Client Information Exchange and System Access Agreement.

Content from the WIOA Partner MOU/IFA below describes the specific roles and resource contributions of the core and required partners:

DWS 25-MOU-0001 [WIOA Infrastructure Agreement 25-MOU-0001.pdf](#) Core and required partners agree to the following:

Services

Provide services through the one-stop delivery system. The manner in which the services will be coordinated and delivered through the system is described in Attachment A - One Stop Center Requirements (included in the WIOA Infrastructure Agreement 25-MOU-0001).

One-Stop Operating Budget

Core partners shall contribute to the costs of the services and to the operating costs of the one-stop delivery system.

(See Attachment B- America Job Centers Budget, included in the WIOA Infrastructure Agreement 25-MOU-0001).

III. Access & Referrals

- Follow the methods and processes for referring individuals between the Department of Workforce Services and one-stop partners for appropriate services and activities (See Attachment A-One-Stop Center Requirements).
- Following the WIOA regulations and guidance which state is required, one-stop partner programs must provide access to programs, services, and activities through electronic means if applicable and practicable. This is in addition to providing access to services through the mandatory comprehensive physical one-stop center (AJC) and any affiliated sites or specialized centers. The provision of programs and services by electronic methods such as Web sites, telephones, or other means must improve the efficiency, coordination, and quality of one-stop partner services. Electronic delivery must not replace access to such services at a comprehensive one-stop center or be a substitute to make services available at an affiliated site if the partner is participating in an affiliated site. Electronic delivery systems must be in compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA sec. 188 and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 38.

- Utilize methods to ensure the needs of workers, youth and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, are addressed in providing access to services, including access to technology and materials that are available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Provide business services through the one-stop center (AJC) network and support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area. Applicable one-stop partners develop, offer and deliver quality business services that assist businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining and developing talent for the area economy. One-stop center (AJC) staff must:
  - Have a clear understanding of industry skill needs
  - Identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinate business services activities across partner programs as appropriate
  - Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among partners to present a unified voice for one-stop centers (AJCs) in its communication with employers
- Make labor exchange activities and labor market information available to employers. Local areas must establish and develop relationships and networks with large and small employers and their intermediaries. Local areas must develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships.
- Support the design of Utah's one-stop delivery system as described in Attachment A- One-Stop Center Requirements.
- Comply with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) one-stop center (AJC) certification processes described in Attachment C- Comprehensive One-Stop Center Certification.
- Support the cross-training of staff.
- Participate in a program review and continuous improvement process to deliver the best possible services and to seek opportunities for further integration. Core and required partners will review available customer surveys to obtain feedback on job seeker and employer customer satisfaction. All partners will participate in the ongoing development and improvement of the One-Stop System/Center procedures, policies and operational management. All partners will be part of a process that will continuously review the needs of the workforce and business community and refine the services of the One-Stop Center based upon those needs (See Attachment A- One Stop Center (AJC) Requirements).
- Attachment A: One-Stop Center (AJC) Requirements

#### Infrastructure Costs

According to the Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-16; Section 5, One Stop Partners, Special Rules, "Native American programs (described in WIOA sec. 166) are strongly encouraged to contribute to infrastructure costs, but are not required to make such contributions under WIOA." Under this guidance, the Utah Native American program will not contribute to the cost of career services in Utah, but will be a partner under this agreement.

In addition, the Department of Labor and the Department of Housing and Urban Development do not have a WIOA-funded Re-entry Employment Opportunities program in Utah, as such, these agencies are not partners under this agreement.

Infrastructure costs of one-stop center (AJC) locations are defined as non-personnel costs necessary for the general operation of the one-stop center (AJC). The core and required partners recognize, as agreed to in the State of Utah One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding section IV, that infrastructure costs apply to all core and required partners, as defined in WIOA section 121(h), whether they are physically located in the One-Stop Center (AJC) or not. Each partner's contributions to these costs, however, may vary, as they are based on the partner program's proportionate use of the one-stop center (AJC) and the relative benefit received. A partner's contribution must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable cost to the program, consistent with the Federal Cost Principles set forth in the Uniform Guidance. Infrastructure costs for DWS include:

- Rent/Lease
- Janitorial Services
- Utilities, including but not limited to garbage/sewer, electrical, water and natural gas.
- Other facility costs, including but not limited to:
  - Buildings and Grounds-Operating Supplies, Maintenance and Repairs
  - Other Equipment-Operating Supplies, Maintenance and Repairs
  - Building and Grounds Security
- Office Supplies
- Printing and Binding
- Books and Subscriptions
- Photocopy Expenses
- Small Office Equipment Less Than \$5000
- Office Furnishings Less Than \$5000
- Other Small Equipment and Supply Less Than \$5000
- Computer Services, including but not limited to, Department of Technology Services Data
- Processing Charges and Telecommunication Charges
- Cell Phone Reimbursement

#### Cost Allocation Methodology

The federally-approved cost allocation plan for Workforce Services is used to cover infrastructure costs for its partners. Costs for other partners that are co-located in the one-stop center (AJC) are covered in co-location agreements. Costs for partners that are not located in the one-stop center (AJC) will be based on the cost per direct linkage.

Direct linkage means providing direct connection at the one-stop center (AJC), within a reasonable time, by phone or through a real-time web-based communication to a non co-located partner

program staff member who can provide program information or services to the customer. It cannot exclusively be providing a phone number, website or providing information, pamphlets, or materials for access at a later date or time. Direct linkage is the identified benefit to the non co-located one-stop center (AJC) partners. Direct linkage is tracked by co-enrollment data match between the UWORKS information system and other partner participant data.

Removal of the following information from section V. Partner Responsibilities, B. Required Partners, 2. Partners that are not located in the One-Stop Center are: ii. Career and Technical Education (CTE) program administered by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE)

## VII. Cost Allocation Methodology

The federally-approved cost allocation plan for Workforce Services is used to cover infrastructure costs for its partners. Except for where a separate co-location agreement exists, costs for other partners that are co-located in the one-stop center (AJC) are covered in co-location agreements.

## VIII. Cost Reconciliation and Modification Process

All partners to the MOU will be notified in writing of:

- Additional parties joining in the MOU
- Co-location changes
- Adjustment of cost sharing items that impact existing individual or overall partner costs will be reviewed by all partners prior to adding additional partners

### 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for Title I activities.

Utah does not award sub-grants and contracts for Title I activities.

### 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated.

Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.

Training Services are provided to Adult, Youth and Dislocated Workers through individual training accounts (ITA's). To determine eligibility for receiving training services through an ITA, customers must first meet eligibility requirements for Adult, Youth or Dislocated Worker. Once determined eligible, an assessment is completed to determine appropriateness for the selected training program. Appropriateness considerations include identifying if the customer unable to obtain or retain suitable employment, does the customer need training in order to obtain or retain suitable employment, if the customer has the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the program, whether there are employment opportunities in the selected occupation and whether the training will increase the customer's earning potential.

Customers are required to select an approved training program from the Eligible Training Provider List. Customers are given the final choice on the training provider and program they select, but through the Eligible Training Provider List they are given program information, outcomes and other tools to help them compare programs and find the appropriate program for them.

Once a customer has been determined appropriate and, through informed choice, has selected an approved training provider and program from the Eligible Training Provider List, tuition and fee costs are paid directly to the provider. Any required books and supply costs are authorized onto a Training and Support Visa Card, which can be used at any merchant that accepts card payments to purchase the required items. Customers are required to provide receipts for the purchase of the required books and supplies to ensure WIOA funds were spent appropriately.

7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate Title I activities with those activities under Title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

Utah's State Workforce Development Board Executive Committee reviewed all of the grant applications after they had been scored by agency staff from Workforce Development and Utah State Board of Education. The Executive Committee made recommendations regarding relevant elements of the grant to the full State Workforce Development Board for its approval. Utah State Board Education accepted the State Workforce Development Board recommendations and incorporated them into the grant review process.

8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

Utah's MOU/IFA and one stop operator agreements are available at:

WIOA Infrastructure Agreement: [WIOA Infrastructure Agreement 25-MOU-0001.pdf](#)

WIOA - One Stop Operator: [WIOA One-Stop Operations 25-MOU-0003.pdf](#)

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;

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 most recent data available regarding the results and outcomes observed through implementation of the existing waiver, in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

**Request for Waiver Renewal:** Providing ITAs to In-School WIOA Youth Participants Utah requests a waiver on the requirement of providing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to only Out of School youth ages 18-24 enrolled in the WIA/WIOA Youth program.

As per current WIOA Regulations: 681.550: "In order to enhance individual participant choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, the Department allows WIOA ITAs for out of school youth, ages 18-24 using WIOA youth funds when appropriate." While this allows flexibility for serving out-of-school youth through postsecondary training, it does not give Utah the flexibility to continue to serve those youth customers enrolled as in-school who are preparing to graduate and extend their educational goals into postsecondary opportunities.

As of June 30, 2025, Utah has 153 in-school youth customers and 1,726 out-of-school youth customers enrolled in the WIOA program; 117 in-school youth are still enrolled in secondary education. Once those customers graduate, they will need continued support through postsecondary educational activities in order to obtain the certificates needed to find employment.

If the Department of Workforce Services is going to offer an adequate supply of workers to in-demand industry and occupations, it cannot include only those who are determined to be out of school as part of that supply. Utah needs a waiver to support those with postsecondary educational goals past high school. In-school youth deserve the same opportunities for support as those being served as out-of-school youth, and it would be a disservice to those in-school customers to not support them past their high school diploma or its equivalent. Although it has been recommended

to close the enrollment of those in-school youth who graduate and then re-enroll them as an out-of-school youth for the purpose of assisting them with an ITA after age 18, this poses a risk that the customer may no longer be eligible under the new barrier requirements. It also prevents the Department of Workforce Services from serving youth customers who graduate early (at 16 or 17 years of age) under an ITA, even if they are enrolled as an out-of-school youth once they earn their diploma.

Having to procure for Occupational Skills Training services for in-school youth would also create an unnecessary and undue burden on those providers who have already submitted the required information to be on Utah's Eligible Training Provider List. Because state schools and effective providers of postsecondary training have already been identified through the Eligible Training Provider List, having an additional process for procured providers for those in-school youth customers would create a duplication of effort for those providers that would not occur if those in-school youth wishing to access postsecondary training have access to the Eligible Training Provider List through an ITA. It has been difficult to encourage training providers to participate on the Eligible Training Provider List and the State has gone to great lengths to provide technical support and encouragement. This duplication and additional burden for providers could limit provider participation on the Eligible Training Provider List and in turn limit options for customer choice.

Because Utah already has an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) in place and an electronic way to pay providers for educational services offered, both in-school and out-of-school youth will be served adequately under this waiver.

Waiver Plan: The waiver request format follows WIOA Regulations section 681.550

1. Statutory regulations to be waived: WIOA section 681.550
2. Describe actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers: N/A
3. Waiver goals and measurable programmatic outcomes, if the waiver is granted:
  - Continue to serve the in-school youth already enrolled past high school completion through postsecondary training under an ITA
  - Continue to encourage education providers to remain current on the Eligible Training Provider List and provide technical assistance where needed to gather performance data that will help both in and out-of-school youth to receive services.
  - Make a gradual shift toward enrolling more out of school youth and using those funds to support other activities, such as work experiences, leadership development activities, and mentoring, along with training activities under ITAs
  - Continue to monitor training completions and outcomes for both in- and out-of-school youth to meet federal requirements for training completions and job placements.

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.

Through allowing both in-school and out-of-school youth to use Individual Training accounts to access training services it opens up more training programs for the youth to select from as they will now be able to use the Eligible Training Provider List approved programs. By opening up the training program opportunities youth will be able to better connect to training programs that match their interest, support their learning style and better prepare them for employment and work-based

learning. Youth who are able to complete occupational skills or adult education programs more easily may be more prepared to enter the job market and be a qualified employee. By serving in-school and out-school youth with the same policy and procedures allows for a continuity of services for all youth. All youth will be eligible to receive training services, connection to work-based learning and then employment and job search support. To better connect youth to work-based learning, they will be able to use the Eligible Training Provider List and find registered apprenticeships and also more easily find academic components that give them the credentials and support to be successful at an Internship or On-the-Job training placement.

5. Describe any individuals affected by the waiver:

The effect of this waiver would be positive for both in-school and out of school youth customers who are enrolled, as both groups would be supported with WIOA funding while completing postsecondary training activities. The effect of this waiver would also be positive for education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List as they will not be required to go through procurement in addition to the requirements of being on the Eligible Training Provider List. This will hopefully encourage providers to continue to be on the Eligible Training Provider List.

This waiver will be able to affect disadvantaged populations and youth with barriers to employment through ensuring both in-school and out-of-school youth are able to receive all of the youth program services, receive a continuity of services without disruption and have access to more training providers and programs. Both in-school and out of school youth may have significant barriers to employment and have had previous hardships that could impact their ability to be successful. It is important for these youth to be able to not only receive support but also customize their services to match their interests and abilities. Without this waiver in-school youth would be restricted to select training programs where they are less likely to succeed and find suitable employment. Also without this waiver, in-school youth who would like to receive an ITA would have to be closed and enrolled as an out-of-school youth. This disrupts continuity of services and could potentially stop services that could greatly benefit a population who may be disadvantaged and have barriers to employment.

6. Describe the process used to:

a. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver:

- Continue to review in-school enrollments and those accessing postsecondary education through an ITA to assess whether the waiver continues to be necessary.
- Review financial reports quarterly to ensure out-of-school youth expenditures are continuing to exceed the in-school expenditures in order to meet the goal of spending 75 percent of funds on out-of-school youth.
- Biannual monitoring of providers available to youth on the ETPL to ensure there are options to foster customer choice.
- Make adjustments as necessary based on the number of in-school youth accessing ITAs and the amount of funds being spent on out-of-school youth.

b. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver: Consistent with the general waiver request, the state will adhere to the publication requirements to ensure the broadest participation possible, including appropriate partners and interested parties such as labor, community based partners, and the State Workforce Development Board.

c. Provide any local board affected by the waiver with an opportunity to comment on the request: Utah is a single state and therefore, no local board would be affected.

d. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comments by business and organized labor, on the waiver: The Department of Workforce Services provides access to the waiver in order for businesses, organized labor, and the community to have an opportunity to make public comments on the waiver for a period of 30 days.

e. Collect and report information about the waiver outcomes in the state's WIOA Annual Report: The outcomes of this waiver will be reflected through the common performance measures, specifically credential attainment, measurable skill gain attainment and employment rates.

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:

Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and measurable programmatic outcomes are met.

Utah continues to use a waiver to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to in-school WIOA Youth. The waiver is used to assist in-school youth who are at risk but not identified as out-of-school youth under WIOA, in maintaining focus on education and exploring career options that require postsecondary education. Increased youth engagement in education leading to credential attainment expands the supply of workers to in-demand industries and occupations and benefits employers in Utah. Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and meets measurable programmatic outcomes.

The data below shows that Workforce Services is exceeding the federal requirement to spend at least 75% of WIOA Youth funds on out-of-school youth.

WIOA Youth Expenditure PY 2024	
In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %
6.17%	93.83%

A quarterly breakdown shows that out-of-school youth expenditures significantly exceeded the 75% goal in each quarter.

WIOA YOUTH EXPENDITURES							
Qt 1 (07/01/24 - 09/30/24)		Qt 2 (10/01/24 - 12/31/24)		Qt 3 (01/01/25 - 3/31/25)		Qt 4 (04/01/25 - 6/30/25)	
In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %
6.60%	93.40%	5.97%	94.03%	4.82%	95.18%	7.18%	92.82%

Utah maintains its in-school youth enrollments at a level that has supported the above indicated increase in out-of-school youth expenditures. At the end of PY 2024, only 153, or 8.14% of youth served were in-school youth.

WIOA Youth Enrollments									
Qt 1 (07/01/24 – 09/30/24)		Qt 2 (10/01/24 – 12/31/24)		Qt 3 (01/01/25 – 3/31/25)		Qt 4 (04/01/25 – 6/30/25)		PY24 Total	
In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %
8.37%	91.63%	8.57%	91.43%	9.38%	90.62%	9.69%	90.31%	8.14%	91.86%

\*\* The quarterly percentage may include the participants served in the previous quarter(s)\*\*

Of the 153 in-school youth served in PY 2024, 36 were working toward a postsecondary credential. The remainder were completing secondary school with the goal of enrolling in higher education. Six in-school youth have attained a postsecondary credential, and, so far, two have obtained employment. The youth who started postsecondary training and did not complete still benefited from their exposure to postsecondary education and gained additional marketable skills. Of the in-school youth who did not graduate, 66.67% obtained employment.

Of the 153 in-school youth served in PY 2024, 21 youth were engaged in work-based learning. The impact of connecting in-school youth to work-based learning was positive, as nine of the youth who successfully completed their work-based learning also obtained employment or enrolled in postsecondary education.

Workforce Services has maintained its partnership with the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which oversees the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and delegates the administration of the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program to Workforce Services to serve in-school youth who are preparing for postsecondary education. This federally funded program is designed to assist foster care youth, or youth who have aged out of foster care, with the support needed to complete postsecondary education and obtain employment. Since most foster care youth are in-school, the waiver enables Workforce Services to serve this target population. During PY 2024, Utah served 65 ETV youth. Of the 28 ETV youth whose postsecondary training service closed in PY 2024, 16 successfully completed their training programs and earned a credential. Additionally, 87.50% of ETV youth had their ETV enrollment closed due to income in PY 2024.

The waiver also positively impacted education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as they were not required to go through procurement in addition to completing the list requirements. This removes barriers and encourages providers to continue to be on the ETPL, benefiting both in-school and out-of-school youth. Utah continues to certify the education providers and monitor their performance.

## Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
3. The State 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;	Yes
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);	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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);	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
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	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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 Program Performance Indicators

#### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.3%	74.3%	74.3%	74.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	73.2%	75.2%	73.2%	75.2%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,300	\$8,800	\$7,300	\$8,800
Credential Attainment Rate	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Dislocated Program Performance Indicators

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach an agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to an agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end-of-year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each state indicator. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	81.3%	81.3%	81.3%	81.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	82.0%	82.0%	82.0%	82.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$11,000	\$12,243	\$11,000	\$12,243
Credential Attainment Rate	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	51.0%	51.0%	51.0%	51.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

### Youth Program Performance Indicators

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach an agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to an agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end-of-year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);

- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	78.7%	77.0%	78.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	73.0%	78.7%	73.0%	78.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,000	\$5,133	\$4,000	\$5,133
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%	56.2%	55.0%	56.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

### Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

#### a. Employment Service Staff

1. Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.

Utah will continue to utilize state merit staff employees.

2. 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

Utah provides professional development activities for employment service staff to help them deliver high-quality services to both job seekers and employers. Department of Workforce Services accomplishes this through:

- New and incumbent employee training: A comprehensive core training for all new staff that utilizes a combination of virtual, in-person and multimedia training, including follow-up activities and focused, targeted one-on-one support. In addition to core training, staff receive program-specific training with implementation of policy, procedures and needed

skills. Employees register and complete skills reviews for training in the Department of Workforce Services' Career Management System.

- Professional development: Incumbent staff receive skills-based training, resource information, best-practice exchange, and professional development opportunities.

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

Core program staff receive Unemployment Insurance Program training through a comprehensive core training for all staff utilizing a combination of virtual, in-person and multimedia training, including skills review assessment, follow-up activities and targeted one-on-one support. This training includes information on how to efficiently assist claimants with their Unemployment Insurance claim filing and refer to Unemployment Insurance staff for adjudication. Staff have access to Unemployment Insurance law and policy manuals through an internal system, and Unemployment Insurance changes are communicated or trained through a monthly update process. Unemployment Insurance has many resource guides and lists available on the Department of Workforce Services website. These are available to help individuals and those working in other programs be aware of the Unemployment Insurance guidelines. Integration between UWORKS and CUBS (the computer program used by Unemployment Insurance) facilitates awareness.

Staff are trained to ask individuals at one-stop centers (AJCs) whether they were recently employed and the nature of their separation from employment. By asking this question, staff are able to determine if applying for Unemployment Insurance is appropriate and assist them in the process. They have also been trained on how to access trained Unemployment Insurance staff to resolve and handle Unemployment Insurance issues. One option is access to the Unemployment Insurance Help Desk, dedicated to supporting one-stop center (AJC) staff who may call or email and receive immediate help with unemployment issues for specific cases or escalated situations. Another option is educating customers about the online chat feature available through the Unemployment Insurance interactive voice response system, where customers can be immediately assisted during business hours.

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

Utah will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers (AJCs). Whether an individual contacts Unemployment Insurance from home or from the one-stop center (AJC), they receive the highest level of customer service. To ensure this level of service, Unemployment Insurance has implemented an enhanced interactive voice response system, online chat, and direct access help desk resources for the on-site one-stop center (AJC) staff providing in-person, meaningful assistance. The meaningful assistance that Unemployment Insurance provides includes:

- Interactive voice response claim status: Claimants accessing the interactive voice response receive their claim status at the beginning of their call, which helps resolve basic question calls and results in lower hold times.
- The option for callbacks: When wait times are elevated, individuals have the option to choose a callback rather than waiting on the phone for a representative to become available.

- More effective direction for calls: Claimants and employers are directed to the same interactive voice response tree, with the distinction between benefits questions and contributions questions made at the beginning of the system, which decreases the number of misdirected calls.
- More effective direction for online chats: Claimants and employers are provided with portals to the online chat system at multiple places throughout the Unemployment Insurance webpage, and the system is configured to direct them to the team that can assist them.
- Online chat: Individuals accessing services through the one-stop center (AJC) can contact the Unemployment Insurance division through the interactive voice response system or online chat feature directly from the Unemployment Insurance webpage.
- Help desk for staff at the one-stop center (AJC): An employment counselor can call a direct number for the Unemployment Insurance Help Desk that puts them ahead of the queue and connects them with an Unemployment Insurance specialist to handle escalated situations

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

Utah's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals involves:

#### Staff support

- One-stop centers (AJCs) operate throughout Utah. A primary goal of the one-stop delivery system is to serve as the anchor for a statewide workforce development system that effectively responds to the needs of employers, job seekers and the community. The one-stop system provides a comprehensive employment exchange network serving as the connecting point for employers and job seekers. A one-stop center (AJC) provides direct services or referrals to partner agencies to meet the individual's needs. One-stop centers (AJCs) develop and maintain strong relationships with partner agencies to maintain efficiency and avoid duplication of services.
- Department of Workforce Services provides core curriculum and training for all one-stop center (AJC) staff to understand and adhere to federal, state and the Department of Workforce Services' policy and procedures. One-stop center (AJC) staff can access all policy and procedures online, or contact state and service-area program specialists to ask questions or obtain policy and procedure clarifications. In addition, supervisors play a very important role in training staff on policy, procedures, and local pathways.
- Department of Workforce Services staff focus on the same overall goal of helping individuals obtain the services and support needed to find employment, regardless of which of the four key business processes they are responsible for: eligibility, employment exchange, employment counseling or unemployment insurance. Outcome targets assist staff in the Department of Workforce Services in achieving its goal of developing the workforce.
- Department of Workforce Services information technology and online services staff continually evaluate the department website's usability and functionality to assist the ease of users in navigating the site.

#### Unemployed individuals

- Individuals can access services from the Department of Workforce Services by visiting one-stop centers (AJCs) or using online services, which are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The website allows individuals to enter resumes, search for job openings, learn about careers, access economic information, apply for training services, file for
- unemployment insurance benefits and find links to other useful resources. In addition, individuals may apply online for financial services, food stamps, child care, medical and other supportive service benefits.
- Individuals, throughout the state, can access the same level of service regardless of their location. One-stop centers (AJCs) have a common appearance and feel, including signage. However, local areas have flexibility in establishing pathways driven by resources and local needs.
- Unemployment Insurance claimants, qualified or not, receive a resource document from the department after they have filed for benefits. This is included with the Notice of Monetary Determination and is available online at [jobs.utah.gov/ui/resources.html](http://jobs.utah.gov/ui/resources.html). When a claimant files, they receive labor market information regarding their selected occupation and available local job postings.
- Unemployment insurance claimants who do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within 10 business days of filing an initial or reopened claim. The registration process involves creating a profile on Utah's labor-exchange system, completing an online assessment and taking up to 5 online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. The online workshops cover topics such as networking, online job search, resumes and interviewing. More than 70% of Unemployment Insurance claimants are referred to complete the labor exchange registration and online assessment.
- The Unemployment Insurance division partners with the Workforce Development Division to offer targeted, virtual and in-person workshops through the Reemployment Support System (RSS). Claimants are referred in two ways. First, workshop presenters select claimants who are identified as most likely to exhaust Unemployment Insurance benefits, and, second, RESEA counselors can refer specific claimants to attend. Claimants who fail to report as scheduled, without good cause, are automatically denied Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- Employment counselors in the Workforce Development Division conduct outreach to Unemployment Insurance claimants. This is one more tool to connect claimants with resources available through one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state.
- As the demand for business hiring began to exceed the available labor supply, AJCs shifted the strategies for employer engagement. For example, workforce development specialists assist employers with posting jobs, consult with them about recruitment strategies, and provide direct support for filling certain positions. Staff utilized the increase in demand for labor as an opportunity to develop jobs for case-managed customers from targeted populations.
- Rural areas of the state focus on the unique needs of job seekers and employers located in remote areas of Utah. Staff encourage employers to hire individuals from rural areas and help educate employers on remote work benefits.

One way the state is providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants is through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. The RESEA program is a statewide program with support of Unemployment Insurance claimants across the state. Claimants are chosen for the program based on a profiling score compiled when they first file for benefits, which identifies those “most likely to exhaust.”

The initial appointments typically last two hours, during which time the counselors:

- Review labor-market information specific to the customer’s needs.
- Registration with the state jobs bank is completed.
- Provide an orientation to the one-stop services.
- Create an individualized reemployment plan.
- Review and assist with a job-ready resume by appointment completion.
- Provide resources based on the individual customer’s needs, including referrals to training programs as appropriate.
- Refer customers to or schedule them for a variety of workshops.
- Assist with tools for networking and train on online resources.
- Provide mock interviews.
- Provide job referrals.

In addition to the RESEA program, Unemployment Insurance maintains a robust connection to labor-exchange services with one-stop centers (AJCs). This includes working closely with local one-stop center (AJC) staff to co-enroll in partner programs when appropriate, sharing interfaces within the UWORKS system, developing reemployment strategies to respond to the current situation and assist individuals at the local level, and providing reemployment workshops.

d. Describe how the State will use Wayner-Peyser funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between Wayner-Peyser 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;

Coordination of labor-exchange services for Unemployment Insurance claimants is provided through the Department of Workforce Services website. Claimants can sign in to their accounts and see the status of their unemployment claim. The same page contains a link to search for work, where they can enter keywords to search for jobs. The system allows users to set search parameters, including their target county, and a specified mileage radius from a ZIP code. In addition, a labor-market information link shows the wages of different occupations and the type of degree required for those occupations. They can also access data showing the projected number of annual job openings in Utah for a particular occupation.

2. Registration of UI claimants with the State’s employment service if required by State law;

Registration of Unemployment Insurance claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law

Individuals who do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within 10 days of filing an initial, additional or reopened claim. The registration process

involves completing a profile in the labor-exchange system, completing an online assessment, and completing online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. The virtual workshops are effective resources that provide access to important information for individuals seeking employment and training throughout the state. The Department of Workforce Services has a skilled workshop team consisting of workshop presenters throughout the state. In addition to presenting workshops, the team offers individualized career coaching to participants.

3. Administration of the 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

Individuals who do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within ten days of filing an initial, additional or reopened claim. The registration process involves completing a profile on UWORKS, taking an online assessment and completing online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. They are required to search for work and make at least four job contacts per week. An eligibility team randomly reviews the work-search contacts to monitor proper work search and create eligibility issues if claimants are not meeting the work-search requirements. These issues could result in a denial of benefits.

The Unemployment Insurance division partners with the Workforce Development Division to offer targeted, virtual, in-person and online workshops through the automated Reemployment Support System. Workshop presenters select groups of individuals, and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) counselors refer individuals to attend. Staff in the Workforce Development Division conduct targeted outreach to claimants who self-identify as veterans, as well as those who are close to exhausting their claim. This is one more tool to connect Unemployment Insurance claimants with resources available through one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state.

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

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources are provided through jobs.utah.gov. Individuals can find information on training resources, eligible training providers, Department of Workforce Services-funded training programs, and alternative funding. They can also apply for training services online or in person at a one-stop center (AJC) and may be referred to training programs during a RESEA appointment.

Department of Workforce Services provides information and workshops focused primarily on "How to get the job you want," which expands beyond traditional résumé and interview skills development into:

- Articulating how an individual's skills align with job requirements.

Capitalizing on non-professional experiences to demonstrate leadership, organization, time management, communication skills, etc.

#### 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 an assessment of need. An assessment of need describes 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.

1. Assessment of Need. 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.

During the past few years, many farm workers have been observed as unwilling to seek assistance from available resources. Deportation concerns for family members have made the farm workers reluctant to utilize community services. Farm workers are either reluctant to give contact information or provide incorrect data for fear of facing legal repercussions.

Farm workers face the need for stable employment and wages. This factors in when deciding whether to pursue additional resources, education and training. The majority of farm workers believe that they lack the necessary skills and therefore, are unable to transition into other fields of employment. Wages are slowly rising due to the adverse effect wage rate (AEWR). The current economic climate has also had an impact; farmers are finding it difficult to find workers and, as a result, have had to increase wages to attract employees.

2. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State

1) Information from the Utah Department of Agriculture, Utah's NFJP grantee, outreach staff and the SMA, shows Utah's top five labor intensive crops as: cherries, apples, corn, tomatoes and melons. The months of heaviest activity are during the harvest season of July to September. The counties with prime crop activities are: Box Elder, Weber, Davis and Utah counties.

2) Employers have continually expressed concern regarding a labor shortage in all areas of agriculture, as Utah reports a September 2025 unemployment rate of 3.3%. Employers have also expressed concerns over the quality and dependability of the workforce, as many workers show up for several days and do not return. Other major issues employers face are increased costs (wages, taxes, land leases, fuel costs and tariffs, etc.) while the prices they receive for their products have decreased. Employers are cutting costs in any way possible and some are operating with a year-end deficit. Farmers believe that under the current conditions, this manner of operations is not sustainable long-term. They also fear that without a change to the current climate or an increase in commodity prices, they will have to cease operations.

3) Other factors that are affecting agriculture in Utah include a steady decrease in available farmland.

Every year, more land is developed for housing or commercial properties. Wages are also a concern with the H-2A program wages (AEWR) rising to levels employers believe are unsustainable.

3. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State

and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration

The majority of the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are from Mexico and Peru, with other Central American nationalities serving as a secondary source for the agricultural workforce. For most workers, Spanish is their native language. The workers who fit the WIOA definition for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are predominantly seasonal, with an extremely low migrant worker presence in Utah. The peak times are during harvest months of July to September. Information gathered from the experience and outreach of the SMA, NFJP, and SWA staff, and other organizations from the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers Coalition report that there are approximately 500 domestic workers during the peak season and 2,000 H-2A workers throughout the year.

#### 4. Outreach Activities

The local offices' outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Utah has outreach activities designed to meet the needs of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers in the state and to locate and contact those who aren't being reached through normal intake activities. Details of how Utah will accomplish each required MSFW activity are described below each activity.

##### A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

The Utah State Workforce Agency utilizes multiple methods to contact farm workers who cannot be reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the one-stop centers (AJCs). As mentioned above, the Department of Workforce Services conducts outreach activities through joint activities with partners from the Utah Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition. Coalition members share events and gatherings of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and invite other organizations to join and offer their services.

The State Workforce Agency outreach worker is active in joint efforts with the NFJP. They meet on a monthly basis, coordinate outreach efforts and typically perform outreach activities together. In conjunction with the Foreign Labor Certification Program, farm workers are also informed by the H-2A housing inspector about their rights and available resources.

##### B. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Utah's State Monitor Advocate coordinates with the outreach worker on an ongoing basis. Technical assistance is provided when needed on resolving complaints, identifying human trafficking, collaborating with community partner organizations, and providing quality services to all MSFWs. New information and refresher training are provided regularly. Complaints are reported by the outreach worker to the State Monitor Advocate immediately. When appropriate, action is taken at

the local level to resolve the complaint in a timely manner. The complaint system is reviewed each month, and all complaints are discussed to review if appropriate actions were taken and to determine areas for improvement.

The State Monitor Advocate and outreach worker participate in the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition and events held by other organizations. This allows for improved collaboration and connection to organizations serving the MSFW population in Utah. Coalition members are invited to participate in outreach events and assist by staffing, posting and distributing marketing materials.

**C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs, including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues**

Utah's outreach worker is a member of the multi-program funded connections team. This team has knowledge of all core programs to assist individuals who walk into the one-stop center (AJC). All connection team workers complete a yearly proficiency training that is reviewed by their managers to assess that they are knowledgeable about core programs. Unemployment Insurance is included in the proficiency training.

**D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers with professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high-quality services to both job seekers and employers**

The Department of Workforce Services provides state merit staff workers with many opportunities for professional development. Internally, there are training sessions as frequently as quarterly or biannually on new and innovative ways to work with individuals and employers. There is also mandatory online training, which includes sexual harassment training and filing complaints. From system enhancements to new services offered, these trainings keep staff up to date on services available to the target populations with barriers to employment. Additionally, the department offers yearly regional and national conferences that offer opportunities for networking, learning vehicles for merit staff and relationship building with community and federal partners.

**E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups**

The outreach worker and outreach staff at Futures Through Training, Utah's NFJP, meet monthly in person, virtually or via telephone to coordinate services provided to employers and farmworkers. To improve efficiency and reach more migrant seasonal farmworkers, outreach visits are frequently completed with NFJP. Coordination with community partners in both the public and private sectors meets monthly at the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition meetings. Through the collaboration of coalition members, the needs and issues of the agricultural community are identified. By this same effort, resources are leveraged to meet the needs of stakeholders and aid in recruiting additional community partners to the coalition.

**5. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system**

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services

i. The Department of Workforce Services offers career services to all individuals, including Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. This includes work-readiness activities, resume preparation and printing, access to email accounts, employment exchange activities, review and referrals to job orders, workshops and career counseling. Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers who are unable to obtain employment through core services are referred to an employment counselor for career and training services that include assessments, employment plans and career counseling. Weber and Utah counties have the highest populations of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. With this in mind, Futures Through Training and the Department of Workforce Services collaborate in an effort to streamline services and coordinate funds to best serve individuals with training. Services are reviewed quarterly and reports are prepared by the Utah State Monitor Advocate at the state and economic service area levels to ensure that services provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are "qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate" compared to non-Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers seeking services.

ii. The State outreach worker focuses on continuing to develop better working relationships with agriculture employers. Assisting employers is a key component to the overall economic health of Utah's agriculture industry and these relationships provide access to farm workers. Assisting employers with recruiting, posting required literature, informing on employment law and providing other resources, enable employers to focus on farming.

These services are also marketed to employers through local workforce development staff who work solely with employers to provide them with access and knowledge of available services.

B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups

The employment service complaint process is a high priority in the State Workforce Agency's daily operations. All employment service complaints are tracked to ensure they are resolved or referred to the proper enforcement agency. Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition partners are reminded of the process and importance of reporting all complaints to the State Workforce Agency. When an employment service complaint is submitted, the complainant is asked if they are a Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW). If the complainant initially identifies themselves as an MSFW or, during investigation, the complainant is found to be an MSFW, the Utah State Monitor Advocate is notified. The Utah State Monitor Advocate works with the outreach worker and investigator to ensure the complaint is resolved and appropriate forms are submitted to DOL. All complaints submitted or shared with the Utah State Monitor Advocate are tracked for monitoring purposes.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Agricultural employers are provided the same level of service as other employers, including public job recruitment listings, labor market information (LMI), interview space at one-stop centers (AJCs) and assistance from local workforce development specialists. The State outreach worker has been

trained first to approach employers and offer services to them before asking to speak with their farm workers. This has helped in creating better relationships with our farmers.

Agricultural employers who are unable to fill their labor needs through the recruitment of United States citizens and other eligible non-citizens are provided with information on the H-2A program. The Department of Workforce Services assists H-2A employers with employee recruitment and meeting the H-2A program requirements.

## 6. Other Requirements

### A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The Department of Workforce Services implemented an MOU in 2018 with the NFJP grantee Futures Through Training. As a result of this agreement, collaboration has been heightened and awareness of the needs of MSFW's has increased. Due to the implementation of the MOU, the State Monitor Advocate and the outreach worker meet either in person, virtually or by phone monthly with NFJP staff. This monthly interaction facilitates the calendaring and coordination of in-person outreach throughout the various parts of the State. The MOU also allows for the department to exchange data with Futures Through Training that validates employment information for NFJP participants. Futures Through Training also provides the department with participant information to support the WIOA Infrastructure Agreement. This MOU was reviewed, updated and approved in June of 2022 for an additional five years.

In 2019, the Department of Workforce Services led efforts to form a coalition of community partners with the intent of identifying the needs of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers in Utah. The MSFW Coalition is anchored by Workforce Services, Futures Through Training, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As issues are identified, the Coalition determines which resources and partners are best able to address the farm worker needs. The Coalition also identifies training areas that would benefit partners and coordinates presentations to enhance the Coalition's knowledge. Presentations have included a wage and hour Q&A with DOL, human trafficking prevention and identifying worker harassment. The Coalition as a whole strategically leverages and provides valuable resources to the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker population.

As collaboration takes place via outreach and other organized events, it has increased the exposure of existing partners within the Coalition and the objective of providing resources to the MSFW community. The exposure increases interest from other potential partners. Since its inception, the Coalition has increased in community partners each year and continues to identify other partners who can enhance the Coalition and provide additional resources.

### B. Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review

and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The Utah State Workforce Agency provided a copy of the final proposed Agricultural Outreach Plan for review and to provide public comment to agricultural employers and groups and all of the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker coalition members and community partners, listed below:

- Futures Through Training (Utah's NFJP Grantee)
- Centro De La Familia of Utah
- Community Health Centers of Utah
- Provo School District
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Salt Lake School District
- Bear River Health Department
- Utah State Board of Education

No comments or recommendations were received from any of these organizations, other community partners, agricultural employer organizations, MSFW community partners, or public individuals on the proposed Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP).

#### C. Data Assessment

Review the previous four years of Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Utah continues to meet all of the Equity Ratio Indicators. Utah continues to increase career and supportive services to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. Due to the population geographic density of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in the State of Utah, in many cases, travel to a one-stop center (AJC) is not feasible for most Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. Utah's outreach worker has been tasked with contacting Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in our system to attempt job development activities to increase career services.

#### D. 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.

Based on the previous Agricultural Outreach Plan, outreach efficiency and effectiveness have been enhanced. The addition of an outreach worker, increased collaboration and outreach efforts with the NFJP, improved organization of outreach events and a focus on the complaint system have enhanced the advocacy offered to Utah's Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. The face-to-face contact and assistance for Utah's Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers continue to grow.

Utah's agriculture employer goals continue to be a focus through coordinating resources offered by Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker outreach and workforce development staff.

#### E. State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The Outreach Plan has been reviewed and approved by the State Monitor Advocate. Workforce Services will afford all coalition members the opportunity to review and comment on this plan as required during the 30-day comment period of the Combined State Plan.

#### Wagner-Peyser Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act 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));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
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 Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within five calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

### Wagner-Peyser Program Performance Indicators

#### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and

- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	69.0%	69.5%	69.0%	69.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.1%	69.8%	68.1%	69.8%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$8,300	\$9,900	\$8,300	\$9,900
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

### Program-specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under Title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

#### a. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned 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)).

Utah has aligned adult education content standards with the state-adopted challenging academic content standards 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 Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education Department is governed by Board Rule R-277-733 - Adult Education which can be viewed online at [https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/administrativerules/administrative\\_rules/effective\\_rules/R277733EffectiveOctober2025.pdf](https://www.schools.utah.gov/adminrules/administrativerules/administrative_rules/effective_rules/R277733EffectiveOctober2025.pdf). Adult Education Board Rules require adult education programs offering Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) curriculum to follow Utah Core Standards infused with OCTAE-developed College and Career Readiness Standards as the basis for instruction leading to an Adult Education Secondary Diploma. Staff teaching courses leading to an Adult Education Secondary Diploma must be licensed as defined in the Utah Adult Education Policies and Procedures Guide Section 3 - Program Design D. Adult education programs are monitored on a rotation schedule whereby curricula are reviewed regularly by the monitoring team for compliance. Adult Education funded community-based organizations (CBO) offering English language instruction to non-native learners are required to ensure that curriculum is aligned to OCTAE-developed College and Career Readiness Standards at a minimum in Language Arts and Math. English Language Acquisition programs are to employ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)-certified instructors or individuals with an English Language Learner (ELL) endorsement. Non-licensed persons may teach under the supervision of licensed staff. Instructors employed in school district adult education programs are required to follow the hiring practices of the local school district.

## b. Local Activities

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include, at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these 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 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.

Utah will fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities. Eligible providers will be funded to provide any combination of the following activities: 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, and integrated education and training. Adult Education AEFLA funds will be awarded in compliance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C, and based on a competitive application process following the 13 guidance points outlined in section 231(e). Program awards will be made based on the application merit as measured on a scoring rubric. The Utah State Board of Education Adult Education leadership will review the applications and determine awards. Programs not funded will have the opportunity to appeal the Utah State Board of Education's decision through the appeal hearing. Following the hearing an applicant may appeal to the Secretary of Education (defined in 34 CFR 76-401) for a final decision. Programs will compete for WIOA

AEFLA awards to provide instruction in English language acquisition (ELA), Adult Basic Education (ABE) literacy services and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) services to qualified individuals as defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. All programs are expected to infuse civics education within the context of offered coursework. Instruction provided should be contextualized and designed to focus on career opportunities defined within the regions. In addition to the above, Utah will make available funds to concurrently blend adult education and literacy activities into strong partnerships with the other partners through increasing the integration of instruction into regional high demand occupations identified by the Department of Workforce Services. As appropriate, programs will partner directly with their local training or postsecondary institution to encourage student transition through the use of transition coaches or counselors. Applicants that are funded are expected to infuse Utah's College and Career Readiness Standards into instruction. English Language acquisition (ELA) instruction will include concurrent and contextualized workforce preparation activities in combination with support from the Department of Workforce Services to successfully provide integrated education and training offerings to students. Additionally, the application process will require programs to define how they will infuse career pathway implementation into ELA, ABE, or ASE instruction, utilizing partnerships with the Department of Workforce Services, including Vocational Rehabilitation, to support the development and implementation of career pathways in high demand industries. Applicants for Family Literacy funding are expected to work in partnership with a local Head Start or early education partner, in addition to the Department of Workforce Services, to ensure that the educational and employment needs of adults and families are adequately met. Applicants are also encouraged to meet the needs of employers by providing ELA, ABE, and ASE services in the workplace when appropriate. Applicants who indicate they are providing workplace literacy programs may also receive priority points. Funded applicants must provide services that are focused on defining a career pathway for each student.

c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- 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.

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 facility must give priority to serving individuals likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Utah will establish and operate programs under Section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals. Priority of service will be given to individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participating in the program. Utah will ensure that no more than 20% of the eligible funds awarded under the WIOA statute will be allocated for corrections education and other education of institutionalized individuals.

Eligible providers of demonstrated effectiveness will have direct and equitable access to apply for Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals grants to provide educational services in correctional facilities, county jails or other institutional settings. These funds will be competitively applied for using the same grant application and application process being used for Section 231 funds. Adult Education AEFLA funds will be completed based on an application process following the 13 guidance points outlined in section 231(e). Grant awards will be awarded based on application merit as measured on a Utah State Board of Education defined scoring rubric. The final decision will rest with the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education leadership. Applicants will be funded based on the focus of grant applications defining the program's ability to meet the needs of the adult learner, 16 years of age or older, by providing literacy activities, including adult education (including high-school completion), basic literacy, special education services to qualified youth, integration of English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation or integrated education and training. Programs awarded funds will be expected to infuse civics education within the context of offered coursework. Applicants applying for funding must define how funding will be used to meet the educational needs of offenders who are within five years of leaving an institution. Awarded funds are to be used to increase the number of incarcerated adults improving their basic skills, completing a secondary school credential, entering postsecondary education and training, or entering or retaining employment. Educational services offered may be provided by peer tutors who work under the direction of an adult educator. Instructions provided should be contextualized and designed to focus on the transition of reentering society. Programs will be expected to define how educational services will improve the offender's likelihood of successful reentry. This may include partnerships with postsecondary education and training institutions, so that students participate in postsecondary training and education programs within correctional facilities in industries that the Department of Workforce Services defines as marketable for formerly incarcerated individuals. Adult Education corrections program applicants awarded funding shall actively engage with Corrections staff and programming officers to ensure students are actively engaged in transition services at release and post-release. Adult Education program staff members are expected to partner with the Department of Corrections and, Department of Workforce Services in transition and release processes designed to reduce offender recidivism.

#### d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA.

Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to 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.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

*Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.*

The Utah State Board of Education will allocate funds to eligible providers to establish or operate IELCE programs. These providers could include community colleges, adult education centers, community-based organizations, and other entities with a track record of providing effective adult education services. Funding decisions will be made based on the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, which include performance outcomes, alignment with local workforce needs, and the capacity to serve English language learners effectively.

Utah requires all eligible providers for sections 225, 231 and 243 to follow the same grant application process. Doing so ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants. This process also ensures that the same grant announcement, application and grant process is used by all potential applicants and is in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C.

Adult Education programs awarded funds by Utah serve qualified students by:

- Incorporating an understanding of the American system of government, freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship embedded within the curriculum and instruction;
- Preparing English language acquisition students to transition to employment and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency through partnerships with the Department of Workforce Services and postsecondary training programs;
- Individualizing services to professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries in such a way as to maximize the utilization of training and experience already gained;
- Providing adult education services that include instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English as well as workforce preparation activities and workforce training in specific occupations; and

- Defining processes that will be implemented with partner agencies, the Department of Workforce Services, including the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, will focus integrated instruction on high-demand industry needs in the local economic area.

The curriculum will be designed to accommodate learners at various proficiency levels, ensuring that individuals with diverse educational backgrounds can access and benefit from the program.

Utah funds an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C. Funds for this program are awarded to qualified adult education ELA providers based on sub-state data supporting target populations with barriers to employment of ELA persons and the high-demand industry needs within the areas.

*Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.*

Utah delivers the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program in combination with Integrated Education and Training activities (IET) as outlined in 34 CFR section 463.36. Each program receiving IELCE funds must include access to an IET program. This means that in addition to language and civics instruction, participants will have access to vocational training and skill development opportunities relevant to in-demand industries and occupations. By integrating language learning with vocational training, participants can acquire both the language skills and technical competencies needed for employment in high-demand fields.

As part of the monitoring processes already established, IELCE grantees will be required to provide evidence of an IET program that meets requirements such as having a single set of learning objectives that is used throughout the three required components of the IET program (i.e., adult education activities, workplace preparation, and workplace training).

IELCE grantees will work with employees, the Department of Workforce Services (including the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation), and postsecondary education and training providers to develop IET programs for in-demand industries and occupations.

*Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.*

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program under section 243(a) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will incorporate a multifaceted approach to instruction, encompassing both literacy and English language acquisition, as well as education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Here's how each component will be addressed within the program:

1. **Literacy Instruction:** IELCE grantees will offer comprehensive literacy instruction tailored to the needs of adult English language learners. This instruction will encompass fundamental literacy skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Participants will engage in activities and exercises designed to improve their literacy skills across various contexts, including everyday situations, workplace scenarios, and academic settings. Instructional materials will be selected to suit the diverse needs and learning styles of participants, ensuring that individuals at different proficiency levels can progress effectively.
2. **English Language Acquisition:** English language acquisition is a core component of the IELCE program. Participants will receive structured language instruction aimed at enhancing their proficiency in English. This instruction will cover grammar, vocabulary,

pronunciation, and language fluency. Immersive learning experiences, interactive activities, and communicative tasks will be employed to facilitate language acquisition in real-life contexts. Instructional strategies will be differentiated to accommodate learners with varying levels of language proficiency, allowing each participant to progress at their own pace while addressing individual learning needs.

3. **Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship:** In addition to literacy and language instruction, IELCE grantees will provide education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Participants will learn about the foundational principles of democracy, the structure of government, and the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. They will also explore topics related to civic engagement, such as voting, advocacy, community involvement, and cultural diversity. Instruction will be interactive and participatory, encouraging learners to critically reflect on their roles as active members of society and empowering them to contribute meaningfully to their communities.
4. **Civic Participation:** IELCE grantees will promote civic participation by fostering a deeper understanding of civic processes and encouraging active engagement in civic life. Participants will have opportunities to participate in civic events, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. Through discussions, role-playing exercises, and collaborative projects, learners will develop the confidence and competence to engage in civic discourse, advocate for social issues, and contribute to positive change within their communities.

*Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to 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.*

The primary goal of the IELCE program is to prepare adult English language learners for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. IELCE grantees have designed programs that provide participants with the skills, knowledge, and credentials necessary to secure and retain employment in their chosen fields. Career counseling, job placement assistance, and connections to local employers are integral components of the program to ensure successful transitions to the workforce.

English literacy and civics classes introduce students to civics-related content by providing them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily work lives while building their English language and literacy skills. As English language learners gain confidence as language learners and as citizens with rights and responsibilities associated with success in the workplace and in-demand industries, they will achieve personal and professional growth and successes within the communities.

*Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.*

The IELCE program will be closely integrated with the local workforce development system to leverage existing resources and infrastructure. This integration will involve collaborating with required partners, employers, and other stakeholders to align program activities with regional labor market needs. Coordination with the workforce development system will facilitate referrals, support services, and career advancement opportunities for program participants, maximizing their chances of success in the labor market.

Adult Education programs providing ELL services will refer qualified adult education students to the Department of Workforce Services, including the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, for necessary services. The Utah Department of Workforce Services, including the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, will reciprocate by referring potential students to Adult Education. Again, the intent of the IELCE program under section 243(a) will be not only to teach English to non-native speakers, assisting them in understanding civic rights and responsibilities, but also to work with partner agencies to place learners in employment settings leading to self-sufficiency.

e. State Leadership

1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA

The Utah State Board of Education will utilize 12.5% of the AEFLA allocation for state leadership activities to:

1. Align adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners.

By aligning Adult Education and literacy activities with core programs, the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services will implement the strategy in WIOA Section 102, including developing career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. Activities that support this alignment include:

- State and local area trainings with partner agencies where staff have the opportunity to interact and set the framework for partnerships, discussions and action in meeting the education and employment needs of customers;
- Providing curriculum to programs to support student instruction in high demand career pathways;
- Providing technical support to programs providing Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs;
- Providing additional support to enable the presence of Career Navigators or similar positions in each program;
- Funded activities for programs to support the implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards;
- Monitoring programs for alignment of Adult Education secondary graduation standards with the Utah Core Standards in the areas of math, English and Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE) College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards; and
- Providing Adult Education program staff with training on components of <https://jobs.utah.gov> and <https://www.ktsutah.org/> with an emphasis on: Career pathways, including but not limited to an understanding of occupational outlook, education requirements and wages in Utah, postsecondary and technical training opportunities supporting in-demand occupations.

2. Establish and operate high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided to students, including the following activities:

The Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services will develop high-quality professional development opportunities to improve instruction provided pursuant to local activities required

under Section 231(b). This will include instruction on the essential components of reading adapted to the specific needs of adult learners. Instruction may be provided by volunteers or by paid staff and will include disseminating information about models and promising practices related to such programs. Programs are encouraged to allocate portions of their budgets, both state and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds, to pay for staff to attend state-sponsored Adult Education training. Programs releasing staff for training will define their expectations are as a result of training and how they will implement and maintain the training learned. State staff will:

- Investigate positive practices for improving teacher quality and retention;
- Develop content and models for Integrated Education and Training (IET) career pathways; and
- Work with programs and partners to integrate literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers.
- Assess the needs of local programs;
- Continue to utilize the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE), ProLiteracy, and other literacy entities as providers for training;
- Utilize local program staff as trainers;
- Host or co-host a fall conference focused on the adult teacher and learner; and
- Disseminate information about models and promising practices.

Program-specific professional development examples include:

- Training opportunities with four emphases: English Language Acquisition (ELA), reading, math, and career pathways with career-infused curricula;
- Adult Education training utilizing both national and state trainers;
- Training utilizing delivery options such as virtual meetings, self-paced online training, and in-person training;
- Student Information System (SIS) training;
- Ongoing data training and program monitoring with program directors, analyzing data, outcomes and implications for changes in academic programming at the local level with an emphasis on meeting state and federal targets;
- Professional learning opportunities for certification in the administration of National Reporting System (NRS) approved assessments;
- National Reporting System (NRS) Training;
- Onboarding and additional professional learning opportunities for new Program Directors;
- Training with partners to ensure that mentors and counselors understand referral processes and all available resources, including postsecondary and career training programs; and
- Other professional development as necessary

3. Provide technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities on:

1. the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;

Eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funding under title (3)(i) have a provision for technical assistance. This involves developing and disseminating instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training. Instructional coaches will be used to disseminate instructional practices statewide based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available. The instructional coaches will provide support in instructional practices rooted in andragogy and contextualization.

2. the role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and

The role of eligible providers as one-stop center (AJC) partners is to provide access to employment, education and training services. Each adult education program will define its role with its partners and how they will meet on an ongoing basis and discuss common topics. Topics include, but are not limited to, services provided, access to services, employment trends and employment opportunities available for the common client. This can be accomplished through attending quarterly area partnership meetings with representatives from core and required partners. At the meeting, members will share information about existing employment partnerships and emerging employment opportunities within the local economic areas. Members may also present information, such as workforce development strategies that will be developed during a program year and how employment opportunities will be extended to adult education students.

State staff will provide technical assistance through American Job Center recertification processes on how to fulfill the roles of eligible providers as a one-stop partner.

3. assistance with the use of technology, including staff training, for eligible providers, especially to improve system efficiencies.

Eligible providers will receive assistance with technology, including staff training and, especially, improving system efficiencies. • Program directors will utilize electronic desk monitoring tools and reports to improve program performance and state outcomes. • Programs will define how they incorporate technology into their classroom to increase the amount and quality of learning related to increased performance. Student outcomes will be evaluated by the Utah State Board of Education based on data in the state's adult education student information system. • Programs will define weaknesses and areas where state support is needed to advance their programming options to increase both efficiency and student outcomes. • Professional learning activities will be provided based on increasing the use of technology in instruction. A remote learning program specialist will provide technical assistance focused specifically on increasing the amount and quality of learning through technology.

4. Monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

Data is monitored regularly and is used along with needs assessments to identify program needs. Targeted technical assistance activities are provided surrounding the following areas:

- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Corrections education
- Evidence-based instruction in the essential components of reading
- Standards based instruction.

State staff will monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities as well as the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state.

- Programs are reviewed at a minimum of every three years. A risk assessment is used to evaluate programs using a variety of metrics. Programs identified through the assessment as high risk are monitored more frequently.
- Each program is assigned a technical assistant (TA) and has regular desk monitoring conversations with their technical assistant. These conversations help identify proven or promising practices within the state and then these are disseminated through Directors' Meetings and other professional learning activities.
- State staff run program reports on a monthly basis and identify programs with additional technical assistant or monitoring needs.
- Funds are used to create and maintain a Student Information System (SIS) that allows for continued monitoring of data.

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

Funds will be used to support activities surrounding the implementation of statewide broadcast courses and the expansion of remote learning within the state. Funds will also be used to provide a text-based communication tool for outreach to instructors and students.

f. Assessing Quality

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) levels will be monitored including academic outcomes, education-gained advancement and high-school completion, through monthly data monitoring with program directors to ensure the entry of quality and timely data into the statewide adult education student information system.● State specialists will utilize state policy, reports, compliance monitoring as well as monthly desk monitoring to ensure compliance of quality Adult Education services and data. Examples include monitoring appropriate testing and testing standards, or monitoring intensity and duration of programs and impact on outcomes.● Programs will define what programmatic changes they will make to improve their program outcomes. A risk assessment is used annually to identify high risk providers. These providers receive an onsite monitoring visit, during which technical assistance is provided and programs receive corrective actions as needed to

bring the program into compliance. Programs are monitored at a minimum of every three years. On-site visits also allow opportunities to gather and disseminate best practices. Collaboration between programs is encouraged to facilitate the implementation of best practices throughout the state.

Corrective action will be taken with programs as identified as necessary through evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods. Corrective action will be used to ensure program compliance with Utah State Board of Education's expectations and to improve the quality of adult education activities in the state. Programs identified through evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods will also receive additional targeted technical assistance in an effort to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State. Targeted technical assistance may include additional program desk monitoring, on site program visits, training and professional learning opportunities designed to target the program's specific needs, and the development and delivery of data reports designed to assist program directors and staff. Professional learning and technical assistance delivery options include in person, virtual, and online options ensuring that all providers are afforded information needed to develop, maintain and improve services for the adult learner.

In addition to the above, Utah will use State Leadership funds as needed to cross train adult education staff to better align services between partners including common referral processes and intake processes. Utah supports statewide professional development. A directors' Advisory Committee meets as needed to assist the Utah State Board of Education in identifying professional learning needs. Decisions are based on data as well as WIOA rules in identifying and setting professional development priorities.

The Utah State Board of Education will utilize evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods in identifying areas needing to be addressed in professional learning opportunities in an effort to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

State leadership funds will be used to focus on a variety of areas including CCR implementation, establishing bridge programs, evidenced based ELA practices, effective program management, integrated education and training as well as transition to postsecondary opportunities.

Utah assesses the quality of professional development in a variety of ways. The state utilizes input from programs gathered from annual program plans, desk monitoring conversations, program data, and program reviews to prioritize gaps that necessitate additional professional development. In addition to the direction and input from the directors' Advisory Committee team, the needs assessments drive the creation of an annual training plan. Participants of all workshops, conferences, presentations and web meetings will be surveyed to evaluate and provide feedback on the quality and content of the professional development event. This feedback will be used to improve future professional development opportunities.

#### Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
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;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

#### Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
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 the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
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.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

## Authorizing or Certifying Representative

### CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

#### Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to [wioa@ed.gov](mailto:wioa@ed.gov) at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)  
[\(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>\)](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	Utah State Board of Education
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	Enter information in this column
First Name	Alesha
Last Name	LeMmon
Title	Adult Education Coordinator
Email	alesha.leMmon@schools.utah.gov

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

### **EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

#### **GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

**State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that include the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants who have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants who believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

### **GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants**

The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:

- The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or
- The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package.

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The first of four questions is:***

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

The Utah State Board of Education's (USBE) vision is that upon completion, all Utah students are prepared to succeed and lead by having the knowledge and skills to learn, engage civically, and lead meaningful lives. USBE's mission is that the Utah State Board of Education leads by creating equitable conditions for student success: advocating for necessary resources, developing policy, and providing effective oversight and support. Acknowledging that all students are capable of learning, educational equity is the distribution of resources to provide equal opportunities based upon the needs of each individual student. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives and supports that recognize each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have access to high-quality education.

Utah Adult Education programs are aligned with USBE's vision in providing transformative, learner-centered, high-quality, evidence-based education that leads to sustainable employment and personal success. Ensuring that all students have equitable access to these services is integral to our program. An established process for the regular monitoring of programs and an established grievance process help ensure all students have equitable access to adult education services across the state.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The second of four questions is:***

***Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?***

Our students may experience some barriers to access of services including lack of transportation and childcare, limited English proficiency, lack of access to technology and the internet, lack of highly qualified teachers, and limited hours of services available. Some of these barriers may be exacerbated for incarcerated students and students in rural areas.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and***

*participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The third of four questions is:***

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

Programs are located throughout the state, with access to programs in each school district. This helps alleviate some of the transportation issues, but students may still have to travel large distances in some areas to access services. In these cases, technology can be used to extend service areas and reduce transportation issues. If students do not have access to technology or the internet, programs work to provide students with devices and hotspots when necessary. Technological solutions can also help alleviate childcare barriers, allowing caretakers to participate in educational services at a distance while still caring for children. In addition, technological solutions allow programs to share highly qualified teachers so that all participants across the state have access to highly qualified teachers through remote broadcasting courses. Using technology also allows increased availability of services, so that many times participants have access to educational services 24 hours a day. Students with limited English proficiency are provided intake materials in their own language and provided services to build proficiency in most areas of the state. Resources are used to create opportunities to expand English language acquisition services as needed.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The final of four questions is:***

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

Broadcast courses are offered to programs throughout the state. While the current catalog of courses is somewhat limited, ongoing efforts to increase the number and quality of courses offered will continue to be made. Additionally, efforts to expand services for students with limited English proficiency will continue, especially targeting rural areas where those services are limited. Efforts are ongoing to increase access to technology and the internet, especially to incarcerated students and in rural areas.

Adult Education and Literacy Program Performance Indicators

## **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to an agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end-of-year adjustment of performance levels. They were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	32.5%	35.0%	34.0%	35.1%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	32.5%	40.1%	34.0%	40.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,000	\$5,970	\$5,500	\$5,975
Credential Attainment Rate	17.5%	23.5%	20.0%	23.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.0%	43.0%	55.0%	43.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

### Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

#### a. State Rehabilitation Council.

1. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has:

Select A or B:

(A) is an independent State commission (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. In accordance with Assurance (a)(1)(B), if selected, please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1	11/25
Parent Training and Information Center	1	6/24
Client Assistance Program	2	9/25
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1	3/23
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1	5/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	2	3/25
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	3/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	6/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	10/25
Disability Advocacy Groups	1	5/24

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1	3/25
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	2	11/20
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	2	2/20
State Workforce Development Board	2	3/25
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	3	8/16
Rep. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community	1	3/25
Former Recipient of VR Services	1	11/23
Former Recipient of VR Service	1	3/25
Higher Education Representative	2	11/23
Rep. Service Provider	1	11/23
Rep. Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities	1	10/24

3. If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council convenes six times annually, aligning with the quarterly meeting requirement. In addition to these regular meetings, the executive committee and the membership subcommittee hold supplementary sessions to guarantee adherence to council mandates, objectives, and priorities. These additional meetings serve to identify subjects for evaluation and discussion, facilitate membership outreach, and engage in strategic planning.

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation collaborate to identify and recruit new members when there is a vacancy. Prospective members can attend meetings as guests to learn more about USOR and the SRC's roles. Council members and USOR staff conducted outreach efforts, disseminating information through social media, the USOR Business Relations team and the Utah's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Prospective applicants underwent interviews by the SRC Membership Committee. Their recommendation will proceed to the full council for endorsement, and are submitted for appointment in accordance with SRC Bylaws.

4. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment. The SRC provides input and feedback to USOR by conducting six meetings annually, committee activities, reports, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment interviews, planning goal setting activities and other structured activities designed to leverage the strategic composition of the SRC.

#### **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts:**

**SRC Input:** Council members expressed enthusiasm for the use of ABLE accounts and requested that information and training be made available to CRPs and Pre-ETS providers.

#### **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Updates:**

**SRC Input:** With the change in state statutes eliminating the state licensure requirement for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, the SRC supported USOR's proposed changes to the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements, including removing the national certification and master's degree prerequisites. The SRC recommended that USOR develop a training plan to ensure counselors have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality services. The council also requested updates on the outcome of the new training program.

#### **Supported Education Milestone Project:**

**SRC Input:** Following a USOR presentation in May 2024, the council strongly supported the new Supported Education Milestone project and requested that it include all VR clients, including those with intellectual disabilities.

#### **New VR Counselor Training Program:**

**SRC Input:** SRC members expressed support for the updated CSPD plan and VR University curriculum. They requested clarification on timelines, competency tracking, and inclusion of core topics such as Pre-ETS, counseling theory, ethics, assistive technology and self-care. Members emphasized the importance of ensuring all staff are prepared to meet federal VR program requirements.

#### **RSA Monitoring Report Findings:**

**SRC Input:** SRC members reviewed the VR Performance Update and RSA Federal Monitoring visit findings from August 2024. Members asked questions about the impact on federal funding and ways

the SRC could support USOR in implementing corrective actions. No additional feedback on the policy updates was provided.

**CRP Provider Agreement Updates:**

**SRC Input:** SRC members expressed support and provided a vote of approval for the updated CRP provider agreement and Performance Dashboards. They also requested that these documents be made publicly available.

**Order of Selection:**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation leadership met with the State Rehabilitation Council executive committee on August 18, 2025, to discuss implementing an Order of Selection (OOS) due to resource limitations.

On September 3, 2025, the Council reconvened, and USOR provided a comprehensive presentation on the key components of the OOS. The presentation included information on priority categories, the criteria for identifying individuals with the most significant disabilities, the administration and implementation of OOS, and a fiscal forecast demonstrating the agency's financial position and the necessity of moving forward with OOS.

Following the presentation, the Council conducted a formal vote, during which all members affirmed the decision to pursue the OOS. This step ensures that vocational rehabilitation services can allocate resources to prioritize individuals with the most significant disabilities while maintaining program sustainability.

In moving forward with implementation, the SRC recommended that USOR provide clear information to clients, stakeholders, and the public to ensure a thorough understanding of the process. The Council also suggested exploring alternative terminology for the "Wait List" to avoid confusion with the long-term support waitlists maintained by the designated ID/DD agency in Utah. Additionally, the SRC requested that USOR continue providing frequent updates on the process.

Following the SRC's vote of support, the Council received the draft state plan amendment and notices for public town halls scheduled for September 17 and 18, 2025. The state plan amendment and notices were posted on USOR's website and social media platforms, distributed through email listservs and posted in USOR offices. SRC members reviewed this information and disseminated it through their respective networks, with several members attending the public town hall meetings. Questions raised during these town halls addressed potential impacts to existing clients, informational resources that would be available to the public post-implementation, the appeal process for clients regarding their priority classification, OOS implementation procedures, services for students and counselor caseload capacity.

**Review and Update of WIOA State Plan Goals**

**SRC Input:** SRC reviewed the 2024–2027 WIOA State Plan VR goals and voted to recommend continuing all current goals for the next two years, except Goal 7 (Improving Access and Awareness of Pre-ETS), noting significant progress and that Pre-ETS is addressed through other goals. The SRC recommended adding additional goals and strategies related to increasing enrollment in occupational and vocational training programs, client engagement and improving employment retention in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit.

5. Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

The following is a summary of USOR's response and actions taken:

#### **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts:**

**USOR Response:** USOR accepted this recommendation and will provide training and resources on the ABLE process to providers. This will be delivered through the UWIPS Team, including the Pre-ETS Financial Literacy Specialist.

#### **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Updates**

**USOR Response:** USOR accepted the council's input and outlined strategies to address the licensing changes, including support for counselors currently in approved master's degree programs, reimbursement through Workforce Services' tuition assistance, incentives for passing the CRC exam, along with providing in-house and external training for VR counselors. USOR agreed to provide an overview of the finalized CPSD plan.

#### **Supported Education Milestone Project**

**USOR Response:** USOR accepted the council's input and discussed a pilot program resulting from the Comprehensive System review aimed at incentivizing clients from all backgrounds and disability types to pursue higher education. USOR also agreed to provide updates on the Supported Employment Service Milestone.

#### **New VR Counselor Training Program**

**USOR Response:** USOR confirmed the updated CSPD incorporates role-based training for new and existing staff through VR University's 18-month blended curriculum. Progress is tracked via YesLMS, covering core topics and providing ongoing professional development. The plan aligns with federal VR requirements and ensures counselors are equipped to deliver high-quality, client-centered services.

#### **RSA Monitoring Report Findings**

**USOR Response:** USOR detailed corrective actions to address findings, including updating regulations and policy review procedures, discontinuing interim vocational goals in IPEs, correcting

TWE coding and enhancing internal fiscal controls. Policy updates and training processes ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, support effective service delivery and align with agency goals. USOR confirmed all corrective actions will be remediated within 180 days, unallowable funds were not used, and SRC support for implementation is welcome. The SRC approved the corrective action plan and policy updates.

### **CRP Provider Agreement Updates**

- **USOR Response:** USOR agreed with the SRC's requests and confirmed that the updated CRP provider agreements and Performance Dashboards will be published publicly to enhance transparency and accountability. USOR emphasized that these updates support monitoring, promote provider accountability, and help drive continuous improvement in services and employment outcomes for clients.

### **Order of Selection:**

- **USOR Response:** The agency agreed with and accepted the Council's recommendations. It affirmed that information and resources would be made available to clients, applicants and stakeholders to help them understand the Order of Selection process. The agency also committed to exploring alternative terminology for the waitlist to reduce confusion with another agency's waitlist while maintaining transparency for VR clients.

### **Review of WIOA State Plan Goal Update**

- **USOR Response:** USOR accepted the SRC's recommendations and coordinated with the council to develop three new goals informed by RSA monitoring findings and recent performance data.

#### **b. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).**

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducts a comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Utah. The assessment identifies needs and evaluates the current VR system's capacity to meet service demands. The most recent Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA) was developed and completed in the Spring of 2023. USOR and the SRC are currently coordinating with Utah State University, which is conducting the new CSNA. This assessment is scheduled to be presented to the Council by late 2026.

USOR and SRC worked in collaboration to analyze the results of the CSNA, review the findings and recommendations, and develop goals and strategies to inform the state plans and improve areas of service capacity gaps and unserved/underserved populations.

In Utah, the prevalence of disability is lower than the national average, at 9.1% compared to 12.7%, with around 289,000 Utahns having a disability as per the ACS-2019. While state-level data is useful, regional disparities in factors like disability prevalence, poverty, and racial diversity, among others, exist. Thus, considering regional variations is crucial. The CSNA identified not just areas for improvement but also the organization's strengths. Notably, Utah ranks third nationally for employment among individuals with disabilities, boasting a 47.5% employment rate in this demographic. The CSNA findings consistently showed that while stakeholders acknowledged the strengths of USOR, they also identified areas for growth to better serve Utahns with disabilities.

The pandemic disrupted rehabilitation services, resulting in a 4.8% drop in applications and a 10.7% decrease in the number of individuals served from 2018 to 2021. These decreases were consistent across racial and ethnic groups, with non-white disability populations seeing the most significant increase in USOR service eligibility. While the number of people with disabilities exiting the USOR program with employment declined from PY 2018 to 2021, the quality of employment outcomes improved.

Focus group participants consistently expressed a favorable opinion of USOR, especially valuing the accessibility and openness of its leadership. Several recurrent themes emerged: the need to improve consumer access to services, enhance outreach efforts, increase pay for personnel and contractors, and advance the use of technology—specifically, there was a clear desire for digital signature capabilities. Concerning Pre-ETS, USOR counselors highlighted several challenges: a scarcity of resources, collaboration bottlenecks with schools, the need for specialized training for transition youth, and gaps in outreach to particular youth groups, such as those in juvenile justice or foster care systems, and those without 504 plans or IEPs.

Agency turnover, particularly within special education, contracted providers, and USOR, was cited as a substantial disruption. Suggestions point toward an emphasis on system-wide collaboration over individual relationships to ensure continuity. Partnering agencies expressed a consistent desire for better and more frequent communication from USOR.

#### Challenges Faced by Those with the Most Significant Disabilities:

In regard to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services, the CSNA found USOR's performance stands out positively when compared to vocational rehabilitation agencies in other states in terms of employment rates, quality indicators, and service timing. However, an area for enhancement is the employment rate for those with the most significant disabilities, where Utah ranked 3rd out of 5 states in 2021 and last in 2020. Identified challenges and recommendations include:

- Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers identified those with the most significant disabilities as having the more difficulties in finding and maintaining employment. It is noted this is often compounded by having parents or caregivers who do not see any possibility for employment.
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities living in rural areas faced challenges in accessing USOR services and employment due to limited transportation, difficulties accessing technology, job opportunity scarcity and pervasive poverty. Recommended solutions include strengthening USOR's presence in rural areas and improving outreach and awareness of its services.
- USOR staff pointed out that the main barriers lay in access, collaboration, and knowledge level among providers, in rural areas when serving individuals with most significant disabilities. These challenges were attributed to service provider turnover and hiring

difficulties, affecting collaboration and service provision, particularly for supported and customized employment.

- A notable issue with Supported Employment Services is the reduction in funding for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) for extended support services.
- The consensus among focus group members is that Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) need more training on both supported and customized employment services. Training for VR counselors, specifically in understanding customized employment, was also identified.
- In addition, other needs to support individuals with most significant disabilities include: providing job accommodations, communication and social skills training, developing effective business relations partnerships, benefits planning, financial literacy and self-advocacy training.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The CSNA results reveal USOR serves a diverse population, largely representative of those with disabilities in Utah. The results revealed that USOR assists diverse clients, closely mirroring the demographic composition of Utah's population. Historically, past CSNAs pointed to a slight underrepresentation of the Asian community within USOR client bases.

Consequently, the current CSNA placed a greater focus on catering to the needs of Utahns with disabilities identifying as Asian. Through focus groups and surveys, it was discerned that while many of the target populations we sought information from suggested that there are systemic and cultural reasons that some from this population may not seek out or want to receive USOR services even if qualifying for them. Survey data suggests that the Asian population is not among the most unserved or underserved racial-ethnic groups in Utah. Instead, USOR counselors and staff observed that the American Indian community grapples with the most pronounced challenges in accessing and benefiting from USOR services. However, on a broader scale, race and ethnicity were deemed less consequential in influencing employment challenges than the nature and type of disability.

Furthermore, the CSNA underscored several vital areas of potential improvement. Recognizing the significant fraction of Utah's population fluent in Spanish but not English, the CSNA also noted a need for USOR to enhance the provision of outreach, information resources and forms in Spanish. Additionally, given the unique challenges posed by Utah's refugee population, the CSNA recommended specialized training tailored to help serve refugees and address their specific needs.

The CSNA also examined unserved and underserved communities. The CSNA high-lighted homeless population with disabilities as underserved and facing the most significant barriers. These include challenges related to employment, accessing USOR services, and deriving benefits from the same. Adults with criminal backgrounds were identified as the next group facing the highest employment challenges, followed closely by individuals with limited English proficiency. However, perceptions of which groups are most underserved varied across the state.

Cultural barriers play a critical role in outreach effectiveness. Interviewees pinpointed specific marginalized groups, such as Asians, Polynesians, and the Slavic community, as having pronounced stigmas associated with disability and a cultural inclination to address needs internally, within the family or community framework. Additionally, there's a noteworthy gap in counselor knowledge about these specific underserved groups, further exacerbating the challenges of effective outreach.

In the context of Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services), several primary challenges and barriers were outlined. These encompassed resource limitations, collaboration challenges with schools, and the need for specialized training geared towards working with transition youth. CSNA particularly emphasized the need for outreach to underserved transition populations, which includes youth in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, those in foster care, youth with disabilities with only a 504 plan, and those without either a 504 plan or an IEP.

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

The CSNA delved into the collaboration between the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and other components of the state workforce development system in serving individuals with disabilities. Most respondents perceived these partnerships as beneficial, with a majority deeming the services moderately to very effective. When asked about potential improvements to the Department of Workforce Services one-stop centers (AJCs), a clear emphasis emerged on two primary areas: collaboration and accessibility. The most frequent feedback highlighted the need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration. Some praised existing collaborative efforts but also noted conflicting goals between agencies. A robust referral system that prioritizes a personal approach was recommended. The next prevalent feedback centered on program accessibility, with concerns about the complex service access process, an over-reliance on automated phone systems, and a hard-to-navigate website. Respondents also underscored the importance of disability awareness training to improve the understanding of the unique needs of clients with disabilities.

Regarding another core WIOA partner, Adult Education, the CSNA assessed the frequency of collaboration between direct service providers and adult education entities. The prevailing perception of the efficacy of adult education services was positive. However, only a minor proportion found them slightly or not at all effective. While specific recommendations for enhancing adult education services were gathered, the report urges caution in interpreting these suggestions, given that many respondents had minimal or no interactions with such services.

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. 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 IDEA.

The CSNA assessment thoroughly examined the needs and challenges faced by youth and students. Students with disabilities generally have access to the broad range of transition and pre-employment transition services. The number of youth and students served did plateau during the pandemic, but has started to rebound. However, there is a clearly identified need to increase the number of youth and students served, including the provision of Pre-ETS. In addition to the CSNA, this is reflected in USOR data reports. While students with individual disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and other health impairments have the strongest access to Transition and Pre-ETS services, there is an opportunity to increase service provision to students with sensory impairments. Another shortfall identified is the limited outreach efforts geared towards underserved populations. This underserved group encompasses youth entangled in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, those navigating the complexities of foster care, and students without the support of a 504 plan or an IEP. Furthermore, the introduction of more temporary and

work-based learning opportunities for the youth and students stands out as an area for enhancement.

Another area of note was the varying degrees of collaboration between educational institutions and the CSNA. While some schools are proactive and welcoming of collaborative efforts, others show noticeable reluctance, leading to inconsistent cooperation levels.

The feedback from focus groups across different target populations highlighted a persistent challenge: the high turnover rates among agencies associated with special education, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, and contracted providers. This turnover disrupts consistent service delivery and hinders long-term collaborations. To mitigate these challenges, CSNA proposes a more systems-oriented approach rather than relying on personal relationships. This would involve amplifying efforts in information sharing, offering on-demand training sessions, and devising strategies to bolster inter-agency communication, ensuring smoother collaboration.

Regarding Pre-ETS, the CSNA underscores the importance of proactive and strategic long-term planning. This planning should holistically consider USOR's roles and capacities in assisting students with disabilities. In terms of inter-institutional relationships, the assessment suggests a deeper emphasis on building and sustaining ties with school counselors and 504 coordinators within the LEAs. Moreover, the assessment emphasizes the potential of the USOR website as a key tool for outreach and recommends its enhancement, focusing on better searchability and making it more user-friendly for potential beneficiaries.

## 2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

The CSNA has pinpointed significant areas of development for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation in its collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers in Utah. These areas include fostering a culture within CRPs that aligns with and respects USOR perspectives, expanding CRP options in rural regions, and enhancing communication between each other's staff. There's also an emphasis on bolstering CRPs' capacities to cultivate business partnerships and offering additional training in areas like Supported Employment, Pre-ETS, and Customized Employment. Furthermore, the CSNA recommends enriching CRPs' comprehension of vocational rehabilitation's policies and expectations and providing them with training to refine the gradual phase-out of job supports. Conversely, CRPs have voiced their needs, including the ability to use digital signatures, improving the compensation structure of temporary work experiences and work-based learning experiences, clearer comprehension of their needs and services by VR counselors, timelier responses from these counselors, consistency in service hours authorized by USOR and an increase in ACRE trained personnel.

### c. Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available

information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, has formulated goals and priorities aimed at enhancing the delivery of high quality vocational rehabilitation services. The development of these objectives involved a thorough examination of information derived from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, client satisfaction survey outcomes, stakeholder input, corrective action plans, and internal data analysis. The State Rehabilitation Council played a crucial role by offering valuable feedback, input, and voting in favor of advancing the proposed goals and strategies.

2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in Section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

- A. Support innovation and expansion activities;
- B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;
- C. 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); and
- D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) collaborated to define the goals, priorities, strategies and performance measures for the VR program. This work followed a thorough review of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), including its key findings and recommendations. The SRC and its executive committee meet regularly throughout the year to provide guidance on emerging needs, and this input plays a central role in shaping the agency's objectives and priorities. Joint discussions during council meetings focused on reviewing, refining and reaching agreement on the goals, priorities and strategies outlined in the state plan.

During the Fall of 2025, the SRC reviewed the 2024–2027 WIOA State Plan VR goals and voted to recommend continuing all current goals for the next two years, with the exception of the goal on improving access and awareness of Pre-ETS. The SRC noted significant progress in this area. USOR accepted these recommendations and confirmed that Pre-ETS outreach and awareness remains a top priority and many of the initiatives started under this goal are now embedded in operational processes. USOR collaborated with the council to develop three new goals (goals 9, 10 and 11) informed by RSA monitoring findings and recent performance data.

- **Goal 1:** Ensure sufficient and reasonable resources are available to support the State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council in carrying out essential and mandated tasks.
  - **Strategy 1:** USOR will reserve funds and resources to support the SRC in fulfilling their activities, such as gathering customer satisfaction feedback, contributing to the statewide needs assessment and publishing the Annual Report. Ongoing coordination with USOR will emphasize identifying crucial resources to meet these responsibilities in line with the strategic plan goal.
  - **Strategy 2:** USOR will allocate funding to the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to carry out their mandated activities outlined in the Statewide Plan for Independent Living. The earmarked funds for SILC are determined through a collaborative planning process, during which the SILC identifies the resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities and achieve their goals.
  - **Basis and Measures:** Adherence to regulatory requirements, fulfillment of SRC objectives, and implementation of the USILC plan will be evaluated. Success will be determined through compliance assessments and the review of achievements aligned with the objectives set by each council.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure the provision of quality Pre-Employment Transition Services that meet the needs of students with disabilities.
  - **Strategy 1:** USOR will extend and enhance quality assurance activities to verify students are benefiting and gaining skills from services provided.
  - **Strategy 2:** USOR will allocate additional resources to increase the provision of Pre-ETS contract monitoring and technical assistance, including on-site visits, to ensure that the provided Pre-ETS services align with the needs of the students.
  - **Basis and Measures:** Ensuring the provision of high-quality Pre-ETS services remains an ongoing focus for the SRC, in accordance with the internal compliance standards established by USOR. Success in this area will be measured through diligent monitoring of the achievement of goals and objectives outlined in the providers' contracts.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance awareness and facilitate improved access to services for minority and underserved groups.
  - **Strategy 1:** Broaden outreach efforts and strengthen collaborations with community partners and agencies that engage with individuals involved in the justice system, including youth in custody.
  - **Strategy 2:** Increase the provision of USOR forms, documents, and informational resources available in Spanish.
  - **Strategy 3:** Provide ongoing training and information to VR staff to ensure they possess the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to serve diverse populations.
  - **Strategy 4:** Develop region-specific outreach, engagement and support initiatives to assist individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

- **Basis and Measures:** The CSNA-derived recommendations form the foundation for the objective and strategy aimed at enhancing access to services for minority and underserved groups. USOR will gauge success by examining demographic trends among 9-11 data and evaluating feedback from clients, staff, and stakeholders.
- **Goal 4:** Optimize and modernize VR processes to enhance accessibility and sustained engagement in services.
  - **Strategy 1:** Improve the referral and application process by streamlining data collection and implementing an online referral.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand use of technology to communicate with clients, obtain required documents and signatures.
  - **Strategy 3:** Identify data entry and paperwork burdens for clients and VR staff and implement process improvement initiatives.
  - **Basis and Measures:** The CSNA, along with input from staff and stakeholders, pinpointed crucial areas for enhancing client access to services. USOR is dedicated to improving the client experience and will measure success by tracking progress toward and completion of the specified strategies.
- **Goal 5:** Fully Spend 15% Funding Reserve for Pre-Employment Transition Services.
  - **Strategy 1:** Allocate additional USOR staff resources to provide and coordinate Pre-ETS to students.
  - **Strategy 2:** Evaluate and, if deemed appropriate, incorporate the costs for additional authorized Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) activities beyond the mandated five.
  - **Strategy 3:** Improve opportunities for fee-for-service arrangements for providers offering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
  - **Basis and Measures:** In compliance with regulations and its corrective action plan, prioritizing the utilization of the Pre-ETS reserve is imperative for USOR. Success will be monitored and measured through a thorough review of expenditures and fully spending the reserve funding.
- **Goal 6:** Increase the number of students with disabilities participating in work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 1:** Expand utilization of the USOR Business Relations Team to assist in identifying and coordinating work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand contracts for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) with a focus on providing work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 3:** Review policies and rates for the provision of work-based learning experiences and implement identified areas for improvement.
  - **Basis and Measures:** As indicated by performance dashboards and the CSNA, USOR must increase the provision of work-based learning experiences. Success will be measured by monitoring the number of eligible and potentially eligible students who participate in these services.

- **Goal 7:** Improve client achievement of high-quality employment outcomes, considering factors such as wages, hours worked, benefits and occupations that require credentials.
  - **Strategy 1:** Provide additional training and resources to VR staff for effectively utilizing labor market information with clients to identify high-demand careers.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand VR staff and client access to vocational assessment and career exploration resources.
  - **Strategy 3:** Enhance and increase services to employers to support hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities; including developing new employer partnerships.
  - **Basis and measures:** A review of performance dashboards and secondary data from the CSNA has identified opportunities for USOR to improve the quality of its employment outcomes. Success will be measured through common performance indicators and a thorough examination of client employment information at exit.
- **Goal 8:** Increase co-enrollment with Adult Education and Workforce Development programs to support client success
  - **Strategy 1:** Enhance local-level partnership collaborations to streamline co-enrollment processes and coordinate service delivery efficiently.
  - **Strategy 2:** Provide WIOA partners with training, resources and support to improve disability awareness and understanding for VR services.
  - **Basis and measures:** Insights from the CSNA and performance dashboards guided the identification of this goal. Success will be measured by the increased co-enrollment of Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser and Adult Education programs.
- **Goal 9: Increase Enrollment in occupational and vocational training programs, including On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships**
  - **Strategy 1:** Enhance counseling and guidance efforts to inform clients about available postsecondary vocational training options, on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeship opportunities, with an emphasis on career pathways that lead to sustainable, competitive employment.
  - **Strategy 2:** Streamline policies and procedures to support client participation in vocational and occupational training programs, including OJT and apprenticeship placements.
  - **Strategy 3:** Provide staff training and resources to strengthen understanding of apprenticeship models and improve staff capacity to connect clients with these opportunities.
  - **Basis and Measures:** This goal responds to recommendations from the RSA Monitoring Report and stakeholder feedback emphasizing the need to expand access to postsecondary training opportunities. Progress will be measured by increases in the number and percentage of clients participating in occupational and vocational training, OJT and apprenticeship programs.
- **Goal 10: Strengthen Meaningful and Sustained Client Engagement to Enhance the Overall Client Experience**

- **Strategy 1:** Provide staff with training, support and resources to implement consistent client engagement practices, including regular check-ins, enhanced documentation and follow-up communication throughout all stages of the rehabilitation process.
- **Strategy 2:** Offer additional counseling skill-based training, such as motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, active listening, conflict resolution and client-centered communication, to strengthen relationship-building and improve client retention.
- **Strategy 3:** Utilize data analytics and case management reports to identify early signs of disengagement and enable proactive outreach and re-engagement efforts.
- **Basis and Measures:** This goal addresses recommendations from the RSA Monitoring Report and stakeholder feedback emphasizing the importance of stronger client relationships and improved service experiences. Success will be measured by increases in client retention and improved satisfaction survey results.

- **Goal 11: Improve Employment Retention in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit**
  - **Strategy 1:** Utilize Labor Market Information (LMI) to guide clients toward employment opportunities with high demand, stability and career advancement potential, supporting long-term retention
  - **Strategy 2:** Provide targeted training to VR staff, including CTW Specialists, on effective job retention strategies, including early identification of stability risks and coordination of follow-up services prior to case closure.
  - **Strategy 3:** Provide employed SSA-beneficiary clients with information on Employment Networks and Work Incentive resources to ensure ongoing support and promote long-term retention.
  - **Basis and Measures:** This goal is informed by USOR's PY24 data indicating a slight decline in employment retention rates at the 2nd and 4th quarters post-exit. Success will be measured by improved performance on WIOA primary indicators of employment retention.

d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), is confident in the progress made toward accomplishing the goals and priorities established in 2024. Any challenges and barriers will be noted in the following section.

- **Goal: Ensure sufficient and reasonable resources are available to support the State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council in carrying out essential and mandated tasks.**

- **Progress:** USOR continued to provide funding and resources to support the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) in fulfilling their mandated responsibilities. The SRC completed key activities including gathering customer satisfaction feedback, contributing to the statewide needs assessment and publishing the Annual Report. The Utah SPIL, approved by ACL, outlines four goals: effective IL services for independence, increased public awareness of disability issues, youth engagement in communities and policies supporting full participation for people with disabilities. SILC initiatives demonstrate measurable progress toward these goals, including a 20% increase in new consumers served across six IL Centers, active participation on boards and councils, annual youth leadership conferences and national advocacy with congressional and legislative leaders. Both councils maintain compliance with regulatory requirements, achieving objectives through effective resource allocation and ongoing coordination with USOR.
- **Goal: Ensure the provision of quality Pre-Employment Transition Services that meet the needs of students with disabilities.**
  - **Progress:** USOR continued to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities. In partnership with Utah State University (USU), USOR measures student skill gains through contracted Pre-ETS providers using the Transition Readiness Toolkit. Thousands of evaluations have been administered, and many students have completed surveys through the toolkit. Results from these assessments are reviewed with Pre-ETS contractors during monitoring, and providers have used the findings to improve their programs. USOR has strengthened technical assistance and contract monitoring, including monthly meetings and site visits. All Pre-ETS contracts have been monitored, resulting in the termination of one contract and amendments to two others. Remediation and additional technical assistance plans are being developed for providers not meeting outcome goals. Fiscal oversight has also been completed, with letters issued to contractors underserving or underspending and remediation plans received from those continuing services.
- **Goal: Enhance awareness and facilitate improved access to services for minority and underserved groups.**
  - **Progress:** USOR took multiple steps to enhance awareness of and improve access to services for minority and underserved populations. Pre-ETS services are now more accessible to schools on the Southeastern Utah reservations, and collaboration with the Navajo Nation VR has been renewed, including establishing a referral process to allow seamless referrals between divisions. To increase accessibility, VR applications and the Pre-ETS Guide are now available in Spanish; along with Pre-ETS student workbooks. Staff training has been enhanced through department-wide sessions on the appropriate provision of interpreter services and monthly Visions training focused on serving diverse client populations. Outreach efforts continue statewide, with VR 101 presentations shared with community partners to ensure individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, are aware of available services and how to apply. Progress in this area is being assessed by the CSNA that is currently being conducted.

- **Goal: Optimize and modernize VR processes to enhance accessibility and sustained engagement in services.**
  - **Progress:** USOR continues to modernize VR processes to enhance accessibility and streamline engagement. Development is underway for a client self-referral and application portal, planned for implementation in late 2026. In addition, USOR has identified a secure electronic signature solution, also targeted for deployment in 2026, to simplify document collection and reduce administrative burden. USOR has reviewed policies and practices within the AWARE case management system and identified duplicate data entry requirements. Redundant fields related to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Annual Review, and service justification have been removed. Streamlining has also been applied to internal referrals for benefits counseling, assistive technology, and CTW job placement services, improving efficiency and reducing barriers for clients and staff.
- **Goal: Fully Spend 15% Funding Reserve for Pre-Employment Transition Services.**
  - **Progress:** USOR successfully utilized its FY24 Pre-ETS grant and is on track to fully use its current FY25 reserve funding. To enhance service delivery, USOR added Pre-ETS instructors in Cedar City, Blanding, Tooele, and Centerville, as well as a Self-Advocacy and Financial Literacy instructor. An additional five High School Transition Counselors were assigned to support Pre-ETS provision. USOR implemented a fiscal forecasting methodology, developed with assistance from the National Technical Assistance Center: The Collaborative (NTACT-C), to guide the transition from required Pre-ETS services to authorized activities. This methodology is being applied to utilize reserve funding strategically. Additionally, USOR released a competitive RFP to enhance Pre-ETS through curriculum and resource development, staff training, and creation of a Pre-ETS student advisory council.
- **Goal: Increase the number of students with disabilities participating in work-based learning experiences.**
  - **Progress:** USOR enhanced work-based learning experiences (WBLE) for students with disabilities through several key initiatives. A WBLE Specialist was added to the team to coordinate relationships with potential business partners, attend job fairs, provide training, and engage with the business community. The new Pre-ETS contracts offer an expanded WBLE pathway with multiple service tiers. USOR also renewed its interagency agreement with Southern Utah University (SUU) to continue WBLEs and internships for students enrolled there. Pre-ETS policies and procedures were reviewed and updated, and staff received training on these updates and general Pre-ETS procedures. USOR revised fee-for-service WBLE and Transitional Work Experience (TWE) milestones for CRPs. As a result, the number of students participating in WBLE increased 140%, from 550 in PY22 to 1,324 in PY24.
- **Goal: Improve access and awareness for Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services.**
  - **Progress:** USOR strengthened access to and awareness of Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through several initiatives. A third Pre-ETS Program Specialist was added to support training and provide technical assistance to Pre-ETS instructors. Outreach and engagement efforts include updates

to the transition and Pre-ETS websites, development of a new informational video, and a sponsored social media campaign. USOR co-sponsored the Utah Institute on Postsecondary Transition, a conference for VR counselors and educators, where approximately 400 attendees shared information and best practices related to transition services. Pre-ETS contractors also participated in a similar Transition Institute event. USOR developed new resources and guidance documents with USBE to encourage local-level coordination, created a job readiness workbook for students, and issued staff guidance on best practices for participating in IEP and 504 meetings. USOR also presented at multiple sessions at the Promising Youth Conference, highlighting interagency resources and employment opportunities for justice-involved youth. As a result of these efforts, the number of students served increased by 16% over the last two performance years.

- **Goal: Improve client achievement of high-quality employment outcomes, considering factors such as wages, hours worked, benefits and occupations that require credentials.**
  - **Progress:** USOR has taken several steps to improve client achievement of high-quality employment outcomes. USOR participated in the Workforce Research & Analysis LMI workgroup and developed associated training modules, scheduled for implementation in 2026, to help VR staff and clients effectively use labor market information to identify high-demand careers. The YouScience platform was launched to expand access to vocational assessment and career exploration resources. USOR enhanced employer engagement by providing additional targeted training and technical assistance. This included hosting multiple Work Ability Career Fairs, supporting events across the state, and holding employer workshops. Staff also participated in business-specific training. As a result, the number of employers served has increased by 15% over the last two years. Common performance measures show gains in measurable skill gain rates, credential attainment, and median wages; however, 2nd- and 4th-quarter employment rates after exit have decreased. Addressing this decline will be the focus of a newly developed goal.
- **Goal : Increase co-enrollment with Adult Education and Workforce Development programs to support client success**
  - **Progress:** USOR has strengthened co-enrollment with Adult Education and Workforce Development programs through ongoing collaboration and information sharing. Statewide AJC certifications and recertifications are ongoing, and USOR participates in quarterly meetings with WDD and Adult Education to coordinate services and support co-enrollment efforts. Outreach initiatives included sharing a VR 101 presentation with Workforce Development Division (WDD), Adult Education, and other partners across the state to ensure individuals are aware of available VR services and how to apply. Training was provided to statewide Adult Education directors, education partners, and new WDD Employment Counselors on appropriate referrals. Counselors participated in staffing cases at Employment Centers, conducting welcome sessions, and working directly with partners. VR Counselors have also been granted access to the Adult Education case management system to better coordinate services for shared clients. Co-enrollment rates have varied over the past three performance years—58% in PY22, 32% in PY23, and 41% in PY24. Ongoing efforts are focused on stabilizing performance and enhancing outcomes through improved coordination and access to services.

- **SE Goal:** Increase the number of competitive, integrated employment outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services.
  - **Progress:** USOR made significant strides in expanding competitive, integrated employment outcomes. Through its partnership with Utah State University, Employment Specialists received Customized Employment (CE) training and ongoing technical assistance to support skill development and retention, resulting in successful CE assessments, placements, and client outcomes. USOR has strengthened support for Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers by requiring continuing education, counting technical assistance toward CEU requirements, and enhancing monthly meetings with targeted training on job coach fading, billing, and accommodations. A job coach training pilot is scheduled for implementation in 2026. Supported Employment and Supported Education initiatives continue, with staff and employers receiving ongoing training and support. Collaboration and best practices are reinforced through a CRP focus group and a training checklist for new CRPs, ensuring consistent support for clients and clear expectations. While the number of Supported Employment (SE) outcomes has remained relatively flat, this is largely due to a waitlist for extended services with the Developmental Disabilities agency, as USOR is providing SE for a longer period before clients can exit VR and transition over.
- **SE Goal 2:** Increase the number of youth with the most significant disabilities receiving supported employment services
  - **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) continues to prioritize increasing Supported Employment (SE) services for youth with the most significant disabilities. USOR has engaged extensively with educational and healthcare partners through presentations to 504 Coordinators, CTE Directors, and at statewide conferences such as the Transition Institute, Autism Conference, and Teen-to-Adult Healthcare Summit. School-to-Work teams continue to meet in several districts, and Pre-ETS programs include contracts with multiple LEAs and summer work-based learning experiences to prepare students for transition. USOR also participates in the Supported Employment Transition Action Youth (SE-TAY) committee, collaborating with the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health to collect and share resources, and has developed marketing materials for Juvenile Justice Youth Services facilities. While the number of youth achieving SE outcomes has remained relatively flat, this remains a high-priority focus area as USOR works to expand access and support successful transitions to competitive, integrated employment.

2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance.

Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Indicators	PY24 Negotiated Level	PY24Actual Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	54.0%	51.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	53.0%	50.0%

Indicators	PY24 Negotiated Level	PY24 Actual Level
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,805	\$5474
Credential Attainment Rate	38%	39.2%
Measurable Skill Gain	55.5%	57.1%

In Program Year 2024, USOR met or exceeded most WIOA Section 116 performance targets. Employment rates in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit were slightly below negotiated levels, 51.7% versus 54.0% and 50.0% versus 53.0%, respectively, due to labor market shifts and increased service to individuals with significant barriers. USOR is focused on improving employment outcomes in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit and has developed targeted goals and strategies to strengthen performance in these areas. USOR exceeded targets for Median Earnings (\$5,474 vs. \$4,805), Credential Attainment (39.2% vs. 38%), and Measurable Skill Gain (57.1% vs. 55.5%), reflecting progress in skill development, credential completion, and overall career readiness for participants.

3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (Sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has undertaken various innovation and expansion projects and activities. These encompass a range of strategic initiatives aligned with the Rehabilitation Act's requirements, demonstrating the organization's commitment to enhancing rehabilitation services:

- **Pre-ETS Program Evaluation:** USOR established a Pre-ETS program evaluation model in partnership with Utah State University to assess students' measurable skill gains following participation in Pre-ETS services. Funding for this activity is not charged to the 15% Pre-ETS Reserve.
- **Enhanced CRP Training and Technical Assistance:** USOR implemented and continues to support an enhanced contract providing training and technical assistance to Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers. This initiative ensures high-quality job development, placement and coaching services, while also increasing the number of Customized Employment (CE) providers.
- **Pre-ETS Services Innovations and Improvements:** A new contract was authorized to enhance the quality of and increase awareness of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities. The contractor is responsible for developing curriculum, training USOR staff and community partners, identifying best practices, disseminating Pre-ETS information, and establishing a student council to guide service improvements.
- **Support for Councils:** USOR provides funding and administrative support for the operation of both the Utah State Independent Living Council and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

e. Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

1. Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of Title

VI funds received under Section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of Title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) provides Supported Employment (SE) services to clients with the most significant disabilities, including youth aged 14 to 24. These SE services are funded through a combination of Title I and Title VI funds. USOR has defined key goals and priorities guiding the utilization of Title VI funds and the delivery of Supported Employment services. These goals and priorities were reviewed with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in Fall 2025. The SRC recommended that USOR continue to focus on these two priorities, reinforcing the agency's commitment to delivering high-quality SE services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

**Goal 1:** Increase the number of competitive, integrated employment outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services.

- **Strategy 1:** Expand the number of qualified and trained providers of Customized Employment Services.
- **Strategy 2:** Enhance the support and training of Community Rehabilitation Program providers to increase the quality and quantity of supported employment services, including targeted training on job accommodations and job coach fading.
- **Strategy 3:** Implement supported education resources to help individuals with significant disabilities increase participation in training programs and obtain long-term employment outcomes.
- **Strategy 4:** Identify tactics to assist clients in achieving independence on the worksite.

**Goal 2:** Increase the number of youth with the most significant disabilities receiving supported employment services

- **Strategy 1:** Enhance ongoing School-to-Work initiatives to assist students with disabilities to begin SE/CE prior to exiting the secondary education system.
- **Strategy 2:** Enhance outreach and training to educator partners on supported and customized employment models to help facilitate discussion of CIE during Individual Education Program planning meetings.
- **Strategy 3:** Enhance outreach to youth with substance use and mental health disabilities who could benefit from supported employment and individual placement and support services.

3. Supported employment services may be provided with Title 1 or Title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with Section 101(a)(22) and Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe 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; and the timing of transition to extended services.

**Quality:** USOR maintains high quality in supported employment services by establishing and applying Supported Employment (SE) program standards for USOR SE vendors. These standards prescribe minimum customer outcomes and identify program procedures that must be followed for a provider to receive funds. A newly implemented quality assurance checklist for provider reviews every two years requires certifications, continuing education requirements, consumer satisfaction, review of complaints and concerns, and an action plan for continuing services for USOR.

USOR created a specific policy based on the provision of supported employment services. The main service provided under SE is job coaching. USOR requires all employment specialists to be trained and have certifications prior to providing services to SE clients. Employment specialists from providers who do not meet the minimum qualifications cannot work with VR clients. The monitoring of SE service providers is conducted by the SE Coordinator and the Employment Support Services Program Specialist. This monitoring is conducted by assessing the application of USOR program standards and outcomes. It includes a review of any complaints received and the results of surveys completed by counselors using the program for clients. The coordinator and program specialist also review current providers, create updates, standardize expectations, revise provider agreements and provide technical assistance. A list of USOR approved CRPs is posted on the website and updated frequently by the ESSS.

USOR also partners with extended support agencies to train and set expectations for employment specialists in customized employment, discovery, and Individualized Placement and Support (IPS). These services have been proven to meet the needs of persons with most significant disabilities (MSDs) who may need additional services and long-term support in order to be successfully employed.

**Scope:** Prior to placement, general VR Title I funds are used to assist individuals seeking supported employment services. After placement, SE services are provided with Title VI, Part B funds on a fee-for-service basis (based on achievement of milestones) by SE service providers, including functional assessment of clients to perform in supported employment (supplemental to the assessment conducted by the counselor for purposes of establishing eligibility with Title I funds); life-skills training, job development, job analysis and client job matching; training by an employment specialist in job skills and behavioral expectations at the job site; training and support away from the job to ensure work performance; family support; and support to the employer to ensure client job retention. The same scope of services is provided by the extended service agency. Target populations in supported employment include persons with the most significant disabilities who qualify for extended services from the Division of Services for Persons with Disabilities (DSPD) or the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (OSUMH), or individuals who have extended services available from other sources, including private, Social Security and natural supports.

**Extent:** SE services are provided to eligible individuals according to their needs. Services are provided for a period not to exceed 24 months unless under special circumstances a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been jointly agreed to by the individual and the VR counselor and established in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). VR Services may be provided to students with disabilities in the school system as a part of a team with the school, extended services agency, VR, family etc. Once the student is placed on a competitive, integrated job, SE services may be utilized to assist the student maintain employment

**Timing:** The transition of services from VR to the extended support service agency depends on the customer's needs and level of support. VR can provide ongoing supported employment services on the job and employment specialist job coaching for up to 24 months or until the customer reaches an 80/20 level of intervention support. The 80/20 level of support is defined as needing less than 20% intervention by the employment specialist to successfully complete job tasks. For example, if a client is working 20 hours each week, the employment specialist would be intervening with job support for four hours or less each week.

The VR counselor is required to maintain communication with the Supported Employment (SE) team at least every 30 days. The SE team includes the VR counselor, customer, family members, extended services agency representative (i.e., support coordinator, mental-health worker, etc.), teacher (if a student), and employment specialist or employer. The team will coordinate services to ensure the client has the support needed to be successful on the job. Once the client reaches an 80/20 level of support or 24 months (whichever comes first) and the team agrees, services and funding will be transferred to the identified extended services agency for long-term SE.

For youth and students with disabilities who qualify and need supported employment services, the transition to the extended services agency will occur at the 80/20 level of support for 24 months. Youth SE who have received ongoing support for a full 24 months and are not able to transition to an extended services provider may receive extended services from USOR for a period of up to 48 months, until they reach age 25, or before if an extended services provider is found.

4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(19)(v).

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) reserves Supported Employment (SE) funds for clients who have been determined most significantly disabled and who have secured an extended support agency for long-term SE support. USOR also uses SE funding for clients who have identified natural supports in the work environment. USOR has partnered with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to provide and transfer funding and support for mutual clients. Though these are the primary agencies that USOR partners with for SE, there are other individual supports that may qualify as an extended support agency as provided for in policy.

USOR and DSPD, in partnership with the Utah Legislature, seek annual ongoing funding for the Support Work Independence (SWI) program. This program provides state funded supported employment support for individuals who have accessed the vocational rehabilitation program and are on the waiting list for DSPD waiver services. When the client is working successfully and is ready to transfer to DSPD for long-term support, state funds are utilized for SE while the individual remains on the waiting list for other waiver supports.

USOR partners with DSAMH with the Individual Placement Services (IPS) model to support local mental health agencies with training and technical assistance to provide supported employment services. USOR and DSAMH are partnering to provide supported employment and extended support to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). Through the support and direction of DSAMH, the local mental health agencies partner with USOR to provide the necessary treatment

and employment support necessary for individual success. Supported employment is growing for mental health agencies; therefore, many projects are in progress across the state. USOR is providing guidance on policy, milestone payments and facility requirements in order to partner with each project and local mental-health agency.

USOR continues to set aside 50% of SE funds to be used for youth with the most significant disabilities ages 14 to 24 who are in need of supported employment services. In order to qualify for use of these funds, the individual must be classified as someone with a most significant disability, require ongoing and extended services to maintain employment, and be between the ages of 14-24. USOR supports these individuals to seek and secure access to an extended services provider (DSPD, DSAMH, natural support, etc.). USOR's information management system is programmed to expend youth SE funds and adult SE funds based on the individual's age, employment status, and service provided. This allows USOR to capture and accurately report expenditures for adult SE and youth SE services

USOR continues to partner with DSPD, USBE, WDD and USU on the school-to-work project. USOR is partnering with Local Mental Health Authorities and DSAMH to provide and expand supported employment services for youth and adults with severe and persistent mental illness, specifically with the IPS model. Through Customized Employment and Supported Employment, USOR is also providing services and support for individuals with most significant disabilities who are eligible VR clients, utilizing 14C certificates, earning subminimum wages to help them move to competitive, integrated employment. USOR also continues to develop and provide training for internal staff and external service providers through the Supported Employment Coordinator position and a collaborative partnership with DSPD and DSAMH.

#### f. Annual Estimates

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

##### 1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

###### A. VR Program; and

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Most Significant Disability	7,759	7,759	\$16,107,684	0

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Significant Disability	12,267	4,284	\$7,703,128	7,983
Individual with a Disability	2,915	639	\$1,189,188	2,222

#### B. Supported Employment

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Most Significant Disability	512	512	\$1,062,912 (\$300,000 from Title I)	N/A

#### g. Order of Selection

1. Pursuant to Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is implementing an order of selection with one or more priority categories closed

2. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

##### A. The justification for the order

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR), in consultation with the Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has determined that it does not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. Multiple factors have contributed to this resource shortage, necessitating the implementation of an Order of Selection.

Over the past four years, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has seen significant growth in both demand for services and the resources required to meet that demand. Since FFY21, the number of annual applicants has risen sharply, from 5,663 to 8,809 in FFY24, representing an increase of more than 55%. The total number of clients served has also grown steadily, reaching nearly 18,500 in FFY24, while the number of individuals actively engaged in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) rose by 14%, from 12,380 to 14,150. A marked increase in program costs has accompanied this surge in participation. Client service expenditures have grown by more than 66% over the same period, climbing from \$12.2 million in FFY21 to \$20.3 million in FFY24.

This growth is attributed to several factors, including federal requirements to serve youth and students, increased program awareness following post-pandemic outreach, economic conditions, and expanded support for individuals with the most significant disabilities, particularly those requiring long-term supported employment services.

Rising expenditures are driven by:

- Inflation and the higher cost of long-term services such as training, postsecondary education, supported employment job coaching and assistive technology
- Vendor rate increases for goods and services
- A greater number of program participants requiring assessments
- Staff salary and benefit increases.

Staffing capacity is another factor contributing to the need for an Order of Selection. The rising demand for services has increased the average caseload size for VR counselors to 115 clients, with some caseloads exceeding 160 clients in areas where clients are assigned based on their place of residence. USOR lacks the financial resources to address the additional personnel demands, and these capacity limitations are hindering staff's ability to provide timely and high-quality services.

With the continued growth in individuals seeking and receiving services, along with a significant rise in costs, USOR has maintained and expanded a variety of cost containment strategies, including:

- Maintaining a Financial Needs Assessment to ensure individuals with available resources contribute toward the cost of non-exempt services.
- Conducting regular reviews to identify and utilize comparable benefits and services to avoid duplication of funding.
- Collaborating with the Department of Workforce Services' Workforce Development programs to leverage training funds and job placement services.
- Applying internal controls, including supervisor review thresholds, to ensure goods and services are necessary, appropriate, and reasonably priced.
- Maintaining supervisory review of all client service authorizations to ensure compliance with programmatic and fiscal requirements.
- Collocating standalone VR offices into American Job Centers, when appropriate, to reduce facility costs.
- Increasing use of internal staff to provide direct job placement and pre-employment

transition services, rather than purchasing these services.

- Eliminating non-essential positions, such as medical consultants.
- Slowing the rate at which vacant positions are filled to control personnel costs.
- Removing master's degree and certification requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselors to reduce tuition and certification reimbursement expenses previously required under the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development plan.
- Providing staff training on using existing information for assessments to prevent duplication and reduce unnecessary expenditures.
- Implementing real-time dashboards for review, training, and updates of authorizations to ensure obligations align with actual expenditures.
- Revising policies to promote cost-effective funding use and ensure quality outcomes, including in areas such as private training providers and community rehabilitation program services.
- Adjusting, consolidating, or reducing service contracts where applicable to increase savings
- Reducing non-essential travel (in-state and out-of-state) and expanding the use of virtual training options and platforms.

Combined with the increase in clients and rising expenditures mentioned above, the following shifts in funding compound the need to go on an OOS:

- \$3,479,185 of FFY25 VR federal funding relinquished due to non-federal share constraints
- Reduction in reimbursements from the Social Security Administration (SSA) due to recent changes in SSA procedures. These changes are more restrictive and have led to a higher rejection rate of reimbursement claims. The challenges stem from new requirements related to the timing of submissions, additional supplemental documentation requirements, and restrictions on resubmissions, all of which contribute to a reduction in program income.
- Utah is unable to obtain additional non-federal share to match any increases in Federal Awards.

Vocational Rehabilitation funding is awarded annually for one year. However, if certain conditions are met, VR funds not expended in the first year can be carried forward and spent in the second year. As a result of the factors described above, VR funding is being depleted earlier in the award period, causing the unspent first year funding that has previously been carried forward and utilized to cover expenditures in the second year to shrink. Absent an OOS, we anticipate that available funding in FFY26 will not be sufficient to cover FFY26 obligations as illustrated below.

	<b>FFY26 (estimated)</b>	<b>FFY27 (estimated)</b>
Prior Year Funding	\$25,496,140	\$6,926,935
12-Month Funding	53,300,469	53,300,469
Available Funding	<b>78,796,609</b>	<b>60,227,404</b>
Less: Expenditures	(71,869,674)	(80,994,979)
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$6,926,935*</b>	<b>(\$20,767,575)</b>

\*We anticipate that unliquidated obligations at September 30, 2026 will exceed the available remaining funds

Because prior year funding is no longer sufficient to address the gap between available funding and expenditures, it is crucial to align annual expenditures with annual (12-month) funding.

	<b>FFY23</b>	<b>FFY24</b>	<b>FFY25 (estimated)</b>	<b>FFY26 (estimated)</b>	<b>FFY27 (estimated)</b>
Federal Award*	\$39,831,760	\$39,831,760	\$41,239,169	\$41,239,169	\$41,239,169
Non-Federal Share	11,017,095	11,161,292 <sup>‡</sup>	11,161,300	11,161,300	11,161,300
Program Income	2,217,439	1,641,120	975,000 <sup>§</sup>	900,000 <sup>§</sup>	900,000 <sup>§</sup>
<b>Total 12-Month Funding</b>	<b>\$53,066,294</b>	<b>\$52,634,172</b>	<b>\$53,375,469</b>	<b>\$53,300,469</b>	<b>\$53,300,469</b>
Less: Expenditures	(47,447,735)	(55,909,606)	(64,189,024)	(71,869,674)	(80,994,979)
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>\$5,618,559</b>	<b>(\$3,275,434)</b>	<b>(\$10,813,555)</b>	<b>(\$18,569,205)</b>	<b>(\$27,694,510)</b>

\*Excludes prior year funding  
‡Amount that is anticipated to be reported on the final FFY24 report  
§As of the end of August 2025, actual program income received during FFY25 is down 40.6% compared to the same point in time in FFY24. Program income in subsequent years is expected to be lower than FFY25 actuals.

Based on the justification above, USOR needs to implement an Order of Selection (OOS). The OOS ensures that current USOR clients with Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) can continue receiving services without interruption, while managing a wait list for new applicants who are determined eligible and assigned to a closed disability priority category. USOR plans to close Priority Categories 2 and 3, and keep Priority Category 1, individuals with the most significant disabilities, open.

USOR engaged in multiple public consultation efforts leading up to the implementation of the OOS. Examples include:

- August 18, 2025 – Met with the State Rehabilitation Council Executive Committee to discuss the need for an OOS and obtained their support.
- August 21, 2025 – Presentation on the OOS to the State Workforce Development Board, and received a vote of support to continue.
- September 3, 2025 – Consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council on the need for an OOS, as well as related rules, policies, and procedures. The SRC voted to support USOR's plan to implement an Order of Selection.
- September 4, 2025 - USOR staff were informed of the agency's intent to implement an Order of Selection through a virtual meeting, which included an overview by leadership and a Q&A

session.

- September 9, 2025 – The state plan amendment was posted for public comment
- September 17–18, 2025 – USOR conducted public town hall meetings providing an overview of the state plan amendment, the justification for the OOS, priority classifications, and related processes. USOR leadership collected input and answered questions.
- November 17, 2025 - USOR implemented the Order of Selection

B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

The order (priority categories) to be followed when selecting eligible individuals for USOR services ensures that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities. Eligible individuals are placed into one of the following priority categories:

Priority Category 1: An individual with the Most Significant Disability (MSD) as defined below.

Priority Category 2: An individual with a Significant Disability (SD) as defined below.

Priority Category 3: An individual with a Disability (D) as defined below.

***Description of priority categories:***

- **Priority Category 1:** An *individual with the most significant disability* means a severe physical or mental impairment that causes serious limitations in two or more functional capacities. Functional capacities include mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills. In addition, the individual must require multiple VR services over an extended period to engage in employment.
- **Priority Category 2:** An *individual with a significant disability* means a severe physical or mental impairment that causes serious limitations in at least one functional capacity. The individuals require multiple VR services over an extended period of time
- **Priority Category 3:** An *individual with a disability* means an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

USOR serves eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities (Priority Category 1) first. Eligible individuals with significant disabilities (Priority Category 2) are served once Priority Category 1 is open and no individuals remain on the waiting list. Eligible individuals with disabilities (Priority Category 3) are served once Priority Category 2 is open and no individuals remain on the waiting list. In all cases, individuals are released from the statewide waiting list in order of priority category, from most significant to least significant, and within each category by application date, from oldest to newest.

C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

### **Projected Service Goals for FY27 and Continuity of Services**

- USOR intends to continue serving all eligible clients with Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) established prior to the implementation of the Order of Selection, as well as newly eligible clients classified as Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) during FFY 2026 and FFY 2027.
- Depending on program capacity, specifically the number of individuals who exit after receiving services and the number of MSD clients, USOR anticipates it may be able to open Priority Category 2, Significant Disability (SD), during FFY 2027. USOR projects the capacity to serve approximately 4,284 individuals in Priority Category 2.
- USOR projects that Priority Category 3, Individuals with a Disability (D), will remain closed during FFY 2027. Only individuals in this category who had IPEs in place prior to the implementation of the Order of Selection will continue to receive services.

Priority Category	Estimated Number of Clients to be Served	Estimated Cost	Estimated Clients on a Wait List
1 (MSD)	7,759	\$16,107,684	0
2 (SD)	4,284	\$7,703,128	7,983
3 (D)	693	\$1,189,188	2,222
Total	12,736	\$25,000,000	10,205

### **Applications, Eligibility and Priority Classification**

When OOS is in effect, USOR will continue to accept applications and make eligibility determinations. At the time of eligibility clients will also be placed into a priority category. USOR will provide all eligible individuals placed on the OOS waiting list with Information and Referral (I&R) services. These services include information about, and referrals to, other federal or state programs, including components of the statewide workforce development system, that are best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability. The I&R process will be carried out in compliance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.37 to ensure individuals are directed to appropriate resources that may assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment.

### **Notification Requirements**

USOR will notify each individual determined eligible, in writing, of the following:

- The individual's assignment to a priority category classification;
- The individual's right to request reclassification if there is a change in circumstances or if a misclassification has occurred;
- The individual's right to appeal the category assignment; and
- The availability of assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

## **Contact and Monitoring**

Individuals placed on the OOS waiting list (Delayed Status) will be contacted at least once within the first 90 days of being placed in delayed status and every 120 days thereafter. Client records will document the nature and scope of any information and referral services provided.

## **Priority Order**

USOR will manage the statewide waiting list as follows:

- **Priority Category 1:** Individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served first.
- **Priority Category 2:** Individuals with significant disabilities will be served once Priority Category 1 is open and no individuals remain on the waiting list.
- **Priority Category 3:** Individuals with disabilities will be served once Priority Category 2 is open and no individuals remain on the waiting list.

Regardless of category closure, individuals will be released from the waiting list first by priority category (from most significant to least significant), then by application date (from oldest to newest).

## **Placing Clients on the Waitlist**

- Clients will be placed on the waitlist within their priority category based on application date.
- Clients on the wait list will be managed and tracked through the AWARE case management system and dashboard reports.

## **Removing Clients from the Waitlist**

- USOR will evaluate financial resources and staffing capacity at least monthly to determine when to reopen categories.
- One priority category will be reopened at a time. The entire waiting list for that category must be cleared before the next category is opened.
- Clients will be removed from the waiting list in order of application date.
- District offices will be notified when clients are moved from the wait list to eligible status.
- Counselors will notify clients by letter of their activation from the waiting list and request a meeting to begin developing an IPE within 90 days of wait list removal.

## **Projected Timeline**

At the earliest, USOR estimates it may have the resources and capacity to open Priority Category 2 and begin moving clients off the waitlist by October 2026. USOR will continue to monitor the fiscal outlook monthly and evaluate its capacity to serve clients, as well as program cost-management efforts. In making these evaluations, USOR will review:

- Projected and actual expenditures;
- Projected and actual numbers of clients in each priority category;
- The number of individuals on the waiting list for services;
- The number of potentially eligible students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS;
- Pre-ETS expenditures; and
- Staff capacity and caseloads.

When resources allow, USOR will first reopen Priority Category 2 (Significant Disability). If funding continues to support expanded services, USOR will then reopen Priority Category 3 (Disability).

3. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

USOR has elected not to implement a policy regarding the provision of specific services or equipment for eligible individuals to maintain employment.

h. Waiver of Statewideness.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not applicable. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is not requesting a Waiver for Statewideness.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

- A. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

B. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR 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.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

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Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
VR Counselors	100	109	109
VR Supervisors	26	26	26
District Directors	10	10	10
Office Specialists	41	45	45
Rehab Techs	14	14	14
Pre-ETS Instructors	16	20	24
Business Relations Specialists	4	4	4
Employment Specialists	9	10	10
Work Incentives Counselors	8	8	9
Assistive Tech Specialists	8	8	8
Field Service Directors	3	3	3
Program Coordinators	5	5	5
Program Specialists	4	4	4
VR Staff Trainers	3	3	3
Business Analysts	4	4	4
Asst. Directors	1	1	1
State VR Director	1	1	1

**D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

Of the 275 positions within the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, 135 are rehabilitation counselors and counseling supervisors who provide the direct core, non-delegable Vocational Rehabilitation services to clients. During PY24 USOR served 21,432 individuals (applicant to eligible) with a counselor to client ratio of 1:158.

**E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

The University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute projects an annual population growth of 1.7% in Utah through 2028. In addition, 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium projects a similar growth trend, but also notes a lower disability prevalence in the state. In analysis of this information, along with referral trends, outreach initiatives, and the connection of potentially eligible students to the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation anticipates serving 14,650 eligible individuals over the course of PY-27.

**2. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:**

**A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and 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.**

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Utah State University	Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling	79	20

**B. The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency 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.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively engages in recruitment efforts to strengthen the rehabilitation profession within the state. USOR hiring officials regularly attend college and provider job fairs to promote the profession and attract applicants with relevant qualifications. The organization has fostered relationships with out-of-state colleges, including successful outreach to the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. From this partnership, USOR successfully recruited four Spanish-speaking VR counselors to relocate to Utah.

Throughout the year, USOR targets Vocational Rehabilitation counselor positions by participating in career fairs and presenting to Utah State University Rehabilitation Counselor Education (RCE)

students. Additionally, USOR provides internship opportunities for rehabilitation students, with several later joining as full-time counselors. To broaden its reach, USOR collaborates with the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to amplify recruitment announcements across the nation, using platforms like LinkedIn and engaging with other social service professionals, including WIOA partners. USOR collaborates with DHRM to provide an alternative state application pathway that promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Work Ability Internship program, offered by USOR, has demonstrated success in creating a pathway to state employment for individuals with disabilities.

Active involvement in the state chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) allows USOR to leverage this association for recruitment and professional development. The organization backs the Utah Rehabilitation Association (URA) conferences and co-sponsors monthly 'brown bag training seminars' for staff. These endeavors aim to attract, train, and retain qualified personnel, especially those from minority backgrounds or with disabilities.

USOR offers flexible schedules, an incentive program that gives administrative leave for above average performance and generous educational assistance. USOR provides VR counselors a 10% career series advancement increase and a 5% Administrative Salary Increase (ASI) for credential attainment. USOR supports employees by providing reimbursement for costs related to obtaining and maintaining certification. In addition, USOR focuses on internal promotion and career mobility opportunities to support the long-term career development of staff.

C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. 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
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) provides for attendance at workshops, conferences, formal course work at institutions of higher education, as well as agency developed and conducted training sessions.

All new employees participate in a training academy that provides in-person training, instruction and guidance on Vocational Rehabilitation policy, procedures and case management. New employees, (e.g. counselors) also have an opportunity to learn about various support programs, community partners and resources to effectively support clients at all position levels. While working in their offices, new staff receive training, clinical supervision, administrative supervision, counseling skills instruction, and professional development from office leadership, including but not limited to guidance and supervision from counseling supervisors and district directors. New counselors also receive support through peer mentorship, case conceptualizations and staffing meetings. Additionally, Training Specialists offer personalized, one-on-one clinical and

administrative support to new staff. This targeted training addresses specific needs identified by district leadership to improve the quality of client service.

New and existing staff receive regular training in the areas of counseling, informed choice, medical, psychological and vocational assessment, assistive technology, culturally sensitive practices, job placement and development, ethics, labor market, technology, as well as other topics relevant to Rehabilitation counselors. Topics and content areas for training are identified through client record review findings, staff surveys, consumer satisfaction survey responses, program updates, local and national trends, system changes and leadership recommendations.

USOR provides monthly in-service training via the video conferencing system to offices throughout the state, as well as by virtual training content. USOR has consistently exceeded the required training hours required to maintain national certification and has also provided counselors with the training hours required to maintain state licensure this past year. USOR has also implemented ongoing competency-based follow-up testing. This is to verify that materials have been received and understood, and to identify any continuing needs.

During FY 24 and FY 25, USOR offered training covering intersectional identities for individuals with disabilities, aligning with the principles outlined in the CRCC code of ethics, particularly section D on Multicultural Considerations. Topics included understanding ethical responsibilities in rehabilitation counseling, addressing systemic bias in chronic pain and substance abuse treatment, and exploring intersectionality, disability, and victimization.

Furthermore, USOR provides for attendance at workshops, conferences, webinars, formal course work at institutions of higher education, as well as agency developed and conducted training sessions. USOR provides monthly in-service training via high definition video conferencing to offices throughout Utah, as well as by web-streaming training content. USOR has consistently exceeded the required training hours required to maintain national certification and has also provided counselors with the training hours required to maintain state licensure this past year. Available training incorporates the dissemination of knowledge gained through research in rehabilitation.

USOR leadership, program specialists and other staff attend local and national conferences and receive training where research relevant to their areas of specialization is disseminated. The information obtained is used for the development of staff training, along with application for enhancement of policies, practices and programs. USOR also surveys staff on the training they attended in order to obtain feedback on making improvements and identifying additional training needs. In addition, USOR encourages staff to be aware of current research, information and practices in the field of rehabilitation and disability. USOR regularly shares and incorporates into trainings information provided by professional associations, government programs and university resource centers, such as the National Rehabilitation Association, Helen Keller National Center for deafblind youth and adult, Utah State University's Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Mathematica, University of Utah's Policy Institute, George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education, and ADA National Network. Additionally, USOR has implemented a learning management system built for and operated by Vocational Rehabilitation professionals to provide ongoing training from national Vocational Rehabilitation agencies.

3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency 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
- B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st-century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has established policies and procedures to ensure that all professional and paraprofessional personnel employed by the Designated State Unit (DSU) are adequately trained and prepared to provide high-quality vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. These policies are consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and ensure that personnel possess the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to support individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment.

### **Standards Consistent with National or State-Recognized Requirements**

While a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or related field and national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) remain preferred qualifications that demonstrate advanced competency, USOR no longer requires a master's degree for employment as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

To ensure comparability with recognized professional standards, USOR:

- Recognizes CRC certification as a preferred credential for vocational rehabilitation counselors;
- Establishes hiring qualifications and internal training programs that align with recognized professional standards for rehabilitation counseling and related disciplines; and
- Provides opportunities for staff to pursue CRC certification or graduate education through tuition reimbursement and RSA scholarship programs when available.

These measures ensure that USOR's professional personnel meet or exceed the knowledge, ethical, and practice standards established by recognized national bodies, even when certification is not mandatory for employment.

### **Education and Experience Requirements**

USOR has established education and experience requirements consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that personnel have a 21st-century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

To qualify for employment as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I or II, an individual must:

- Hold a bachelor's degree in a field reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, psychology, social work, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported or customized employment, or other related fields that prepare individuals to work effectively with clients and employers in the vocational rehabilitation context; and
- Have at least one year of experience (paid or unpaid) providing direct services to individuals with disabilities in relevant settings such as rehabilitation agencies, nonprofit or advocacy organizations, educational institutions, workforce programs, or healthcare facilities.

Individuals who do not yet meet the experience requirement may be hired as Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees and must complete additional training and supervised experience as outlined in their professional development plan.

### **Core Competencies**

To ensure that professional and paraprofessional personnel possess a modern understanding of workforce trends and disability-related needs, USOR has identified key core competencies that guide training and performance expectations. These include:

- Medical aspects and functional implications of disabilities;
- Counseling and vocational guidance techniques;
- Vocational assessment tools and job matching strategies;
- Evidence-based practices for achieving competitive integrated employment, including supported and customized employment;
- Case management and coordination of services;
- Utilization of labor market information and workforce data;
- Implementation of rehabilitation technology and workplace accommodations;
- Cultural competence and the ability to serve diverse and underserved populations;
- Advocacy and ethical practice within the VR program.

### **Training and Professional Development**

USOR provides initial and ongoing training to ensure personnel meet established competency standards and maintain professional growth.

- **New VR Counselor Training:** Counselors hired without a master's degree or CRC certification must complete USOR's internal training program for new counselors within two years of hire. This structured program delivers comprehensive instruction through YesLMS, the DWS Learning Portal, Monthly VISIONS training, and annual VR Essentials training.
- **New Staff and Paraprofessional Training:** USOR provides comprehensive orientation and training for newly hired paraprofessional staff, including rehabilitation technicians, support

specialists, Pre-ETS instructors, employment specialists, AT specialist, and other personnel. This training ensures that all staff understand the mission of the VR program, confidentiality and ethics standards, client service processes, and their role in supporting successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

- **Ongoing Professional Development:** All USOR staff are required to participate in continuing education to maintain current knowledge of VR policies, practices, and labor market trends. Supervisors monitor participation and compliance through established performance management processes. The USOR Training Team also monitors and tracks staff participation and completion of required assigned training.
- **Educational Support:** USOR supports staff pursuing advanced education or professional certification through the Department's Tuition Reimbursement Program (DWS Admin Policy 1302) and by sharing information about Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) scholarships offered through accredited universities.

These ongoing development opportunities ensure that USOR's workforce maintains up-to-date skills aligned with the changing needs of individuals with disabilities and the evolving workforce environment.

### **Career Series Advancement**

USOR employs a structured VR Counselor career series to ensure staff possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide high-quality services to individuals with disabilities. Entry-level staff are hired as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees with a bachelor's degree and limited direct experience, while VR Counselor I requires a bachelor's degree with at least one year of relevant experience or a master's degree with less experience. VR Counselor II positions require either demonstrated competency with two years as a VR Counselor I, a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling, or a master's degree in a related field with at least one year of direct experience. Staff advance through the career series upon completion of required CSPD training and competency reviews. Compensation increases by 10% for each career series advancement, with an additional 5% for obtaining CRC certification. All counselors complete training programs aligned with their role and prior experience, ensuring ongoing professional development and readiness to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

### **Monitoring and Compliance**

USOR tracks personnel qualifications, training completion, and competency development through internal systems to ensure compliance with CSPD standards and section 101(a)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. CSPD and professional development requirements are defined in each staff member's performance plan. Supervisors review and verify that staff meet training and experience requirements, complete required training, and demonstrate the necessary competencies. Staff are eligible for career series advancements only after successfully completing CSPD requirements and a competency review conducted by their supervisor.

Through these policies and procedures, USOR ensures that all professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained, developed, and prepared to deliver effective vocational rehabilitation services consistent with the intent of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel 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.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is dedicated to delivering high-quality services to all individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services. As such, USOR endeavors to address the communication needs of all clients, in line with the Equality Opportunity standards of the Department of Workforce Services. Upon application, USOR gathers information regarding preferred language and utilizes accessible resources to offer services and information in the individual's preferred language.

USOR works to ensure the availability of personnel who can communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English-speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation makes coordinated efforts to hire Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with bilingual skills to meet the needs of eligible individuals with limited English proficiency. USOR utilizes state contracts language interpreting. This includes On-Demand Phone and Video Language translation services, such as Language Link and Language Line. USOR also has applications and forms available in Spanish. In addition, USOR utilizes state contract services for additional language translation needs.

Beyond linguistic diversity, USOR also acknowledges the unique communication needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. To this end, USOR has strategically designated specific caseloads across the state to be managed by professionals who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation provides interpreting services through qualified staff members, through telephone, video relay services, real-time captioning and through outside staff services purchased per state contract. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation also routinely provides materials in alternative formats to meet the needs of individuals. This includes electronic, large print and braille.

5. 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.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has put in place procedures and initiatives to align with the comprehensive personnel development system outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A cornerstone of this alignment is the state interagency agreement between the USOR and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). This agreement ensures a systematic transition for Utah's youth with disabilities.

One primary objective of this partnership is to elevate awareness and understanding of Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) available to eligible and potentially eligible students. The agreement provides clarity on how USOR and USBE work synergistically, detailing collaborative efforts in cross-training, offering technical assistance and fostering partnerships at the local level.

Furthermore, to support best practices and enhance staff capabilities, USOR and USBE jointly host an annual transition institute conference. This event serves as a platform for USOR staff and local education agency personnel to receive training and share effective strategies, ensuring a seamless and efficient transition for the youth they serve.

j. Coordination with Education Officials.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has robust plans, policies, and procedures in place to strengthen coordination with education officials overseeing the public education of students with disabilities. These mechanisms aim to ease the transition of students with disabilities into employment and independent living, with a focus on providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities aged 14 through 21.

Annually, USOR collaborates with the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) through a cross-training conference. This gathering provides an avenue for teams from both sides to strategize and refine their collaboration efforts, particularly concerning Transition and Pre-ETS. A pivotal part of this strategy involves synchronizing the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) with their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), ensuring seamless progression from school to post-school endeavors.

To support this process, USOR maintains policy and procedures to ensure that eligible students with disabilities develop an IPE prior to exiting high school. Both USOR and USBE have affirmed their commitment through a signed Interagency Agreement. This agreement delineates the blueprint for state and local level coordination, guaranteeing a smooth transition for Utah's students with disabilities as they navigate from academic settings to the workforce.

Both USOR and USBE attend the annual National Transition Institute, sponsored by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, to develop state goals and strategies to improve student transitions from school to employment. In addition, as specified in the DWS and USBE interagency agreement, USOR will share information regarding policies, procedures, guidelines, programs and services for the purpose of improving access to, and availability of Transition and Pre-ETS services. The interagency agreement also specifies that USBE will assist USOR in the facilitation of the provision of transition services.

To ensure procedural integrity, USOR's Client Services specifies that students' IPEs will be developed and signed prior to graduation from high school or post-high high. USOR's Client Service Policy Manual Chapter 10 (Individual Plan for Employment) states that IPEs will be developed as soon as possible, but within 90 days unless an exception is granted. Furthermore, USOR, in partnership with USBE and the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), aligns IEPs with IPEs. This coordination ensures timely IPE development and signing, all within the prescribed 90 days and prior to the student's exit from the school system.

2. Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:

- A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;
- B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;
- D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;
- E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 C.F.R. part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

**A.** The Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) maintains a state-level interagency agreement with Utah State Board of Education (USBE), which governs collaboration with school districts and public charter schools that serve secondary education students. The interagency agreement includes provisions for consultation, technical assistance, professional development, Vocational Rehabilitation referrals and eligibility, and individualized goals of the local teams. USOR has assigned transition counselors to each local school district and charter school. The counselors meet with special educators and administrators, provide outreach to students and parents, provide Vocational Rehabilitation Welcome Sessions to students, provide Job Readiness Workshops to students, attend IEP meetings, as well as cover all referrals and questions from that school.

The interagency agreement with USBE also provides guidance and clarification of expectations as set forth by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), defines terms, and delineates financial responsibilities. It describes consultation and technical assistance available to assist USBE and local districts in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services and Pre-Employment Transition Services to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. Recognizing the diverse geographic landscape and potential logistical challenges, USOR and the LEAs have integrated

alternative communication tools, such as video conferencing and conference calls. This ensures continuous and effective collaboration regardless of any physical distance or logistical barriers.

**B.** The interagency agreement between the Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) provides for joint transition planning coordination for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It specifies the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

The agreement includes directives for establishing state lead agencies and delineating qualified personnel responsible for overseeing transition services. It includes provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and describes procedures developed for outreach to students with disabilities during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. To ensure a comprehensive understanding and shared goals, representatives from both entities are embedded within the other's key advisory groups. Specifically, a representative from the Utah State Board of Education Special Education is an integral member of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Conversely, a representative from USOR plays an active role in the Utah Special Education Advisory Panel (USEAP). These cross-representations facilitate continuous dialogue, consultation, and assistance between the two bodies.

Every year, USOR and the USBE collaborate to formulate statewide objectives aimed at enhancing transition services. This collaborative effort is enriched by their participation in the Capacity Building Institute, an initiative sponsored by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). Furthermore, representatives from USOR and USBE play active roles in the Statewide Transition Council (STC). Alongside other state agencies and stakeholders, this council's overarching mission is to elevate postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities in Utah. Through interagency collaboration and shared expertise, the council works diligently to ensure a seamless and productive transition for these students.

**C.** The interagency agreement between the Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities for each entity, ensuring clarity and direction in their collaborative efforts.

USBE agrees to ensure that all children ages 3 through 21 with disabilities are provided free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under IDEA. USBE has responsibility for educating transition youth between ages 14 and school exit through graduation, reaching maximum age, or no longer IDEA-eligible. Under IDEA, USBE will provide education and activities focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student, to facilitate movement from the school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, counseling and guidance, integrated employment (including supported employment), adult services, independent living or community participation. USBE is also responsible for funding transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services including speech-language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation (including therapeutic recreation), social work services, counseling services (including rehabilitation counseling), orientation and mobility services and medical services (for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in students.

USOR is responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with a disability, including students and youth with disabilities, to prepare for, secure, retain or regain an employment outcome that is consistent with his or her strengths, resources, priorities, concerns,

abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. In addition, USOR is responsible for providing transition services to eligible students and youth with disabilities as they transition from school to adult life. USOR will coordinate with USBE to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students who are eligible and potentially eligible for services. USOR coordinates with USBE at the state and local level to ensure that transition services, to include Pre-ETS, provided by each entity are complementary and non-duplicative. USOR and USBE agree to collaborate on the financial responsibility of services, within the guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA. Both agencies will respect the resources set forth by the policies and procedures that guide each agency's services. When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with Vocational Rehabilitation, the cost of services necessary for both education and for the student to become employed will be negotiated between the LEA representative and the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, pending any necessary approval through LEA administration and USOR chain of command. At any time during the transition process, comparable benefits or additional agency representatives will be included in the IEP and IPE transition team as an additional resource for financial responsibility. Agreements on shared cost of required services for the student/client, will be in writing in the IEP and IPE, to ensure collaboration and understanding of agency involvement. USOR and USBE are separately responsible for recruiting, hiring, training and retaining qualified personnel responsible for transition services and the coordination of transition services. USOR's staffing policy and practices comply with CSPD standards and state licensing requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. USBE maintains a separate staffing policy that adheres to state educator and para-educator licensing and credential requirements.

**D. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively engages with a broad range of educational and community partners to ensure that students with disabilities are promptly identified and provided the necessary transition services.**

Key school personnel, including special education teachers, administrators, 504 coordinators, school counselors, and nurses, collaborate closely with USOR. Additionally, community non-profit organizations, such as the Utah Parent Center, also play a vital role in this outreach process. These collective efforts aim to pinpoint students requiring Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Informational sessions, bolstered by both digital and printed resources, provide clarity on the services offered, emphasizing the eligibility criteria, application procedures, and the range of services available. Notably, outreach materials underscore the opportunity for students with disabilities as young as 14-years-old to access these services.

To support and enhance outreach endeavors, USOR has a notable presence on various advisory and operational councils. This includes local school district transition councils, the statewide transition council, and the Utah Futures Advisory Committee. These platforms foster a cohesive collaboration between the Department of Workforce Services Workforce Development Division and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Utah State Board of Education, Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity and higher education.

Further strengthening this collaborative structure, USOR has designated roles such as a transition coordinator and two Pre-ETS program specialists. Their primary responsibility is to augment the quality of transition services provided by USOR.

In addition, by working collaboratively with the Utah State Board of Education and the Local Education Agencies, USOR ensures that students, both eligible and potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services, have information and access to services. In addition to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, USOR has Pre-ETS instructor positions in each of the Vocational Rehabilitation district offices to provide Pre-ETS services and outreach and coordination activities to students.

The outreach and identification procedure for students with disabilities is multi-faceted and inclusive. By casting a wide net through varied platforms and methods, USOR ensures that every student who could benefit from transition services is not only identified but also equipped with comprehensive knowledge about the opportunities available to them.

**E.** To fulfill the documentation mandates outlined in 34 C.F.R. § 397, both the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) have a coordination process, which is defined in the statewide interagency agreement.

Furthermore, USOR has set forth specific policies and procedures concerning Section 511—Limitations of Subminimum Wage. These guidelines encompass the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services, Pre-Employment Transition Services, as well as career counseling, information and referral services to youth contemplating subminimum wage employment.

To reinforce this effort, USOR and USBE actively collaborate with the Local Education Agencies (LEA). This collaboration ensures that youth receive the requisite career counseling, information, and referral services. Information related to these services is communicated to parents, guardians, teachers, and students during IEP meetings, fostering a comprehensive postsecondary transition planning process. In addition, USOR has introduced disability career navigators to support these activities. These navigators are tasked with providing education and outreach services to youth with disabilities and their parents, particularly those considering the prospects of subminimum wage employment.

Lastly, USOR maintains a centralized database to track and maintain records, making it easier to verify and demonstrate compliance regarding its statutory responsibilities.

**F.** According to the statewide interagency collaborative agreement, the State Education Authority and the Local Education Agency affirm not to enter into contracts or partnerships with entities possessing a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which could lead to employing a youth with a disability at subminimum wage levels. Furthermore, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation commits to adhering to all regulatory mandates as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, specifically Section 511 - Limitation on the Use of Subminimum Wage.

#### **k. Coordination with Employers**

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) is actively engaged in several initiatives aimed at forging partnerships with employers to uncover competitive, integrated employment opportunities and foster career exploration that facilitates the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services. These initiatives are primarily spearheaded by the Business Relations team, the Choose to Work (CTW) Program, and Utah's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Through these coordinated efforts, USOR enhances the connection between employers and individuals with disabilities. The approach involves outreach endeavors, disability awareness training, consultation services, job fairs, workshops, business networking activities, and job posting networks. Key activities, services, and initiatives are outlined as follows:

- **Customized Services:** The USOR Business Relations Team actively engages in outreach activities, meeting with individual businesses to furnish information and resources regarding hiring practices, disability awareness, recruitment strategies, retention programs, consulting, technical assistance, tax credits, incentives, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reasonable accommodations, employment laws and other pertinent subjects related to disabilities and assistive technology.
- **Workshops, Job Fairs, and Trainings:** USOR conducts semi-annual employer workshops focused on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities and career preparation. These workshops provide business partners an opportunity to gain insights into disability-related topics, accommodations, and other employment-related issues. USOR offers job fairs designed to connect businesses with job-ready individuals with disabilities and provide career exploration opportunities. They also offer avenues for internships and mentorship experiences. Additionally, the USOR collaborates with the Utah's Committee to support the Utah affiliate of Disability:IN, a business-to-business mentoring model aimed at promoting disability-inclusive workforce practices.
- **PWDNET:** Through the one-stop center's (AJC's) online job board, employers have the option to use the keyword "PWDNET" in their recruitment, facilitating the search for job opportunities by job seekers with disabilities, vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and employment specialists. The business relations team manages an email listserv of job postings shared by business partners and recruitment entities targeting individuals with disabilities.
- **Choose to Work (CTW):** The core services of the Choose to Work program involve job development and job placement for individuals with disabilities. CTW employment specialists collaborate with the business relations team to organize employer workshops aimed at increasing awareness about hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. These specialists actively participate in local chambers of commerce and sit on local and community boards to facilitate Vocational Rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes. They also work closely with workforce development specialists, other one-stop center (AJC) partners and affiliates to identify integrated employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities.
- **Business Customized Training (BCT):** The business relations team also helps to support Business Customized Training (BCT) with specific business partners. BCT entails negotiating a tailored training program and training duration in partnership with USOR, a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) of the business's choice and the business partner. The designated CRP conducts training on-site at the business partner's location, preparing clients for potential employment opportunities with the partner business.
- **Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP):** USOR utilizes the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), a platform developed by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Employment Team (NET) in partnership with disABLEDperson, Inc. TAP serves as a connection point for a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation clients seeking employment and a job posting system for employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities.

USOR offers a diverse range of transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) aimed at connecting transition-aged youth, including students with disabilities, with employers. To facilitate these transition services, USOR leverages the business relations team, Choose to Work and Pre-Employment Transition Services team.

The various USOR teams collaborate closely with Utah's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities to organize Disability Mentoring Day events for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. These events are hosted by interested businesses, offering insights into their organizations and addressing concerns raised by students with disabilities. During these events, students have the opportunity to tour the company premises and gain a firsthand understanding of the job opportunities available within the business. Local high school students, accompanied by their teachers, advocates, or parents, are invited to attend these informative gatherings.

Furthermore, the VR district office staff, which includes Pre-ETS instructors, VR counselors and supervisors, partners with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to develop events and activities with employers tailored for students. These activities encompass business tours, employer panels, mock interviews, career days and workshops.

USOR is committed to expanding work-based learning and job exploration opportunities for students and youth with disabilities. USOR has established contracts with providers to support the provision of Pre-ETS, with a strong emphasis on collaboration with employers to deliver work-based learning experiences for eligible and potentially eligible students. These services are provided in both individual and group settings, fostering partnerships with employers to enrich the learning experience.

Additionally, USOR incorporates a career exploration track within its Work Ability Job Fairs. This unique offering enables LEAs to bring students to engage with hiring specialists and explore potential employment opportunities. The business relations team and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors equip school transition specialists and teachers with information packets to prepare students for these events. These packets cover essential topics such as dressing for success, interviewing skills, resume building and appropriate etiquette when interacting with business partners. Students can also participate in workshops covering subjects such as "Working in Government Professions, State and Federal Hiring Initiatives," "Employer Panel," "How to Dress on a Dime and Interview Success" and "Social Security and Working."

#### I. Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), 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 to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has a collaborative relationship with the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP), which is a state program carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. UATP provides assistive technology devices and services to Utahns with disabilities, in addition to providing training to individuals with disabilities, families and professional service providers. Through USOR's Utah Center for Assistive Technology office, UATP operates a program that provides refurbished mobility devices and equipment to low-income individuals with disabilities. In addition, specific to the provision of assistive technology services, Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) serves as a statewide resource for information and technical services for people with disabilities for assistance with acquiring and using assistive technology devices. Another assistive technology resource within USHE is the Utah assistive

technology team which provides assistance to adults and youth with disabilities by providing introductory training and support on computer technology that can enhance education and employment. This includes free consultations, workshops, and information and referral services and augmentative communication device loaner programs for students with disabilities in public schools.

2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively partners with AgrAbility of Utah, a program under the umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture. AgrAbility's primary objective is to assist farmers, ranchers, and their families in navigating the challenges posed by age, illness, injury, or other disabilities, ensuring they can continue their agricultural endeavors. Specialists from AgrAbility assess individual cases, offering pragmatic solutions tailored to each unique situation. This can range from restructuring work tasks and adapting agricultural operations to tapping into community and state resources. With their expertise, they design customized plans addressing the specific needs of farmers and ranchers.

USOR works hand-in-hand with AgrAbility, lending its expertise to shape these recommendations. The focus is on enabling individuals with disabilities to pursue agricultural employment safely and effectively. Many of these tailored recommendations encompass the introduction of assistive technologies or other necessary accommodations, ensuring individuals remain active and productive in the agricultural sector.

3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively collaborates with various agencies dedicated to assisting out-of-school youth. Among its key partners are the Division of Services for People with Disabilities, the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health, Community Rehabilitation Programs, the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services and regional mental health agencies. To streamline these collaborations, USOR has designated liaisons across the state. These liaisons play a pivotal role in interagency referrals, conducting outreach, disseminating information and coordinating services tailored to the specific needs of out-of-school youth. Additionally, USOR partners with the Title I WIOA Youth program, further enhancing the referral process and ensuring comprehensive support for these youth.

4. State use contracting programs;

The State Use Program serves to create employment opportunities and to enhance the independence of people with disabilities by having departments of state government purchase commodities and services from qualified Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Utah state law sets aside funding for contracts to be awarded to CRPs. The USOR Director serves as a member of the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Board, which implements the State Use Program.

5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) continues to collaborate with the Departments of Health and Human Services related to provision of services for individuals eligible for home and community-based waiver programs. USOR, the Division of Services for People with Disabilities and the Utah State Board of Education will coordinate efforts to provide information and referral

resources to Utahns with disabilities interested in entering or reentering the workforce. The three aforementioned agencies will negotiate and allocate resources as necessary to support a comprehensive system of work support resources that will increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Utah.

6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) maintains a long standing cooperative agreement with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD), the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities. USOR and DSPD are partners in the Employment First legislative initiative in Utah, Utah State Code § 35A-13-203, which establishes competitive, integrated employment as the preferred option for Utahns with disabilities. USOR and DSPD are in the process of developing an improved data sharing agreement to enhance collaboration and coordinate services for shared clients.

USOR and DSPD collaborate to provide extended services to clients participating in supported employment services, including customized employment services. DSPD receives its extended support funding through Medicaid Waivers and the Utah State Legislature. This funding is ongoing and available to provide long term services for individuals who have utilized Vocational Rehabilitation supports, are eligible for DSPD Services, and need long term supported employment services. USOR and DSPD coordinate to ensure successful transitions of mutual clients from ongoing services to extended services. DSPD currently has a waitlist for services and will provide services to those with the most critical needs first when funding is available. DSPD has a yearly allocation in their budget to provide extended services to clients who are on their waitlist.

7. State agency responsible for providing mental health services; and

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (OSUMH) have a longstanding partnership and collaborative relationship to provide supported employment opportunities for individuals with primary diagnoses of severe and persistent mental illness. USOR coordinates and collaborates with the OSUMH to implement the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS). IPS is a Supported Employment model that is designed to meet the needs of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. To implement the IPS model, local mental health agencies receive employment support training from OSUMH and register as Community Rehabilitation Program providers with USOR.

8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system.

The Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has developed and maintains cooperative agreements where necessary with federal and state agencies not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. The department maintains cooperative agreements with the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). USOR has coordinated plans with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health (DSUMH) within DHHS to carry out services related to employment for persons with significant disabilities. Additional agreements exist relevant to the Employment First initiatives in Utah. The department also maintains cooperative agreements with the USBE, the Utah Department of Corrections, The Navajo Nation Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Veterans Administration (VA).

## 9. Other private nonprofit organizations.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) holds the authority to engage in contracts with organizations to deliver Vocational Rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in compliance with Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. Within the framework of the Combined State Plan, USOR has established fee-for-service provider agreements with both private and non-profit entities offering Vocational Rehabilitation services throughout Utah. Furthermore, the office maintains vendor relationships with agencies involved in Supported Job Based Training (SJBT), Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) services. These partnerships involve fee-for-service agreements and participation in job coach training activities. USOR remains committed to identifying and, where applicable, expanding the availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) offering supported employment and extended services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, in line with state plan requirements. To ensure the efficacy of these agreements and the quality of services, USOR employs an employment support services specialist. This specialist is responsible for overseeing provider agreements, ensuring that providers meet the necessary training qualifications, and monitoring the performance of these providers.

### 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, 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:

<p>The State Plan must include</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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 State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.</p>
<p>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:</p>
<p>3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>

The State Plan must include
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.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.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, 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.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. 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.
3.l. 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 as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if

The State Plan must include
implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for

The State Plan must include
individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met? Yes

**Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) Certifications**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) 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 title IV of WIOA<sup>[1]</sup>, and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;

<sup>[1]</sup> Public Law 113-128.

Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

2. In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit)[2]agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[3], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[4], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) 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;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

Enter the name of designated State agency

The Utah Department of Workforce Services

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency, or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[5], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[6], 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;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. The designated State unit or, if not applicable, the designated State agency 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 and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);

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 (enter the name of authorized representative below) 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;

Enter the name of authorized representative below

Sarah Brenna

8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

Enter the title of authorized representative below

Division Director

9. 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.

#### Footnotes

<sup>[1]</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>[2]</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>[3]</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>[4]</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

<sup>[5]</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>[6]</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

#### Certification Signature

**To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the "Edit" button.**

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
<b>Name of Signatory</b>	Sarah Brenna
<b>Title of Signatory</b>	Division Director

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
<b>Date Signed</b>	

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Indicators

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X%) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

#### **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	53.0%	54.0%	54.0%	55.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	51.1%	53.0%	52.1%	54.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,648	\$4,805	\$4,805	\$4,900
Credential Attainment Rate	34.6%	38.0%	35.1%	39.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	54.2%	55.5%	55.2%	56.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Vocational Rehabilitation

## **EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

### **GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

#### **State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The first of four questions is:***

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities in their journey toward employment and increased independence. Our mission is to assist them in preparing for and securing meaningful employment opportunities. We envision a community where everyone receives top-quality services and where both clients and staff are empowered through collaborative teamwork, leading to fulfilling employment, independence, and self-fulfillment. Our commitment to respect, kindness, dignity, diversity, trust, and integrity forms the foundation of our work.

In alignment with the designated state agency, the Department of Workforce Services, USOR adheres to standards of equal opportunity and maintains policies that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation, or belief. We have established procedures for individuals to seek assistance if they believe they are being unfairly denied access.

Additionally, USOR actively solicits feedback from clients to assess their experiences and satisfaction with our vocational rehabilitation services. This feedback is gathered through monthly client satisfaction surveys and a comprehensive statewide needs assessment conducted triannually. By analyzing this assessment, USOR can identify and address the needs and barriers faced by underserved and unserved individuals, ensuring that our services are accessible and responsive to all.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.**

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The second of four questions is:**

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

Based on USOR's latest comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, individuals residing in rural communities encounter obstacles due to the scarcity of service providers, particularly concerning community rehabilitation program services and temporary work-based learning opportunities. Furthermore, non-English speakers face an additional barrier, prompting a recommendation for USOR to enhance the availability of forms in Spanish. Additionally, various populations, such as refugees, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those with criminal backgrounds, require specific support to overcome their respective barriers.

Regarding students and youth, the assessment underscores the necessity for increased outreach to specific groups, including youth involved in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, and those in foster care

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.**

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The third of four questions is:**

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

USOR continues to make measurable progress toward these goals by prioritizing outreach efforts and leveraging technology to enhance services in rural communities. USOR is also reevaluating fee-for-service options to strengthen and expand provider capacity in rural areas statewide. Addressing language barriers remains an ongoing focus, with continued progress in updating and expanding the availability of forms and correspondence in Spanish.

To better reach underserved populations, USOR is implementing targeted, localized outreach initiatives. In addition, USOR is advancing the development of an applicant/client online portal to

improve accessibility and streamline application and communication processes. Additional details regarding these efforts are outlined in the Goals, Priorities, and Strategies sections.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The final of four questions is:**

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

In accordance with state plan requirements, USOR continues to make steady progress toward addressing identified barriers. Several forms and informational materials have already been updated and made available in Spanish, improving accessibility for Spanish-speaking clients. USOR will continue to assess and, where necessary, update fees for services in rural areas over the next two years.

The target for initial implementation of the client portal has been revised to late 2026, allowing adequate time for development, testing, and stakeholder input. Outreach and engagement efforts focused on underserved populations will continue over a two-year period, with progress updates incorporated into state plan updates. USOR will monitor progress through ongoing data collection and information gathering to ensure sustained advancement toward these goals.

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Supported Employment

## **EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

### **GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

**State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The first of four questions is:***

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities in their journey toward employment and increased independence. Our mission is to assist them in preparing for and securing meaningful employment opportunities. We envision a community where everyone receives top-quality services and where both clients and staff are empowered through collaborative teamwork, leading to fulfilling employment, independence, and self-fulfillment. Our

commitment to respect, kindness, dignity, diversity, trust, and integrity forms the foundation of our work.

In alignment with the designated state agency, the Department of Workforce Services, USOR adheres to standards of equal opportunity and maintains policies that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation, or belief. We have established procedures for individuals to seek assistance if they believe they are being unfairly denied access.

Additionally, USOR actively solicits feedback from clients to assess their experiences and satisfaction with our vocational rehabilitation services, which includes Supported Employment and Customized Employment. In addition to client satisfaction surveys and the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, USOR closely monitors supported employment providers performance, and provides training and technical assistance to enhance quality and support accessibility. USOR publishes the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Performance Report, which details provider performance and can be used to assist in making an informed choice about providers.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The second of four questions is:***

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

USOR is dedicated to addressing the barriers of Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) provider capacity and skills; and limited provider options in rural areas, as they can hinder access to and engagement of clients in need of supported employment and customized employment services. Furthermore, individuals with the most significant disabilities, who may require supported employment services, face additional challenges related to transportation, technology access and utilization, financial literacy, awareness of available services, educational support, and extended service needs. There is also a need to increase awareness for supported employment services among MSD youth with substance use and mental health disabilities.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the***

*steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The third of four questions is:***

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

USOR remains committed to collaborating with Utah State University to provide comprehensive training, support and technical assistance aimed at enhancing both the quantity and quality of Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers. This includes a focus on expanding the number of providers offering customized employment services. USOR is actively leveraging technology to broaden access to supported employment services, with a particular emphasis on exploring virtual job coaching options to overcome access barriers. Additionally, efforts are underway to increase the availability of providers offering financial literacy and life skills support for supported employment (SE) clients.

Furthermore, in alignment with Section (e), which outlines goals and strategies for Supported Employment Services, USOR is diligently working to establish a supported education pathway. This initiative aims to facilitate increased access to educational programs for individuals with the most significant disabilities, while also enhancing provider training, support and comprehension regarding job accommodations and job coach fading.

Moreover, USOR is dedicated to improving outreach and awareness initiatives targeting youth with substance use and mental health disabilities who could benefit from supported employment and individual placement and support (IPS) services.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The final of four questions is:***

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

USOR is committed to achieving significant progress towards its goals within the next two years. To this end, USOR aims to achieve year-to-year increases in the number of Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) providers for FY24 and FY25. Furthermore, USOR aims to roll out supported education support services by the conclusion of FY-24 and to provide additional training for providers in job accommodation and job coach fading techniques throughout FY-25.

Moreover, USOR plans to advance its efforts in leveraging technology and exploring virtual job coaching applications in FY-25. Additionally, USOR is collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services to enhance access to extended support services for supported employment clients. Concurrently, efforts are underway to improve service awareness for youth with substance use and mental health disorders over the next two years.

## VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.<sup>24</sup> If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. [24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### Jobs for Veterans' State Grants

(OMB Control Number: 1293-0017)

#### **Components of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants State Plan**

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) recipients must provide a four-year state plan as a condition for the receipt of annual funding in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This plan must include responses to each of the components below.

- a. Describe how the state intends to provide employment, training, and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG program (i.e., virtually and in-person).

Veteran Employment Services encompass a range of services administered by the Department of Workforce Services to support veteran job seekers in securing and sustaining employment. These services are made possible through the funding provided by JVSG, which supports the roles of Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) staff and the consolidated DVOP & LVER positions. These services are delivered virtually, in-person or through a combination of both methods.

JVSG staff are fully integrated into Utah's one-stop centers (AJCs). DVOP and consolidated DVOP & LVER staff are located in local one-stop centers (AJCs) and are incorporated into the teams there. This integration provides the ability to effectively and efficiently serve veterans and their spouses. When these individuals enter a one-stop center (AJC), staff offer employment and training assistance and screen them for eligibility for DVOP services. If they are deemed eligible, they are referred to a DVOP for individualized career services through the case management framework, as

taught by the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI). Case management services focus on removing barriers and assisting eligible individuals to employment.

DVOP specialists provide services to veterans, eligible spouses, and other eligible populations with qualifying barriers to employment. LVERs promote the hiring of all veterans to employers and work with business services partners to connect job-ready veterans to employment opportunities. The following is a breakdown of the services provided by DVOP specialists, LVERs and consolidated DVOP & LVER staff.

### **Career Services**

Upon entering a one-stop center (AJC), veterans and their spouses are triaged to determine which services they are in need of and whether they are eligible for DVOP services. Eligible individuals are then referred to the appropriate JVSG staff to receive services. DVOP & LVER staff provide the following assistance with consolidated DVOP & LVER staff providing a combination of the services listed.

#### **DVOP Specialist**

- Individualized career services
- Comprehensive and specialized assessment
- Employment planning
- Career planning
- Career counseling
- Customer follow-up and engagement
- Referrals to outside community partners
- United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program coordination
- Due to their integration into the one-stop centers (AJCs), DVOP specialists refer customers to various one-stop partners to assist them in accessing the tools and resources available to obtain employment. Services they refer to include:
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
  - Wagner-Peyser services
  - Family Employment Program (TANF)
  - VR&E
  - Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE)

#### **LVERs:**

- Develop relationships with employers who are interested in hiring veterans
- Job development

- Recruitment assistance
- Worksite visits to encourage business services staff to develop job opportunities for veteran customers
- Educating and training employers on:
  - Veteran employment law
  - Incentives for hiring veterans
    - Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit
    - Utah Veteran Employment Tax Credit
- Developing and promoting:
  - United States Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) Hire Vet Medallion Program participation
  - Utah Patriot Partner Program participation
  - Job and resource fairs
  - Employer recruitments

Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff provide a hybrid of the services mentioned above.

LVER staff provide training and workshops to employers and employer associations discussing the benefits and opportunities of hiring veterans and eligible spouses. These trainings include information about the unique needs of veterans and the support employers can provide. LVER staff also work closely with local one-stop center (AJC) staff to promote and develop apprenticeships, internships and on-the-job training opportunities with employers. They also work to help employers navigate the process of posting jobs and searching for veteran job seekers in the labor exchange system.

The Utah Patriot Partnership (UPP) program, initiated in 2011, is an employer recognition initiative launched by Workforce Services. It acknowledges employers pledging to hire qualified veterans over non-veteran applicants. Over 1,200 employers have joined the Utah Patriot Partnership program, receiving a signed certificate from the governor and a window decal. A star symbol is displayed next to the employer names of Utah Patriot Partners in the labor exchange system on [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). The program has been expanded to encourage employers to go 'beyond the pledge' by engaging in activities that promote veteran hiring and retention, such as developing company policies that are veterans-friendly and veterans-ready. The LVER promotes Utah Patriot Partnerships at a statewide level and distributes welcome packets to local workforce development specialists and consolidated position staff for new UPP employers. Workforce development specialists engage with employers to recognize their participation in UPP, explain 'beyond the pledge' activities, and review the company's hiring expectations and veteran hiring strategies. Additionally, the LVER and workforce development specialists encourage employers to apply for the DOL VETS Hire Vet Medallion Program to gain national recognition for employing and retaining veterans. Information about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program is provided on the department's veteran page on [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov) and is presented to employers as part of UPP program orientation.

b. List the populations to be served by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and consolidated position staff, including the eligibility criteria for referral for DVOP services.

**All populations served by the DVOP specialist must meet the eligibility criteria in accordance with VPL 05-24.**

Eligible Veteran is defined as:

- A person who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 consecutive days and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
- A person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; or
- A person who was a member of a reserve component; and served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized; and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
- A person who was discharged or released from active duty by reason of a sole survivorship discharge.

Eligible Person is defined as spouses of veterans who:

- Died of a service-connected disability; or
- Are listed as missing in action, captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power and have been so listed for a total of more than ninety days, at the time of application for services; or
- Has a total permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or any veteran who died while such a disability was in existence.

Eligible veterans or eligible persons must be interested in receiving individualized career services and have a qualifying employment barrier(s) at the time of eligibility.

Qualifying Employment Barriers:

- Disabled:
  - Special disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(1) as a veteran who is 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 for a disability rated at 30% or more, or rated at 10 or 20% in the case of a veteran who has been determined to have a serious employment handicap; or person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
  - Disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(3) as a veteran who is 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 a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
  - Other disability. Eligible veterans and eligible persons who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12102.
- Served in the Republic of Vietnam between November 1, 1955, and May 7, 1975, or any part of active duty service was between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975.
- Is a recently separated veteran, who was discharged or released from active duty within three years of the eligibility determination date.
- Has been referred for employment services by a representative of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

- Homeless:
  - Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
  - Has a primary nighttime residence that is:
    - A publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
    - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings or
    - In a temporary living arrangement being shared with other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; or
    - A motel, hotel, RV trailer park, or campground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; or
    - Is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions; or
    - Has no other residence and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- A justice-involved individual:
  - Who is or has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process; or
  - Who requires assistance in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction.
- Ages 18 to 24.
- Did not obtain a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
- Meets the WIOA low-income requirements.
- Is unemployed.
- Is a single parent of at least one child under the age of 18.

Additional populations eligible for DVOP services include:

- Current Service Member who meets one of the situations below:
  - Transitioning service member who participated in any part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), including self-paced online modules and Individualized Initial Counseling and is:
    - Within 1 year of separation, or
    - Within 2 years of retirement.
  - A member of the Armed Forces who is wounded, ill or injured; and is receiving treatment in a military treatment facility (MFT) or Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU).
- The family caregiver of a member of the Armed Forces who is wounded, ill or injured, and is receiving treatment in a MFT or SRU.
  - Caregiver means an individual who provides personal care to the eligible veteran.
  - Family members mean:
    - Parent
    - Spouse
    - Child
    - Step-family member
    - Extended family member
    - Person who lives with but is not a member of the family of the veteran.

A DVOP Eligibility Screening Form must be completed before DVOP services are provided. The form is reviewed to determine if the customer is eligible for DVOP services. If eligible, the customer is referred to a DVOP.

c. Describe the roles and responsibilities assigned to Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and consolidated DVOP/LVER positions by the state. These must be consistent with 38 U.S.C. 4103A and 4104.

**DVOP Specialist.** The DVOP specialist's primary duty is to provide individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible persons who have a qualifying barrier or belong to additional populations with overcoming barriers to gaining employment. Individualized career services includes:

- Comprehensive skill and service need assessments.
- Development, implementation and monitoring of an individualized employment plan to achieve the veteran's employment goal.
- Career exploration and coaching.
- Address barriers identified in the comprehensive assessment.
- Short-term pre-vocational services, preparing individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Follow-up contact to ensure successful employment and address remaining employment barriers affecting retention.

The provision of individualized career services employs the case management approach taught by the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), which includes assessments, employment plan development and continuous contact with the veteran to alleviate employment barriers and secure employment.

DVOP specialists conduct outreach to identify eligible veterans and spouses who need individualized career services to obtain employment. These job seekers are encouraged to register or apply for services. Outreach services occur on-site or at local community events to locate veterans with significant barriers to employment, leveraging the department's existing databases for proactive service offers.

Customers who engage with Workforce Services and self-identify as a veteran or spouse of a veteran are screened for eligibility using the DVOP Eligibility Triage Form by one-stop center (AJC) staff. If they meet eligibility requirements, they are referred to a local DVOP or Consolidated DVOP & LVER for services. Referrals are tracked through the case management system.

**LVER.** Workforce Services utilizes a full-time LVER position and a Consolidated DVOP & LVER position to meet Title 38, Section 4104 U.S. Code requirements. The department achieves this by leveraging the services of other Workforce Development Division employees and workforce development specialists in collaboration with the LVER.

The LVER's duties encompass:

- Serving as the statewide employer point-of-contact for veteran hiring inquiries.
- Collaborating with and training workforce development specialists on processes, incentives and employer coordination for veteran hiring.
- Acting as the statewide contact for employer referrals from the Utah Director of Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS).

- Coordinating department efforts for statewide job and career fairs aimed at veteran job seekers.
- Assisting with job development for eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans.
- Managing the implementation and promotion of the Utah Patriot Partnership program with participating Utah employers, including the promotion of 'beyond the pledge' activities and services.
- Providing employers information about the HIRE Vets Medallion program, Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC), Federal Bonding, DoD SkillBridge program and other beneficial programs that encourage the hiring and retention of veterans.
- Promoting apprenticeship, on-the-job training and other work-based learning opportunities with employers.
- Assisting in the development and dissemination of policies and materials for local one-stop centers (AJCs) to support veteran hiring and retention.

The LVER is assigned to a one-stop center (AJC) and coordinates with statewide workforce development specialists and the consolidated DVOP & LVER. They collaborate and actively advocate to employers of the benefits of hiring and retaining veterans within their workforce.

To foster employer relationships, the LVER, in conjunction with workforce development specialists, employs various methods, including in-person, telephone, mail and electronic communication. They attend trade association meetings, employer conferences and job and community fairs to establish and maintain connections with employers. The goal is to generate job opportunities for veterans, educate employers about the advantages of hiring veterans and cultivate relationships that will benefit veterans in the future.

Outreach to employers, industry partners and community based organizations includes education on utilization of Workforce Services' labor exchange system at jobs.utah.gov. The LVER, in conjunction with workforce development specialists, will provide training to employers on how to post their jobs and review qualified veterans in the system. When the LVER is made aware of an employer posting a job, they will search for qualified veterans to connect to the employment opportunity. If the veteran or employer needs assistance with navigating the recruiting or hiring process, the LVER will offer support as needed.

**Consolidated DVOP & LVER.** The consolidated DVOP & LVER staff member fulfills the roles of both a DVOP specialist and LVER, promoting more efficient administration of services to veterans with significant barriers to employment. The consolidated position is designed to ensure that services to veterans and employers are not compromised.

d. Demonstrate the manner in which DVOP, LVER and consolidated DVOP/LVER staff are integrated into the state's employment service delivery systems or American Job Center (AJC). This demonstration should show active engagement between JVSG and other AJC staff, such as through participation in staff meetings and cross-training opportunities.

The Department of Workforce Services offers many federal and state-funded programs. Its mission is to strengthen Utah's communities by connecting the workforce to new opportunities and providing services to individuals and families in need. The department is structured around four

fundamental principles or cornerstones: operational excellence, customer experience, employee success and community connection. Moreover, the department has identified four target populations: veterans, refugees, homeless individuals and individuals with disabilities.

Various divisions within the department serve veterans, military members and spouses. However, employment services primarily fall under the Workforce Development Division (WDD). WDD is operationally organized into Economic Service Areas. DVOP specialists and consolidated DVOP & LVER positions are co-located and integrated into one-stop centers (AJCs). They receive training on all available programs and other services to which veterans might be eligible. Furthermore, they provide training to staff on their responsibilities concerning veterans and the services available through state and federal veterans' programs. One-stop center (AJC) staff screen all veteran job seekers for the full range of supportive services. Veterans who are eligible for DVOP and consolidated DVOP & LVER services are seamlessly referred to local JVSG-funded staff. This unified staffing approach makes DVOP and consolidated services readily accessible to veterans in need.

The LVER works out of a local one-stop center (AJCs) closely collaborates with DVOPs, employment counselors and workforce development specialists throughout the state, with specific responsibilities in veteran employment, training and job placement. This close partnership allows for concentrated coordination and consistent collaboration, benefiting employers, DVOP specialists, consolidated staff and veteran customers alike.

e. Describe the state's performance incentive award program to encourage individuals and/or employment service offices to improve and/or achieve excellence in the provision of services to veterans, including:

1. The nomination and selection process for all performance incentive awards to individuals and/or offices;

The Department of Workforce Services will allocate the entire 1% of the approved grant to providing performance incentives to eligible employees. The specific amount allocated to these incentive awards in each fiscal year will fluctuate depending on the total funding received for the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

Department employees who are eligible and may receive the performance incentive awards are outlined below:

- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER)
- Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff
- Individuals providing employment, training and placement services to veterans, funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or the Wagner-Peyser Act
- A one-stop center (AJC) or team

The Department uses the incentive award program to:

- Encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training and placement services for veterans.

- Recognize eligible employees who have demonstrated exemplary achievements.

The department administers three tiers of veterans performance incentive awards tailored specifically for veteran programs. They are: the Service to Veterans Award, the Eagle Award and the Stars and Stripes Award.

- **Service to Veterans Award:** The Service to Veterans Award is presented to eligible Department of Workforce Services employees throughout the state by division leadership. Eligible employees nominated for providing direct services to veterans are processed through their respective area's nomination procedure. The Service to Veterans award is \$250 cash.
- **The Eagle Award:** Annually, five Eagle Award recipients are recognized for their exceptional service to veteran customers. All Service to Veteran Awards nominees automatically become candidates for these prestigious awards. A committee of Workforce Development Division representatives convene and review all Service to Veteran nominations to select the five Eagle Award recipients. The selection is made by August 15 each year. The Eagle Award consists of a \$650 cash prize, an Eagle Statue and a framed certificate. These awards are presented by department leadership during the annual Veterans Training Conference. The \$650 cash award will be funded from the one-percent incentive allocation, while the acquisition of the Eagle statue and framed certificate will be covered by other department funding.

**Stars and Stripes Award for Services to Veterans:** The Stars and Stripes Award is the Department's top-tier recognition, presented by the Executive Director at the annual Veterans Training Conference. This department wide award is granted to the most deserving of the Eagle Award recipients, as determined by an awards committee. This committee is composed of the Department Executive Director, the Assistant Deputy Director, the Division Director and the JVSG Program Manager. The Stars and Stripes Award includes a \$750 cash prize and a U.S. Flag, encased in a glass flag case, with

- engraving to highlight the recipient's remarkable achievement. The \$750 cash award is funded through the one-percent incentive allocation, while the U.S. Flag and glass flag case are purchased using other Workforce Services funding sources.

The criteria for the Service to Veterans Award are as follows:

**Outstanding Service:** Nominations must include specific, written examples of how the nominee provided exceptional services to veterans, transitioning service members or eligible spouses. Nominations may be submitted by all levels of staff including all front-line staff in the one-stop centers (AJCs), management and JVSG funded peers. Examples of nominations may include:

- Going beyond their regular job duties.
- Conducting searches to match veterans with jobs in UWORKS.
- Advocating for veterans by reaching out to employers on their behalf.
- Providing valuable training services to veterans or employers.
- Increasing the delivery of individualized career services to veterans.
- Taking extra steps to enhance a veteran's employability.

- Establishing connections between veterans and other Department of Workforce Services programs, community partners and resources to support veterans' employability.
- Offering other exceptional services to veterans.

**Improving Services to Veterans:** Nominations provide written examples of ways the nominee contributed to enhancing the overall system of providing services to veterans. Examples may include:

- Improving pathways within their respective division or between divisions to create more opportunities and services for veterans.
- Increasing the percentage of individualized career services delivered to eligible veterans or eligible spouses.
- Ensuring that eligible veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment receive assistance from the DVOP specialist.
- Offering other services not listed above that improve the overall system of services for veterans.

Each division will submit its Service to Veterans Award recipient information to the JVSG Program Manager for submission to the department finance division. All nominations are submitted using the awards nomination form. An individual may receive more than one Service to Veterans Award during the year.

Employees funded through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act funding are eligible to receive the Service to Veterans Award funded through the one-percent JVSG Incentive Allocation, while all other nominees are funded using other department funds.

2. The approximate number and value of cash awards using the one percent incentive award allocation;

The estimated total cost for the Service to Veteran Awards is \$8,022 based on 21 cash awards at \$250 and \$132 for awardee benefit costs (to cover taxes and benefit costs so the recipient receives the entire award amount).

The estimated total cost for the Eagle Award is \$5,200 based on \$650 for five cash awards and \$390 in awardee benefit costs.

The estimated total cost for the Stars and Stripes Award is \$1,200 based on \$750 for one cash award and \$500 in awardee benefit costs.

3. The general nature and approximate value of non-cash performance incentive awards to be charged to the base allocation; and

There are no non cash performance incentive awards that will be charged to the base allocation.

4. Any challenges the state may anticipate to carrying out a performance incentive award program as mandated by 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This should include any state laws or policies that prohibit such awards, if applicable. Describe the state's efforts in overcoming those challenges.

The Department of Workforce Services does not anticipate any challenges in carrying out the incentive award program.

f. List the performance targets for direct services to veterans provided by JVSG staff, as measured by participants': employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program; employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit; and median earnings in the second quarter after exit.

- Employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program: 62%
- Employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit: 63.5%
- Median earnings in the second quarter after exit: \$7,650

## Performance Indicator Appendix

### All WIOA Core Programs

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

#### Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities - Adult Program Performance Indicators

### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs

not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.3%	74.3%	74.3%	74.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	73.2%	75.2%	73.2%	75.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,300	8,800	7,300	8,800
Credential Attainment Rate	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities - Dislocated Program Performance Indicators

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make

reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	81.3%	81.3%	81.3%	81.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	82.0%	82.0%	82.0%	82.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	11,000	12,243	11,000	12,243
Credential Attainment Rate	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	51.0%	51.0%	51.0%	51.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities - Youth Program Performance Indicators

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels.

As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	78.7%	77.0%	78.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	73.0%	78.7%	73.0%	78.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4,000	5,133	4,000	5,133
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%	56.2%	55.0%	56.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Wagner-Peyser Act - Wagner-Peyser Program Performance Indicators

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with

the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and

- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	69.0%	69.5%	69.0%	69.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.1%	69.8%	68.1%	69.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8,300	9,900	8,300	9,900
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program - Adult Education and Literacy Program  
Performance Indicators

### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, will have

two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	32.5%	35.0%	34.0%	35.1%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	32.5%	40.1%	34.0%	40.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,000	\$5,970	\$5,500	\$5,975

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Credential Attainment Rate	17.5%	23.5%	20.0%	23.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.0%	43.0%	55.0%	43.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Combined or General) - Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Indicators

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

#### **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.5%	TBD	53.5%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	51.5%	TBD	52.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,550	TBD	\$5,750	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	40.5%	TBD	41.5%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	56.5%	TBD	57.0%	TBD

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Blind) - Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Indicators

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

#### Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)				
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Credential Attainment Rate				
Measurable Skill Gains				
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

#### Additional Indicators of Performance

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

#### Other Appendices

NA