DELAWARE PYS 2026-2027 (MOD)

CONTENTS

Delaware PYs 2026-2027 (Mod) 1

Overview 4

Options for Submitting a State Plan 4

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized 5

I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary 6

a. WIOA State Plan Type 6

Combined Plan Partner Program(s) 7

b. Plan Introduction or Executive Summary 8

II. Strategic Elements 9

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis 10

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals 62

c. State Strategy 74

III. Operational Planning Elements 88

a. State Strategy Implementation 88

b. State Operating Systems and Policies 124

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs 171

V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs) 172

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs 173

Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B 173

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services) 261

Program-specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs 285

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) 304

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind) 358

VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs 414

Career and technical education programs authorized under the 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) (Title 20, United States Code (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)) 414

Jobs for Veterans' State Grants 452

Performance Indicator Appendix 463
All WIOA Core Programs 463
Additional Indicators of Performance 469
Other Appendices 470

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, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing 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.)) [1]

[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 that are included 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 the State's 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 State-identified 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.

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.)

Yes

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.

Delaware is pleased to submit this Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. Under Governor Matt Meyer's leadership, Delaware is executing a bold, people-first vision to build a workforce ready for the high-demand careers of today and tomorrow with a particular focus on technology and artificial intelligence, healthcare, financial services, and skilled technical trades.

Delaware's economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Following the historic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic which drove the state's unemployment rate to 13.4% in May 2020, Delaware has steadily recovered and continues to grow. That recovery, however, also exposed long-standing gaps in workforce preparation that this plan directly addresses. Delaware's labor market is evolving rapidly, and our workforce system must evolve with it.

Governor Meyer’s first Executive Order on the day of his inauguration was to establish an apprenticeship programs within state government he later signed an Executive Order establishing the Office of Workforce Development within the Delaware Department of Labor, and reestablishing and streamlining the Delaware Workforce Development Board in order to centralize coordination of job training and education programs across the state to ensure every Delawarean has a clear pathway to career success.

Central to this administration's workforce agenda is positioning Delaware as a national leader in AI-ready talent. Delaware became the first state in the nation to join the OpenAI Certification Program, a groundbreaking initiative to help workers build fundamental skills in artificial intelligence, giving every Delawarean the chance to earn certifications in AI tools. Alongside this, Governor Meyer signed a joint resolution launching the Delaware AI Sandbox Program, a cutting-edge initiative designed to accelerate innovation while maintaining responsible governance, creating a controlled testing environment for AI technologies across high-impact sectors including corporate governance, biotechnology, healthcare, and financial services.

In healthcare, Governor Meyer has launched one of the most ambitious workforce investment plans in the state's history. The administration submitted an application for up to $1 billion from the federal Rural Health Transformation Program, compiling 15 critical projects to dramatically expand healthcare access, lower costs, and increase the medical workforce in rural Kent and Sussex counties including a Healthcare Workforce Data Collection Initiative to track and report on workforce trends, shortages, and disparities across the state.

Delaware's strength as the corporate home to two-thirds of Fortune 500 companies makes financial services a cornerstone of our workforce strategy. The University of Delaware offers the first of its kind Trust minor and as well as required financial literacy programs in Delaware’s high school curriculum. Additional training programs aligned with this sector including fintech,

compliance, data analytics, and AI-driven financial tools will position Delawareans to access high-wage careers within a world-class business ecosystem already rooted in the state.

Skilled technical trades represent another critical pillar of this plan. With growing demand for licensed electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, and construction tradespeople driven by infrastructure investment, housing development, shipbuilding in the region and energy expansion, Delaware is committed to expanding registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship pipelines, and career and technical education (CTE) pathways that lead directly to family-sustaining wages.

A more than $2 million Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant to Delaware's Workforce Development Board will modernize the state's workforce and education data infrastructure, building a longitudinal data system that links workforce and education program data enabling workforce leaders to better understand what's working and make data-driven investment decisions.

Delaware continues to operate as a single service delivery area, with the State Board serving as both state and local entity, a strategic structure that maximizes the impact of limited resources and strengthens partnerships among key stakeholders. The four core WIOA co-partners — the Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training (DET), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Visually Impaired (DVI), and the Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and are joined by 16 program partners who together drive constant communication, forward-thinking planning, and bottom-up input. Delaware's Combined State Plan also includes the Career and Technical Education State Plan, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

The vision animating this plan is straightforward: empower individuals, enrich communities, and drive economic prosperity through skills that matter in the industries that are growing, in an economy that is changing, and in a state that is ready to lead.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

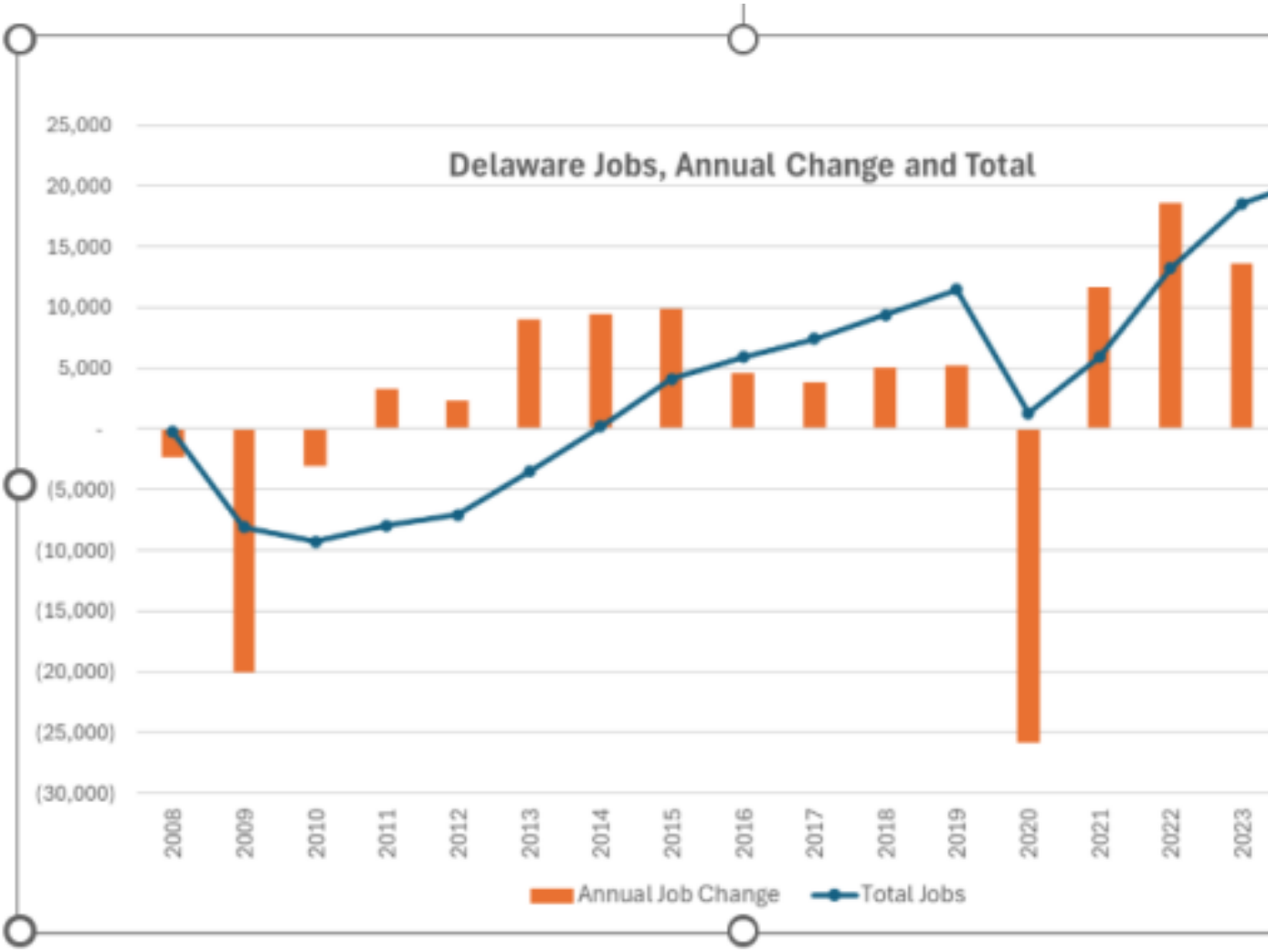
III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

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.

Employment by Industry

In 2024, Delaware added a net 7,600 jobs, marking its fourth consecutive year of employment growth since 2021. The state's total annual average employment exceeded pre-pandemic levels, surpassing the 2019 average of 452,747 jobs by 24,327. Delaware's job growth rate of 1.6 percent in 2024 also outpaced the national average of 1.2 percent.

New Castle County recorded the largest increase in employment in 2024, adding 3,371 jobs, a growth rate of 1.1 percent. Sussex County closely followed, gaining 3,361 jobs and posting the fastest growth rate at 3.7 percent. Kent County experienced more modest growth, adding 787 jobs, also a 1.1 percent increase. Jobs classified as multi-county rose by 43 over the year.



This narrative covers seventeen of Delaware's nineteen major job sectors. In 2024, nine sectors experienced growth in their total annual employment compared with the prior year, seven sectors recorded job losses, and one sector showed no change. Two major sectors—*Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting*, and *Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction*—are excluded from this report. The former is omitted because most of its employment is not covered by unemployment insurance laws, while the latter is excluded due to its extremely small employment base in the state (fewer than 100 jobs)

While much of the data produced by the Office of Occupational & Labor Market Information (OOLMI) in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is derived from surveys, the industry employment data presented in this overview are based on actual payroll records reported under state unemployment insurance (UI) law. These payroll records cover more than 90 percent of Delaware's employment. Excluded from the UI system—and therefore from this analysis—are the self-employed, most farmworkers, most railroad workers, interns, and other categories specifically exempt under UI regulations.

2024 Industry Job Change by County

Each year, a small number of jobs are not classified to a specific county. These unclassified jobs are included in statewide employment totals but are not allocated to individual counties. As a

result, the sum of county-level employment for a given industry sector may not equal the statewide total. Unclassified jobs account for less than two percent of total private employment. Additionally, not all industry sectors are included in this article. Some sectors, such as *Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction*, are excluded due to their limited size in Delaware. The table below presents the year-over-year change in private sector employment for 2024 by county and industry sector.

NAICS* Code	Industry Sector
22	Utilities
23	Construction
31-33	Manufacturing
42	Wholesale Trade
44-45	Retail Trade
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing
51	Information
52	Finance and Insurance
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
54	Professional and Technical Services
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
56	Administrative and Waste Services
61	Educational Services
62	Health Care and Social Assistance
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
72	Accommodation and Food Services
81	Other Services
* North American Industry Classification System	

2024 Government Employment

The North American Industry Classification System has a code for *Public Administration*, however, government employment in this article is broken out by Federal, State, and Local government ownership codes. While Federal, State, and Local ownership will capture all government employment, the NAICS code of *Public Administration* will not because government employment can be found in multiple industry sectors. A breakout of Government employment by NAICS industry is listed below. Below is a table of the 2024 Government employment at the statewide level for Federal, State, and Local government.

NAICS* Code	Industry Sector
22	Utilities
23	Construction
31-33	Manufacturing
42	Wholesale Trade
44-45	Retail Trade
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing
51	Information
52	Finance and Insurance
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
54	Professional and Technical Services
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
56	Administrative and Waste Services
61	Educational Services
62	Health Care and Social Assistance
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
72	Accommodation and Food Services
81	Other Services
92	Public Administration
Total	**All Industries**
* North American Industry Classification System	

2024 Job Growth by Industry

The industry sectors reported below are sorted from the most to the least number of job gains in 2024. The "Top Ten Occupations" below each industry sector narrative include both Private and Government employment. This is most apparent in the *Educational Services* area in which the Top Ten Occupations tables includes both Private and Government Educational Services.

1) Health Care and Social Assistance

Health Care and Social Assistance ranked first among industries for job gains in 2024, adding 4,200 jobs—a 5.3 percent increase over 2023. With a total of 83,100 jobs, it remained Delaware's largest industry sector. All three counties experienced growth. New Castle County added 2,851 jobs, accounting for approximately 54.5 percent of the industry's total job increase.

Kent County gained 396 jobs, while Sussex County added 717. Women held 78.6 percent of Health Care and Social Assistance jobs statewide in 2024.

Annual wages in the sector were highest in New Castle County at $73,476, followed by Sussex County at $68,796. Kent County had the lowest average annual wage in the industry at $55,952.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Health Care and Social Assistance Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
29-1141	Registered Nurses	10,170
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	9,076
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,989
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	4,091
31-9092	Medical Assistants	2,814
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	1,928
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,894
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,115
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	964
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	961

2) Educational Services

The *Educational Services* industry sector ranked 2nd in total over-the-year job growth with an increase of 1,492 jobs or 3.9 percent in 2024. E*ducational Services* was the fifth largest industry sector for Delaware in 2024 with 39,745 jobs.

Jobs grew in all three counties in 2024 with New Castle County leading with an additional 227 new jobs. Sussex County was second in job growth with 55 jobs, while Kent County added 29 total jobs in the *Educational Services* sector. Women held 63.2% of the jobs in the *Educational Services* sector.

Annual pay was highest in New Castle County at $58,396. Kent County had second highest annual wage at $45,708, while Sussex County's average annual wage was $42,057.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Educational Services Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	4,683
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	4,344
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	3,571
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	1,922
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,866
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,695
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,691
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,558
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	1,333
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	1,227

3) Professional and Technical Services

Professional and Technical Services had an increase of 744 jobs or 2.6 percent in 2024, ranking third in total job gains. This sector was the sixth largest in Delaware with a total of 29,100 jobs in 2024.

Each of Delaware's three counties added jobs with New Castle County leading the way with 308 jobs. Sussex County and Kent County both added 362 and 107 jobs, respectively. Women held 49.8% of the jobs in the *Professional and Technical Services* sector.

Annual pay was highest in New Castle County at $135,824, Sussex County had second highest annual average wage at $98,748 while the annual wage in Kent County was $82,784.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Professional and Technical Services	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
23-1011	Lawyers	1,875
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	1,564
15-1252	Software Developers	1,483
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,234
43-6012	Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,067
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	698
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	695
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	584
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	557
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	517

4) Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation ranked fourth in job growth in 2024, adding 697 jobs, a 7.5 percent increase over the prior year. With 9,960 jobs, this sector was Delaware's thirteenth largest industry by employment.

New Castle County led job growth in the *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* sector in 2024, adding 564 jobs compared to 2023. Sussex County followed with 87 new jobs, while Kent

County ranked third with an increase of 50 jobs. Women held 48.6 percent of jobs in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector statewide.

Despite having the lowest year-over-year job growth, Kent County reported the highest average annual wage in the sector at $33,332. New Castle County, which experienced the largest employment increase, ranked lowest in average annual wages at $28,392. Sussex County's average annual wage in 2024 was $3,152.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
39-3091	Amusement and Recreation Attendants	1,324
39-9031	Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	748
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	517
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	441
27-2022	Coaches and Scouts	291
39-3011	Gambling Dealers	261
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	222
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	220
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	207
33-9092	Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service Workers	188

5) Accommodation and Food Services

In 2024, *Accommodation and Food Services* ranked fifth among industry sectors for job gains, adding 460 jobs for an over-the-year growth rate of 1.1 percent. The sector was Delaware's fourth largest by employment, with a total of 43,791 jobs statewide. Women accounted for 55.1 percent of employment in the *Accommodation and Food Services* sector.

Employment in this industry increased in two of Delaware's three counties in 2024. Sussex County experienced the largest growth, adding 453 jobs, followed by Kent County with an increase of 263 jobs. In contrast, New Castle County saw a decline of 228 jobs over the year.

Average annual wages were highest in Sussex County at $28,808. New Castle County reported the second-highest annual wage at $6,260, while Kent County had the lowest average annual wage at $24,908.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Accommodation and Food Services Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	10,222
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6,486
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	5,134
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	3,110
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	2,321
35-3011	Bartenders	1,695
35-9021	Dishwashers	1,600
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	1,525
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	1,325
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	1,190

6) Construction

The Construction industry added 373 jobs in 2024, an increase of 1.5 percent, ranking 10th among all industry sectors with a total of 25,759 jobs statewide. Women accounted for 18.6 percent of employment in the sector.

Among the three counties, Sussex County experienced the largest job growth, adding 172 jobs, followed by New Castle County with an increase of 131 jobs and Kent County with growth of 104 jobs.

New Castle County reported the highest annual average wage in the Construction sector at $82,524. Kent County ranked second with an annual average wage of $75,972, while Sussex County followed at $64,480.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Construction Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	2,073
47-2061	Construction Laborers	2,001
47-2111	Electricians	1,871
47-2031	Carpenters	1,379
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,318
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	1,214
13-1051	Cost Estimators	950
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	651
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	610
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	591

7) Other Services

The Other Services industry sector ranked seventh in job growth in 2024, adding 346 jobs or 2.8% over the year. The sector—which includes repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, religious organizations, and private households—was the twelfth-largest industry in Delaware in 2024, employing 12,732 workers statewide.

Job growth occurred in two of Delaware's three counties. New Castle County added 252 jobs, while Sussex County gained 120 jobs. Kent County experienced the only over-the-year decline, losing 12 jobs compared to 2023. Women held 54.6% of jobs in the Other Services sector statewide.

Average annual pay in the Other Services sector was $49,660 in New Castle County, $45,188 in Kent County, and $43,940 in Sussex County.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Other Services Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1,590
13-1075	Labor Relations Specialists	1,013
39-9011	Childcare Workers	980
35-3011	Bartenders	889
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	861
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	811
39-5092	Manicurists and Pedicurists	789

8) Wholesale Trade

The *Wholesale Trade* sector gained 189 jobs or 1.5% over the past year, the eighth most jobs gained in 2024. *Wholesale Trade had a total of 12,777 jobs in 2024,* ranking 11th out of Delaware's 17 industries in the total number of jobs.

Jobs in New Castle County fell by 23 from 2023, while both Kent and Sussex Counties experienced industry job growth. Sussex County led this sector's growth, increasing by 89 jobs, while Kent was second, growing by 10 new jobs in 2024. Statewide, women held 29.6% of the jobs in the *Wholesale Trade* sector.

Annual average pay in the *Wholesale Trade* sector was highest in New Cast County at $99,476. Sussex County had the second highest average annual wage at $88,296, while Kent County had the third highest wages at $67,132.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Wholesale Trade Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,581
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	849
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	770
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	583
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	587
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	458
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	415
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	323
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	312
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	268

9) Utilities

The *Utilities* sector was the final industry to record employment growth in 2024, adding 36 jobs, or 1.7%, over the year. Despite this increase, *Utilities* remained the smallest industry in Delaware by total employment, with 2,140 jobs statewide. Women accounted for 26.5% of workers in the sector.

Job gains occurred in both New Castle and Sussex Counties in 2024, which added 29 and 11 jobs, respectively. Kent County experienced a net loss of one job over the year.

Average annual pay in the Utilities sector was the second-highest among all Delaware industries. In 2024, average annual wages were $143,208 in New Castle County, $110,864 in Kent County, and $120,276 in Sussex County.

Due to confidentiality restrictions, the top ten occupations in the *Utilities* sector are not displayed.

10) Management of Companies and Enterprises

Management of Companies and Enterprises ranked 14th among Delaware industries by total employment and experienced no net job change in 2024, remaining at 7,735 jobs statewide.

Kent and Sussex Counties saw modest over-the-year employment gains in the sector, increasing by 10 and 5 jobs, respectively. In contrast, New Castle County recorded a significant decline, losing 112 jobs. Employment growth in multi-county jobs offset these losses, resulting in no overall change in total employment. Women held 44.9% of jobs in the *Management of Companies and Enterprises s*ector statewide in 2024.

Average annual pay in this sector was the highest among all Delaware industries. In 2024, average annual wages were $69,572 in New Castle County, $118,248 in Kent County, and $127,764 in Sussex County.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Management of Companies and Enterprises Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	495
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	469
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	375
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	352
19-2031	Chemists	321
11-3031	Financial Managers	265
11-2021	Marketing Managers	236
13-1081	Logisticians	223
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	218
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	210

11) Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

The *Real Estate and Rental and Leasing* sector lost 66 jobs, or 1.0%, in 2024, ranking 11th among industries in over-the-year job change. The sector employed 6,293 workers statewide, making it the 15th-largest industry in Delaware.

New Castle County was the only county to record job growth in the sector, adding 87 jobs compared to the previous year. Sussex County experienced the largest decline, losing 133 jobs,

while Kent County saw a reduction of 46 jobs. Women accounted for 39.7% of employment in the *Real Estate and Rental and Leasing* sector statewide.

Average annual pay in the *Real Estate and Rental and Leasing* sector was highest in New Castle County at $77,220. Sussex County had the second-highest average annual wage at $62,608, while Kent County recorded the lowest average annual pay at $56,992.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	768
11-9141	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	654
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	527
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	308
41-2021	Counter and Rental Clerks	265
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	191
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	151
41-9021	Real Estate Brokers	133
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	133
47-2061	Construction Laborers	120

12) Information

The *Information* industry ranked 12th in over-the-year job change in 2024, with a decline of 79 jobs, or 2.0%. The sector employed 3,875 workers, making it the 16th-largest of Delaware's 17 industries by total employment. *Information* industry jobs include motion picture and sound recording, publishing, broadcasting, telecommunications, computing infrastructure, and related service-providing industries.

Sussex County was the only county to record job growth in the sector over the year, adding six jobs. Both New Castle and Kent Counties experienced employment declines, losing 12 and 74 jobs, respectively. Statewide, women accounted for 39.8% of employment in the *Information* sector.

Average annual pay in the Information sector was highest in Sussex County at $111,852, followed by New Castle County at $101,868, and lowest in Kent County at $80,340.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Information Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	340
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	295
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	199
39-3031	Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers	146
41-3011	Advertising Sales Agents	141
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	124
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	120
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	119
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	114
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	112

13) Transportation and Warehousing

In 2024, the *Transportation and Warehousing* sector experienced a decline of 121 jobs, or 0.5%, compared to 2023. Despite the decrease, the sector remained the eighth-largest industry in Delaware, employing 26,143 workers. Industries within this sector include air, rail, water, and truck transportation, as well as warehousing and related support activities.

All three counties recorded employment declines over the year. Kent County experienced the largest reduction, losing 106 jobs, followed by Sussex County with a decline of 80 jobs. New Castle County saw a smaller decrease of 25 jobs. Statewide, women held 36.9% of jobs in the *Transportation and Warehousing* sector in 2024.

Average annual pay was relatively similar across all three counties. Kent County reported the highest average annual wage at $54,652, followed closely by Sussex County at $53,664 and New Castle County at $53,144.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Transportation and Warehousing Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,528
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	8,376
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	3,784
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1510
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	1025
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	986
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	854
53-1047	First Line Supervisors of Transportation & Material Moving Workers, Exc Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisor	674
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	656
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	616

15) Manufacturing

The *Manufacturing* sector declined by 141 jobs, or 0.5%, in 2024, ranking 15th among industries in over-the-year job change. Despite the decline, *Manufacturing* remained the eighth-largest industry in Delaware, employing 26,677 workers statewide. The sector includes food, textile, paper, chemical, computer, furniture, and other manufacturing industries.

Among the three counties, Sussex County was the only one to record job growth in 2024, adding 693 jobs. Both New Castle and Kent Counties experienced employment declines, losing 689 and 149 jobs, respectively. Statewide, women accounted for 33.2% of employment in the *Manufacturing* sector in 2024.

Average annual pay in the *Manufacturing* sector varied significantly by county. New Castle County reported the highest average annual wage at $101,764, followed by Kent County at $64,844, and Sussex County at $57,252.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Manufacturing Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	2,678
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1,072
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	981
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	873
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	826
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	811
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	743
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	705
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	574
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	540

16) Retail Trade

The *Retail Trade* sector declined by 537 jobs, or 1.2%, in 2024, ranking 16th among industries in over-the-year job change. Despite the decline, *Retail Trade* remained Delaware's second-largest industry, employing 51,213 workers statewide. Subsectors within *Retail Trade* include motor vehicle and parts dealers, food and beverage stores, health and personal care stores, gasoline stations, and clothing and related retailers.

Sussex County was the only county to record job growth in 2024, adding 287 jobs. New Castle County saw employment decline by 263 jobs, while Kent County experienced a reduction of 243 jobs. Statewide, women accounted for 49.4% of employment in the *Retail Trade* sector in 2024.

Average annual pay in the *Retail Trade* sector was highest in New Castle County at $40,560, followed by Sussex County at $38,116 and Kent County at $36,972.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Retail Trade Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	12,155
41-2011	Cashiers	9,947
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,229
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,584
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,076
41-2011	Cashiers	2,723
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	2,273
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	1,911
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1,856
41-2011	Cashiers	1,691

17) Finance and Insurance

Finance and Insurance is Delaware's largest industry sector in terms of GDP and ranks third in total employment, with 43,872 jobs in 2024. Over the year, the sector lost 537 jobs, or 1.2%, ranking 17th among industries in over-the-year job change. Subsector jobs include employment in central banks, credit intermediation, securities and financial investments, and funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles.

The statewide job decline was largely driven by New Castle County, which lost 573 jobs. Sussex County added 66 jobs, while Kent County recorded 30 new jobs. Women held 54.2% of employment in the *Finance and Insurance* sector statewide

Kent County has the lowest average wage in the sector at $96,406, while New Castle has the highest average wage at $133,588. The average wage in Kent County was $95,420.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Finance and Insurance Sector	
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment
15-1252	Software Developers	3,034
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	2,551
13-1111	Management Analysts	2,040
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,911
13-2051	Financial and Investment Analysts	1,802
11-3031	Financial Managers	1,540
13-2099	Financial Specialists, All Other	1,503
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,456
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	1,441
43-3071	Tellers	1,307

18) Administrative and Waste Services

Administrative and Waste Services ranked last in job growth in 2024, losing 718 jobs or -2.4%. This industry ranked seventh in total number of jobs at 28,920. Jobs in this industry include

employment services, travel arrangement, investigative and security services, facilities support and office administration.

Administrative and Waste Services jobs fell in all three counties in 2024. Kent County saw the largest of the declines, losing 264 jobs. New Castle County had the second largest job loss at 236 and followed by Sussex with 134 job loses. Women held 46.7% of the jobs in this industry sector.

Administrative and Waste Services highest annual pay was found in New Castle County at $58,396, followed by Kent at $57,876 and Sussex at $51,324.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Administrative and Waste Management Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	2,956
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,677
33-9032	Security Guards	1,907
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,117
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,115
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	799
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	714
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	688
13-1111	Management Analysts	673
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	655

Government

Government, which includes *Federal*, *State* and *Local Government*, had an increase of 422 jobs in 2024. *Local Government* increased the most in 2024 with 1,176 jobs, followed by the *Federal*

Government with an increase of 422 jobs. *State Government* also grew 846 jobs in 2024 from the previous year.

In Delaware, *Federal Government* employment had the highest annual pay in 2024 at $95,056. The next highest annual pay was in *State Government* with an annual average of $75,140. *Local Government* was slightly below *State Government* in terms of annual pay at $71,916.

	Top Ten Occupations in the Government Sector	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**	**Employment**
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,883
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,783
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	1,025
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	990
43-4031	Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	973
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	795
13-1111	Management Analysts	612
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	590
29-1141	Registered Nurses	567
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	549

Employment and Unemployment

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

The Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is a key economic indicator of the health of the economy and one that is widely watched by the public. The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program is a state and federal cooperative program that generates the unemployment rate for the state, counties, and cities with populations over 25,000. The unemployment rate is measured by dividing the number of unemployed by the total labor force. To be considered unemployed, one has to be not employed but actively seeking employment and available to work during the month.

In 2024, Delaware's not seasonally adjusted annual unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, 0.1 percentage point lower than the prior year. Delaware's annual unemployment rate was 0.3 percentage points lower than the national average of 4.0 percent in 2024. In 2010, Delaware's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate peaked at 8.3 percent and the U.S. unemployment rate peaked at an annual rate of 9.6 percent following one of the most severe post-World War II recessions, ending in June of 2009.

Historical Local Area Unemployment Statistics for states begin in 1976. Delaware's not seasonally adjusted average annual average unemployment rate has been higher than the US unemployment rate three times since 1990. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, Delaware's unemployment rate was higher than the US unemployment rate by 0.1, 0.6, and 0.2 percentage points, respectively.

Comparative Unemployment Rates

Delaware and its Neighboring States Annual Average Unemployment Rate

Delaware's annual average unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in 2024 was ranked as the 28th lowest rate in the nation. Delaware's unemployment rate was ranked third highest among neighboring states Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in 2024. Maryland's annual average unemployment rate of 3.0 percent tied for 7th lowest in the nation. New Jersey's annual average unemployment rate of 4.5 percent tied for 43rd and Pennsylvania's annual average unemployment rate of 3.6 percent tied with three other states for 24th lowest in the nation.

Delaware's annual average unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage points from 2023 to 2024. Among neighboring states, Maryland experienced the largest change, rising by 0.8 percentage points. Pennsylvania matched Delaware's decline of 0.1 percentage points, while New Jersey's

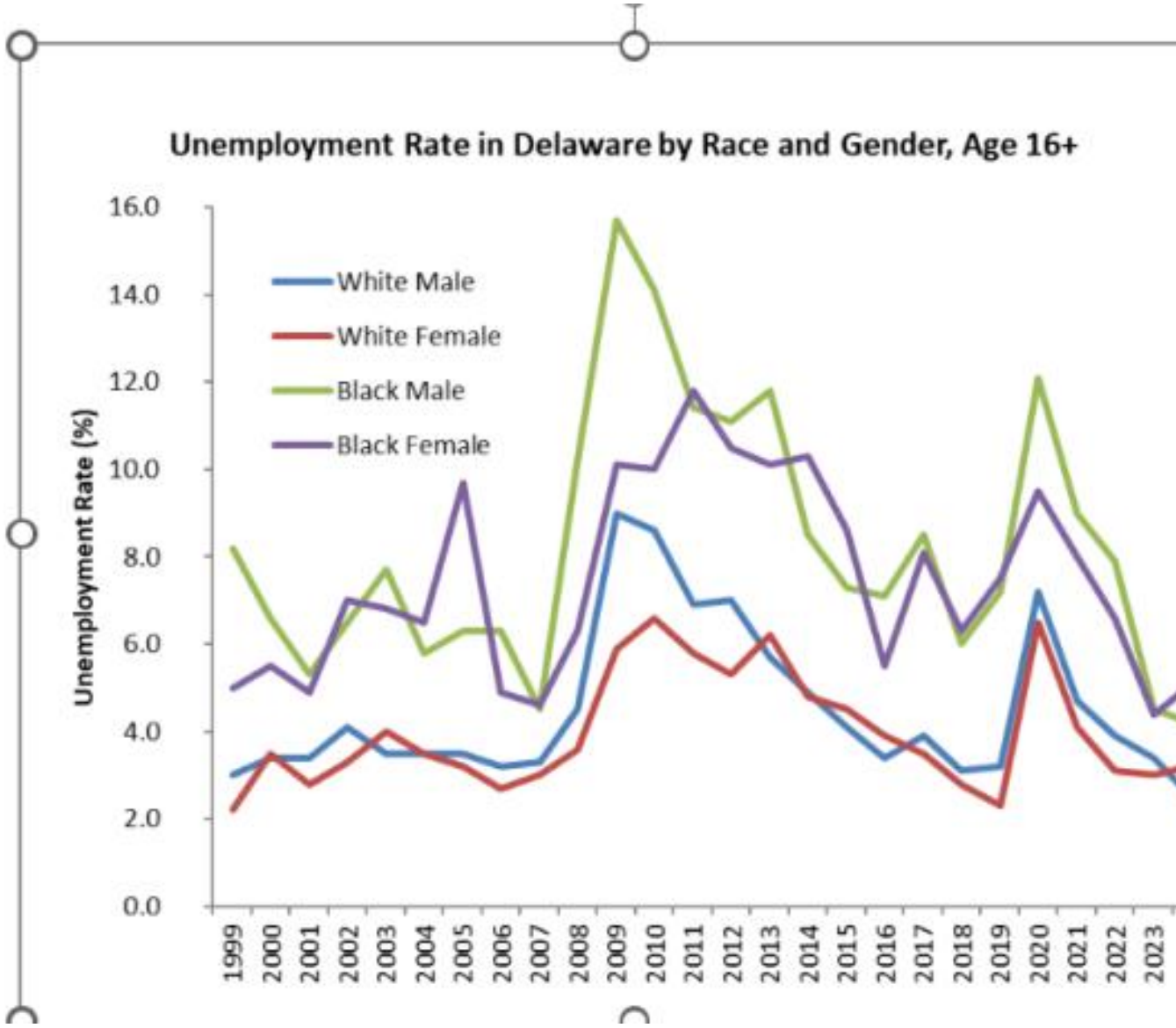
rate increased by 0.2 percentage points. The U.S. average unemployment rate in 2024 was 4.0 percent, up 0.4 percentage points from 2023.

Comparative Annual Unemployment Rates	
	Unemployment Rate
	2023
Delaware	3.8
Maryland	2.2
New Jersey	4.3
Pennsylvania	3.7
United States	3.6
* Lower ranking indicates a more favorable rate.	

t indicates ranking was tied with other state(s).

Unemployment Rate In Delaware by Race and Gender, Age 16+

The chart below clearly demonstrates that race and gender matter. Black males and black females have an unemployment rate about twice that of white men and women.

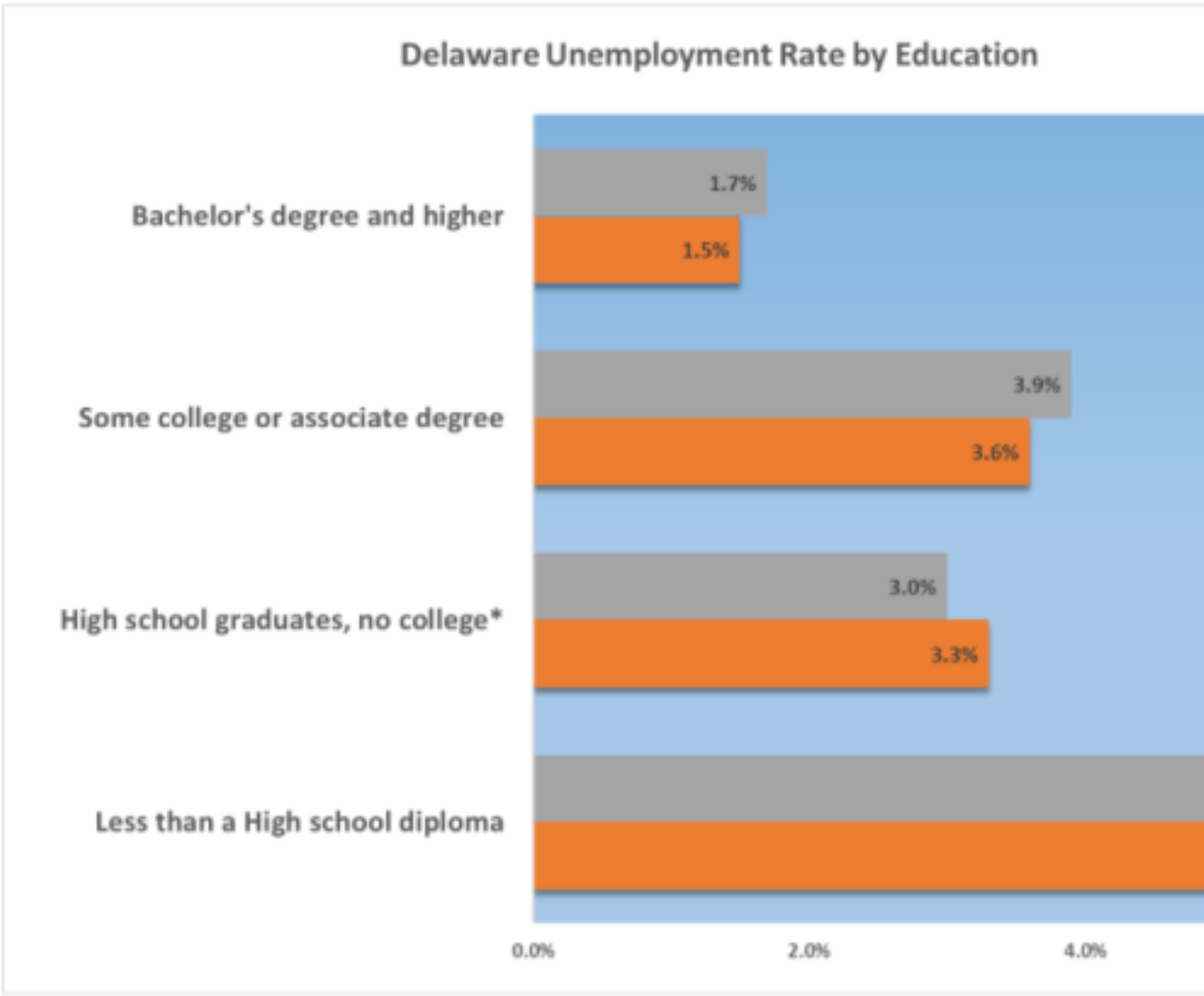


The Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment

In 2024, Delaware's annual average unemployment rate for all residents was 3.7 percent. In most years, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment shows that those with less education are more likely on average to be unemployed than those with more education. In 2024, the average unemployment rate for those who have less than a high school diploma had the highest rate of unemployment than the other educational categories. The benefits of educational attainment are not only that those with more education are usually less likely to be unemployed, but also that those with more education earn on average higher wages than those with less education. The Delaware Unemployment Rate by Education graph below breaks out the unemployment rate by the highest level of education an individual has obtained for persons 25 years of age and older.

The average unemployment rate in 2024 for Delaware residents with less than a high school diploma was 5.7 percent and those with a bachelor's degree or higher had an unemployment rate of 1.5 percent. The unemployment rate for those with Some College or an Associate's

Degree was 3.6 percent and High School Graduates with no college had an average unemployment rate of 3.3 percent.



Jobs by Skill Level in Delaware (2022–2032)

Job openings in Delaware arise from two main sources: employment growth (new jobs created) and separations, which include workers leaving the labor force (exits) or moving into different occupations (transfers). Total job openings are the combined result of these factors.

Between **2022 and 2032**, Delaware is projected to generate **597,336 total job openings**.

- **6.1%** will result from job growth
- **41.8%** will come from worker exits
- **52.1%** will be due to job transfers

This means the vast majority of openings will occur because workers change careers or leave the workforce, not because of net job growth. Delaware's labor market can be grouped into three skill-based categories:

- **Low-skill jobs**
- Require a high school diploma or less
- Average annual wage: **$34,001**

- **Middle-skill jobs**
- Require postsecondary education such as an apprenticeship, certification, or associate degree
- Average annual wage: **$51,074**

- **High-skill jobs**
- Require a bachelor's degree or higher
- Average annual wage: **$90,815**

Top Ten Occupations by Skill Level	
Low Skill	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**
41-2031	Retail salespersons
31-1120	Home health and personal
35-3023	Fast food and counter work
41-2011	Cashiers
53-7062	Laborers and freight, stock
43-4051	Customer service represen
53-7065	Stockers and order fillers
43-9061	Office clerks, general
37-2011	Janitors and cleaners, excep
35-3031	Waiters and waitresses

Top Ten Occupations by Skill Level	
Middle Skill	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**
53-3032	Heavy and tractor-trailer t
43-3031	Bookkeeping, accounting, a
49-9071	Maintenance and repair wo
43-1011	First-line supervisors of off
51-2090	Miscellaneous assemblers a
41-1011	First-line supervisors of re
31-1131	Nursing assistants
41-4012	Sales representatives
25-9045	Teaching assistants, except
35-1012	First-line supervisors of foo
High Skill	
SOC Code	**Occupation Title**
11-1021	General and operations ma
29-1141	Registered nurses
15-1252	Software developers
13-2011	Accountants and auditors
25-2021	Elementary school teachers
11-9199	Managers
13-1199	Business operations specia
25-2031	Secondary school teachers,
13-1111	Management analysts
13-1082	Project management specia

Jobs by Career Cluster & County (2022–2032)

The US Department of Education developed 16 career clusters as a way to link school and work to industry and occupational projections. In the tables below, career clusters are arranged alphabetically by county. For each career cluster is included its average wage, total openings, and job growth.

New Castle County

In New Castle County, the Hospitality & Tourism cluster is expected to generate the most annual openings, with 62,759 projected openings. The Health Science cluster has the highest projected job growth, with 5,906. The Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics cluster is the highest-paying cluster, at $115,357.

New Castle County Wages, Projected Openings, and Growth by Career Cluster		
Career Cluster	**Average Wage 2022**	**Rank**
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	$61,260	11
Architecture & Construction	$59,573	12
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	$71,829	7
Business Management & Administration	$73,519	6
Education & Training	$62,388	10
Finance	$83,694	4
Government & Public Administration	$74,902	5
Health Science	$68,480	8
Hospitality & Tourism	$33,775	16
Human Services	$50,126	14
Information Technology	$111,192	2
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	$87,368	3
Manufacturing	$57,525	13
Marketing	$64,532	9
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	$115,357	1

New Castle County Wages, Projected Openings, and Growth by Career Cluster		
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	$49,039	15

Kent County

In Kent County, the Hospitality & Tourism cluster is expected to generate the most annual openings, with 16,119 projected openings. The Health Science cluster has the highest projected job growth, with 1,034. The Information Technology cluster is the highest-paying cluster, at $82,518.

Kent County Wages, Projected Openings, and Growth by Career Cluster.		
Career Cluster	**Average Wage 2022**	**Rank**
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	$52,383	11
Architecture & Construction	$53,899	10
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	$55,477	7
Business Management & Administration	$54,639	8
Education & Training	$60,041	6
Finance	$70,904	3
Government & Public Administration	$54,165	9
Health Science	$67,382	4
Hospitality & Tourism	$31,129	16
Human Services	$44,802	13
Information Technology	$82,518	1
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	$60,453	5
Manufacturing	$50,527	12
Marketing	$42,398	15
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	$80,590	2
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	$42,998	14

Sussex County

In Sussex County, the Hospitality & Tourism cluster is expected to generate the most annual openings, with 37,315 projected openings. The Health Science cluster has the highest projected job growth, with 3,264. The Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics cluster is the highest-paying cluster, at $103,601.

Sussex County Wages, Projected Openings, and Growth by Career Cluster.

Career Cluster	**Average Wage 2022**	**Rank**
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	$35,598	15
Architecture & Construction	$49,028	10
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	$55,214	8
Business Management & Administration	$54,633	9
Education & Training	$59,114	6
Finance	$79,170	3
Government & Public Administration	$57,774	7
Health Science	$67,950	4
Hospitality & Tourism	$32,183	16
Human Services	$42,923	12
Information Technology	$101,822	2
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	$60,480	5
Manufacturing	$41,135	13
Marketing	$44,335	11
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	$103,601	1
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	$38,575	14

In addition to educational attainment and occupational projections, Delaware assesses employer workforce needs through analysis of the knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), credentials, certifications, and licensure requirements associated with in-demand occupations across the State's priority industries and career clusters.

Employer engagement conducted through sector partnerships, workforce development system partners, Delaware employers, labor market analysis, and occupational projections consistently

identifies demand for workers possessing both technical and employability skills. Common workforce competencies identified across industries include:

- digital literacy and technology proficiency;
- communication and customer service skills;
- critical thinking and problem-solving;
- teamwork and collaboration;
- adaptability and time management;
- project management and organizational skills; and
- occupation-specific technical competencies.

Delaware employers also report significant demand for industry-recognized credentials, occupational certifications, and professional licensure connected to middle-skill and high-skill occupations. Frequently requested credentials and licenses include:

- Commercial Driver's License (CDL);
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA);
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN) licensure;
- teacher certifications and paraprofessional credentials;
- CompTIA, cybersecurity, and information technology certifications;
- welding and manufacturing certifications;
- HVAC, plumbing, and electrical trade licenses;
- Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) credentials; and
- Registered Apprenticeship-related credentials and journey worker certifications.

Middle-skill occupations continue to represent a significant workforce need within Delaware's economy, particularly in healthcare, transportation and logistics, skilled trades, manufacturing, construction, education, and information technology sectors. Many of these occupations require postsecondary training below the bachelor's degree level, including apprenticeships, industry certifications, occupational licensure, or associate degrees.

Delaware utilizes labor market information, employer feedback, apprenticeship data, credential attainment outcomes, and workforce system partner engagement to continuously evaluate evolving employer workforce needs and align workforce development strategies, career pathways, training investments, and educational programming with industry demand.

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, including for populations 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.

IV. 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.

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.

Below is a report DWDB commissioned on labor force participation rate in Delaware:

DELAWARE LABOR FORCE NONPARTICIPANTS: POTENTIAL ASSETS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Alan Phillips, for the Rodel Foundation of Delaware & the Delaware Workforce Development Board February 2023

INTRODUCTION – WHY LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES ARE SIGNIFICANT

Delaware is experiencing a mix of demographic and economic conditions that will impact the state's ability to grow its labor force over the coming decades. First, only modest population growth of prime, working- age Delawareans is expected through 2050. Secondly, historically low unemployment and low rates of labor force participation are continuing to tighten the statewide labor pool. This research brief explores labor force participation and nonparticipation among various population segments. Groups with low participation rates may be potential targets for efforts to increase participation.

- Population projections show modest growth of prime, working-age Delawareans (age 25-54) through 2040.1
- Less than 25,000 prime, working-age residents will be added to the population by 2040.
- From 2040-2050, the prime, working-age population will decline by more than 12,000.
- Delaware's unemployment rates in 2021 and 2022 have been a little higher than the U.S.; however, Delaware's are still at historically low levels and appear to be heading lower.2

- Delaware's labor force participation rate is the 2nd lowest on record since 1976.3
- Labor force participation fell to 60.2% in December 2022, a 1% decrease from December 2021 and more than 2% lower than December's U.S. participation rate of 62.3%.

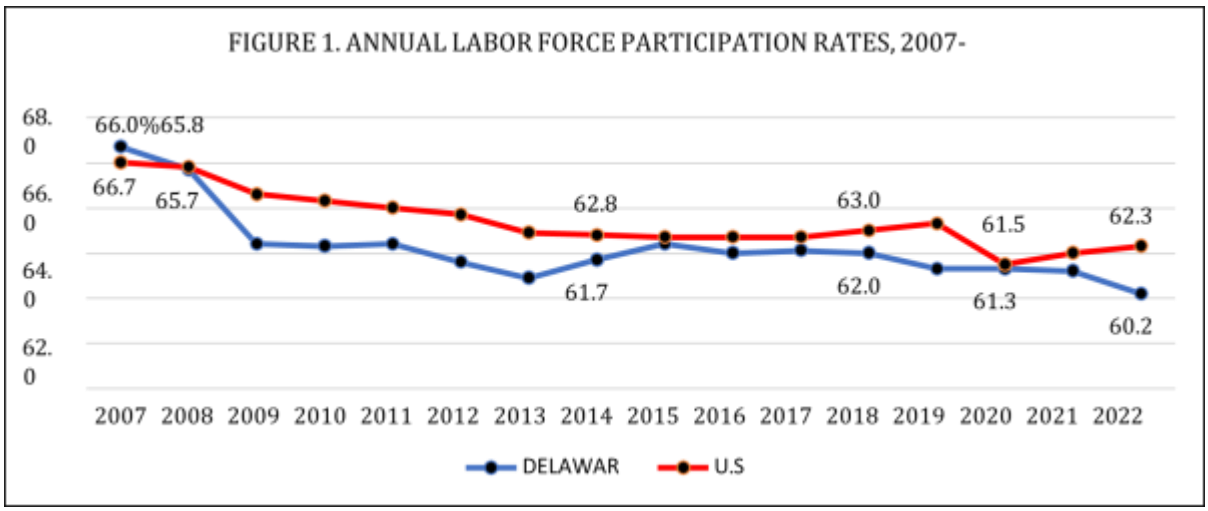
Part of the explanation for Delaware's declining unemployment rate is its declining labor force participation rate. Both employed and unemployed residents are counted in labor force participation rates. Employed residents and those actively seeking work are participants. Those who aren't working and are not able, not available, or not actively seeking work are labor force nonparticipants. Other than increasing migration into Delaware, the only way to grow the state's labor force will be to convert labor force nonparticipants into participants.

FIGURE 1. ANNUAL LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, 2007-2022

Delaware's labor force participation rate has mostly been lower than the U.S. labor force participation rate over the last 15 years.

- Labor force participation was 66.0% prior to the Great Recession of 2008; the U.S. labor force participation rate was 66.7%.
- Neither the U.S nor Delaware returned to pre-recession participation in the years following.
- Baby Boomer retirements began to accelerate at the onset of the Great Recession.
- Delaware's labor force participation rate was about even with the U.S. rate by 2015.
- Since 2015 U.S. labor force participation rates have increased, but Delaware's have declined.
- U.S. labor force participation appears to be recovering and rising during the post-pandemic recovery, but labor force participation in Delaware appears to be continuing a downward trend.

Changing economic conditions as well as the continuing departure of the Baby Boomers from the workforce will likely impact the state's labor force participation rates for years.



SOURCE: Delaware Department of Labor Office of Labor Market Information; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Economic Data

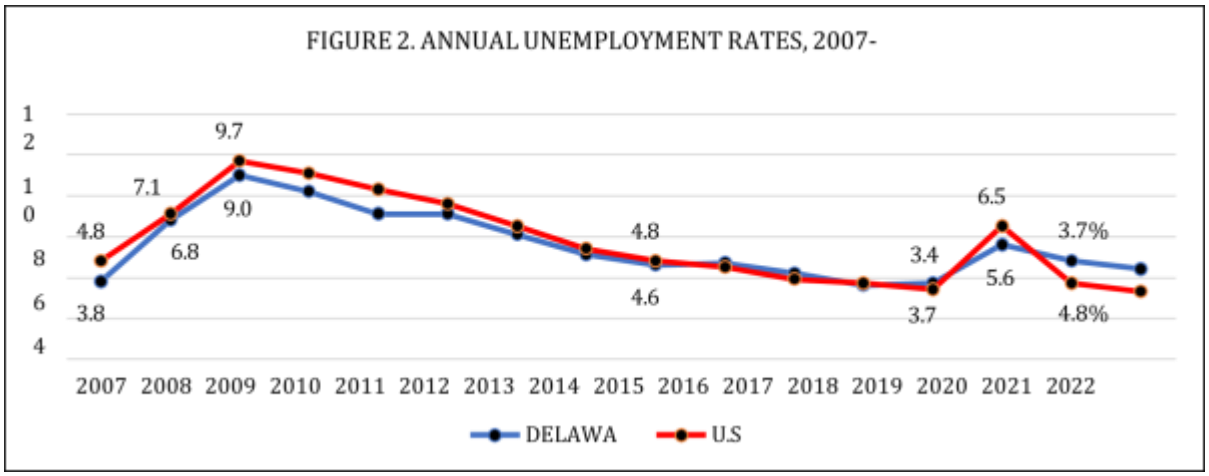
FIGURE 2. ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 2007-2022

Unemployment rates in Delaware have been remarkably similar to U.S. unemployment rates through most of the 12-year period from 2007-2019. Unemployment peaked during the Great Recession beginning in 2008, and then recovered a bit more quickly between 2010 and 2015.

- The state's unemployment rate spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to 5.6%.
- Unemployment in Delaware was lower in 2020 than the U.S. unemployment rate of 6.5%.
- Delaware's post-pandemic unemployment rates, while low, have been about 1% higher than the

U.S. unemployment rates (December 2021 & December 2022).

Delaware's unemployment rates appear to be trending downward in tandem with labor force participation. Together, lowering unemployment and labor force participation rates signal a continuing tightening of the state's labor force.



SOURCE: Delaware Department of Labor Office of Labor Market Information; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED Economic Data

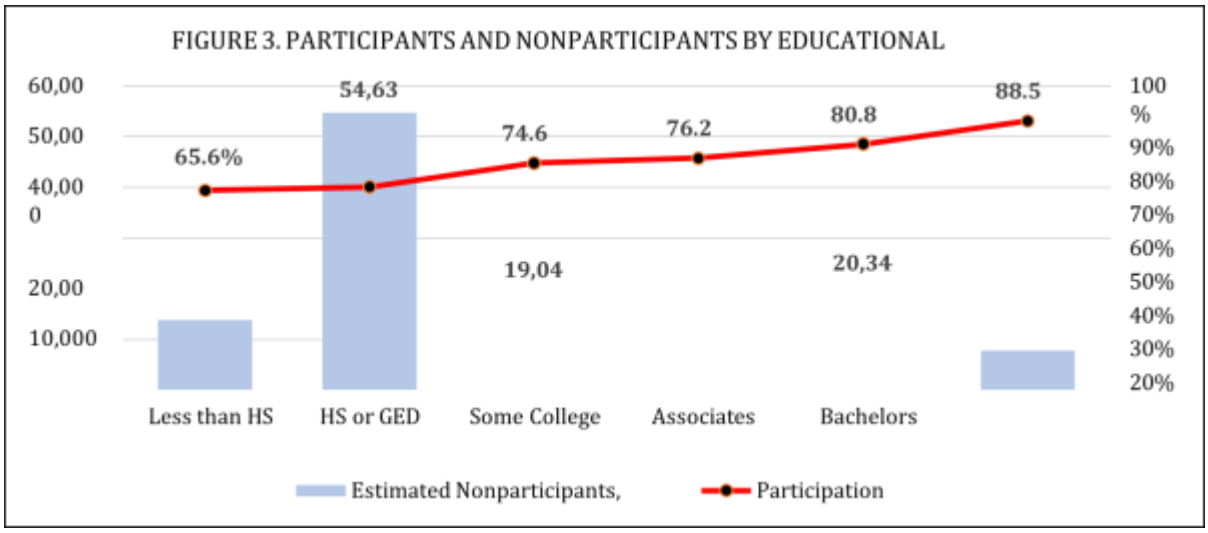
FIGURE 3. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT GROUP

Labor force participation rates vary by education level. The red line in the figure below shows participation rates by education attainment for prime, working-age residents (25 to 64).

- High school & GED completers display the lowest labor force participation rate, at 65.6%.
- Completers of Some College, No Degree participate in the labor force at a rate of about eight percentage points higher than those with just a high school diploma.
- Associate degree completers participate at rate that is 10 percentage points higher than high school/GED completers.

- Bachelor's degree (or higher) completers demonstrate participation rates at greater than 80%, and greater than 14 percentage points above high school/GED completers.

The increased rates of labor force participation for those with higher levels of educational attainment indicate that the state's labor market likely values higher levels of education.



SOURCE: U.S. Census, Current Population Survey, 2022, IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

INCREASING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY ATTAINMENT GROUP

A one- or two-percent increase in the state's labor participation rate would add approximately the following numbers of workers to Delaware's labor force:

Education Attainment Level	Participation I
Less than HS	394
HS or GED	1,681
Some College, No Degree	799
Associate's degree	405
Bachelor's Degree	1,041
Masters/Prof Degree	725

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY AGE GROUP AND SEX

Participation in Delaware's labor force for both males and female peaks for workers aged 25-29. After that, female and male participation trajectories vary until both turn 60 and begin to retire and exit the labor force at similar rates.

FIGURE 4. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AGE GROUP (WOMEN)

- Women in the 25-29 age group participate in the labor force at higher rates than males by nearly 20 percentage points.

- Women's participation trajectory declines sharply after age 29.
- Women also appear to exit the labor force earlier than males, showing decline as they enter the 55-59 age group.

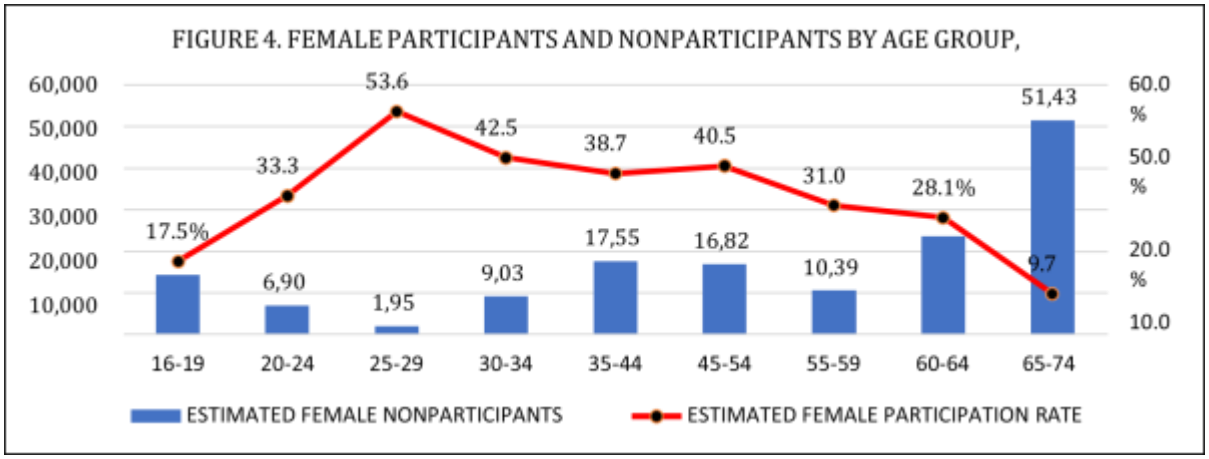
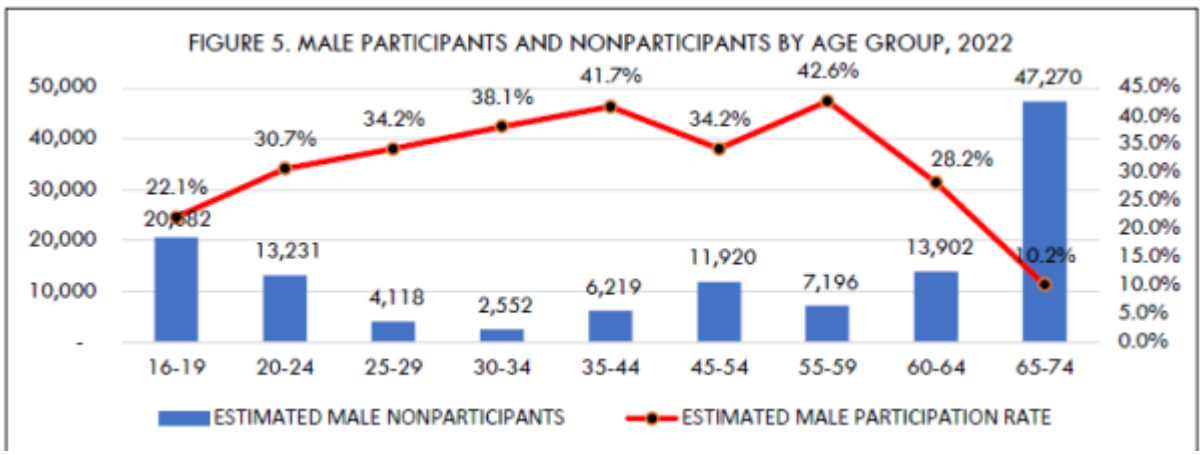


Figure 5. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY AGE GROUP (MALES)

- Men aged 20-34 participate in the labor force at smaller rates than women.
- Participation for men aged 35-44 is higher than for women aged 35-44.
- Male participation drops sharply for the age 45-54 age group.
- Participation rates for men jump at age 55-59, exceeding women's rates by more than 20 percentage points.
- Males exit the workforce at about the same rate as females upon entering the 60-64 age group.



INCREASING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION FOR PRIME WORKING-AGE FEMALES AND MALES

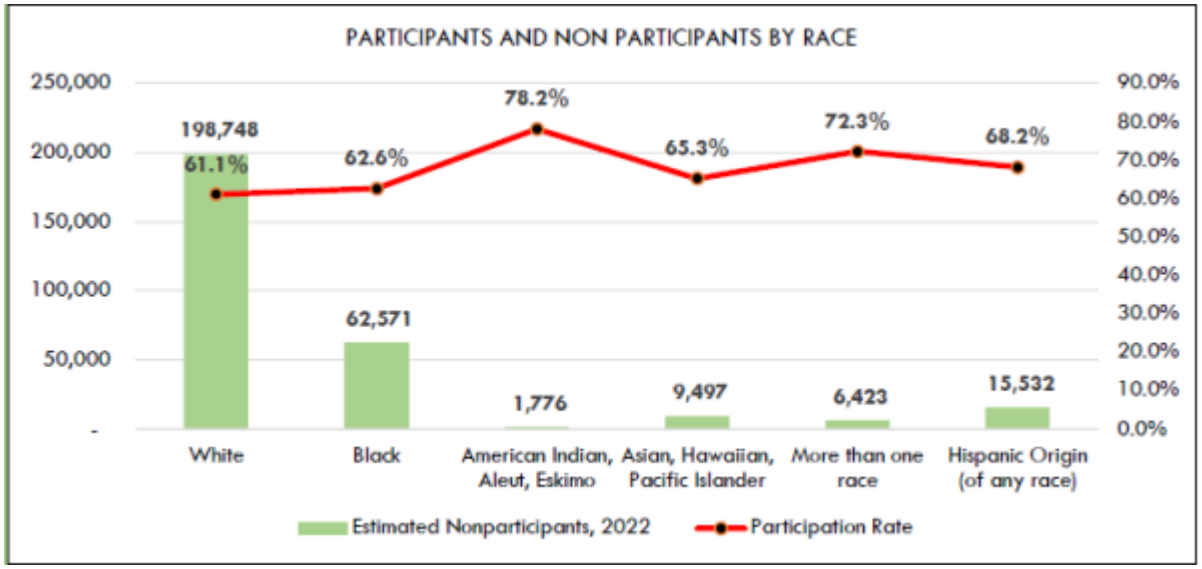
A one- or two-percent increase in the state's labor participation rate would add approximately the following numbers of prime, working-age participants to Delaware's labor force:

Education Attainment Level	Participation I
Females, age 25-54	1,933

Education Attainment Level	Participation In
Males, age 25-54	1,572

FIGURE 6. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY RACE

There is little variation in labor force participation by White and Black Delawareans; however, residents of Hispanic origin (of any race), Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders and those identifying as More than One Race participate at higher rates than either White or Black residents.



INCREASING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY RACE

A one- or two-percent increase in the state's labor participation rate would add approximately the following numbers of participants to Delaware's labor force by race:

Education Attainment Level	Participation In
White	5,156
Black	1,684
American Indian, Aleut, Eskimo	81
Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	274
More than one race	232
Hispanic Origin (of any race)	821

SUMMARY

Falling unemployment rates and labor force participation, and slowing population growth of prime, working-age Delawareans, will create challenges for growing the state's workforce for some time. Nonparticipants in the labor force could be a potential source of additional workers.

This research brief suggests opportunities for further analysis including examining additional variables impacting labor force participation such as:

- Differences in male and female participation at all educational attainment levels.
- Differences in participation by race/ethnicity at all educational attainment levels.
- Factors that may impact women's participation in the labor force, such as childcare availability and/or caregiving responsibilities.
- Reasons given for unemployment and unsuccessful job searches.
- Wage levels and demographic/educational attainment characteristics.

There are sizable number of 25–54-year-old residents – over 54,000 = who have only completed high school or a GED and are labor force nonparticipants. This group represents potential candidates for training that moves them into the Some College, No Degree (and higher educational attainment categories), with the goal of entering into the labor force earning self-sustaining wages in Delaware's in- demand industries. The February 14 edition of The Economics Daily online bulletin by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), announced that "half of civilian workers required over one year of preparation time to perform their jobs in 2022." Further, in 2022, "53.7 percent of civilian workers required specific vocational preparation time over 1 year. This preparation comes in the form of formal education, credentials, prior work experience, and on-the-job training needed to perform the job." Ensuring participants have critical preparation needed to enter and advance in the labor force will be crucial to encouraging nonparticipants to enter and stay engaged in Delaware's labor force.

Labor Force Participation and Workforce Opportunity Analysis

Delaware recognizes that declining labor force participation rates, combined with modest projected growth among prime working-age residents, present long-term workforce challenges impacting the State's ability to meet employer demand across key industry sectors.

A Delaware Workforce Development Board labor force participation analysis found that Delaware's labor force participation rate declined to 60.2 percent in 2022, remaining below the national average and representing one of the lowest participation rates recorded in the State since 1976. The analysis further noted that slowing population growth among prime working-age residents, combined with increasing retirements among aging workers, will continue to constrain labor force growth over the coming decades.

The analysis identified labor force nonparticipants as a significant opportunity area for workforce system engagement. Populations with barriers to employment, including individuals with low educational attainment, caregivers, older workers, justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, English language learners, long-term unemployed individuals, and public assistance recipients may represent potential sources of labor force growth if barriers to participation are addressed through targeted workforce development and supportive service strategies.

The State's analysis also demonstrates a strong relationship between educational attainment, workforce participation, and economic opportunity. Labor force participation rates increase significantly as educational attainment rises, with individuals possessing postsecondary

education, credentials, certifications, apprenticeships, or degrees participating in the labor force at substantially higher rates than individuals with only a high school diploma or less. Delaware's labor market increasingly values postsecondary education, occupational training, industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning, and technical skill development aligned to in-demand occupations.

Delaware's workforce and economic analysis identifies middle-skill occupations as a major area of workforce opportunity. Many in-demand occupations across healthcare, construction, transportation and logistics, manufacturing, information technology, education, finance, and skilled trades require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree. These occupations frequently require industry-recognized credentials, occupational licensure, apprenticeship participation, technical training, or associate degrees.

The State also identified several workforce participation barriers impacting labor force engagement and economic mobility, including:

- childcare and dependent care responsibilities;
- transportation access;
- digital literacy gaps;
- access to affordable training opportunities;
- housing instability;
- limited work experience; and
- credential attainment gaps.

To address these workforce challenges, Delaware continues to align workforce system investments toward career pathways, sector partnerships, Registered Apprenticeship, postsecondary credential attainment, work-based learning opportunities, supportive services, and employer-driven training strategies designed to increase labor force participation and meet the hiring, education, and skill needs of Delaware employers.

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

Delaware does not provide a reassessment of current information in this section including data or progress on identified plans to address weaknesses in the workforce development system. The description of activities does not provide an analysis in relation to the state's ability to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii), and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii).

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 [6] and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[7]

[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.

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Adult
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Dislocated Wo

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Youth
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title III Wagner-Pey
Delaware Department of Labor	Trade Adjustment Assistan
Delaware Department of Labor	Jobs for Veterans State Gra

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Labor	Reemployment Services an
Delaware Department of Labor	DVR Title IV
Delaware Department of Education	Title II Adult Education and

Delaware Agency	Program Role

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Education	Career and Technical Educa

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	DVI

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	TANF

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	SNAP
Delaware Health and Social Services	Community Service Block G
Delaware Health and Social Services	Division of Aging Adults wi

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	Office of Financial Empowe
Criminal Justice Council Authority	State Administrating Agenc
Department of HUD	Delaware State Housing Au

Delaware Agency	Program Role

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of State	Division of Small Business
	Wilmington Job Corps
Delaware Department of State	Division of Libraries
	Telamon NFJP
Wilmington Housing Authority	Youth Build

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Additional Partners	
Newark Housing Authority	

Criminal Justice Reform Initiatives

The core purpose of this initiative is to recognize the State's citizens returning from incarceration face many barriers that often contribute to a cycle of criminal activity. Challenges such as homelessness, lack of job skills, limited education, mental health issues, substance use disorders, transportation constraints, and employment hurdles due to criminal records are critical concerns for the State. Addressing these issues is essential for the collective benefit of all citizens. The primary goals include enhancing the transition from correctional facilities to communities, bolstering public safety, diminishing recidivism rates, optimizing correctional resources, and fostering partnerships with communities, non-profit service providers, reentry advocates, and statewide justice-oriented associations.

Delaware Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint 2021-2024 found here.

The Blueprint sets forth the strategy for the State's ongoing work to improve prisoner reentry into the community following a term of incarceration. Board members and staff are actively engaged in various committees within the governance framework. Several working groups have goals that surround providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to find gainful employment.

Specifically, the Employment and Education Committee objectives are to strengthen the vocational training options available to incarcerated individuals and ensure inmates' s equitable access to and credit for those programs. Under this committee v*ocational training programs should prioritize the adoption of industry recognized credentials for all current and future vocational and industry programs. Apprenticeship programming should be considered so incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to accrue supervised apprenticeship hours while incarcerated.*

- *The workgroup should review DOC's menu of all vocational training occurring in the prisons and determine if the training is adequate and make recommendations for addressing gaps.*

- *The workgroup should work with the DOC's Director of Classification to ensure the process of inmate assessment and classification to education/vocational training is consistent and equitable across all Level V sites.*
- *The workgroup should review alignment of all Prison Education service hours with goodtime in DOC's computerized offender management system.*
- *The workgroup should identify and implement at least one apprenticeship pathway for incarcerated people and implement the program at a Level V institution.*
- *The workgroup should ensure that the 2nd Chance Pell Grant program partnership with Del Tech is fully implemented in the pilot prison sites to offer associate degree opportunities in the human service sector.*

APEX Pardon and Expungement Program

The APEX Pardons & Expungement Program provides direct services to justice-involved persons to remove barriers relating to employment, housing, and education. To help eliminate barriers to employment and provide comprehensive One -Stop Services, the Apex Program was moved to the Division of Employment and Training in 2021. This program is dedicated to providing direct applicant services and information to individuals with criminal histories by helping them through the pardon or expungement process. Eligible persons are provided one-on-one assistance and guidance through each step of the process. Services are provided statewide including supportive services and training opportunities.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant-DOL Veterans Employment Team:

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Program, funded by the USDOL, empowers local State Workforce Agencies to deploy specialized personnel. These individuals offer tailored services to eligible veterans and those facing significant barriers to employment, including those with a history of criminal justice involvement or past felony convictions. Within each American Job Center (AJC), a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist delivers personalized case management to veterans, eligible spouses, or caregivers of wounded, ill, or injured service members receiving treatment at military treatment facilities (MTFs) or warrior transition units (WTUs).

DVOPs offer a spectrum of services including employment readiness training, career guidance, and assistance. They facilitate access to resources within the Department of Labor (DOL) or connect individuals with appropriate support through our extensive partner network. Additionally, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) engage directly with employers to cultivate employment opportunities specifically for veterans.

Veterans Treatment Court

The Department of Labor's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) conducts direct outreach to Delaware Veterans who have been involved with the justice system or are in recovery from substance use disorders and opioid addictions. This outreach involves the DVOP attending scheduled treatment court sessions across the state. Veterans attending these

sessions receive individualized case management and specialized employment services aimed at supporting their successful re-entry into the workforce.

For more information on the Delaware Treatment Courts please see weblink below.

https://courts.delaware.gov/superior/veteranscourt/

Other one- stop mandatory partners linked into the comprehensive system on a referral basis but not electronically.

Strengths of the Delaware's workforce development activities based on the State Plan Survey Discussion:

Expanded opportunities to connect with staff, other agencies, and DWDB: There is increased interaction and engagement with the workforce system, that encourages the emergence of issues and opportunities from bottom up, allowing for better collaboration and understanding among the partners. There is a receptive board that values and considers suggestions.

More availability of data to guide decisions: The access to a wider range of data enables informed decision-making, aiding in crafting more effective strategies and interventions.

Partnerships: There is increased emphasize and encouragement for partnerships, fostering collaboration between different stakeholders which can lead to more comprehensive solutions and better resource allocation.

Proactive plan for better coordination: There is a proactive approach towards coordination which implies a commitment to streamlining efforts and resources for more efficient outcomes.

Collaborative review of different title RFP's: By collaboratively reviewing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to various titles, there is enhanced and comprehensive understanding of different aspects, ensuring a more unified approach.

Devoted board: A devoted board actively participating in meetings, committees, volunteering for special projects, and serving on RFP panels (e.g., DWDB RFP panels; DOE panels).

Committed personal: Committed personal from all levels, including core partner staff, program providers, community-based organizations and other that are dedicated to their roles and providing opportunities for Delawareans.

DET's ability to successfully deliver integrated services statewide, including many of the core and mandatory programs under WIOA.

DVR co-located in American Job Centers.

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).

Weaknesses of Delaware's workforce development activities based on the State Plan Survey Discussion:

Separate databases despite coordination mandate: Despite a mandate for coordination, the existence of separate databases creates silos and impedes seamless information sharing, collaboration, tracking, and referrals.

No common intake form: The absence of a standardized intake form could lead to inefficiencies and difficulties in data collection and sharing across different departments or organizations.

Limited institutional knowledge: High turnover in staff that processes the institutional knowledge might hinder innovation and the adoption of more effective practices based on new data or insights.

Customers frustration: Process can be frustrating and difficult to navigate. Especially true if a client needs several services across multiple agencies. This can lead to no-shows and different stages of the process. Individual experiences shaped by the first partner they encounter. Steps are being taken to reduce frustrations to include streamlining the process for ITA approvals by sharing CASAS scores among partners, incorporating outreach coordinators to better serve employers, adding the referral mechanism into Delaware JobLink to reduce duplicative systems and a focus on customer service to ensure the best possible experience.

Staff frustration: Staff has expressed frustration with the intake process, clients not having the necessary documentation, processes can be time confusing and inefficient. In addition, there can be varying degrees of internal and external program knowledge among individuals.

Lack of coordination at the Federal level: While Delaware aims for coordination, the expectation of coordination at the Federal level doesn't align with the actual coordination among Federal agencies, leading to challenges in meeting expectations and requirements.

Establishing sufficient resources and funding sources

- The level of effort required to develop and maintain strong partnerships.
- Increased pressure on the American Job Centers and staff knowledge.

Educating the public on WIOA resources for those that need services.

Increasing the awareness of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) services available to veterans, covered veterans, and eligible spouses.

Staff turnover which increases loss of staff knowledge and retraining new staff to be subject matter experts.

Addressing these weaknesses could significantly enhance the effectiveness of the WIOA State Plan, promoting better coordination, streamlined processes, and improved outcomes in workforce development.

Delaware possesses a robust capacity to educate and train its citizens across various workforce segments. The state boasts a range of training investments from both state and federal sources, enabling the development of diverse training programs. These initiatives encompass customized workforce training, pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities, and secondary school programs within Career and Technical Education (CTE). Leveraging its size as an advantage, Delaware engages employers and trainers effectively to

ensure alignment with local skill needs across all workforce levels. Collaborative efforts between the Department of Labor, Delaware Workforce Development Board, Delaware Prosperity Partnership, Department of Education, and others facilitate information sharing and action based on insights received from the business community. Additionally, stakeholders representing workers, including entities like the Department of Labor, United Way of Delaware, local housing authorities, unions, and community-based organizations, actively participate in shaping training programs to prioritize individual workers' voices.

Delaware's training community thrives with resources. The state hosts a single community college system with four primary campuses and specialized satellite sites, such as the Innovation and Technology Center, offering diverse workforce training programs tailored to industries like healthcare, construction, and manufacturing. Furthermore, the Adult Education Workforce system, housed within Vocational Technical (VoTech) School Districts across three locations within the state, serves as a hub for Registered Apprenticeship technical instruction. Both the community college system and VoTechs cater to a diverse student population, representing Delaware's workforce. The local trades unions also contribute significantly, providing excellent training opportunities for apprentices and continuous education for Journey workers. Community-based organizations play a pivotal role in complementing the efforts of traditional educational institutions and government agencies in providing training and educational opportunities. These organizations serve as invaluable partners in addressing the diverse needs of communities by offering specialized and tailored training programs. By leveraging their close ties to the local community, these providers offer accessible and targeted training initiatives that cater to specific skill gaps and requirements. Their flexibility, grassroots approach, and cultural sensitivity enable them to reach marginalized or underserved populations effectively, ensuring inclusivity and expanding the reach of workforce development efforts. Collaborating with community-based organizations enriches the training landscape, fostering a more comprehensive and responsive ecosystem for skill-building and career advancement.

In adult education, the increased integration of technology in prisons has expanded post-secondary education opportunities. A recent task force was established to study ways to increase funding for Adult Basic Education (ABE), to develop strategies for better aligning ABE with workforce needs and ensure that ABE students are aware of all opportunities for further training and education in Delaware. The below chart was presented as part of the work and shows the current wait list as well as cost to eliminate the list. Increasing the funding for ABE, GED, and ESL would serve 577 current students waiting for services.

Adult Education: **FY 24 Adult Basic Education Waiting List**

Program Name	Number of ABE/GED Students Waiting	Number of ESL Students W
Sussex Tech	0	294
Polytech	3	130
Red Clay	24	0
NCCVT	0	18

Program Name	Number of ABE/GED Students Waiting	Number of ESL Students W
Christina	10	10
DTCC Owens	1	8
DTCC Terry	9	0
DTCC George	36	0
Appoquinimink	0	34
Totals	83	494

* *The chart shows the amount needed to eliminate the ABE waiting list for this year with classes running from January to June. The numbers used were based on the Continuing Services Applications each program submitted last March to receive funding for Fiscal Year 2024.*

Other struggles with capacity include recent staff shortages and turnover pose a significant barrier to delivering services effectively. Vocational-technical schools lack sufficient funds to support apprenticeships, compounded by staff capacity issues in managing apprenticeship programs. Diverse enrollment procedures exist due to varying federal regulations governing intake forms. There's inconsistency among our partners and the Department of Employment and Training (DET) in defining a participant, leading to incomplete and inaccurate outcome assessments. The state grapples with document accessibility issues, especially with PDF files, images lacking text descriptions, non-fillable documents, and everyday materials, hindering the effectiveness of screen readers. Document remediation remains unaddressed.

Delaware continues to reassess workforce development system performance, coordination, and capacity through partner engagement, labor market analysis, employer feedback, strategic planning efforts, and workforce system surveys conducted in conjunction with State Plan development activities.

The State has identified several areas of progress since the previous planning cycle. Significant advancements include expanded interagency collaboration among WIOA core and mandatory partners, increased co-location and coordination within American Job Centers, improvements in integrated service delivery, enhanced employer engagement strategies, and expanded utilization of labor market and workforce data to support decision-making. Delaware also continues to strengthen sector partnerships, Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, career pathway development, work-based learning models, and workforce alignment efforts across education, workforce, economic development, and community-based organizations.

Progress has also been made in improving services for populations with barriers to employment, including justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, English language learners, veterans, individuals experiencing housing instability, and low-income populations. Initiatives such as the APEX Pardon and Expungement Program, Veterans Treatment Court outreach, prison education expansion, Second Chance Pell implementation,

integrated education and training programs, and increased supportive service coordination demonstrate Delaware's continued focus on workforce inclusion and labor force participation.

Despite these improvements, Delaware continues to face workforce system challenges that impact the State's ability to fully address workforce and employer needs. Identified challenges include:

- fragmented intake and data systems across partner programs;
- inconsistent participant tracking methodologies;
- staff turnover and institutional knowledge loss;
- limited staffing capacity;
- accessibility barriers related to electronic and printed materials;
- insufficient Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED, and ESL capacity;
- apprenticeship administrative capacity limitations; and
- customer navigation difficulties across multiple workforce programs and agencies.

These challenges directly affect the State's ability to respond to the workforce skill needs identified in Section II(a)(1)(B)(iii) and the hiring needs of employers identified in Section II(a)(1)(A)(iii), particularly within healthcare, skilled trades, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, information technology, education, and public safety occupations.

Delaware identified several priority opportunity areas to strengthen workforce system effectiveness and improve alignment with employer demand, including:

- expanding integrated data-sharing and referral systems;
- streamlining intake and customer navigation processes;
- increasing Adult Education, GED, ESL, and digital literacy capacity;
- expanding Registered Apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities;
- strengthening employer engagement and sector partnerships;
- improving accessibility of workforce system materials and services;
- increasing staff cross-training and professional development; and
- expanding supportive services that address transportation, childcare, housing, and other barriers to employment.

The State's workforce development activities continue to prioritize alignment between education, workforce training, credential attainment, and employer demand. Delaware leverages partnerships among the Delaware Workforce Development Board, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Delaware Technical Community College, vocational-technical school districts, labor organizations, employers, community-based organizations, and economic development entities to support workforce preparation strategies responsive to current and projected labor market needs.

Delaware's workforce strategy recognizes that many of the State's highest-demand occupations increasingly require postsecondary education, industry-recognized credentials, technical skill attainment, occupational licensure, digital literacy, and work-based learning experience. As a result, the State continues to emphasize career pathways, integrated education and training, apprenticeship expansion, adult education alignment, correctional education, and sector-based workforce strategies designed to increase labor force participation and strengthen Delaware's talent pipeline.

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[8] and other populations.[9]

(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, and 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.

Since Governor Matt Meyer assumed office in January 2025, Delaware has reaffirmed and refined its workforce development vision to further align workforce, education, economic development, and labor market strategies with current economic conditions and emerging workforce needs. Building upon the State's existing workforce framework, Governor Meyer's administration has emphasized workforce participation, economic mobility, skills attainment, employer alignment, and equitable access to career opportunities as central priorities of Delaware's workforce strategy.

Delaware's current labor market conditions, workforce participation trends, demographic changes, employer workforce shortages, and educational attainment data, Delaware updated its workforce priorities to place additional emphasis on:

- expanding labor force participation;
- addressing workforce shortages in healthcare, education, construction, manufacturing, technology, and skilled trades;
- increasing credential attainment and work-based learning opportunities;
- strengthening career pathway alignment;
- integrating digital literacy and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence;
- improving access for populations with barriers to employment; and
- strengthening coordination among workforce system partners.

These refinements reflect Delaware's recognition that workforce challenges have evolved significantly due to demographic shifts, labor market constraints, technological changes, post-pandemic workforce participation trends, and growing employer demand for technical and durable skills.

Delaware Governor Matt Meyer and the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) are deeply committed to creating a cohesive and effective integrated workforce system for the state's residents. The vision is to empower individuals, enrich communities, and drive economic prosperity through learning and skills advancement. This vision, which spans from developmental years through adulthood, emphasizes the importance of specific skillsets, including durable skills, critical thinking, teamwork, digital literacy, workplace proficiency, and civic engagement.

The focus on improving literacy, graduation rates, and providing diverse post-secondary education and training options reflects a holistic approach to preparing individuals for the workforce. This approach recognizes that learning is a lifelong endeavor, with opportunities for skill development continuing throughout one's career.

Maintaining Delaware as a single service delivery area, with the State Board acting as both a state and local entity, demonstrates a strategic move to leverage existing successes and

strengthen partnerships among key stakeholders. This unified approach is critical for maximizing the impact of limited governmental resources, while also tapping into the wealth of knowledge and resources available from leaders outside the publicly funded system.

The mission of the Delaware Workforce Development Board is to be committed to the continuous improvement of workforce development by remaining responsive to the evolving needs of individuals and industries. We aim to drive positive change, strengthen our communities, and contribute to a vibrant and thriving economy, building a future where every Delawarean has the opportunity to flourish and contribute to the greater good.

Overall, this vision and mission is a testament to the dedication of Governor Meyer, the DWDB, and our partners to create a robust and inclusive workforce system that empowers Delawareans, supports Delaware businesses, and the state's economic growth and prosperity.

The State of Delaware has set forth comprehensive goals aimed at strategically transforming its workforce landscape to address crucial challenges and meet the evolving demands of its economy. These goals encompass a holistic approach geared towards fostering sustainable growth, aligning educational pursuits with industry needs, and expanding opportunities for all its residents. **With an acute awareness of the significant disparities between job openings and the available workforce, Delaware will prioritize sectors vital for immediate employment needs while strategically targeting long-term growth industries**. Concurrently, the state is committed to raising educational attainment levels, aligning training programs with industry demands, and fostering inclusivity by bridging existing gaps among various demographic groups. This ambitious vision is underpinned by a robust workforce system designed to provide comprehensive services, ensuring equitable access and tailored support for job seekers and employers alike.

Goal 1: Prioritize Sectors

Delaware faces an historic imbalance between the demand for workers and the supply of job seekers. In August of 2023, there were 20,800 unemployed people versus 33,000 job openings (BLS), resulting in 1.6 open positions for everyone looking. The average for the US is 1.5 so Delaware is higher than the national average. Compared to our neighboring states Delaware ties with PA, NJ is the lowest at 1, and MD has the highest at 3.3 jobs opening per individual.

With talent shortages in most sector across the state, Delaware needs to prioritize. Delaware plans to address both growth sectors and enabling sectors. Enabling sectors are those that focus on occupations in industries with immediate employment needs that are crucial to helping Delawareans re-enter the workforce. These are industries such as individual and family services, early childcare, and education, K12 education, and home health services are vital for others to be able to work. Delaware's identified enabling sectors are industries that are growing and will drive high employment demand through 2030. Many of these jobs require workers with training or certification, and several of these industries provide services to vulnerable populations and/or provide critical services that other workers depend on.

In addition, Delaware will focus on longer term growth in sectors that will build economic prosperity in mid- to high-skill careers that will driver economic self-sufficiency and build a growing economy in high growth technology and infrastructure. These industries include healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, and construction, align with projected

employment growth. Delaware is also looking at ways to blend in Artificial Intelligence programing, stackable credentials with an aggressive focus on Apprenticeships.

Goal 2: Raise the Bar

Many professions now demand education beyond a high school diploma. Projections for 2025 indicate that approximately 60% of job opportunities will necessitate training or education beyond high school. Surprisingly, Delaware lacks a formalized educational or training goal, setting it apart from only five other states. Nonetheless, Delaware aims for 60% of its residents aged 25 to 64 to achieve a degree or certification beyond high school by 2030, marking a 9.1 percentage point increase from the present 50.9%. Industries requiring education beyond high school are expected to flourish and offer higher compensation. Moreover, individuals with advanced education or training are more likely to participate in the workforce. Consequently, Delaware actively promotes individuals to pursue additional education and training opportunities.

Goal 3: Increase Alignment

Delaware is deeply committed to eradicating the barriers that separate education from the workforce by emphasizing career pathways, internships, work-based learning initiatives, apprenticeships, and other such programs. The state's goal is to enhance the correlation between work and education, thereby better aligning training programs with the requirements of both employers and the future workforce. Efforts are underway to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and practical work settings, enabling learners to acquire genuine hands-on experience.

Moreover, establishing strong connections with employer partners is a key focus for Delaware, ensuring that training programs are finely attuned to meet employer needs. A recent survey conducted among Delaware employers highlighted specific deficiencies in potential employee applicants. These gaps encompassed enduring qualities like self-motivation, communication prowess, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking, alongside technical proficiencies such as Excel and Word software proficiency, fundamental computer literacy, and proficiency in data analysis.

Goal 4: Expand Opportunities

Ensuring educational and economic fairness forms the bedrock of Delaware's state well-being. Presently, opportunities aren't evenly accessible, prompting Delaware's ambition to significantly narrow existing gaps rooted in racial and ethnic disparities. Notably, Delaware is experiencing increased diversity, evident in its population growth from 907,135 in 2011 to 1,003,384 in 2021 to it's current estimated population level of 1,082,900. During this period, the white population declined, surpassed by the growth of other racial and ethnic groups, notably the swiftly expanding Latino demographic. This demographic shift is mirrored in Delaware's workforce.

Additionally, Delaware is undergoing an aging trend, ranking as the fifth oldest state by 2020, with one in five Delawareans now aged over 65. This demographic shift poses a challenge in meeting the workforce demands essential for our economy. Hence, Delaware aims to serve all populations and communities.

Title II: The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) oversees the State's workforce development activities funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). They follow strict guidelines and processes for distributing funds, including a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Eligible providers must demonstrate effectiveness in providing literacy services and transitioning learners to employment or further education. The RFP outlines specific considerations providers must address, such as support for literacy resource centers, curriculum development, teacher quality improvement, and outreach efforts. The DDOE monitors program performance regularly and offers technical assistance to ensure compliance with WIOA targets. Funded programs must serve various adult populations, including those with barriers to employment, and align with the state's workforce development goals.

DDOE oversees a range of workforce development activities funded under WIOA Title II. These activities include:

1. Adult education and literacy: Providing basic education and literacy instruction to adults, including workplace-focused education.
2. English language acquisition: Offering English language instruction for non-native speakers.
3. Family literacy activities: Providing literacy instruction for both adults and children together.
4. Integrated education and training: Offering combined education and workforce training for specific occupations or clusters.
5. Workforce preparation activities: Providing instruction and skills development to prepare individuals for the workforce.
6. Workplace adult education and literacy activities: Offering literacy and education services tailored to workplace needs.
7. Integrated English literacy and civics education: Combining English language instruction with civics education.

These activities aim to equip adult learners with the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce and further their education or career advancement opportunities. These goals align with the state's overarching goals of raising the bar and expanding opportunities for all.

Title IV: The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) tasked the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) with reflecting on the agency's quality of services using previous plan measurements after it was unable to establish new goals and priorities for FY'23.

Goal 1: Provide quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities

- DVR's Business Relations Unit (BRU) builds relationships with businesses to match participants with suitable job opportunities.
- Job placement services include resume development, job application assistance, interview preparation, and employer consultation.

- Customized services cater to individual needs, ensuring success in employment outcomes for those with significant barriers.

Goal 2: Support training programs reflecting labor market opportunities

- DVR assists participants in focusing on career pathways, offering appropriate training leading to recognized credentials.
- Coordination with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners ensures access to training and measurable skill gains.
- Collaboration with community rehabilitation providers facilitates training services aligned with labor market needs.

Goal 3: Expand opportunities for students transitioning from school to work

- DVR enhances the quality of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) by evaluating program effectiveness and targeting labor market growth.
- Monitoring the quality of transition services involves training, tracking referrals, and regular counseling sessions with staff.
- Coordination with partners like the Department of Education and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services ensures seamless transitions for students into adult services.

Overall, DVR focuses on providing quality employment outcomes, supporting relevant training programs, and expanding opportunities for students transitioning from school to work through strategic partnerships and tailored services. These goals align with the state's overarching goals of expanding opportunity for all, increasing alignment, and prioritizing sectors.

Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) collaborates with local agencies to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to transition students aged 14-22 potentially eligible for DVR services. Currently, DVR contracts with nine vendors and has increased its internal Pre-Employment Career Counselors to five, covering all three counties in Delaware. However, feedback from the 2022 Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA) revealed gaps in access to Pre-ETS, coordination between DVR and schools, and services for transition youth. Respondents expressed the need for additional training, work experiences, expanded services in underserved areas, more counselors, outreach efforts, and funding for specific services like speech therapy. DVR acknowledges these needs and plans to allocate resources accordingly. Additionally, DVR is involved in a technical assistance program focused on enhancing community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in Delaware, aiming to address concerns regarding location, training types, accessibility, and other recommendations for improvement identified by stakeholders.

Title IV: Under the Division of Visually Blind (DVI) workforce development activities encompass a diverse array of programs and partnerships aimed at enhancing education, training, and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Through a comprehensive review process, the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) analyzed data from correction action plan activities, program reports, and the 2021 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to inform the development of the 2024 WIOA State Plan.

The VRAC collaborated with DVI leadership to identify key takeaways from the CSNA recommendations, existing goals, and agency strategies. Subsequently, the VRAC recommended several goals to enhance workforce outcomes, including increasing employment outcomes, improving data quality, and expanding pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students with visual impairments.

The VR agency responded positively to the VRAC's recommendations, agreeing to prioritize initiatives such as increasing employment outcomes for VR consumers, enhancing employer partnerships, and improving data quality and participant engagement. Additionally, the agency committed to expanding Pre-ETS services and ensuring equitable access to vocational resources for minority communities.

The CSNA highlighted the need to address various challenges, including access to assistive technology, coordination of transition services, and outreach to underserved populations. In response, DVI outlined strategies to improve accessibility, enhance collaboration between education and VR services, and expand outreach efforts to minority communities.

Overall, DVI's workforce development activities aim to address the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and promote inclusive employment practices to create a more equitable and accessible workforce ecosystem which aligns with the state's overarching goal of expanding opportunities for all.

Although each agency has its own objectives in serving specific populations within their department, the state maintains a singular goal of preparing individuals uniformly. We strive to facilitate career opportunities for everyone, irrespective of their educational background, income level, disability status, veteran status, or re-entry background.

Delaware's workforce system is committed to providing inclusive access and a comprehensive array of services catering to the diverse needs of job seekers. The system is strategically designed to offer a spectrum of services, spanning from self-guided resources to group workshops, and individualized one-on-one case management. For example, Delaware Job Link (DJL) services are available both online via personal computers and in any of the four American Job Centers (AJCs) situated across the state.

Operating within a unified one-stop system, any job seeker can enter at any point and access consistent assessments and services customized to meet their specific requirements. The system is unified by a singular portal (DJL) that serves as the bridge connecting businesses with qualified individuals. DJL is equipped with cutting-edge technology, featuring a smart resume builder and a job order system, ensuring precise alignment between job seekers and available job openings.

DVR focuses on careers that lead to increased wages and aims to engage individuals in understanding the availability of career opportunities. The goal is to guide them toward a career path that doesn't necessitate continual return for services, offering decent wages and opportunities for career advancement beyond considering just their disability status.

DVI focuses on engaging employers to incorporate individuals with disabilities into their workforce. Both DVR and DVI might require more customized approaches due to the specific limitations and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. Creative solutions are sought to fulfill their needs and enable their participation in the workforce.

All agencies serve individuals facing barriers to employment, offering various services to support them.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) emphasizes inclusion of individuals with disabilities in programs proportionate to the state's demographics. Efforts are made to avoid over or under-representation in any specific area and provide comprehensive support through wrap-around services from DVR and DVI.

Enhanced collaboration and referrals between agencies are being revitalized, aiming for cross-training among partners to improve service delivery and streamline tracking procedures.

The strategic goals outlined by Delaware reflect a dedicated commitment to fulfilling the skilled workforce requirements crucial for meeting the diverse and evolving needs of employers across various sectors. Three of our four goals directly impact Delaware employers.

Prioritize Sectors: Delaware aims to address both growth sectors and enabling sectors, focusing on industries crucial for immediate employment needs and re-entry into the workforce. These industries, such as individual and family services, early childcare, education, home health services, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, and construction, align with projected employment growth. The goal is to prioritize these sectors, ensuring they receive adequate attention and support to meet employment demands through 2030. All training done through our partners are aligned with in-demand jobs in Delaware and must be on the High Demand Occupation List.

Increase Alignment: Delaware is dedicated to strengthening the connection between education and the workforce by emphasizing career pathways, internships, work-based learning initiatives, apprenticeships, and other programs. The state seeks to align training programs with the needs of employers, creating stronger connections between classroom learning and practical workplace skills. Additionally, efforts are underway to understand and address specific deficiencies highlighted by employers, ensuring that training programs adequately prepare individuals with the skills and qualities employers seek.

Expand Opportunities: Delaware is committed to fostering economic fairness and ensuring opportunities are accessible to all residents. To achieve this, the state intends to address existing gaps related to racial and ethnic disparities, actively engaging with diverse communities. By targeting efforts toward all Delawareans, including individuals facing barriers due to race, wealth, gender, or immigration status, Delaware aims to create initiatives that provide equitable access to opportunities and remove barriers for these groups. Additionally, the state plans to focus on addressing workforce challenges presented by demographic shifts, particularly an aging population, by ensuring initiatives are inclusive and meet the diverse needs of all job seekers.

These goals collectively highlight Delaware's commitment to actively engage with employers, bridge skill gaps, align training programs with industry demands, and create inclusive opportunities that cater to the needs of a diverse workforce and changing economy.

Delaware firmly believes that collaboration is the cornerstone of and recognizes the power and value of working together with businesses and others that do business outreach to foster mutually beneficial relationships and drive towards a skilled workforce for Delaware Employers.

This extends beyond partnerships; it embodies a shared vision of innovation, resource-sharing, and leveraging each other's strengths to achieve common goals. Delaware actively seeks opportunities to engage with businesses of all sizes, understanding their needs and provide resources within the state based on expertise and capabilities.

Delaware strives to provide tailored solutions and support that cater to the specific objectives and requirements of our business partners. This approach not only enables us to deliver value but also ensures that our collaborations are mutually enriching.

As we continue our journey of collaboration for business outreach, we remain dedicated to nurturing these partnerships, fostering trust, and fostering an environment that encourages growth, innovation, and shared success.

Delaware recognizes workforce development as a continuous improvement process requiring ongoing assessment of economic conditions, labor market information, employer demand, participant outcomes, and workforce system effectiveness. As a result, the State utilizes performance accountability measures, labor market analysis, partner feedback, employer engagement, customer satisfaction data, and strategic evaluations to guide decision-making and adjust workforce strategies as necessary.

Since the previous planning cycle, Delaware has made progress in several strategic workforce areas, including:

- expanded interagency collaboration and partner coordination;
- increased focus on sector-based workforce strategies;
- growth in apprenticeship and work-based learning initiatives;
- expanded justice-involved reentry workforce initiatives;
- increased alignment between education and workforce systems;
- enhanced use of workforce and labor market data;
- strengthened employer engagement efforts; and
- improvements in integrated workforce service delivery.

The State also identified areas requiring continued improvement and strategic adjustment, including:

- workforce participation declines among certain populations;
- staffing shortages impacting service delivery capacity;
- customer navigation challenges across workforce programs;
- inconsistent data-sharing systems and intake processes;
- digital literacy gaps;
- persistent workforce shortages in key sectors including healthcare, education, transportation, and skilled trades.

As part of Delaware's continuous improvement approach, workforce system partners conduct regular reviews of performance outcomes, customer feedback, labor market trends, and operational effectiveness. Findings from these evaluations inform midcourse corrections, funding priorities, policy updates, program design modifications, and technical assistance strategies. Delaware's workforce system will continue adapting strategies based on evolving labor market conditions, employer workforce needs, and participant outcomes to ensure alignment with the Governor's vision and the State's economic priorities.

WIOA Performance Measures:

WIOA Adults	PY24 Negotiated Levels
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	78.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	75.0%
Median Earnings	$7,800
Credential Attainment Rate	64.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	37.0%
WIOA Dislocated Workers	
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	72.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	75.0%
Median Earnings	$9,800
Credential Attainment Rate	65.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	31.0%
WIOA Youth	
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	66.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	72.5%
Median Earnings	$2,500
Credential Attainment Rate	74.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.5%
Wagner Peyser	
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	60.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	61.0%
Median Earnings	$6,800

Delaware will evaluate its workforce system using a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools. The State's performance accountability system will prioritize the six required WIOA

common measures applicable to each core program. Currently, there are no plans to introduce additional goals beyond these six. Delaware, operating within a single statewide workforce investment area, aims to establish performance levels promoting accountability while aligning with the Governor's commitment, ensuring access to employment and training for all of Delaware's adults and youth facing barriers to employment.

In determining Delaware's performance levels, the DWDB will consider various factors such as the U.S. DOL Statistical Model, labor market conditions, historical state and national performance trends, U.S. DOL Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals, expectations for continuous improvement, the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the U.S. DOL Yes WIOA Can! Initiative.

Delaware will conduct an analysis of unemployment rates to determine the actual need for adult education services, focusing on several key indicators such as job types (part-time vs. full-time), wages supporting families, job placements related to training, long-term job prospects, increasing educational attainment among adult workers, utilization of career pathways by lower-skilled workers, provider performance targets, and client satisfaction surveys. Additionally, a deeper analysis will be conducted to understand the characteristics of workers unable to secure employment while receiving unemployment insurance, particularly those who become part of the "out of the labor market" cohort.

The state's assessment will extend to its publicly funded system, focusing on two primary stakeholders: Businesses and Job Seekers. Business Customer Services effectiveness will be evaluated through customer service surveys, increasing employer usage of Delaware JobLink, feedback from focus groups, among other criteria. The assessment of services to job seekers will focus on the One-Stop system's efficacy, considering customer service surveys, success in seamless referrals, implementation surveys, partnerships meeting federal performance measures, and other necessary evaluations.

To streamline the evaluation process, the DOL–DET Contract Management and Monitoring unit will compile program performance data for interim reporting, reporting directly to the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) on managed contracts and related programs. Core partners will submit information to the DWDB, and presentations will be scheduled as part of the DWDB's quarterly meeting schedule. DOL-DET MIS Unit will compile and report out to staff and board members quarterly reports and final performance measures.

Delaware's workforce system will utilize the data gathered from these methods to reinforce successful strategies and make necessary adjustments through collaborative information sharing practices among partners. Partners will develop midcourse corrections and report outcomes at various meetings, including DWDB quarterly board and committee meetings, quarterly leadership meetings, and monthly partner meetings. Additionally, the system will employ a "dashboard graphic" system to present trends, fund allocations, and essential data points such as interagency referrals and customer surveys for easier assessment and decision-making purposes.

To further evaluate the system, the State will periodically look at the following areas for improvement and or collaboration.

- Organizational structures/working groups

- Funding allocations: The board will review current programs, evaluate performance outcomes, training available across the state, and work with partners to establish needs of employers.
- Strategic Plan and attainment towards the goals
- Board operations and structure
- Client flow in the system
- Technology improvements and updates: Review employer usage of DJL, provide updates in the Tableau reporting system, look at co-enrollments or a common intake form, and more.
- Implement client satisfaction surveys
- Focus group feedback
- Success in Seamless Referrals – This refers to the number of individuals that are referred to partner services who actually receive services. This refers primarily to referrals linking affiliated sites or partner programs with the One–Stop. It is thought that outside the One-Stops, in affiliated sites and partner programs little success in referral has been occurring.
- Implementation Surveys – This refers to the evaluation of operational changes. Among these will be the referral system and the seamless enrollment of core partner customers in Delaware Job Link. Added by a continuous feedback loop during implementation, a final assessment survey will be completed
- Core Partners meeting federal performance measures – Federal Reports
- Other Evaluations as necessary

Adult Education utilizing their MIS system that aligns to accountability performance and targets.

DVI is developing an outcomes management system to measure programs and find gaps in outcomes.
Under the Perkins Act, each district seeking funding must devise a four-year local plan involving employer stakeholder. This engagement requires districts to collaborate with employers to strategize for the upcoming four years and establish an advisory system.

To effectively evaluate programs, each district is mandated to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment every two years. This process involves engaging employers in reviewing and updating plans, programs, and practices. Evaluations encompass various aspects such as certification levels achieved, demographic data, early post-secondary credits, and work-based learning opportunities. If programs fail to meet federal accountability targets (below 90%), they are placed on an improvement plan. Continued underperformance over two years may lead to funding reduction or withholding.

While program reviews occur every five years, shortcomings typically revolve around academics rather than credential attainment. To address this, a new approach involves joint professional development for academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers. For

instance, they undergo shared literacy training, integrating literacy teaching methodologies in both technical and English domains, spanning ELA and math.

Each agency uses their assessments and develops solutions to mitigate any shortcomings. These mitigations include quarterly meetings with their federal project officers, reviewing data dashboards and comparing with other programs across the country, immediate resolution once customers satisfaction surveys are reviewed, and having program managers reach out to providers to assist in data collection.

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 IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

Since the development of the 2022 Delaware Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan, Delaware has continued to assess workforce strategies using current labor market information, employer feedback, workforce participation trends, economic conditions, and implementation outcomes. While the State's core strategic priorities remain consistent, Delaware has refined and expanded workforce strategies to better address evolving workforce shortages, demographic shifts, technological advancements, and changing employer skill requirements.

Current labor market analysis continues to demonstrate significant workforce shortages across healthcare, education, construction, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, information technology, early childhood education, and skilled trades occupations. Delaware's strategy has evolved to place greater emphasis on:

- labor force participation and workforce reengagement;
- middle-skill workforce development;
- industry-recognized credentials and apprenticeships;
- digital literacy and emerging technology skills;

- work-based learning expansion;
- equitable access to career pathways;
- integrated workforce and education alignment; and
- coordinated employer engagement strategies.

The State also recognizes the increasing importance of durable skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and critical thinking, which employers consistently identify as essential workforce competencies across industries.

In 2022, the DWDB produced a three-year **Strategic Plan** (full plan found here) that reflects the impact of the pandemic, significant changes to the board membership and staff, and new data on the workforce including a recent survey of 250 Delaware employers.

This 3-year strategic plan sets the priorities and actions we will take to create economic prosperity for employers and employees statewide.

Our priorities, along with various strategies, include:

1. Prioritizing investments in sectors that will enable Delawareans to get back to work and increase growth in high skill, high wage jobs.
    a. **Tailored Training Programs:** Develop and offer industry-specific training programs that equip individuals with the precise skills needed by employers in various sectors. These programs align with current industry standards and technological advancements.
    b. **Adaptability and Reskilling Initiatives:** Facilitate reskilling and upskilling programs for existing employees to adapt to technological advancements or changes in industry requirements. These initiatives ensure the workforce remains agile and capable of meeting evolving demands.
    c. **Increase Alignment Opportunities:** Create robust work-based learning, internship, and apprenticeship programs that allow students and trainees to gain hands-on experience within the workplace. This fosters a pipeline of skilled individuals tailored to the needs of specific industries.
2. Raise the bar on educational attainment to reflect the needs of our future economy.
    a. **Empowerment Through Training and Education:** Develop/invest in comprehensive training/educational programs aimed at fostering lifelong learning opportunities for all Delawareans. This includes implementing initiatives that support continuous skill development, vocational training, and access to higher education/training, ensuring individuals have the tools to adapt to evolving industries and technologies.
    b. **Promotion of Lifelong Learning:** Encourage a culture of continuous learning and skill development among all Delawareans. Offer adult education programs, upskilling opportunities, and retraining initiatives to ensure individuals can adapt to changing job market demands and technological advancements.

Promote funding opportunities to help increase post-secondary credential attainment for our adult population.

c. **Skills Assessment and Certification:** Establish mechanisms to assess and certify skills relevant to the workforce demands. Offer recognized certifications or credentials that validate the proficiency of individuals in specific skill sets, ensuring employers have a workforce equipped with the skills necessary.

3. Increase alignment between learning and work to improve how we build talent pipelines.

    a. **Youth Empowerment and Development:** Establish and support specialized programs geared towards empowering youth by providing mentorship, career guidance, internships, work-based learning, and apprenticeships. Focus on nurturing their talents, honing skills, and fostering a strong work ethic, equipping them with the necessary resources to succeed in the workforce. Implement meaningful mentorship programs, internships, apprenticeships, work-based learning and career counseling services targeted specifically toward young individuals. Encourage hands-on learning experiences, exposure to different industries, and guidance in career exploration to equip youth with relevant skills for the workforce.

    b. **Partnerships with Educational Institutions and Training Providers:** Foster collaborations with training/educational institutions to create curriculum enhancements, internships, apprenticeships, work-based learning, and co-op programs that directly address the skill gaps identified by employers in Delaware.

    c. **Feedback Mechanisms for Skill Alignment:** Establish channels for employers to provide feedback on the alignment of workforce skills with industry needs. Use this feedback to continuously refine training programs and ensure they remain relevant and responsive to market requirements.

4. Expand opportunity to increase equity and expand economic prosperity for all Delawareans.

    a. **Inclusivity and Breaking Barriers**: Design inclusive strategies that address the unique challenges faced by individuals with barriers to employment. This involves creating targeted programs that provide support, accommodation, and skill-building opportunities for individuals with disabilities, those reentering the workforce, and veterans. Offer job coaching, assistance with resume building, interview skills, and access to resources that facilitate their integration into the workforce.

    b. **Diversity and Equal Opportunity:** Promote the workforce system by fostering an environment that celebrates individual differences and values diverse perspectives. Implement policies that ensure equal access to opportunities and eliminate discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Ensure access to educational resources, including digital learning tools and technology, for individuals with diverse

needs. Create inclusive learning environments that accommodate different abilities and learning preferences, fostering an equitable learning experience for all.

c. **Recruitment Strategies for Diverse Talent:** Implement inclusive recruitment strategies to attract a diverse pool of talent. Develop initiatives that encourage hiring individuals from different backgrounds and experiences, fostering innovation and a broader perspective within the workforce.

By pursuing these goals, through a variety of strategies, Delaware can actively contribute to building a skilled workforce that meets the specific needs of employers, ultimately fostering economic growth.

Delaware embraces sector strategies through a commitment to Pathways initiative as well as partnerships with sector partnerships, and industry associations.

Delaware Pathways stands as a dedicated initiative, ensuring diverse options cater to each student's unique journey, acknowledging that one size does not fit all. This program is a collaborative effort between education and workforce entities, establishing a comprehensive career pathways system for all young individuals. Leveraging Delaware's strong legacy in Career and Technical Education (CTE) through vocational school districts and community colleges, this initiative has consistently produced a highly skilled workforce benefiting Delaware and the surrounding region.

This endeavor encompasses partnerships across secondary and postsecondary institutions, integrating community-based organizations and workforce partners. Its primary goal is to facilitate the success of all young individuals in pursuing both postsecondary training and education and gainful employment.

A robust education doesn't just offer knowledge; it presents choices. A well-designed educational system must cater to the diverse needs of each student by fostering seamless connections between K-12 public education, postsecondary training and education, workforce, and employers.

To ensure students embark on fulfilling careers post-high school, they must be well-informed about their options and equipped to take the next steps. The majority of Delaware's well-paying jobs require education or training beyond high school, often demanding intricate technical expertise and adept communication skills. These competencies can be acquired through various channels like advanced training, certifications, apprenticeships, military service, and two- or four-year degrees.

Hence, it's imperative that students possess both academic and technical proficiencies aligned with their career goals. Emphasizing a single approach for all students is ineffective; instead, fostering a flexible relationship between educators and employers best serves the diverse needs of students.

Delaware Pathways is organized around five core priorities:

1. Build a comprehensive system of career preparation that aligns with the state and regional economies.

2. Scale and sustain meaningful work-based learning experiences for students in grades. To ensure that learning occurs both in the classroom and in the workplace, a statewide Workforce Intermediary, Delaware Office of Work Based Learning was created to place students into meaningful work experiences and support employers to recruit and onboard student talent.
3. Integrate our education and workforce development efforts and data systems. To establish a direct link between education and training programs and changes in state and regional employment, we will create a connected service model for students with disabilities and other barriers to employment and implement a workforce data quality campaign.
4. Coordinate financial support for Delaware Pathways. To address pervasive issues in our education and workforce system that might otherwise prohibit youth from moving directly into continuing education and employment, a diversified funding model was established that includes public, private, and philanthropic support.
5. Engage employers, educators, and community organizations to support Delaware Pathways. To collectively ensure that the path to a meaningful career is accessible for every student and that the state's economy remains strong, developing a robust communication and partnership strategy to coordinate the delivery of support services and activities across the public, private, and non-profit sectors is ongoing.

Pathways are continuously reviewed and aligned to high demand high growth industries and occupations in Delaware. Pathways include:

Agriculture, Food & Natural resources (AgriScience)

- Environmental & Natural Resource Science
- Agricultural Structures & Engineering
- Animal Science & Management
- Natural Resource Management
- Plant Science
- Agricultural Power & Engineering

Architecture & Construction

- Architectural Engineering Technology (AET)

Arts, A/V Technology & Communication

- Digital Communication Technology

Business Management & Administration

- NAF Academy of Business Information Management

Education & Training

- Early Childhood Teacher Academy

- K-12 Teacher Academy

Finance Careers

- NAF Academy of Finance

Health Sciences

- Allied Health
- Public & Community Health
- Nursing Assisting
- Patient Care Assistant

Hospitality & Tourism

- Culinary & Hospitality Management
- Hospitality & Tourism Management

Information Technology

- Cisco Networking Academy
- Computer Science

Manufacturing

- Manufacturing Engineering Technology
- Manufacturing Logistics Technician
- Manufacturing Production Technician
- Industrial Maintenance Mechanic

Marketing

- Marketing Today

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM)

- Architectural Engineering Technology
- Biomedical Science
- Engineering

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

- Automotive Technology

Delaware has 6 vocational public schools serving around 7,000 students in three districts across the state. Programs offered at one or more of the three vocational schools include:

Business, Communication & Computers

- Academy of Finance and Business
- Business Technology
- Computer Networking Administration
- Digital Media
- Graphic Arts
- Broadcast Media
- Cisco Networking
- IT Academy
- Information Technology & Networking
- Web & Print Technology

Construction Technologies

- Carpentry
- Carpentry and Construction Management Technologies
- Electrical Trades
- Electrical and Green Technologies
- Heating and Ventilation & AC
- Industrial Mechanics/Millwright Technologies
- Masonry
- Plumbing
- Sheet Metal Fabrication
- Welding/Fabrication Technology
- Landscape Management
- Building Construction

Health Services

- Physical Therapy & Athletic Healthcare
- Biomedical Science & Allied Health
- Dental Assisting
- Emergency Medical Services
- Medical Assisting
- Nursing Technology

- Physical Therapy Medical Assisting
- Surgical Technology

Public & Consumer services

- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Legal Administrative Assisting
- Legal Support Services
- Legal Support Services & Criminal Justice Technologies
- Production & Imaging Technology
- The Teacher Academy for Early Childhood Development
- The Teacher Academy for K-12

Science, Energy & Drafting Technologies

- Biotechnology
- Chemical Lab Technician
- Technical Drafting & Design
- Engineering Design Technology
- Computer Engineering Technology
- Electronics Engineering Technology
- Environmental Science & Natural Resource

Transportation

- Automotive Body Repair
- Automotive Technology
- Auto/Diesel Technology
- Engine Technology
- Collison Repair Technologies

The concept of Pathways extends beyond just our secondary population—it equally impacts our adult demographic. Adult Career Pathways (ACP) isn't a complete overhaul of the Pathways system; rather, it signifies a broader perspective shift. It aims to offer adults a comprehensive and practical system enabling them to acquire skills and progress within their respective workplaces. ACP represents an advancement in the existing process, seeking to identify and bridge gaps in services, support, and funding necessary for adults to achieve a "family-sustaining wage."

These pathways are meticulously crafted, considering the experiences and obligations of adults. They are structured to assist adult learners in navigating from unemployment to employment or from underemployment to more promising job opportunities within their current field or even in different industries. This progression is facilitated by creating accessible "on and off ramps," leading individuals toward increasingly advanced training and employment prospects. Additionally, ACP integrates crucial support services and literacy skills crucial for ensuring their success.

Moreover, ACP initiatives will specifically target populations that might face difficulties accessing pathways under their current design. This focus aims to address the barriers and challenges faced by certain groups, ensuring they have equitable access to opportunities within the Pathways framework.

Delaware Pathways is recognized as an exemplar program across the country. Access a recent Case Study on Delaware Pathways here.

Delaware aims to centralize the Pathways Initiative as the linchpin for the publicly funded workforce system and is dedicated to the following endeavors:

1. Ensuring Support for All Learners:
    a. Guaranteeing comprehensive education and clear career goals beyond high school for in-school youth (ISY), out-of-school youth (OSY), and adult learners.
    b. Coordinating activities aiding ISY and OSY throughout the career pathways system.
    c. Aligning secondary, postsecondary, and adult programs within the career pathways system.
    d. Prioritizing education and workforce funding towards middle- and high-skill occupations in vital industry sectors.
    e. Enabling successful pathways for adults into the state career pathways system.
2. Enhancing Employer Engagement:
    a. Strengthening employer involvement and ownership of work-based learning and outreach.
        i. DWDB Business Engagement committee
        ii. DWDB Business Liaison Program established in 2022, aims to connect businesses to training providers, programs for employers, and other state agencies.
        iii. Office of Work Based Learning
    b. Establishing regular gatherings to expand employer engagement and develop regional support structures.
        i. Coordinated business outreach group. Established in 2023 to gain important insights into how to collaborate business outreach more effectively to better serve the Delaware business community.

c. Expanding postsecondary education programs in pivotal industry sectors.

d. Forming sector partnerships.

i. Formation of Delaware's IT Council (see below for more information).

3. Integrating Education and Workforce Development:

a. Instituting policies and procedures that fortify a statewide career pathways system.

b. Creating a branding campaign for Delaware's career pathways/lattices.

c. Coordinating both public and private funding efforts.

d. Coordinating the collection of labor market information and conducting industry skills analyses and research.

e. Broadening access to career counseling services.

4. Cultivating Shared Accountability:

a. Establishing standardized performance measures.

b. Developing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) along with its governing body.

c. Validating and documenting certificate and licensure data.

d. Reporting employment and wage outcomes throughout the career pathways system.

e. Implementing a sustainable funding mechanism to support the SLDS.

The Delaware Department of Labor has made significant strides in integrating Registered Apprenticeship programs into its workforce strategies. In 2016, they received funding to expand these programs, aiming to better meet employers' needs and introduce new occupations. By incorporating these initiatives into the Division of Employment and Training, Delaware aims to maximize the advantages of American Job Center (AJC) services for both employers and jobseekers.

key strategies are being employed for a seamless integration:

Scheduled presence in AJCs: A regular schedule is set up for Registered Apprenticeship personnel to be available in AJC lobbies. This allows them to address queries from jobseekers, employers, and AJC staff, helping to connect jobseekers with new career options and familiarizing AJC staff with the program, enhancing support for jobseekers' needs.

Supporting Related Instruction through AJCs: Delaware is working on a policy to integrate WIOA Adult and USDOL Apprenticeship grants, providing funding for tuition and support services for targeted populations. AJC staff will aid in recruiting and referring candidates to these programs, aligning processes with WIOA Adult ITA to further integrate Registered Apprenticeship into Delaware's workforce system.

Overall, these efforts aim to streamline the incorporation of Registered Apprenticeship programs into Delaware's workforce system, with an emphasis on data collection, reporting, and ongoing improvement to create more pathways for both employers and jobseekers.

Registered Apprentices (RA) are offered in a variety of occupations. Most Registered Apprenticeships are four years in length or 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. For each year of training, a minimum of 144 hours of related instruction is required. Upon completion of the required on-the-job training and related instruction, the Registered Apprentice is eligible for Journeyperson papers. A journeyperson is nationally recognized as having a well-rounded ability in all aspects of his/her trade. While DOL is expanding opportunities within RA in Delaware with the addition of programs in IT, Teacher Academy, and Community Healthcare Workers, the top five occupations for apprenticeships in Delaware continue to be in the construction and skilled trades industry.

- Electrician
- Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
- HVAC
- Sheet Metal Workers
- Construction Laborers

Pre-Registered Apprenticeship programs offer's participants the opportunity to experience the trades prior to making a full commitment to engage in Registered Apprenticeship programming. The goal is to have opportunity to explore in both traditional and non-traditional industries as made available and at conclusion the end result is a well-rounded experience for all in involved.

Sector Partnership in Delaware:

Having robust sector partnerships are critical for alignment between Delaware's workforce system and industry. Sector partnerships are the vehicles through which industry members express critical hiring needs and where customized solutions for workers and businesses are designed. Delaware is fortunate to have various sector partnership or industry associations to fill this need and are connected with many of these in Delaware through membership or board/committee involvement.

In December 2020, former Governor Carney and other partners convened over 30 employers to formally launch the Delaware IT Industry Council to build a local tech talent pipeline in response to the growing need for skilled tech across Delaware. In October 2021, the Delaware Community Foundation and Rodel established the Delaware IT Industry Council as an LLC within Rodel.

Renamed Tech Council of Delaware, this sector partnership has three goals.

1. Build and expand an inclusive tech talent pipeline in Delaware.
2. Create a strong tech ecosystem in Delaware.
3. Strengthen Delaware's position and perception as a tech hub.

Delaware Manufacturing Association (DMA) is an affiliate of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). The mission of DMA is to enhance the competitiveness of Delaware manufacturers in the global economy. DMA serves as manufacturing's advocate at the state and local government level, DMA meets regularly to discuss the industry's challenges, identify solutions, and advise the State Chamber on topics that specifically impact manufacturers such as government regulations, supply chain disruptions, trade, and tax policies, workforce, and more.

Trade Associations such as Delaware Contractors Association and Associates Builders and Contractors are industry trade associations providing support. Advocacy, education, workforce development and more.

Delaware Academy of Medicine is an essential public health resource within the state. In late 2023, DWDB is working towards collaboration for the healthcare workforce needs of the state. Under the Academy, Delaware Health Force is at the cutting edge of data, predictive models of workforce, decision making, and policy surrounding the healthcare industry. Partnering with the Academy, DWDB and partners will utilize the data provided to make data informed decisions around funding opportunities and needs. Dashboards are found here.

DESCA and Delaware BioScience Association are advocates for various science sectors in Delaware. DWDB staff works closely with DESCA on the recent Hydrogen Hub designation and DE BioScience on workforce needs.

Every sector partnership and trade association maintain a close connection with DWDB. This connection involves the participation of board members, collaborations through proposals or initiatives, and membership involvement.

To mitigate the identified weaknesses in the WIOA State Plan and improve coordination, efficiency, and customer experience, the State's Strategy will be executed through the Core Program Activities, primarily via the streamlined one-stop service delivery system housed in the American Job Centers (AJCs). Publicly funded workforce systems will align with this model, creating a cohesive network for workforce development, education, and resource services. This integrated system aims to prioritize customer needs, improving accessibility to services and fostering better long-term employment outcomes for individuals seeking assistance. Under this structure, partners manage their programs collaboratively, offering unified services to customers. The overarching vision of this unified system is to empower Delaware's workforce by providing necessary skills, credentials, and support for securing and advancing in employment with sustainable wages. Simultaneously, it aims to equip local employers with the skilled workforce essential for success in a global economy.

Current key services for job seekers at Delaware's American Job Centers encompass:

- Outreach, assessment, and referral to various services.
- Thorough evaluation of skills, aptitudes, interests, and abilities, facilitated through self-service or staff-assisted contexts, utilizing tools such as CASAS for math and reading readiness, Career Scope for identifying knowledge and interests, and O'Net Interest Profiler for assessing individual interest areas.

- Career counseling, workshops for career planning, interview strategies, resume building, job search, placement assistance, GED classes, basic computer skills, and skill refresher workshops.

Additionally, the centers provide:

- Labor Market Information, including job vacancy listings, local in-demand occupations, and associated earnings and skill requirements.
- Performance and cost information about eligible training providers.
- Information on supportive services like childcare and transportation availability.
- Case managers play a pivotal role during registration, identifying available services and determining eligibility. They also assist in identifying and overcoming barriers that might hinder individuals' success in training and employment.

Currently, for employers, Delaware's American Job Centers offer:

- Screening and referral of qualified job candidates via Delaware Job Link (DJL).
- Outreach through Business Services Representatives, LVER's, and Outreach Specialists.
- Access to Delawareans registered on DJL.
- Coordination of job fairs and recruitment events.
- Connections to community service organizations and tax credit opportunities.
- Training for Incumbent Workers and access to Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Information about On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, and sources for funding worker training.
- Collaboration with economic development and other business assistance programs.
- Assistance with layoff aversion strategies.

The staff regularly screens job referrals and provides recommendations to both individuals and employers. Additionally, employers have the option to review resumes within DJL to identify potential candidates for employment.

Delaware has made substantial progress implementing the workforce strategies identified in prior planning cycles. Key accomplishments include:

- expansion of Delaware Pathways and Adult Career Pathways initiatives;
- increased integration of Registered Apprenticeship programs into workforce strategies;
- strengthened sector partnerships and employer engagement efforts;
- development of coordinated business outreach initiatives;
- expansion of work-based learning opportunities;

- improved coordination among workforce, education, and economic development partners;
- increased focus on populations with barriers to employment; and
- advancement of workforce data-sharing and longitudinal data system efforts.

At the same time, reassessment of workforce system implementation identified several areas requiring continued strategic adjustment and improvement. These include:

- workforce shortages in critical sectors;
- inconsistent customer intake and referral processes;
- limited data integration across partner systems;
- staffing shortages and turnover;
- accessibility and document remediation challenges;
- unequal access to training opportunities;
- employer concerns regarding workforce readiness and durable skills; and
- persistent barriers impacting workforce participation, including childcare, transportation, housing, and digital access.

As a result of these findings, Delaware continues refining workforce strategies to improve system coordination, customer navigation, employer responsiveness, and workforce outcomes. Current course-correction efforts include:

- development of more integrated referral and intake systems;
- expansion of cross-agency collaboration and MOUs;
- increased emphasis on apprenticeship and work-based learning;
- stronger alignment between education and labor market demand;
- expanded employer-driven sector strategies;
- increased focus on digital literacy and technical skill attainment; and
- broader inclusion of underserved and barriered populations within workforce strategies.

Delaware's workforce system will continue utilizing labor market data, employer engagement, performance outcomes, customer feedback, and strategic partner input to guide future adjustments and ensure workforce strategies remain responsive to the State's evolving economic and labor market conditions.

To help mitigate the weaknesses further, Delaware could consider the following, although has not stated this work:

Integrated Database System: Develop a unified database system that consolidates information across departments or organizations. This system should allow seamless sharing, collaboration,

tracking, and referrals, breaking down silos and ensuring comprehensive access to data while maintaining appropriate privacy measures.

Standardized Intake Procedures: Implement a standardized intake form and procedures across all agencies involved. This standardized process will improve data collection and sharing, enhancing coordination and efficiency while reducing redundancies.

Knowledge Management and Training: Establish comprehensive knowledge management practices to capture institutional knowledge. Develop training programs and resources to retain and transfer knowledge, especially considering high staff turnover. Encourage the adoption of innovative practices based on new data or insights.

Enhanced Customer Support: Create a unified customer support system that assists clients navigating multiple services across various agencies. Provide guidance, resources, and assistance at every stage of the process to minimize frustration and ensure a smoother experience. Develop a streamlined process where a client's journey is consistent and supported regardless of the initial point of contact.

Improved Staff Training and Support: Offer comprehensive training programs for staff members involved in intake processes. Ensure that all staff have adequate knowledge of programs, procedures, and expectations to reduce confusion and inefficiencies. Encourage internal collaboration and knowledge sharing among staff members.

DVI and DVR have established an MOU and a strategy to ensure individuals efficiently navigate through services and resources, with co-enrollment processes.

Collaboration between the Department of Education (DOE) and DVI has led to the development of services and a pipeline program. Additionally, there's a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among all parties regarding Unemployment Insurance (UI).

In Adult Education, there exists an MOU with the Department of Correction (DOC) to provide education services within correctional facilities. Efforts are directed towards creating a co-enrollment process aimed at identifying individuals and enhancing their service experience.

Furthermore, there are MOUs in place, such as one between the Department of Labor (DOL) and DOE for data matching.

By implementing these strategies, the Delaware's WIOA State Plan can address its weaknesses, resulting in better coordination, streamlined processes, enhanced customer experiences, and improved outcomes in workforce development.

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).

Through federal and state mandate, the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) exists to help Delaware achieve economic prosperity by building the workforce that our economy needs. To do this, the board works with two key constituencies: employers who have evolving needs for a workforce, and Delawareans who are in or will be in the workforce. DWDB provides leadership and resources to develop a skilled workforce that is responsive to the evolving needs of business and communities.

The work of the Delaware Workforce Development Board is based on the following set of principles that guides priorities and investment decisions.

- **Strategy Based:** Board focuses on the big picture of workforce development (creating a system, not merely a collection of programs) to match supply and demand more effectively.
- **Customer Focused:** Systems are built around customer needs, including job seekers, employers, and youth (rather than funding streams) and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Leveraged Partnerships and Resources:** Strategies leverage other resources and are based on strong partnerships, building on existing collaborations when possible.
- **Outcome Driven:** Outcomes are clearly defined, communicated, and measured with investments made accordingly.
- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Programs are focused on outcomes and are encouraged not to duplicate one another but rather work collaboratively to deliver services to the customer.
- **Industry and Economic Development Aligned:** Workforce programs and services are aligned with regional industries and economic growth strategies.
- **Accountable and Transparent:** There is a clear process for making decisions informed by analyzing data and evaluating performance standards.

The Delaware Workforce Development Board's (DWDB) utilizes committees in an ADHOC manor to ensure it is able to remain flexible, innovative and responsive.

The committees include:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of Board members who are officers of the Board, the chairpersons of committees, the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Division of Small Business, the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services. And shall not exceed 15 members The majority of the members shall be from the private sector. The Executive Committee shall exercise all the authority of the Board during the intervals between full Board meetings. Provides governance, leadership, and direction. Approves and negotiates federally mandated performance measures. Works with

fiscal agent (U.S. Department of Labor) to oversee financial matters (i.e., funding allocations, budget, training provider cost issues, etc.).

Youth Committee: The Youth Committee provides recommendations on policy and performance for the development and implementation of WIOA youth funded programs statewide. Oversees the delivery of youth services for the neediest and at-risk youth, including both in-school youth and out-of-school youth. The Youth Committee works with our school systems and training program providers on how to build the workforce of the future. The committee provides recommendations on life skills training, expanding work-based learning opportunities, career exploration and exposure, credential attainment, completion of high school or GED program, and making sure our graduating seniors are college and/or career ready. In addition, the Youth Committee works with Delaware's Pathways efforts to assure students are exposed to high growth industries. Finally, the Youth Committee is charged with developing or researching pilots, models, and best practices.

Adult Dislocated Worker Committee: The Adult Dislocated Worker Committee provides recommendations on policy and performance for the development and implementation of WIOA adult and dislocated worker funded programs statewide. Focuses on high- demand occupation programs that train and/or strengthen skills of Delaware's adult and dislocated workers, particularly in essential career tracts. This committee works with providers to identify customized job training programs centered on data determined needs. In addition, this committee investigates opportunities for businesses to "grow their own" training programs. The priority is to invest in businesses that provide training for current lower-level employees so they can advance within their company. In addition, this committee works to identify populations of Delawareans that need to skill or upskill and enter or reenter the workforce such. These populations include re-entry, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and those that have barriers to employment. Finally, the Adult Dislocated Worker Committee is charged with developing or researching pilots, models, and best practices.

Business Engagement Committee: The Business Engagement Committee ensures that the DWDB's funding priorities are aligned with Delaware's most current workforce skills needs, as indicated by the state's business stakeholders. This committee also works to help close the skills gap experienced by employers. Ensures that the DWDB's funding priorities are aligned with Delaware's most current workforce skills needs, as indicated by the state's business stakeholders. Facilitate a more effective and efficient connection to training providers and industry.

Strategic Planning Committee: Strategic Planning Committee guides the DWDB's achievement of its overarching goals, objectives, priorities, and activities. It will track the progress and support the Board and its committees in the development of metrics establishing, data collection, and data reporting criteria. This committee would continue to evaluate Process Redesign and Resource Alignment. Guides the DWDB's achievement of its overarching goals, objectives, priorities, and activities. Track the progress and supports the Board and its committees in the development of metrics establishing, data collection, and data reporting criteria. The Strategic Planning Committee works with each chair to determine priorities, goals, and best practices.

Performance Measures Committee: This committee is pivotal in providing support in negotiating levels of performance, as required by section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of the Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Additionally, this committee reviews performance reports and finances with regards to activities of the board staff and expenditures within WIOA grants and reports to both the Executive Committee and the full Board on a quarterly basis.

Proposal Review and Certification Committee (PRCC): The key role of the PRCC is to determine, certify, and recommend qualified providers and programs for Delaware's State List of Eligible Training Providers (ITA's- Individual Training Accounts) for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adults and Dislocated Workers based on the Demand Occupation List. Additionally, the Committee hears complaints, oversee the appeals process, and render final decisions in all providers appeals. The Committee also plays a role in the request for funding proposal (RFP) process for awarding contract services. The PRCC ensures that participants enrolled in programs financially assisted under Title I of the WIOA Act, are provided with a wide variety of quality, job-driven, and labor market relevant programs to maximize consumer choice. The objective is to invest and approve a vast number of programs for participants to make informed educational decisions that will lead to sustainable employment.

Committees are advisory to the Delaware Workforce Development Board. The Committees will provide information, advice, and recommendations to advance DWDB's mission. Each committee consists of members of the DWDB, and additional industry or subject matter experts not considered full DWDB board members. Committee Chairs and members are appointed by the Chair. Each committee is assigned a staff member via the DWDB Executive Director to act as an advisory member. Advisory members consist of Delaware Department of Labor, Employment and Training, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, WIOA Leadership, and DWDB staff. Advisory members are non-voting members and will be invited to participate in committee work at the discretion of the committee.

The work of each committee may include the following:

- Provide recommendations to the Executive Committee or full Board on how to support programs and initiatives that align with DWDB's mission.
- Provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to their area.
- Set yearly goals.
- Review the strategic plan provided by the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Identify innovative and new ideas for potential investment.
- Review the DWDB operations periodically and identify open items, ongoing projects and share time frames.
- Review in detail staff's recommendation for action and relevant issues.
- Assist the board in carrying out activities.
- Identify technology to streamline workforce efforts.
- Investigate and identify data tracking systems to measure success.
- Embrace a streamlined outcomes mechanism to measure data and results.

Committee recommendations cannot be implemented and are not authorized until the Board has given its approval.

The committees are not authorized to act on behalf of the Board, but are authorized to conduct the following activities:

- Gather information, consider all matters within the committee's scope of work, and provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Board.
- Communicate the workforce development priorities of the Board to stakeholders or community members.
- Engage in outreach efforts to advance the mission of the Board.

DWDB Bylaws can be found here.

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:

Implementation of Delaware's strategic plan will be carried out primarily through the one-stop service delivery system, ensuring alignment among the publicly funded workforce system.

The Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET) is responsible for various workforce-related activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and related programs. This includes:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Statewide Activities
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adults & Dislocated Workers
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Wagner-Peyser Act
- Trade Act
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act National Dislocated Worker Grant
- Local Veterans Employment Representative
- Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
- RESEA

- Ticket to Work Program administered by the Social Security Administration established under sec. 1148 of Socials Security Act (42 U.S.C 1320b-19)

Their key responsibilities encompass:

1. Provision of an electronic system (DJL) facilitating informed employment and training decisions for employers and jobseekers, offering features like job registration, candidate search, training information, and automated job matching and referrals.
2. Acting as a central repository for Partner program information, enabling seamless referrals between programs.
3. Assisting Partner Programs in reporting on common performance measures specified in Delaware's WIOA plans and regulations.
4. Offering career and training services per WIOA requirements Sec. 134 (c)(2)-(3, developing strategies for continuous program enhancement.
5. Collaborating with partners for joint funding opportunities and ensuring accessibility for interested customers in training programs.
6. Providing support for Employment and Training services to TANF recipients and delivering WIOA Youth Services based on annual funding guidelines.
7. Collaborating with partners for joint projects and aligning investments or programs with the Board.
8. Offer eligibility for an Individual Training Account to any customer who completes their secondary credential through WIOA Title II programs, subject to funding availability.
9. Extend eligibility for an Individual Training Account to Job Corps graduates who completed their secondary credential and seek further training, dependent on funding availability.
10. Grant eligibility for an Individual Training Account to Job Corps graduates who obtained occupational skills certification, completed 12 months of employment, and express interest in additional training, subject to funding availability.
11. Deliver WIOA Youth Services as per annually released funding guidelines, catering to both in-school and out-of-school programs. The One-Stop Operator will manage referrals among partners for necessary youth services.

Training Services include:

1. Occupational Skills Training: This includes specific training programs designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge for a particular occupation or industry.
2. Training for Nontraditional Employment: This refers to training programs geared towards occupations that are less common for a specific gender or demographic. For instance, encouraging women to enter STEM fields or men to pursue careers in nursing.
3. On the Job Training: This involves learning while performing actual job tasks. It allows individuals to gain hands-on experience and skills needed for a specific job role.

4. Incumbent Worker Training: Training provided to individuals who are already employed. It's meant to upgrade their skills or help them learn new techniques necessary for their current job or potential future positions within the company.
5. Private Sector Operated Training Programs: These are training initiatives developed and run by private companies or organizations to enhance specific skill sets for their employees or the general workforce.
6. Skill Upgrading and Retraining: Refers to improving existing skills or learning new ones to stay relevant in a changing job market or industry.
7. Transitional Jobs: Temporary or short-term employment opportunities designed to help individuals gain work experience, particularly those facing barriers to employment.
8. Job Readiness Training: Prepares individuals for the workforce by teaching them essential skills such as resume writing, interviewing techniques, workplace etiquette, etc.
9. Adult Education and Literacy Activities: Programs aimed at enhancing adults' literacy, numeracy, and language skills. This could also include programs focused on teaching English as a second language.
10. Integrated Education and Training Programs: These combine workforce preparation (like occupational skills training) with adult education and literacy activities to provide a comprehensive approach to skill-building.
11. Customized training with Employer Commitment: Training programs tailored to meet the specific needs of an employer or a group of employers, often with a commitment to hire individuals who successfully complete the training.
12. Career counseling and support.
13. Job Fairs.

These programs and initiatives aim to bridge skill gaps, improve employability, and provide individuals with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in various job sectors.

The Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) administers programs under Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) authorized under sec. 112 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C 732). Additionally, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of the Visually Impaired (DVI) also administers programs under Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

DVR's primary focus for individuals revolves around personalized employment plans utilizing Career Pathways, counseling, assessments, OOLMI data, and collaborations with businesses and educational institutions. This approach facilitates the objective of ensuring that all eligible DVR clients achieve meaningful integrated employment. Collaboration with key partners aims to create a unified referral process, allowing clients to access multiple support services concurrently while pursuing their training and employment objectives.

The mission of DVI is to provide educational, vocational, and technical support to empower and foster independence for Delawareans with visual impairments. Specifically, Vocational

Rehabilitation Program provides services to remove barriers to obtaining or retaining employment that people who have visual impairments may face and the Pathways to Employment program is designed to support low-income teens and young adults with disabilities in Delaware who want to work.

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) carry out programs under Adult Education and Literacy Activates authorized under Title II and Post-Secondary Vocational Education Activities Authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act (20 USC 3201). Adult education currently operates in three comprehensive DOL sites, Fox Valley, Dover, and Georgetown. Adult education providers aim to contextualize academic instruction, develop career plans, coordinate academic skills, share educational attainment data, and streamline services for efficient program delivery. Career plans include researching job market information and developing timelines for attaining further training, as needed.

- Assist adults to be literate and obtain knowledge/skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain an education/skill that are necessary to become partners in the educational development of their children and that lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families.
- Assist adults in attaining a secondary credential in preparation for transition to postsecondary education and training.
- Assist individuals who are English language learners to improve their reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English and Math while acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.
- Types of Programs:
    - **Adult Basic Education (ABE) ESL/GED**
        - Instruction in Reading, Writing, Math, English Language Proficiency, and preparation for GED® Test
    - **Integrated Education and Training Programs**
        - IELCE - Specific vocational skills combined with English Language instruction and Civics education
        - IET – Specific vocational skills combined with academic upskills
    - **Family Literacy Programs**
        - Academic instruction for adult learners and their children,
        - Developmental psychology for parents to support their children in school success
        - Parenting classes
        - PACT (Parent & Child together)

- **Prison Education**
    - Provision of reentry skills including vocational, cognitive behavioral therapy, community resources and academic instruction

Adult Education has also:

- Participated in employer driven training initiatives for incarcerated learners.
- Participated in Perkins grant to increase the number of pre-apprentices and apprentices in the skills trades.

A process for coordinating the provision of academic skills and enrollment in training programs will be developed and will include:

- A process for administering and analyzing common assessments across the system for all core providers, to reduce the time spent in assessment. This also provides the opportunity to target academic skills needed for further training or job attainment.
- Job seekers who have not attained a secondary credential or high school diploma will be provided with information on community adult education programs. If they are unable to attain employment after six months due to academic deficits, the adult will be referred to a Title II-funded adult education provider.
- The educational attainment of reentering offenders will be shared with DOL case managers upon consent of the customer.
- Title II will fund integrated education and training programming to reduce duplication of services and increase funding for specific skills training programs.

Core program partners' responsibilities involve ensuring access to its programs through the one-stop delivery system, providing information, attending meetings, offering consultation on accessibility and assistive technology, and collaborating with partners on various programs. Specifically, each partner agrees to the following:

- Provide access to its program or activities through the one stop delivery system through the agreed upon referral mechanism (Delaware JobLink)
- Provide information and schedule of services to DET to enable referral mechanism to refer to services and for the public to learn about services.
- Participate in events to provide information on post-secondary training and education.
- Register clients in Delaware JobLink when clients are job ready.
- Attend scheduled partner and Board meeting and activities.
- Provide information and best practices as requested by the Board. The goal is to position the Board to make informed employment and training decisions in order to align and coordinate employment and training activities, when appropriate, for the State's workforce system.
- Work collaboratively with the Board to establish and maintain the one stop delivery system including one stop infrastructure.

- Provide consultation on accessibility and assistive technology.
- Work collaboratively with DET on the Ticket to Work program.
- Provide one on one case management and career services to those who qualify to enable success in employment.
- Enter job openings in Delaware JobLink when unable to fill position.
- Provide support in conjunction with DET for jointly eligible clients who may already be receiving DET training and who require additional funding to cover costs.
- Work jointly to provide services that mutually benefit clients.
- Share information with clients on in-demand jobs and promote the need for the need for increased education and training.
- Work collaboratively and provide necessary information and/or documentation to DET and customers (clients and employers) to ensure customers are maximizing tax credits under the WOTC program.
- Work collaboratively with the Board to align investments and/or programs, as appropriate.

Alignment of these programs is achieved through various means such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), partnership meetings, leadership gatherings, county meetings, executive committee and board meetings, special projects, strategic planning, and utilizing Delaware JobLink for system-wide coordination.

Alignment occurs several ways:

- Memorandum of Understand (MOU) – All partners sign an MOU laying out the Rules, Roles, and Responsibilities for each partner
- WIOA Partnership Meetings.
- Statewide Leadership Meetings – These meetings occur once a month where workforce activities are aligned, and workgroups are convened to work on systems improvement,
- County Leadership Meetings. These monthly meetings are the foundational to the alignment process because WIOA partners at the Unit levels identify systemic challenges and opportunities for improvement. The issue that cannot be solved the local level are raised to the state meeting for resolution.
- Executive Committee and Board Meetings. Issues and opportunities needing systemic fixes are raised to the board where state workforce leaders with the necessary organizational gravitas can act. If the issue is larger and needs a long- term fix, the board established it as a goal and adds it to its strategic planning.
- Special Projects. The WIOA partners are key participants in special projects designed to improve the states publicly funded workfare system. For example, most workforce partners participated in business mapping of Phase I of state's process redesign initiative.

- Strategic Planning. WIOA Partners are full participants at the DWDB annual October planning retreat.
- Delaware Job Link. All customers are enrolled in Delaware JobLink (DJL) when they are determined work-ready, to provide customers with access to the job matching capabilities of the system. This is accomplished either through client registration at the partner site or by the interface/upload of key data elements into DJL from partner systems.
- Delaware uses computer-based system called the Delaware Vocational Portal (VOCAL). Vocal is the one-stop shop for re-employment information and assistance. It allows a single-identity sign-on so Delawareans can login with credentials from DJL. Registration process is quick and easy, and it displays jobs and education opportunities on the home page. Vocal connects individuals to career counselors for one-on-one assistance, organizes appointments, has a job or training program search feature, displays information, and resources for all partners, and connects to one-stop staff virtually. The value of VOCAL is the ability to assist job seekers who qualify for workshops and services based on their education and employment history, allows staff to manage all users within the VOCAL system, and allows staff to check a job seeker's potential eligibility for programs like VETS or WIOA, set appointments for clients to better support, send individual messages to those seeking employment or education opportunities, and manage new stories related to employment.

All partners commit to sharing data to evaluate program and system performance outcomes, identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment, engaging in consistent communication for system revisions and best practice dissemination, and developing career pathways for adult learners. Regularly survey business and job seeker customers to determine which services are working well and which services or processes need improvement.

Programs operate within the comprehensive American Job Center (AJC), including WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, Job Corps, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, and Adult Education. There's an electronic linkage between the TANF Employment and Training Program and the WIOA Youth program. Furthermore, the Division of the Visually Impaired (DVI), Carl Perkins postsecondary education, Older Americans Act, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), the Criminal Justice Council, Second Chance Act programs, and HUD Employment & Training programs have signed memoranda of understanding with the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) and the Division of Employment and Training at the Department of Labor (DOL).

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.

Delaware leverages its status as a small state by cultivating strong partnerships with various WIOA partners. These collaborations span multiple planning groups, committees, and initiatives, fostering valuable connections that bolster the state's publicly funded workforce. The goal is to streamline efforts, prevent redundancy, and enhance employment and training activities.

WIOA Partnerships: Delaware benefits from partnerships with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners who serve on planning groups, committees, and initiatives. These partnerships help build bridges to local programs that complement the state's publicly funded workforce.

Small State Advantage: Being a small state allows Delaware leaders to engage closely with providers and organizations throughout the state. These relationships are identified, expanded, and formalized as needed.

Information Sharing: Information sharing is done at several levels to avoid duplication.

- WIOA Partnership Meetings- To promote cross partner collaboration and resource sharing, state and local county level meetings are held monthly to share information on initiatives and resources and to pose questions for mutual problem resolution.
    - Statewide Leadership Meetings – These meetings occur once a month where workforce activities are aligned, and workgroups are convened to work on systems improvement,
    - County Leadership Meetings. These monthly meetings are foundational to the alignment process because WIOA partners at the staff levels identify systemic challenges and opportunities for improvement. The issues that cannot be solved the at local level are raised to the state meeting for resolution. Monthly meetings have additional partners that regularly attend. These meetings include the following partners outside of the plan:
        - Appoquinimink ABE programs
        - NCC Vocational Technical School
        - Career Team
        - Anton Associates
        - Latin America Community Center
        - The Challenge Program
        - Delaware Futures
        - Jobs for Delaware Graduates
        - Delaware Technical Community College - all campuses
        - Delaware State University
        - Teen Warehouse
        - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Polytech Adult Education and Training Programs
- Milford Advocacy for Homeless
- Modern Maturity Center
- Get a Ride, Get a Job
- YWCA
- Friendship House, DE
- Dover High School
- First State Community Action Agency
- PMG Consulting/Sussex County Health Coalition
- Pathways to Success
- University of Delaware
- Sussex Tech - ABE Programs
- Family Promise of Southern Delaware
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Neighborhood Good Partners (NCALL)
- West End Neighborhood House
- Delaware Health and Social Services
- Telamon
- Wilmington Housing Authority
- Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities
- Division of Libraries
- Delaware Food Bank

- Executive Committee and Board Meetings serve as platforms to address issues and opportunities requiring systemic solutions. State workforce leaders possessing the organizational influence bring forth these matters to the board's attention. If an issue is significant and demands a lasting solution, the board identifies it as a goal and incorporates it into its strategic planning for long-term resolution.

Overall, the plan emphasizes collaboration among stakeholders, monitoring of programs, and leveraging various resources to enhance employment and training opportunities for individuals in Delaware, including justice-involved persons.

Governor's Office ARPA Proposals Funded: The overarching goal of ARPA funds dedicated to workforce is to assist unemployed or underemployed individuals with job training, summer

youth, and to achieve certifications and additional education. Delaware is focusing on long-lasting impact to better equip Delawareans for the workplace, and to have resilience as a state for the changing job market. ARPA funds are set to sunset on 12/31/2026.

Pathways: This project has several components.

- Tech School Career Pathways Project: Three districts redesigned programming in electric to launching over 300 students. In the past school year, 400 students placed in apprenticeship. Revamping the programming will increase the amount of college credit (via articulated agreements and dual enrollments) earned prior to graduation. Next Pathways to redesign include Masonry, Welding, Construction, HVAC, and Plumbing.
- Middle Grades Pilot Program: Implement career exploration models for students in middle school. To date, this pilot is launched in 10 schools and will touch 5,500 students.
- Tech Council of Delaware: This is an industry council focuses on Technology and Technology adjacent careers. To date, the council launched the Yes, We Tech! program as a collaboration between s training provider, community organization, and employers to engage high school students learning in-demand workplace skills, digital proficiency, and attain an industry-relevant certification. These students participated in a combination of activities to expand their knowledge of workplace standards and employer expectations. Six worksite employers across various industries provided on-the-job learning to support the interns with practicing and refining digital and durable skills learned in the classroom to ensure high school students have essential skills to compete in the labor market.

Healthcare Research, Academy of Medicine: This project has several components.

- Delaware Health Force: To gather and aggregate data, introduce geographic mapping and population demographics/trends within the industry.
- Mini Medical School Expansion: Encouraging youth to consider a career in healthcare creating homegrown professional.
- Expansion of Student Financial Aid Program: Extending to nurses, medical, and dental assistants, and behavioral health professionals as determined to be in a shortage status within Delaware workforce. First loans began in Spring 2023.
- Graduate Medical Education Expansion Program: Operate statewide at booth physician and higher-level medical graduate levels in other disciplines. Current contract with Christiana Care.

Zip Code: Break into Tech Scholarships under a “Pay for Success model”. Financial support for low- to moderate-income Delaware residents making the transition from minimum wage jobs, underemployment, or unemployment into tech careers with sustainable wages. Goal is to produce over 200 Java Software Developers and Data Engineers over the next three years.

Tech Impact: This project is focused on attracting and keeping talent in Data Scientists here in Delaware. Participants complete a one-year fellowship upskill their data and soft skill capabilities. Participants are then placed on projects with local organizations (including state agencies) focused on public health initiatives providing support in data analysis.

LEEP Pathways to Apprenticeship: LEEP's newly funded contractor development initiative Pathways to Business (P2B) was designed to expand on their pathways program by including minority businesses in their efforts. The P2B program is committed to providing Delaware minority, woman owned, veteran, small and emerging construction/contracting firms with the tools necessary to become competitive bidders on public works and private construction projects throughout the state. By strengthening these businesses, our goal is to empower them with the resources they need to hire and train a newly expanded workforce and to grow our local economies.

United Way OGOV Fellowship: The program will used APRA funds to support elementary and middle school aged youth to enroll in high-quality summer learning experiences. Program is designed to promote peer engagement, positive community relationships and develop college/career skills and orientation.

Delaware Restaurant Association: provide workforce development training and other support services for Delaware's restaurant industry. DRA and its philanthropic educational Foundation (DRF) seek to provide nationally recognized curriculum and workforce development management and other career advancement for Delaware's restaurant and hospitality industry workforce.

Code Differently: Comprehensive workforce training to eligible individuals throughout Delaware, with a focus on unemployed adults seeking new opportunities and existing adult workers looking to upskill or reskill. Currently, more than 80% of the trainees from underrepresented groups in tech field, showcasing commitment to diversity an inclusion.

Faithful Friends: Grants funds used for the implementation of an animal welfare education and career training program in partnership with New Castle County Vocational Technical School. NCVTT students will gain an understanding of animal shelter management including animal and housing care responsibilities, volunteer and staff integration, and introduction to veterinary technician and nursing care.

Kind to Kids: The objective of Kind to Kids Foundation's UGrad Education Program is to improve educational outcomes for Delaware's students in foster care, specifically high school graduation rates and grade succession rates. The primary goals of the program are:

1. Increase grade succession rates for children in foster care

2. Increase high school graduation rates for children in foster care

3. Improve academic success for children in foster care.

4. Facilitate academic or career success for youth aging out of foster care and transitioning to young adulthood.

DelDOT Generic Workforce: A workforce training program through Delaware Department of Transportation Workforce Development Academy. This program works to increase the participation of women, minorities, and disadvantaged persons in highway construction industry.

DelTech CNA National Guard: This program was implemented to combat pandemic experienced staffing shortages in local hospitals and healthcare facilities the College trained

Delaware National Guardsmen and Guardswomen for placement/assignment of newly trained CNAs into healthcare/hospital facilities in order to increase beds available and reduce patient boarding at the state's hospitals, reducing delays in moving patients from emergency departments who require inpatient treatment to a hospital bed

Technology Park Business Accelerator: This project is to foster entrepreneurs building products and services to improve financial health and equity of the low to moderate income community. The incubator will accommodate 20 early-stage companies or entrepreneurs.

DelDOT CDL Training: A workforce training and development project for classified drivers that meet certain qualifications.

DelDOT Keep Litter Free: This program engaged 20 personnel to help clean up Delaware's highways and other transportation areas.

DelDOT Western Sussex: This program seeks to create awareness and stimulate interest among high school students in the western part of Sussex County. Awareness includes information about the vast transportation and science technology, technology, mathematics, and engineering or STEM related careers available. This is a four-week program that provides opportunities to explore jobs in transportation and STEM industry through field trips and hands on activities.

Career Exploration APP: This program seeks to engage job seekers as well as reengage those that have abandoned the workplace with job opportunities and training programs via a technology focused Career Exploration APP that maximizes our ability to connect unemployed and underemployed.

DWDB ARPA Proposals Funded:

Business Liaisons: Business Liaison program to build the foundation for an alignment between the State, industry, and education/training providers to meet the needs of Delaware's businesses. The overarching goal of the Business Liaison program is to introduce a structured employer engagement process that establishes a two-way communication pathway to understand business hiring needs, to provide input into training programs, and to expedite the hiring process for qualified employees. After the Business Liaison program is complete, we will have strong processes and systems in place, along with behaviors cultivated during the program.

Workforce Innovation: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) is seeking innovative training programs and nontraditional training delivery methods to help Delawareans find employment opportunities in high growth, high demand and/or emerging industries. The goal of this initiative is to establish at least 5 new training programs, across all counties, within industries identified as growth or emerging sectors. The target audience for participation in the programs includes unemployed or underemployed individuals, unemployed women, and particularly those that may face barriers to employment.

DOL-DET ARPA Proposals Funded:

On the Job training (OJT): This funding is used for a workforce initiative to reimburse businesses that provide on-the-job training opportunities to support those looking for work while addressing their own staffing shortages. This program is to ensure that individuals who

were rendered unemployed or underemployed due the mandatory job shutdowns may be provided with the opportunity to put current skills to work as well as gain additional skills via on-the-job training with an employer who would benefit from assisted employee placement within jobs where employers have a need for workers.

The Focus on Alternative Skills Training (FAST): This program provided tuition up to $10,000 for recent high school graduates for an approved non-degree credit certification program in impacted in industries that provides industry skills training and recognized credential certifications. This program has completed.

Tableau Enhancement: Upgrades and enhancements for Tableau reports for DJL to include new filters for case management reports, interactive dashboards, custom reports, and dashboards. Enhancing Tableau will assist in reaching workers affected by COVID-19 by allowing staff to track and target clients for outreach.

Forward Delaware (second iteration of the program): High quality occupational skills training and/or workforce preparation programs for adult career entrants or adult career changers. Agreements with specific industry (e.g., Healthcare) and included all occupational skills training programs that lead to a job within the funded industry (e.g., CNA, LPN, Patient Care Tech).

- Short-term training designed to assist Delaware workers and their families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Targeted areas of; Healthcare and Warehouse/Logistics/Transportation.
- Supportive services will also be available for individual needs to include transportation, childcare, tools, uniforms, one-time personal expenses payment, etc.
- Industry focus is based on high demand occupations.

Forward Delaware OST Training Program (third iteration of the program): Targeted occupational skills training in, high demand industries, that can lead to persons becoming gainfully employed. • Short-term training designed to assist Delaware workers and their families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. This initiative targets the areas of; Healthcare and Warehouse/Logistics/Transportation. Programs will be offered statewide. • Supportive services will also be available for individual needs to include transportation, childcare, tools, uniforms, one-time personal expenses payment, etc. • Industry focus is based on high demand occupations. Training providers are identified based on Forward DE performance goals achieved.

- *Being Implemented- The Subrecipient Agreements are fully signed for the following:*
    - *Delaware Skills Center-*
        - *Healthcare*
        - *Construction*
        - *Information Technology*
    - *Blindsight- Healthcare*
    - *Sussex Tech- Healthcare*

- *Polytech-*
    - *HVAC*
    - *Electrical*
- *Food Bank-*
    - *Warehouse/Log*
    - *Culinary*
- *American Driver Academy- CDL*

GED (Test of General Education Development) GED®/HS Diploma Program /UI Claimants: This program will provide incentives to individuals that have self-identified in Delaware Job Link as not having a high school diploma or GED. This program provides skills upgrade training that prepares qualified unemployment claimants to earn a high school credential and a $500 one-time incentive payment who earn their GED within 6-8 months from enrollment. This program will serve approximately 250 UI Claimants.

Pre- Apprenticeship Training: Pre-apprenticeship program seeks to create a qualified pipeline of Register Apprentices (RA) Pre-Apprenticeship programs provide programming aimed to close the gap in qualifications for individuals not qualifying for a Registered Apprenticeship position.

- *Being Implemented- The Subrecipient Agreements are fully signed, and programs will begin July 1, 2023, for the following:*
    - *Delaware Skills Center: Plumbing Pre-Apprenticeship*
    - *LEEP: Constructions/Union Pre Apprenticeship*
    - *NERDiT: IT Pre Apprenticeship*
    - *Polytech Adult Education: Aircraft Mech Pre Apprenticeship*
    - *The Challenge Program: Furniture Pre-Apprenticeship*

DOL ARPA Proposals Funded:(This proposal directly prompts and enhances the outreach for training activities in the state).

Marketing and Communication: This project will assist with the promotion and marketing of the agency's workforce-related programming to increase employment services to those unemployed and underemployed. It will help get the message out with attention on the resources DOL has to be able to help workers upskill and find employment in Delaware. DOL, primarily through its Division of Employment & Training, will highlight the one stop nature of its resources and programs that make assistance much more accessible to individuals seeking help finding career guidance or employment.

ARPA project results can be found here: 2023-Recovery-Plan-and-Performance-Report.pdf (delaware.gov)

The recent enactment of three landmark legislations—BIL, CHIPS, and IRA—by President Biden provides a transformative opportunity to revitalize the American workforce while catalyzing a

surge in high-quality job creation. These legislative measures, namely the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), collectively allocate significant investments toward infrastructure enhancements, semiconductor production, and climate crisis mitigation. The legislation outlines diverse opportunities for states to engage in workforce development activities, from integrating workforce initiatives into infrastructure programs to expanding workforce training aligned with semiconductor production and clean energy sectors. This unprecedented legislative landscape provides a foundation for states and local boards to play instrumental roles, leveraging grants, fostering local hiring opportunities, and crafting strategies to enhance workforce readiness within emerging industries, driving inclusive economic growth across the nation.

To date, DWDB has engaged with departments that are overseeing this landmark funding opportunities to collaborate and align workforce dollars allocated under BIL.

As listed in the Statewide Digital Equity Plan (the Plan), Delaware Department of Technology and Information (DTI) is designated by the State of Delaware as the Eligible Entity for purpose of the federal Digital Equity Act. Delaware's Digital Equi plan aims to address various challenges through multiple strategies and initiatives. DTI anticipates utilizing its Digital Equity Capacity Grant to collaborate with local entities in bolstering digital equity in the state. However, the successful implementation depends on resource availability and other competing priorities.

Some proposed strategies include increasing broadband access, expanding affordable connectivity programs, providing low-cost service options, offering devices and technical support, and incorporating a digital equity perspective into infrastructure decisions.

To tackle barriers such as affordability, skill development, job opportunities, and resource constraints, strategies involve increasing job training capacities, enhancing digital skills through training courses, online safety education, and fostering collaboration among governmental and nonprofit entities to build digital skill capacities. These strategies are detailed in the plan, aiming to make them actionable, measurable, and sustainable to achieve digital equity in Delaware. The chart below, found in Delaware's DRAFT Digital Equity Plan, shows the cross-agency alignment and collaboration DTI has created for Delaware. Many of the partners and objectives for the plan align with Delaware's key priorities. Full plan can be found here.

DTI has developed strategies for barriers identified in the plan. The challenge of limited digital and tech-related job opportunities, especially for marginalized and low-income groups in Delaware, requires addressing the skill gap for participation in the digital economy. To combat this issue DTI has identified two strategies:

- Strategy 1 focuses on enhancing the capacity of job training programs to provide pathways to well-paying positions in the tech sector.
- Strategy 2 aims to expand outreach and recruitment efforts of job training organizations, both governmental and nonprofit, to include historically underrepresented populations, thus bridging the gap in access and opportunities for these groups.

Delaware's Climate Action Plan, announced by Governor John Carney in November 2021, is the result of a two-year public engagement process. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emission and enhance resilience against climate change impacts. A key focus is the transportation sector, with a goal of achieving 17,000 electric vehicle sales annually by 2030. To support this goal, the plan emphasizes equitable expansion of charging access. The state's Department of Transportation (DelDOT) created a Division of Transportation Resiliency and Sustainability in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to plan electric vehicle infrastructure. Delaware initiated the development of a Statewide EV Charging Infrastructure Plan in collaboration with a consultant, incorporating the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program. This plan aims to establish a network of EV charging stations along major travel corridors, focusing on DC fast-charging stations along Alternative Fuel Corridors to contribute to a national EV charging network. Full plan found here.

In the plan, labor and workforce were taken into consideration. It was found that Delaware possesses a robust and versatile workforce capable of meeting diverse needs. Leveraging state and federal funds, Delaware invests in tailored training programs for unemployed individuals, those entering the workforce, career changers, and existing workers. DelDOT recognizes that the state prioritizes registered apprenticeships and aims to expand them into new industries and demographics through school and nonprofit pipelines.

In the plan, key entities are identified like the Department of Labor, Delaware Workforce Development Board, economic development groups, and the Department of Education that collaborate to engage businesses efficiently. Worker input is valued through various organizations and entities, ensuring their involvement in program design.

Additionally, the state's vocational institutions and community colleges are identified as having the ability to offer adaptable programs, ideal for supporting Delaware's goals in transportation electrification. With around 1,000 youths in construction pathways and a significant labor force, the plan believes that Delaware is well-positioned to embrace new training for electric vehicle technology. The Department of Labor offers free training for lower-skilled workers, including courses on vehicle electrification to prepare for a decarbonized future. DelDOT is actively considering the establishment of apprenticeship programs and pathways within DOE, DTCC, and the VoTech schools.

DelDOT currently collaborates with the Delaware Contractors Association, prioritizing the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) in training initiatives. Their draft RFP emphasizes workforce training plans and certification requirements to align with federal regulations.

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan outlines training initiatives aiming to retrain individuals currently specializing in diesel systems to operate battery electric systems. This includes integrating training for hydrogen mechanics to support the introduction of new hydrogen fuel cell buses. The plan also emphasizes providing first responder training in partnership with DEMA.

The Delaware Department of Labor and Department of Education remain committed to adapting training programs for electric vehicle infrastructure to ensure a competent workforce. Annual updates will track progress in EV and EV infrastructure training program development, aligning with federal workforce compliance regulations (23 CFR 680.106(j)).

Moreover, DelDOT helps in obtaining CDL permits and collaborates with Delaware Motor Vehicle to expedite licenses for bus drivers and mechanics as needed.

Under the BIL Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Delaware Department of Natural Resources (DNREC) will utilize funds to increase certification trainings, recruiting Justice40 youth to work in WAP and initiating a DNREC Green Jobs Academy. This will be in partnership with the Green Energy Program for weatherization and solar sector workforce development.

Under the Inflation Reduction Act, DNREC will be applying for and implementing the HOMES Contractor Training Grant and the HOMES Auditor Training Grant. The grants focus on the training for certified professionals in the residential energy sector to conduct home energy audits, install and repair HVAC systems, building envelope, home appliances, renewable energy systems, and other energy efficiency measures. DNREC will be creating a Community Benefits Plan to ensure that the funds flow to high priority areas in the state and abide by the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Energy as more instructions are provided throughout the coming year.

Other grants administered by the state may also have a workforce development component to them: 40101(d) Grid Resiliency Grant, competitive pool of funds for utilities to improve the grid; Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant, competitive pool of funds for municipalities to improve energy efficiency; and the Revolving Loan Fund, an available loan for energy projects and technical support. However, the use of those funds is dependent upon the applicant and their intended use, which has yet to be determined as they are implemented in 2024.

DelDOT's Capital Transportation Program (CTP) highlights several opportunities for workforce development. For example, the Project Education and Training lists potential funding from core formula apportioned program funds for workforce development, training seminars, workshops, and conferences and education activities.

The Summer Transportation Institute Program, initially funded through ARPA, is a four-week, non-resident program, in partnership with Delaware State University (DSU), provides high school students the opportunity to learn about transportation, in an effort to cultivate their interest in pursuing careers in transportation. The goal is to generate more diverse applicants for DelDOT jobs, ultimately resulting in a more diverse workforce.

Finally, the New Freedom Program Statewide provides transportation for persons with disabilities. Its services allow mobility options which will help individuals enter the workforce and participate in social, work and business activities.

The full CTP can be found here.

The Mid-Atlantic Clean Hydrogen Hub (MACH2™), involving Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, aims to harness existing technology for clean hydrogen generation. This initiative will create well-paying jobs, especially benefiting historically underserved communities. MACH2™ will support clean hydrogen production, delivery, and usage, with a focus on Southeastern PA, Southern NJ, and Delaware. It seeks to significantly contribute to decarbonizing various industries while prioritizing environmental justice objectives.

Key Goals of MACH2™:

1. Generate clean green and pink hydrogen for local energy use, reducing emissions.

2. Reuse existing pipeline infrastructure in densely populated regions.
3. Create over 20,000 well-paying jobs, including union positions, fostering a talent pipeline in clean energy.
4. Provide economic and health benefits to disadvantaged communities, aligning with President Biden's Justice40 Initiative.

Strategies to achieve workforce goals include:

Ensuring Job Quality and Workforce Readiness: MACH2™ plans to train a new energy workforce in partnership with stakeholders, including the Delaware Workforce Development Board, training providers, labor unions, and community advisors. It aims to collaborate with educational institutions for inclusive career pathways through micro-credentialing, apprenticeships, and degrees, promoting workforce diversity and accessibility.

Involvement of Organized Labor and Educational Institutions: MACH2™ is significantly led by organized labor and partners with labor unions for effective reskilling. Collaboration with universities like the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, and Delaware Technical Community College will develop relevant curricula and training programs for future energy sector workers.

Strategic Alignment and Job Creation: The focus is on identifying areas needing training within the energy sector, creating pathways to well-paying, union jobs, particularly in historically underserved communities. The initiative aims to generate more union jobs in construction, manufacturing, and other sectors, ensuring sustained wages.

More information on MACH2™ can be found here.

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.

Delaware has opted to utilize its One-Stop Operator as the central coordinator. This Operator convenes all partners in monthly workgroups and meetings to ensure seamless coordination of activities outlined within and beyond the plan.

An integral part of the American Job Centers (AJCs), the One-Stop Operator strives for connectivity, collaboration, and continuous enhancements throughout the system. The primary goal is to foster an environment conducive to collaboration, communication, and coordinated efforts, ensuring consistency in delivery and coordination among programs. This is achieved through open communication with all frontline teams. Therefore, the One-Stop Operator effectively:

1. Organizes monthly statewide leadership meetings to align workforce activities and workgroups, aiming for system improvements.

2. Facilitates regular monthly meetings with all four local One-Stops (NCC, Kent, and Sussex counties) along with required and additional community partners.
3. Coordinates services, devise strategies for continuous program enhancement, address problems/challenges, share best practices, and foster a unified WIOA One-Stop System.
4. Collaborates with One-Stop leaders on training needs, aiming for at least Baseline certification while striving for Hallmark certifications for all four One-Stops.
5. Escalate issues, priorities, and systemic fix opportunities to the board where state workforce leaders with necessary authority can act. Larger issues needing long-term solutions become strategic goals through board-established planning.

Additionally, the One-Stop Operator ensures continual progression within the WIOA One-Stop System by overseeing the progress of agreed-upon agenda items among program leaders. The Operator encourages open communication while eliminating duplication, aiming to:

1. Ensure compliance with the WIOA state plan and other variables for consistent program delivery and coordination.
2. Coordinate services, develop strategies for continuous improvement, address challenges, and support partners in removing barriers to effective service delivery according to WIOA law.
3. Encourage innovative concepts and coordinated efforts for statewide policy enhancements and continuous improvements in WIOA services.

The Operator also plans and executes an annual gathering for statewide One-Stop System frontline staff, aiming to exchange innovative ideas to enhance the quality of the workforce, economic self-sufficiency, and employer skill requirements.

Furthermore, the Operator strives to provide support for accurate referral tracking data, offers insights on trends, and gauges effectiveness through customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement within the WIOA One-Stop system. While we have not achieved this as a Hallmark service for our AJC, we are working to achieve this in the new year.

WIOA law states that One-Stop delivery systems need to be certified for effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement at least once every three (3) years.

1. The One-Stop Operator compiles and maintain all necessary documentation and records to successfully complete the certification process according to federal, state, WIOA and DWDB policies.
2. The One-Stop Operator works with DWDB to prepare and partner with the Leadership Team for successful one stop certifications for all four One-Stop programs.
3. The One-Stop Certification team determine where improvements can be made to One-Stop systems.

The One-Stop Operator works with the WIOA Leadership Team to ensure that all roles of the required partners and their areas of accountability, according to WIOA law, are clearly defined

with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that will serve as the foundation of the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).

The MOU process among partners ensures clear identification of rules, roles, and responsibilities, contributing to alignment. Moreover, Delaware's advantage as a small state with WIOA partners engaged across multiple planning groups, committees, and initiatives further facilitates this alignment.

Meeting People Where They Are Initiative – The goal of this initiative is meet clients in the community in conjunction with current and new partners with an objective of providing information regarding DOL and E&T services while also increasing the foot traffic at the AJCs by advertising via word of mouth and community involvement.

Title II: DDOE conducts a rigorous Request for Proposal (RFP) process to allocate AEFLA funding to eligible providers. This process involves public announcements, pre-bid meetings, and transparent evaluation procedures. Applicants must demonstrate effectiveness in providing literacy skills and transitioning learners to employment, further training, or post-secondary education. A scoring rubric ensures consistency and transparency in the evaluation process.

The RFP considers the 13 considerations listed under WIOA, including support for a state literacy resource center, technology applications, curriculum development, teacher quality improvement, outreach efforts, and other activities promoting workforce development. Applicants must address how their proposed services align with WIOA goals and support the Workforce Development Board's strategic plan.

Furthermore, DDOE determines high-need areas for adult education services based on data from the American Community Survey/US Census regarding low literacy rates and limited English proficiency. The RFP requires applicants to detail how they will provide services in these areas, referencing WIOA Title II language, the Workforce Development Board's Strategic Plan, and Delaware Department of Labor Employment and Training in-demand job data.

All programs funded through Title II must deliver instruction in work preparation, basic academic skills, critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-management, tailored to participants' needs and aligned with federal and state goals. Additionally, they must coordinate services with WIOA partners, post-secondary education and training entities, one-stop centers, community-based organizations, and non-profit organizations to develop career pathways and support participants' supplemental needs.

DDOE ensures ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program performance, offering technical assistance to all programs to meet WIOA targets. Programs failing to meet performance standards may receive reduced funding or face defunding. Continual improvement is facilitated through the review of program successes, challenges, innovations, and best practices, with input from funded providers.

Overall, DDOE's management of AEFLA funds aims to provide equitable access to high-quality adult education services, supporting individuals with barriers to employment and promoting their successful transition to the workforce or further education and training.

Title IV: The DVR Business Relations Unit (BRU) establishes and maintains strong relationships with businesses in Delaware. They collaborate with hiring managers to understand staffing needs and job duties, facilitating suitable employment opportunities for DVR participants.

DVR offers customized services to individuals, including job placement assistance, resume development, job application support, and interview preparation. They work closely with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure participants receive necessary support during their job search and on-the-job training.

Furthermore, DVR provides career guidance, assisting individuals with disabilities in mapping out career pathways aligned with their interests and skills. They coordinate with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners and community service providers to offer training services, aiming to build a strong labor force within occupational sectors.

DVR also evaluates the effectiveness of Pre-Employment Transition services and monitors the quality of Transition services. They collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education to support students and families in the transition process, providing information and resources through various outreach efforts.

Overall, DVR's approach focuses on tailored services, partnerships, and seamless transitions to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve successful employment outcomes and career advancement

To ensure comprehensive and high-quality services for individuals with visual impairments and significant disabilities, particularly in vocational rehabilitation (VR), the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) conducts a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) in collaboration with stakeholders.

Through partnerships with the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies, DVI gathers primary data from stakeholders, including consumers, community providers, interest groups, and businesses. The assessment identifies key needs such as employment/placement, access to services (including transportation), and assistive technology.

DVI commits to engaging stakeholders through various channels, including educational programs, community organizations, and monthly partner meetings with other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners. By sharing information and collaborating with multiple partners, DVI aims to improve services and address community needs effectively.

Furthermore, DVI emphasizes outreach to underserved populations, including minorities and non-English speaking communities. Strategic planning focuses on improving access to services, increasing social integration, and enhancing employment outcomes for these groups.

As a core partner of the Statewide Workforce Development System, DVI ensures physical and electronic accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. Collaboration with other agencies and testing of accessibility initiatives contribute to an inclusive environment for all.

In addressing the needs of youth with disabilities, DVI acknowledges the importance of assistive technology and transition services. Coordination with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) ensures seamless transitions and collaboration on shared cases, ultimately supporting students and families in their vocational goals.

This response would be insufficient without acknowledging Delaware's advantages as a small state, benefitting from multiple WIOA partners actively engaged in various planning groups, committees, and initiatives. Within DOL-DET, a team of dedicated Business Service

Representatives (BSRs) assists employers with a spectrum of workforce needs, including job postings, candidate screening, referrals, and comprehensive marketing of available positions. Each One-Stop location features a BSR specifically focused on catering to local employers within their county or area.

DOL-DET extends a range of services to employers, encompassing robust support for job fairs, including assistance with venue selection, connecting with other employers or community partners, and comprehensive marketing through various channels such as email blasts, press releases, and social media platforms.

The Apprenticeship & Training initiative offers a unique learn-and-earn model, where a Registered Sponsor hires apprentices. This program empowers businesses to cultivate highly skilled employees. The demonstrated benefits of Registered Apprenticeship programs include reduced turnover rates, heightened productivity, and diminished recruitment costs, thereby facilitating a more efficient and skilled workforce.

Delaware leaders actively engage with statewide providers and organizations, supplementing the publicly funded workforce system. Once identified, these relationships are expanded and formalized to become integral parts of the workforce system, contributing to board initiatives. For instance, the Rodel Foundation, a national education non-profit, exemplifies this integration by being pivotal members of the Pathways initiative, with their CEO holding a position on the DWDB and leading the Strategic Planning Committee.

The DWDB is forging connections with economic development activities across the state to understand the new business and expansion landscape. The Division of Small Business, actively participating in monthly WIOA meetings and holding a seat on the board, engages in various activities. These include providing access to programs via the one-stop delivery system through Delaware VOCAL, referring employers to Delaware JobLink, sharing information with DET for referrals, attending partner and Board meetings, and collaborating on employment and training decisions to align the State's workforce system.

Similarly, Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP), the economic development entity for the state, maintains a board seat, with its President and CEO chairing the Business Engagement Committee. Regular coordination between DPP's Director of Workforce and the DWDB Executive Director ensures synchronized efforts and activities.

Educational activities are provided by Title II adult education programs and are co-located in the AJCs. Where One-Stop capacity is surpassed, job seekers are referred to either the Title II distance learning adult education program or to local Title II adult education programs.

Supports needed for attendance are provided as allowed by each core partner's enabling legislation. Justice involved persons are monitored for participation in AJC activities and receive supports as allowed through WIOA, Perkins Post-Secondary and Second Chance Pell Grant funding streams. The Departments of Labor, Correction and Education also collaborate to provide vocational training to incarcerated students with job placement opportunities upon release. These agencies work collaboratively to monitor and continuously improve processes to better support successful reentry for justice involved citizens.

Attendance, career planning, service provision, transition, employment results, and recidivism rates are monitored. Educational information gathered through the Prison Education Program,

which receives WIOA Title II funding, is shared as permitted to expedite job attainment and appropriate job training in alignment with in-demand employer needs and Professional Licensing Board regulations.

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.

In the spring/summer 2021 it was apparent that the board structure and support would be the top priority. The Chair and the Executive Director ensures that the appointments to the board are aligned with the state's critical industries, especially those targeted by DPP and the creation of the Business Engagement Committee to ensure funding priorities are aligned with Delaware's most current workforce skills needs and to help close the skills gaps, as indicated by the state's business stakeholders.

The most recent short-term program and service priorities, established in 2021 for business engagement included:

1. Develop an employer engagement strategy and implementation plan.
2. Rollout employer engagement strategy to a selected number of critical industries.
3. Pilot industry-led cohort training to upskill workers.

Work done to achieve the goals above include:

Commencing 2022 the Business Liaison program engaged two contractors to serve as intermediaries between businesses, workforce development/training programs, and prospective employees. These contractors, aka Liaisons, are tasked with building a two-way communication pathway that will enable businesses to share hiring needs, provide input into training programs, and easily hire qualified employees. Simultaneously, this strategic engagement with business improves training programs by connecting them with open jobs.

The Business Liaison program works closely with the Department of Labor's (DOL) Division of Employment and Training, which employs Business Service Representatives (BSR) to help companies with their workforce needs. The Liaisons will provide knowledge and data to assist BSRs in building strong, proactive relationships with businesses and create sustainable processes for meeting the rapidly changing needs of Delaware's industries. The long-term goal is to build processes to enable direct, sustainable relationships between businesses, government, and workforce development/training programs.

Liaisons are proactive, develop strong relationships with the local chambers of commerce, industry associations, economic development agencies, DWDB and DOL partners, Division of Employment and Training (DET) staff, and others to:

- Understand and champion the needs of businesses in Delaware.

- Educate businesses on available training programs, resources (e.g., Delaware JobLink, Elevate, Forward Delaware, Seed +, One Stop Centers, DOL BSRs, and Co-op Programs).
- Engage employers/business partners to understand real-time hiring needs.
- Advocate for those hiring needs to DWDB, DOL, and workforce development/training programs in the community.
- Provide data to the Office of Work-Based Learning, and other existing intermediaries to align activities.
- Monitor willingness of businesses to hire graduates of training programs and work with training programs to alter operations/offerings as needed.
- Use the agreed upon data system to store and track information related to employer engagement, employer needs, and other key metrics.
- Use the agreed upon labor market software (e.g., EMSI) to track trends and better serve business partners.
- Build a sustainable, long-term process for two-way communication between businesses, workforce development/training programs, and other key partners that can be successfully handed off once the contract is complete.

In addition, partners will continue to align and coordinate services to business partners. Services for the partners are carried out by the partner employer services staff locate throughout the state.

DET provides an array of services for business across the state.

1. Apprenticeship and Training: Registered apprenticeships is a proven approach for training workers in skilled trades while meeting the needs of businesses for a highly skilled workforce.
2. Fidelity Bonding Program: The Federal Bonding Program provides fidelity bonding insurance coverage to ex-offenders and other high-risk job applicants who may be denied coverage due to issues that may include but not be limited to work experience, poor credit history or a criminal background. At no cost to the employer or employee the bonds are issued by a national insurance firm ranging in the amounts of $5,000 to $24,000 per person for a period of up to one year.
3. Foreign Labor Certification: Assists employers to meet the requirements for recruiting nonimmigrant foreign workers to the U.S. on a temporary or seasonal basis when there is a shortage of domestic workers.
4. On-the Job Training: This funding is used for a workforce initiative to reimburse businesses that provide on-the-job training opportunities to support those looking for work while addressing their own staffing shortages.
5. Today's Reinvestment around Industry Needs (TRAIN): TRAIN's goal is to engage providers to support employers in identifying workforce training need and then provide support around creating a solution. The solution is to provide targeted education and

training to individuals, with a focus on serving unemployed and/or underemployed, to ensure Delaware employers have the talent they need to compete and grow.

6. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): The purpose of the WOTC program is to improve employment opportunities for hard-to-place job seekers by providing a tax credit to the employer who hires and maintains that employee. Employers make the hiring decision and there is no limit to the number of new hires who can qualify an employer for the tax savings.
7. Job Order Portal in DJL: This provides employers with a tool for their hiring needs.
8. Learning for Careers (LFC): The purpose of LFC is to expand employer participation in youth employment programs in addition to increasing the number of youth served through summer youth employment programs, secondary school work-based learning and co-operative education programs, and postsecondary work-based learning and clinical/experiential learning programs. DWDB, with a partnership with DOL-DET, and DOE works to engage employer groups, chambers, and associations in creating paid work experiences for youth.
9. Assistance with job fairs. This includes organizing locations, connecting with other employers or community partners, and utilizing various marketing tools like email blasts and press releases.
10. Promotes the Apprenticeship & Training model, which allows individuals to learn while earning. Employers engaging in Registered Apprenticeship programs benefit from developing highly skilled employees, reducing turnover rates, increasing productivity, and lowering recruitment costs.

DOL-DET offers extensive support to employers through its team of Business Service Representatives (BSRs). These professionals aid companies by addressing various workforce needs, including job postings, candidate screening and referrals, and marketing positions. Each One-Stop center has a dedicated BSR catering to the specific needs of employers in their region.

DOL–DET Business Services Reps, LVER's, and DVOPs; Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's employment services specialist; and the Delaware National Guard Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) will all work together to ensure members of the Delaware National Guard receive job training and the best resources and opportunities for their civilian employment, including coordinating employment opportunities with local employers as well as providing employment counseling and job referrals. DVOPs will provide employment services/case management/individualized career services only to veterans and eligible persons.

In Fall of 2023, DWDB and DPP staff realized the need to coordinate a state-wide business outreach. The goal of this group is to eliminate redundancies in business outreach programs and promote communication and cooperation amongst groups across the state to ensure the most consistent and beneficial contact with each Delaware business. To date, this group includes members from DOE, DVI, DVR, Division of Small Business, DOL/DET, economic development agencies from each county, and more. Each agency is committed to develop resources, provide referrals and points of contact, and coordinate best matches for the business's needs.

Recent programs such as Elevate Delaware which affords tuition for an eligible individual to attend an approved noncredit certificate program that provides industry-accepted skill training and certification. Participants must be currently employed within a Delaware business that employs under 51 employees. This program was established to provide tuition reimbursement and/or supportive services (up to $10,000) for currently employed individuals to obtain additional training for career advancement.

Elevate Delaware is intended to do all the following:

1. Preserve jobs for Delaware residents and small businesses.
2. Assist Delaware residents who need skills for promotion or to obtain higher paid employment.
3. Assist small businesses in Delaware who need employees that have obtained certification for specific skills.

Each Local Education Agency (LEA) is required to establish an Advisory Committee for their Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. These LEAs must adopt a comprehensive approach to crafting and executing CTE programs in growing industry sectors while discontinuing underperforming programs, in collaboration with their program advisor committee. To either embrace a state modeled CTE program or devise a local one, the advisory committee will leverage local, state, and regional labor market data to evaluate relevant employment demands and initiate the adoption or creation process.

Regarding existing CTE programs, the advisory committee will evaluate their performance. This evaluation aims to ensure that the program aligns with the core functions of the industry sector and addresses both current and future workforce development needs. Based on this assessment, appropriate measures will be identified to maintain the program's relevance and effectiveness.

The Delaware Advisory Council on Career & Technical Education (DACCTE) offers technical assistance to districts and conducts monitoring activities alongside the CTE office. DACCTE functions as an advisor, providing support when needed. In instances where a practice necessitates a policy update, DACCTE often offers preliminary guidance or technical assistance while the CTE office follows the formal process of policy or regulation updates. This approach enables Delaware to present a cohesive approach while also proactively addressing behaviors before formal guidance is issued.

Delaware Advisory Council on Carer & Technical Education's (DACCTE) mission is to strengthen and enhance the Career and Technical Education delivery system and to assist the State in providing quality programs and expanded opportunities for all citizens. DACCTE's key objectives are:

- Recommend policies the State should pursue to strengthen and expand Career and Technical Education in Delaware.
- Review and monitor Career and Technical Education programs, services, and activities throughout the state.

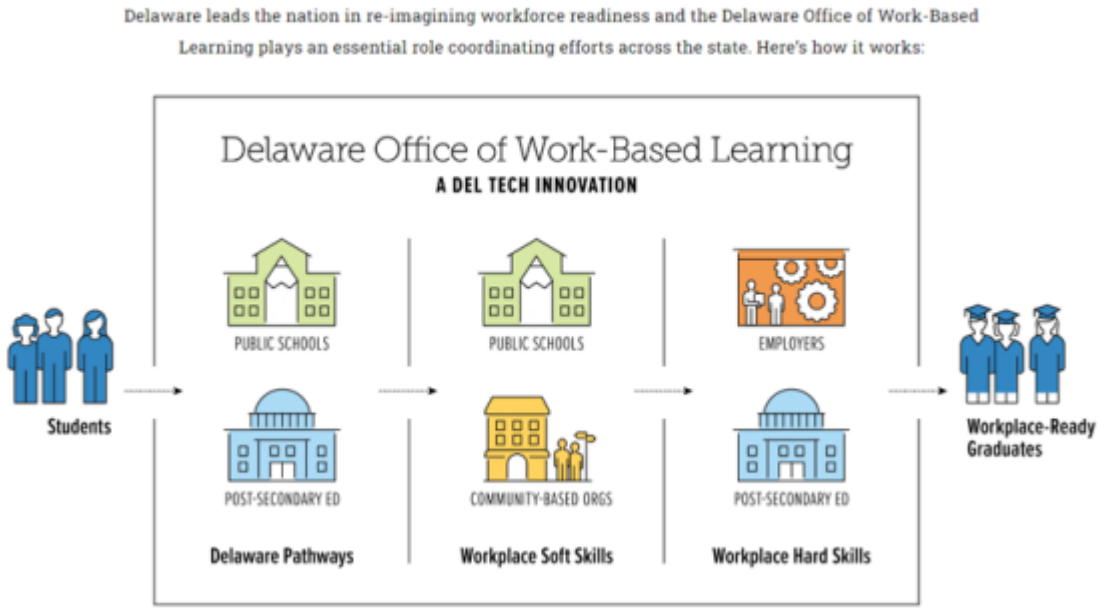
- Provide technical assistance to local school districts and agencies to improve and enhance the Career and Technical delivery system.
- Advise the State Board of Education and the Department of Education on the development and amendments of the State Plan for Career and Technical Education (CTE) required by the Perkins Act for federal funding of CTE.
- Develop and sponsor professional development workshops and activities for teachers, administrators, and counselors.
- Provide support to improve and expand the services and activities of the Career and Technical Education Student Organizations (CTSOs) which are integral components of CTE.
- Conduct an annual awards program to recognize and promote business, agencies, students, and other individuals for excellence in Career and Technical Education.
- Provide input and resources to develop the Career Compass and Teachers Guide publications for middle and high school students and teachers annually.

DWDBbelieves with all training dollars invested, there should be a job at the end. Under our recently updated RFP, we ask providers to submit (if applicable) at least 3 letters from employer partners stating they support and have hired individuals trained through the funder.

The Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning functions as a coordinating body, bringing together employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to equip students with essential hard and soft skills crucial for success in the workplace. The office plays a pivotal role in program management, collaborating closely with schools to identify student needs. It organizes various events such as mock interviews and job shadows, fostering student competency. Additionally, it collaborates with local employers to create immersive work experiences for students.

Operating as facilitators, co-creators, and ambassadors, the Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning aims to establish a robust work-based learning framework statewide. Their objective is to provide support to schools, ensure students are well-prepared, and contribute to thriving industries by nurturing a skilled local workforce. Employers can engage with the office by being a supporter, a partner, or a leader. Supporters are companies that provide entry-level engagement with introductory career information and presentations. Partners provide hands-on engagement with direct student interaction at multiple touchpoints over a period of time. And finally, leaders offer immersive experiences that can help jumpstart a student's career path.

The Office of Work-based Learning was established to ensure that schools have access to vetted work-based learning opportunities to support Delaware Pathways. The intent is to create a seamless statewide system for schools to place students in meaningful learning experiences as well as a single-entry point for businesses to engage with schools.



Title II providers are committed to delivering instruction in high-demand occupations and career pathway areas that are in alignment with the DWDB's strategic plan. These providers will collaborate with local employers to identify the essential skills, information, and attitudes necessary for individuals to secure entry-level positions and advance within various job fields.

TITLE IV facilitates the connection of pre-screened, qualified candidates with businesses for employment purposes. It assists businesses in retaining current employees who acquire a disability, offers information on the ADA and accommodations, and leverages the Delaware Employment Network to link State of Delaware agencies and DVR candidates with internship opportunities.

Moreover, DVR collaborates as a Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Team (NET) partner, granting access to national business opportunities. This partnership includes the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), enabling individuals to register for employment opportunities.

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.

Delaware has a single Community College system; Delaware Technical Community College (DelTech) and the president is a board member.

Organizations offering authorized study programs that offer training services are accessible under Delaware's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Individuals seeking to improve their skills and job preparedness to progress in their career pathways can access these authorized study programs listed. With guidance from an AJC case manager, individuals receive support in career planner and participants have the opportunity to choose from the ETP programs that best suit their requirements. DelTech, and two state sponsored schools as well as Wilmington University, have a presence on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Adult Vocational Technical Schools in all three counties have programs on the ETP list as well. The focus on high-demand occupation programs that train or strengthen skills of Delaware's adult and dislocated workers, particularly in mid- to high-level careers. The state works with providers to identify customized job training programs centered on data determined needs.

Through the Request for Proposal process, the state looks for programs that demonstrates a marketing/outreach to participants on advancement, or career pathway, beyond the current training offered. A career pathway is a non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical courses that includes secondary- and postsecondary-level content and opportunities for participants to apply knowledge in the classroom and the workplace. For example, moving from a CNA to LPN, where training can be acquired, and the increase in salary as a participant advances training. Career pathways culminate in industry-based credentials and/or postsecondary degrees.

Title II Adult Education providers are actively developing pathways with the state's community colleges and adult career and technical education schools to facilitate access to career-specific skills training. They strive to co-enroll students whenever feasible.

Individuals involved in the justice system who are re-entering society receive preparation through the Prison Education Program and Department of Correction Re-entry Programs to engage with the One-Stop Center. Education provided within Level 5 prisons aligns with community Title II Adult Education standards, ensuring participants' readiness for One-Stop Center activities. Deltech college programs have commenced in two of the four prisons, with plans for expansion to all by the end of 2024, aiming for an associate degree in general studies under the Second Chance Pell Pilot initiative.

Additionally, Title II providers will offer instruction in high-demand occupations and career pathways that align with the DWDB's strategic plan. They will collaborate with local employers to identify the essential skills, information, and attitudes necessary for individuals to secure entry-level positions and advance within various job fields.

The Credit for Prior Learning policy framework aims to bridge the gap between degree and non-degree programs. There are articulation agreements established with all higher education institutions and Career and Technical Training under DOE, wherein individuals can attain advanced standing by achieving a specified grade. Additionally, dual enrollment opportunities are available.

Delaware faces certain hurdles in maintaining its higher education institutions on the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list. The University of Delaware & Goldey Beacom College have chosen to withdraw its programs from the list due to difficulties in accurately reporting all student requirements.

To address reporting burdens, the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) staff has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the unemployment insurance system. This collaboration aims to alleviate reporting responsibilities by collecting wage information for training providers. However, a significant obstacle arises as some higher education institutions do not collect social security numbers, therefore assistance is not available.

In response, DWDB has facilitated a partnership between Delaware Technical Community College (DelTech) and the unemployment insurance system. DelTech is now actively engaging with unemployment insurance independently to obtain wage information, thus addressing reporting challenges more effectively. This collaborative effort demonstrates a proactive approach to overcoming obstacles and ensuring the continued alignment of higher education programs with workforce development initiatives in Delaware.

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.

Many professions now demand education beyond a high school diploma. Projections for 2025 indicate that approximately 60% of job opportunities will necessitate education beyond high school. Surprisingly, Delaware lacks a formalized educational or training goal, setting it apart from only five other states. Delaware realizes the importance of having some education or training beyond a high school diploma. Because of this, we've set a goal around increasing access to postsecondary credentials attainment. Delaware aims for 60% of its residents aged 25 to 64 to achieve a degree or certification beyond high school by 2030, marking a 9.1 percentage point increase from the present 50.9%. Industries requiring education beyond high school are expected to flourish and offer higher compensation. Moreover, individuals with advanced education or training are more likely to participate in the workforce. Consequently, Delaware actively promotes individuals to pursue additional education and training opportunities.

Strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Continue programs to ensure all high school students can graduate completing one year of college and/or a certified apprenticeship.
2. Ensure adult and displaced worker training programs require candidates to earn a recognized certification or education beyond high school.
3. Set clear, statewide, target and build tools to monitor progress by race, age, and sector. Build a data system to collect and distribute educational/training attainment and employment data.
4. Build on existing state scholarships such as SEED, Inspire, etc. to address funding gaps to support higher education credit and certification attainment to help all reskill or upskill.
5. Establish partnerships and campaigns to increase educational/training attainment.

Changes to the Request for Proposal to include additional points for providers that can show Credit for Prior Learning. DWDB values programs that can provide individuals with post-secondary credits which can demonstrate college level knowledge and competencies. Points are awarded to programs that can demonstrate via letter from a higher educational institute that their programs allow students to earn post-secondary credits.

Pre-Apprenticeship program is ideal for individuals who lack experience or education but want to build a solid foundation to start a successful career. The Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program complements the existing Registered Apprenticeship programs. Current programs include auto, general construction, and electrical. As Delaware's unemployment rate drops, disadvantaged and underrepresented populations will be at a greater risk of being left behind. Pre-Apprenticeship opportunities will allow these populations to gain the needed hard and soft skills for a successful career. Pre-Apprenticeship Programs refer to a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Registered Apprenticeship is a commitment that prepares an individual for a career in various trades. Registered Apprenticeship is an "earn-while-you-learn" model to prepare workers for careers. The registered apprentice receives a combination of related technical instruction and on-the-job training with an employer who is a registered sponsor who elects to sponsor individuals to be a registered apprentice. Typically, an apprentice works during the day and attends school at night. You learn on the job by someone who is skilled in the trade (mentor).

College tuition doesn't always fit into every budget, and finances sometimes keep good students from going to college. That's why the SEED (Student Excellence Equals Degree) Scholarship program was started in 2005. This free-tuition program was expanded in 2021 to include Delawareans of all ages who would like to pursue an academic degree or a workforce training certificate.

The SEED scholarship can be applied to an associate degree, diploma, credit certificate, bachelor's degree, or workforce training program at Delaware Tech. The free tuition can be applied to five years of courses (paying for a full associate degree and one additional year toward a bachelor's degree).

In 2022, the DWDB partnered with United Way of Delaware to provide support for graduating high school seniors. The *Success for Our Seniors* (SOS) program is a collaborative impact initiative that ensures every Delaware high school senior has exactly what they need to graduate with a clearly defined path and plan for their immediate futures. DWDB and DET staff worked with students to offer information and connections to post-secondary graduation plans that do not include higher education degree programs. During the pilot school year, we engaged with seniors that showed an interest in apprenticeship programs, workforce certification training, and those that wanted to enter directly into the workforce. In the pilot year, this initiative worked with Dover High School in Kent County as well as United Way partner programs. More information on SOS found here.

In 2023, DWDB worked with Delaware Department of Education, Department of Higher Education Office (DHEO) on the Launch into Your Future Month. The goal of this initiative is to work with students as they explore apprenticeship opportunities, learn about certification programs, work on their college applications, take steps to enlist in the military, and develop

skills to enter the workforce. In the pilot year, this initiative worked with 5 high schools across the state with the hopes to increase in future years. More information on Launch found here.

Title II Adult Education providers are actively enhancing procedures in collaboration with the State's community colleges and adult career and technical education schools. Their aim is to establish pathways for individuals to access career-specific skills training and facilitate co-enrollment when feasible.

Those re-entering society after involvement with the justice system are being equipped for interaction with the One-Stop Center. This preparation is carried out through the Prison Education Program and the Department of Correction Re-entry Programs. Education provided within Level 5 prisons aligns with the requirements of community Title II Adult Education. Consequently, participants are well-prepared for engagement in activities at the One-Stop Center.

The DWDB is looking to build a Statewide Co-Op learning program that by the end of 2027 will be fully self-sustained. The DWDB is exploring investment strategies such as Governor Reserve set asides to help get this program off the ground. The program is designed for Juniors and Seniors to enter into employment and earn college credits for the work they're doing, with hopes that more employers/businesses across the state will see the true value and begin investing in the Co-Op which will relieve the DWDB and Governor's Reserve funding for future innovative projects.

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.

In 2017, Governor Carney restructured the state's economic development approach, dividing the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) into two distinct entities: the Delaware Division of Small Business and Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP), a public-private partnership.

The Delaware Division of Small Business operates as a state agency, concentrating on aiding businesses in their initiation and expansion within Delaware, particularly smaller enterprises (those with 100 or fewer employees). It employs regionally focused Business Managers who assist businesses at various stages by navigating governmental processes, linking them with resource organizations, and facilitating access to capital. The Division's Director is a member of the DWDB board.

DPP, a nonprofit state economic development agency, spearheads Delaware's economic growth initiatives by attracting, nurturing, and retaining businesses. It aims to fortify the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem while aiding private employers in talent identification, recruitment, and development within Delaware. The DPP team assists prospects by evaluating potential sites, providing details on cost-of-living, and highlighting funding opportunities, including tax credits and incentives. Central to DPP's role is coordinating Delaware's economic development programs and strategies, serving as a reliable resource for businesses seeking to establish or expand within the state.

DPP is committed to four pivotal elements of economic development:

- Attraction – Concentrating efforts on drawing new companies to Delaware.
- Expansion – Engaging and supporting existing employers to foster growth.
- Innovation – Convening and supporting emerging sectors to drive innovation.
- Talent – Enhancing the state's talent pool and aiding employers in meeting workforce demands.

The President and CEO is a member of the DWDB board and the co-chair of the Business Engagement Committee.

In 2021, a representative from The Kent Sussex Alliance, a non-profit organization established in the late 1980s by Central Delaware's CEOs and top business executives, joined the DPP board. This appointment enhances connectivity to economic and workforce development issues in Central Delaware.

Established in 1837 under the name Wilmington Board of Trade, the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce (DSCC) boasts a rich legacy as the foremost and most impactful business entity in the state. Serving as a consolidated advocate for businesses, DSCC holds a steadfast mission to foster an economic landscape that empowers enterprises of every size and nature to enhance their competitiveness within an ever-evolving, increasingly global, and volatile context. DSCC holds a distinctive position, serving as a unifying force to facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders, addressing challenges, fostering job creation, advancing business interests, and elevating the overall quality of life for all residents of Delaware. The President of DSCC assumes a seat on the DWDB board and co-chairs the Business Engagement Committee. Furthermore, DSCC plays a pivotal role in identifying potential board members by providing recommendations for consideration.

Finally, regular meetings are convened with economic development partners from New Castle County, Kent County, and Sussex County through Business Outreach Coordination sessions. These meetings foster collaboration and address pertinent economic development matters across different regions of Delaware. These meetings are a co-creation and collaboration of DPP Director or Workforce and DWDB Business Liaison team. Additionally, updates are presented by DWDB staff and board members to members of economic development groups, and work groups established through DWDB or other initiatives.

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.).

The One-Stop delivery system comprises required, additional, and other partners who have formalized their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU designates Delaware JobLink as the State's Labor Exchange system and mandates that partner program information be accessible on DJL while ensuring all partners participate in the One-

Stop referral system. Additionally, the MOU specifies that the program enrolling a customer is responsible for eligibility and service costs. Dual enrollments are supported, allowing partners to refer customers to any necessary service within their program. Delaware is progressing towards an integrated intake process by enrolling work-ready individuals in DJL through partner systems or direct registration, facilitating service tracking. Delaware is currently looking into a common intake form but has not implemented at this time.

DJL is a comprehensive web-based labor exchange and case management tool utilized by Delaware to enhance job center productivity and elevate employment results. DJL ensures compliance with key regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Veterans' Priority of Service. It prioritizes network security, adhering to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) moderate control standards. DJL remains regularly updated to align with federal and state mandates. The platform integrates four interconnected sections—JobLink, ServiceLink, ProviderLink, and FiscalLink—seamlessly.

JobLink is a self–service job matching and workplace information service for employers and job seekers. Job seekers can establish an account to manage their job search activities or to register with labor exchange activities. Employers can establish an account to manage job openings and view job seeker resumes.

ServiceLink is a web–based One–Stop client management application that allows case managers to track their caseloads and report information required under WIOA, Labor Exchange, Re–Employment Services, TAA, and other Federal programs. ServiceLink provides a standardized process for following participants through the workforce development system network. It eases the caseloads for case managers by providing a tool that can manage and monitor caseloads, assess employment barriers, establish training and employment plans, search for service providers and WIOA eligible training providers and programs, and track job placements. ServiceLink collects all information required to generate reports for these Federal programs.

ProviderLink is a self-service provider section, allowing training providers and providers of youth services to create self-service accounts to apply for inclusion on the statewide WIOA Eligible Training Provider (ETP) List and the list of approved youth service providers. Provider and program records may also be added by State Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Administrators.

FiscalLink allows case managers and program administrators the ability to establish program budgets and authorize participant/vendor payments for all WIOA programs including National Dislocated Worker Grants and TAA activities.

Tableau Reporting tool is used for data analysis purposes which links to DJL.

Literacy Pro is an online student data management system designed specifically for the adult and continuing education team.

- Collects student information aligned with the federal regulations.
- Generates reports for state and federal grants.
- Identifies program overlaps and gaps.
- Reports program effectiveness and progress towards larger goals.

- Present clear, easy-to-understand reports for internal use and to meet reporting requirements.

USDOE/Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education has approved its use. Delaware provides an annual data quality report to OCTAE and the system is tested by USDOE on its monitoring visits to the state. Delaware had it last monitoring in January 2020.

DVR utilizes its Case Management System and Unemployment Insurance data to capture required data elements. The Case Management System is designed for compliance and the natural flow of the case process, making it intuitive and easy-to-navigate for VR Team Members. This platform is used for case, financial management, and maintained on VR federal requirements, best practices, and business practices.

DVI utilizes Visually Impaired Client Registry (VICR) as their case management system. DVI has released a Request for Information (RFI) for a new system but has not switched over to date.

In addition to the Office of Labor Market Information within DOL, DWDB staff uses Lightcast for labor market information. This platform provides the latest employment trends, information on local job postings, skills in demand in various industries, and more.

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.

DWDB Policies: Website_Policy_Manual.pdf

The WIOA Leadership Team, made up of required and additional partners met several times prior to the last State Plan submission to determine cost allocations and proportional share for the Infrastructure Agreement (IFA). These sessions included cabinet secretaries, leaders empowered to sign MOUs, and the staff of the Delaware Workforce Development Board. These meeting were both facilitated and unfacilitated. Throughout the meeting the partners provided cost information, contributed insight and recommendations. The information was analyzed by the DWDB staff, verified by the partners, and consensus was reached. From these almost three months of discussions and analysis Delaware's WIOA One Stop Partners came to consensus on the following:

1. To conduct reviews of memorandum semi-annually, or when a partner restructures services, which materially change a partner's presence in the AJC, such as a change to a process flow or personnel staffing within an AJC resulting in a drop or increase in utilization.
2. To purchase, replace, and/or upgrade furniture used by their staff and/or customers in accordance with state budgeting and purchasing procedures. Current budgeted funds will be used as intended by the State of Delaware.

3. The current usage of facilities making up the American Job Centers (AJC) represents proportional usage and relative benefit received and that proportional usage generally reflects the percentage cost allocations listed in the master budget at enclosure #1. Required partners will pay these costs using the currently established systems, due dates.

4. Cost Allocations are based on square footage. The DWDB and the WIOA Partners used square footage as reflected in rental agreements as a foundation of costs allocations for infrastructure costs In Accordance With (IAW) TEGL 17-16, para 4 ". Infrastructure costs of AJCs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the one-stop center, including: rental of the facilities; utilities and maintenance; equipment…"

5. Proportional use. Delaware has chosen to base its proportional use calculations on the total number of clients each partner served/the total of all partners served. That is the starting point for all negotiations.

6. Participation Value. This is the real value of partner contributions for participation in WIOA team functions. This is a calculation of in-kind contribution from all partners. The calculation is "annual salary + fringe /52 Weeks in a year). Then divide by 37.5 (hours in a work week). Then multiply by 2 (length in hours of a meeting). Then multiply by 12 (1 meeting per year)." This occurs at both the Leadership and county level leadership teams.

7. Delaware will review additional shared costs at prescribed reconciliations and for the time being only list career services as a shared cost as permitted by TEGL 17-16 which states "The one-stop operating budget may be considered the master budget that contains a set of individual budgets or components that consist of costs that are specifically identified in the statute: infrastructure costs, defined in WIOA sec. 121(h)(4); and additional costs, which must (emphasis mine) include applicable career services and may include shared operating costs and shared services that are related to the operation of the one-stop delivery system but do not constitute infrastructure costs.

8. Delaware's publicly funded One Stop System is housed in four locations in three counties throughout the state. Because the One Stop Allocation process is "based on partner programs' proportionate use of the system and relative benefit received," these locations include the Delaware Department of Labor Divisions of Unemployment Insurance; Vocational Rehabilitation; and of Employment and Training.

Establish the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) team. The IFA team will collect and collate data to conduct the reconciliation. The team members will include but are not limited to the DWDB Management Analyst; the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET) Fiscal Officer; the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Fiscal Officer; The Delaware Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fiscal Officer; and The Delaware Department of Labor Comptroller.
Establishing the Reconciliation Period. The reconciliations occur twice every year, July 30th, and January 30th.
Tracking Infrastructure and Shared Costs. The IFA tam will meet quarterly, immediately following a monthly DOL Fiscal Committee meeting. The IFA team will review rent, utilities, common area maintenance (CAM) costs, and shared costs. The DWDB staff will catalogue and store the evidence.
The DWDB Begins the Reconciliation. The DWDB staff and the DWDB Executive Director will review the Infrastructure and Shared Costs evidence for completeness. The DWDB staff and the Executive Director will prepare an updated a spreadsheet.
Collecting Career Services Data. DOL-DET; DOL-DVR; and DOE Adult and Prison Education Resources Workgroup will provide the DWDB with copies of their Annual Training Services data within 30 days of submission of the respective Annual Reports.
Comparison of Evidence to IFA. The DWDB staff will compare the entries on the spreadsheet to the IFA document and determine whether the partner obligations in the IFA were achieved.
Corrections Identified. The DWDB staff will list discrepancies (if any) between IFA and actual collections by type and amount. In the unlikely event a discrepancy is found, the DWDB staff will resolve the problem with the appropriate partner.
Report written. The DWDB will prepare an Executive Summary of the Reconciliation within 30 days of completion. The summary will include: • The proportional share of Infrastructure Costs • Copies of all Supporting Documents including Career Services, Evidence of Payments, and noted discrepancies.
Report Disposition. The report will be presented to the DWDB at the next board meeting. The DWDB management analyst will maintain the report.

Delaware acknowledges that there has been a deviation from the established procedure in the past. Moving forward, we are committed reviewing, updating, and strictly following the outlined

protocol to ensure consistency and compliance. Steps have been initiated to update, reinforce awareness, and adherence to this procedure among all involved parties. A new MOU and IFA are being developed and will be established by July 2024.

Appeals Policy for Funding the Infrastructure Cost of One Stop System

Background: WIOA makes improvements to the public workforce system including a requirement that partners dedicate funding for allowable infrastructure and other shared costs that are allocable to the partner and in proportion to the partner's use and the relative benefit received by the partner program. The Governor, through the assistance of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB), will make the final determination of each required partner's proportionate share of statewide infrastructure costs under the State funding mechanism. One-Stop partners may appeal the Governor's determination regarding their portion of funds to be provided for infrastructure costs. Reference: section 121(h)(2)(E) and 20 CFR § 678.700-678.755.

Policy: DWDB establishes this appeal process for funding the infrastructure cost of One Stop System.

1. One Stop partners will, to the greatest extent possible, resolve conflicts at the lowest level possible. This resolution usually occurs at the division or comparable unit level.
2. Only a division director of a participating One Stop Partner directly affected by an allocation may initiate an appeal and that appeal only addresses infrastructure costs allocations based on proportional use.
3. One-Stop partners may appeal on the basis of a claim that:
    a. The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the proportionate share requirements of 20 CFR 678.735(a), or
    b. The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the cost contribution caps described in 20 CFR 678.736 and 20 CFR 678.738.
4. The DWDB Executive Committee will hear appeals with a notification as a special meeting; the DWDB Executive Director will post the special meeting notice on Delaware's Public Meeting Calendar Website. Normal quorum rules will apply and the DWDB chairman will chair an appeal hearing.

The appellate process is:

- The division director initiates the appeal by providing a written request to the DWDB Executive Director. The written request must specifically address the cost allocation/proportional use concern. The request will detail the efforts made to resolve the impasse.
- The DWDB Executive Director will, within 14 days, schedule an appeal hearing. The Executive Committee will meet as soon as a quorum is available and all parties to the dispute are available, not to exceed 60 days.
- The Executive Committee will hear from all parties and make a final determination using a majority vote of the quorum.

Policy 4.4, DET AJC Policy – Co-enrollment, established on July 1, 2022

1.0 Purpose: This policy provides the reference information for co-enrollment of participants with WIOA funding.

2.0 Policy Scope/ Details: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (https://www.congress.gov/1 I 3/bills/hr803/BILLS-I I 3hr803enr.pdf) establishes a foundation to assist job seekers obtain the necessary skills and assistance in order to obtain sustainable career pathways. Co enrollment in different programs allows for the full utilization of funding sources to produce the best outcomes for job seekers. The following guidelines are provided to One Stop Centers in support of producing these outcomes and addressing concerns of performance reporting: TEGLs 4-20, 14-18, 19-16

3.0 Procedures: Clients are accessed by case managers to provide the full range of services available to them to achieve a timely and successful outcome of skills advancement and job placement.

All information regarding each enrollment is entered in Delaware JobLink

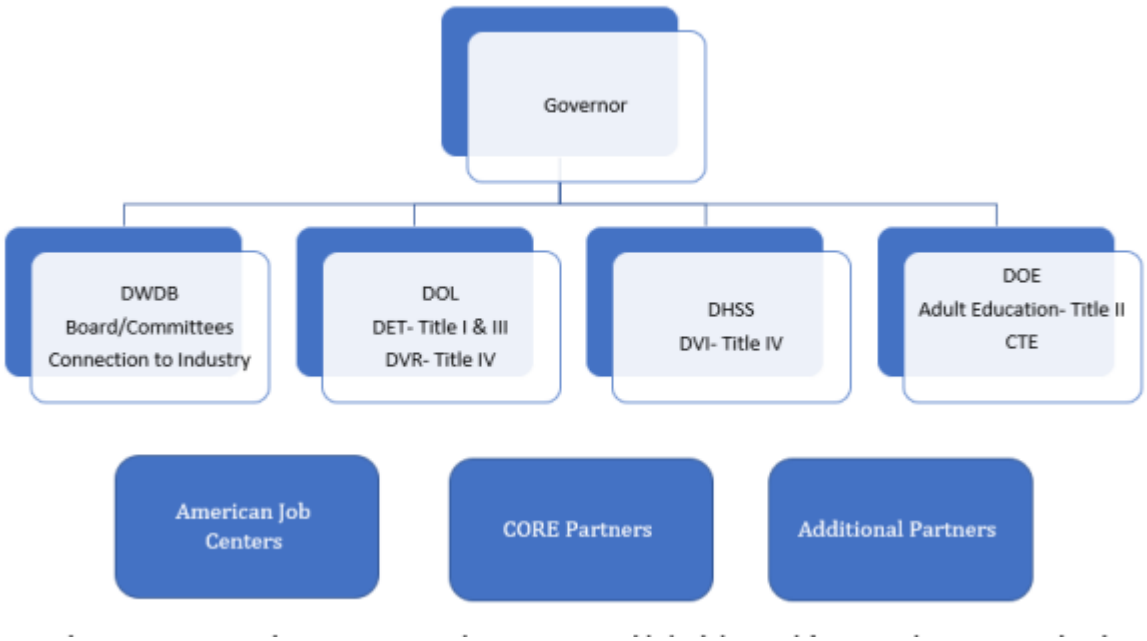
Information of services for each enrollment is documented and shared across enrollments as per the Participant Individual Report Layout (PIRL) data elements and measure configuration.

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.

Delaware's Workforce System



According to Executive Order 10, Governor Matt Meyers reestablished the Workforce Development Board and declared the following:

The Delaware Department of Labor's (DOL) Division of Employment and Training (DOL/DET) is designated as the PACIA for the WIOA Title I (Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs) and Title III Employment Service Programs and shall be the Grant Recipient for funds allocated by the WIOA for the Title I and Title III Programs.

The DOL Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DOL/DVR) and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division for the Visually Impaired are each designated as the PACIA for the WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) is designated as the PACIA for the Title II Adult and Family Literacy Programs, and for combined WIOA programs including the Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21st Century Act and the Prison Education Program.

The workforce delivery system seamlessly integrates various services, including workforce development, education, and other human resource offerings, within a customer-centric service network. This setup aims to enhance accessibility to program services and elevate long-term employment prospects for individuals availing themselves of these services. It achieves this by ensuring all customers have access to top-notch American Job Centers, linking them with a comprehensive array of services accessible within their communities. These services cater to diverse needs, whether individuals seek job opportunities, wish to enhance basic educational or occupational skills, aspire to attain postsecondary certificates or degrees, require guidance for career decisions, or represent businesses and employers in search of skilled workers.

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.

The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) exists to help Delaware achieve economic prosperity by building the workforce that our economy needs. To do this, the board works with two key constituencies: employers who have evolving needs for a workforce, and Delawareans who are in or will be in the workforce. DWDB provides leadership and resources to develop a skilled workforce that is responsive to the evolving needs of business and communities. The Delaware Workforce Development Board is a governor appointed, private business majority board, which provides oversight of Delaware's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) publicly funded workforce system.

The work of the Delaware Workforce Development Board is based on the following set of principles that guides priorities and investment decisions.

- **Strategy Based:** Board focuses on the big picture of workforce development (creating a system, not merely a collection of programs) to match supply and demand more effectively.

- **Customer Focused:** Systems are built around customer needs, including job seekers, employers, and youth (rather than funding streams) and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Leveraged Partnerships and Resources:** Strategies leverage other resources and are based on strong partnerships, building on existing collaborations when possible.
- **Outcome Driven:** Outcomes are clearly defined, communicated, and measured with investments made accordingly.
- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Programs are focused on outcomes and are encouraged not to duplicate one another but rather work collaboratively to deliver services to the customer.
- **Industry and Economic Development Aligned:** Workforce programs and services are aligned with regional industries and economic growth strategies.
- **Accountable and Transparent:** There is a clear process for making decisions informed by analyzing data and evaluating performance standards.

A significant portion of the Delaware Workforce Development Board's (DWDB) activities is accomplished through committee involvement. Each committee meets on an ADHOC basis. These committees diligently strive to achieve the outlined goals and recommendations set forth by the DWDB.

The committees include:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of Board members who are officers of the Board, the chairpersons of committees, the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Division of Small Business, the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services. And shall not exceed 15 members The majority of the members shall be from the private sector. The Executive Committee shall exercise all the authority of the Board during the intervals between full Board meetings. Provides governance, leadership, and direction. Approves and negotiates federally mandated performance measures. Works with fiscal agent (U.S. Department of Labor) to oversee financial matters (i.e., funding allocations, budget, training provider cost issues, etc.).

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee provides recommendations on policy and performance for the development and implementation of WIOA youth funded programs statewide. Oversees the delivery of youth services for the neediest and at-risk youth, including both in-school youth and out-of-school youth. The Youth Committee works with our school systems and training program providers on how to build the workforce of the future. The committee provides recommendations on life skills training, expanding work-based learning opportunities, career exploration and exposure, credential attainment, completion of high school or GED program, and making sure our graduating seniors are college and/or career ready. In addition, the Youth Committee works with Delaware's Pathways efforts to assure students are exposed to high

growth industries. Finally, the Youth Committee is charged with developing or researching pilots, models, and best practices.

Adult Dislocated Worker Committee

The Adult Dislocated Worker Committee provides recommendations on policy and performance for the development and implementation of WIOA adult and dislocated worker funded programs statewide. Focuses on high- demand occupation programs that train and/or strengthen skills of Delaware's adult and dislocated workers, particularly in essential career tracts. This committee works with providers to identify customized job training programs centered on data determined needs. In addition, this committee investigates opportunities for businesses to "grow their own" training programs. The priority is to invest in businesses that provide training for current lower-level employees so they can advance within their company. In addition, this committee works to identify populations of Delawareans that need to skill or upskill and enter or reenter the workforce such. These populations include re-entry, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and those that have barriers to employment. Finally, the Adult Dislocated Worker Committee is charged with developing or researching pilots, models, and best practices.

Business Engagement Committee

The Business Engagement Committee ensures that the DWDB's funding priorities are aligned with Delaware's most current workforce skills needs, as indicated by the state's business stakeholders. This committee also works to help close the skills gap experienced by employers. Ensures that the DWDB's funding priorities are aligned with Delaware's most current workforce skills needs, as indicated by the state's business stakeholders. Facilitate a more effective and efficient connection to training providers and industry.

Strategic Planning Committee

Strategic Planning Committee guides the DWDB's achievement of its overarching goals, objectives, priorities, and activities. It will track the progress and support the Board and its committees in the development of metrics establishing, data collection, and data reporting criteria. This committee would continue to evaluate Process Redesign and Resource Alignment. Guides the DWDB's achievement of its overarching goals, objectives, priorities, and activities. Track the progress and supports the Board and its committees in the development of metrics establishing, data collection, and data reporting criteria. The Strategic Planning Committee works with each chair to determine priorities, goals, and best practices.

Performance Measures Committee

This committee is pivotal in providing support in negotiating levels of performance, as required by section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Additionally, this committee reviews performance reports and finances with regards to activities of the board staff and expenditures within WIOA grants and reports to both the Executive Committee and the full Board on a quarterly basis.

Proposal Review and Certification Committee (PRCC)

The key role of the PRCC is to determine, certify, and recommend qualified providers and programs for Delaware's State List of Eligible Training Providers (ITA's- Individual Training

Accounts) for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adults and Dislocated Workers based on the Demand Occupation List. Additionally, the Committee hears complaints, oversee the appeals process, and render final decisions in all providers appeals. The Committee also plays a role in the request for funding proposal (RFP) process for awarding contract services. The PRCC ensures that participants enrolled in programs financially assisted under Title I of the WIOA Act, are provided with a wide variety of quality, job-driven, and labor market relevant programs to maximize consumer choice. The objective is to invest and approve a vast number of programs for participants to make informed educational decisions that will lead to sustainable employment.

Committees are advisory to the Delaware Workforce Development Board. The Committees will provide information, advice, and recommendations to advance DWDB's mission. Each committee consists of members of the DWDB, and additional industry or subject matter experts not considered full DWDB board members. Committee Chairs and members are appointed by the Chair. Each committee is assigned a staff member via the DWDB Executive Director to act as an advisory member. Advisory members consist of Delaware Department of Labor, Employment and Training, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, WIOA Leadership, and DWDB staff. Advisory members are non-voting members and will be invited to participate in committee work at the discretion of the committee.

The work of each committee shall include the following:

- Provide recommendations to the Executive Committee or full Board on how to support programs and initiatives that align with DWDB's mission.
- Provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to their area.
- Set yearly goals.
- Review the strategic plan provided by the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Identify innovative and new ideas for potential investment.
- Review the DWDB operations periodically and identify open items, ongoing projects and share time frames.
- Review in detail staff's recommendation for action and relevant issues.
- Assist the board in carrying out activities.
- Identify technology to streamline workforce efforts.
- Investigate and identify data tracking systems to measure success.
- Embrace a streamlined outcomes mechanism to measure data and results.

Committee recommendations cannot be implemented and are not authorized until the Board has given its approval.

The committees are not authorized to act on behalf of the Board, but are authorized to conduct the following activities:

- Gather information, consider all matters within the committee's scope of work, and provide information, advice, and recommendations to the Board.
- Communicate the workforce development priorities of the Board to stakeholders or community members.
- Engage in outreach efforts to advance the mission of the Board.

Additional Board duties include the following:

- Financial Oversight by working with fiscal agent (U.S. Department of Labor) to oversee financial matters (i.e., funding allocations, budget, training provider cost issues, etc.).
- Manage the funding approved for contracts, ITAs and training providers.
- Develop processes and procedures for managing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Select providers for youth programs through the competitive bid process.
- Ensure continuous improvement of training providers through continuous feedback, monitoring, and data sharing.
- Maintain Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with mandatory service partners to enhance One-Stop service offerings.
- Conduct oversight for One-Stop Required and Additional Partners and WIOA training activities.
- Establish administrative polices and guidelines for the operation of WIOA activities and One-Stops.
- Allocate State Blue Collar funds, providing oversight to DET, which facilitates the RFP and contracting processes.
- Develop and submit the Delaware Annual Report to DOL, serving as the State's point of contact for Delaware's workforce development system.
- Assists the CEO to develop performance measures and, in partnership with the CEO, negotiate the State's performance standards.
- Negotiate final Federal performance measures with DOL on behalf of Delaware.
- Oversee and coordinate all State and Federal workforce development programs.
- Promote private sector involvement of board members and business community.
- Develop immediate corrective action plans upon learning of violations resulting from Federal compliance visits/inspections.
- Develop and maintain a Management Information System to monitor eligibility, intake, performance, and compliance with contracts, the DWDB Plan, and WIOA regulations.
- Establish and maintain eligibility determination, intake, assessment, and referral procedures for those enrolled in WIOA programs.

- Assist the Governor in developing the strategic plan for all state and Federal workforce development programs.

Delaware's State Board Roster:

Board Member First Name	**Board Member Last Name**
Alisha	Bryson
John	Gooden
Vere	Archibald
Shelly	Cecchett
Malcolm	Coley
Amanda	Irwin
Michael	Fleming
Paul	Herdman
Lisa	Kirkwood
Margaret	LaFashia
Scott	Malfitano
Becky	Harrington
Mike	Quaranta
Carrie	Leishman
Jennifer	Cohan
Jonathan	Horner
Saad	Soliman
Mike	Begatto
Kenneth	Woods
Ian	Patton

Board Member First Name	Board Member Last Name
Mark	Brainard
Jeffrey	Taschner
Cynthia	Martin
Matt	Meyer
Elisha	Jenkins
LaKresha	Moultrie
Larry	Lambert
Nicole	Poore
John	Carney
Marcus	Henry

DWDB has reduced its board from 53 members to 30 members allowing for flexible operations and streamlining.

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.

Delaware will comprehensively assess its workforce system through a blend of quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools. The State's performance accountability framework will concentrate on the six mandatory WIOA common measures, tailored to suit each core program's specifics. Given that Delaware is a single state workforce, the State has set performance benchmarks to ensure accountability while aligning with the Governor's commitment to making Delaware's employment and training system accessible to individuals facing significant barriers to employment, especially the most challenging-to-serve adults and youth.

Delaware will leverage data from Delaware JobLink to assess performance. This assessment evaluates two primary stakeholders: businesses and job seekers. The effectiveness of Business Customer Services will be gauged through customer service surveys, increased utilization of Delaware JobLink by employers, and feedback from focus groups.

Furthermore, the Board will assess One-Stop programs and services catering to job seekers using various evaluation tools. These include customer service surveys, the measurement of successful seamless referrals to partner services, evaluations of operational changes like the

referral system and the seamless enrollment of core partner customers in Delaware JobLink. Federal reports documenting performance measures of core partners will also be considered.

Moreover, the DOL-DET Contract Management and Monitoring unit will spearhead efforts to compile program performance data for interim reporting, informing the Board's program evaluations. This unit will directly report to the DWDB for contracts managed by DOL-DET and other programs housed within DOL-DET. For core partners situated outside DOL-DET, partner information will be collected to report to the DWDB. These updates will be scheduled as part of the DWDB's quarterly meeting agenda.

The DWDB leadership, partners, and upper-level management will collaboratively evaluate results and determine the necessity, nature, and timelines for any required adjustments, ensuring alignment with the overall objectives and effectiveness of the workforce system.

Title II programs will rely on several data points to determine program quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvement. These will include:

- Quarterly desk audits to monitor program progress toward performance targets.
- Technical assistance meetings with programs that are in danger of not meeting performance targets.
- On site State and peer monitoring visits to ensure that programs are delivering services as described in the grant agreement, SOW, and guiding legislation.
- Student surveys to evaluate service quality from a client perspective.
- Staff surveys to evaluate delivery of professional development from an instructor perspective.

Title IV through DVI have performance measures that need to be adhered to. DVI monitors vendors, does customer satisfaction surveys, and trainings.

The DVR will run a scheduled task, monthly or quarterly, that will select candidate cases. The candidate cases will be “successful outcomes” that have not been previously selected for quarterly wage reporting. An Intermediate Database Table will be used to store all candidate wage data information. This table will be used to create a file that will be forwarded to UI for wage data processing. The results from the UI process will then be used to update the Intermediate Database Table. Reporting of the wage information will be generated using the Intermediate Database Table.

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 2-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.

During the preceding two-year period, Delaware utilized quarterly performance reporting, provider monitoring, employer feedback, customer engagement activities, workforce system

evaluations, and strategic planning assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of core programs, one-stop partner programs, and Combined State Plan partner programs.

Quarterly reviews conducted by the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET), and the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) demonstrated continued progress toward negotiated WIOA performance measures across multiple core programs. Program monitoring identified strengths in employer engagement, work-based learning expansion, workforce partner coordination, and customer access to training opportunities.

Assessments conducted through provider monitoring and performance reviews also identified several areas requiring continued improvement, including:

- measurable skill gain performance consistency;
- customer intake and referral coordination;
- participant co-enrollment tracking;
- accessibility and digital literacy challenges;
- data-sharing limitations among partner programs;
- staffing capacity and turnover;
- and customer navigation difficulties across workforce programs.

Employer feedback gathered through the 2022 Delaware business survey indicated that employers viewed Delaware JobLink and workforce system services positively, particularly in the areas of recruitment support, talent matching, hiring incentives, and workforce training support. Employers also identified workforce readiness concerns, specifically citing gaps in communication, self-motivation, critical thinking, time management, problem-solving, digital literacy, and basic computer skills among applicants.

As a result of these findings, Delaware implemented several strategic adjustments, including:

- increased emphasis on digital literacy within provider curricula;
- expansion of business engagement and employer outreach efforts;
- hiring of business liaison contractors through ARPA funding;
- expanded focus on work-based learning and career pathways;
- enhanced provider technical assistance and quarterly provider forums;
- and continued evaluation of intake and referral processes across the publicly funded workforce system.

Process mapping and workforce system evaluations conducted with external consultants also identified opportunities to improve service integration, streamline customer intake, strengthen referral tracking, and improve coordination among workforce system partners. While implementation timelines were impacted by staffing changes and the COVID-19 pandemic,

Delaware continues utilizing the findings from these assessments to guide operational improvements and workforce system modernization efforts.

Additional assessment efforts, including the Advancing Wilmington initiatives and the Amplify pilot project, highlighted the importance of wraparound supports, interagency coordination, and barrier reduction strategies for populations facing employment challenges. These findings continue to inform Delaware's workforce strategies related to supportive services, workforce participation, and equitable access to career pathways.

Delaware will continue utilizing performance accountability data, employer feedback, customer engagement, provider monitoring, labor market analysis, and partner collaboration to evaluate effectiveness and guide continuous improvement across the workforce development system.

DOL-DET's MIS unit produces a quarterly performance measures outcomes and sends to the staff that oversees each area for review. This report is also reviewed by the DWDB board on a quarterly basis. Staff compares the outcomes to the negotiated performance levels for each measure and adjust as needed. DOL-DET's contract staff periodically meets and reviews monthly performance with providers and establishes areas of support that is needed. This includes support from the board and any technical assistance. Additionally, quarterly provider forums are held to engage with and support providers.

In early 2022, the DWDB conducted a survey of Delaware businesses to gauge the preparedness of potential employees. Around half of the respondents expressed confidence in Delaware JobLink's ability to benefit their businesses through services such as job postings, recruitment assistance, and talent matching. Additionally, many believed that JobLink could aid in providing hiring incentives, training support for current employees, organizing career fairs, and offering tax credits.

The survey highlighted the perceived importance of various education and training providers in supplying qualified applicants to businesses. High schools, career and technical education programs, as well as both public and private colleges, were identified as crucial sources of talent. Interestingly, businesses with multiple locations in Delaware placed greater emphasis on these providers compared to their single-location counterparts.

Among the skills commonly lacking in job applicants, non-technical attributes such as self-motivation, communication, problem-solving, attention to detail, and time management were noted. On the technical side, proficiency in software like Excel, basic computer literacy, and data analysis were identified as areas of weakness.

In response to the survey findings, the DWDB made adjustments to the RFP, including digital literacy as a criterion for additional points if implemented in provider curricula. Additionally, with funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), two business liaison contractors were hired to offer support and guidance to companies statewide regarding available programs and resources.

Due to staff changes and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Delaware was unable to complete the action plans as initially planned under the Capstone Project. While customary evaluations of specific services were conducted, the primary focus was on comprehensive internal evaluations of the intake processes within the Publicly Funded

Workforce System. These internal evaluations were carried out by external consultants and the findings are detailed in the final report.

Additionally, a detailed research project was undertaken in 2019. Following the Advancing Wilmington Report, strategic pilots were launched to implement priority recommendations. One such pilot, titled "Amplify," aimed to clarify the capacity needed to provide workforce development programs with access to essential wraparound services. This pilot involved partnerships with key stakeholders such as the DWDB, Delaware Department of Labor (DOL), Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and the Challenge Program.

However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift in priorities and resources. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, efforts continued with the first pilot, albeit with modifications to adapt to the new circumstances. As a result, subsequent pilots were not pursued as originally planned.

Although the full assessments could not be completed as intended, the process mapping project has already yielded positive outcomes. Several process maps are available to partners to provide insight into ongoing efforts to enhance workforce development in the state.

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)).

Delaware Employment Equity Project (DEEP):

Delaware's Employment Equity Project is a U.S. Economic Development Administration Statewide Planning grant received by DWDB in 2021. The purpose of the grant is to analyze the needs of Delawareans and employers within the state. DWDB focus is on communities that experience persistent poverty and formulate strategies to decrease disparities between those communities and more prosperous areas. Working with partners, DWDB is conducting several a statewide assessments and analysis to identify workforce development and training needs based on employer demand. The DWDB is also analyzing state innovation and entrepreneurship assets including mechanisms to access capital and equity financing to support business development and expansion and gaps in access to capital for underserved rural and urban communities. Working with United Way of Delaware, the DWDB has identified seventeen Promise Community zip codes which are areas of multi-generational poverty. DWDB will use the information gathered in the assessments to help inform and guide workforce development and training funding.

Status Report

December 2023

Workstream Status

Workstream	Status
Business Decision Maker Survey	Completed
Equity-Centered Workforce Development Study	Completed
Policy Review and Analysis	In Progress
Gap Analysis of Entrepreneurial Resources	In Progress
Gap Analysis of Wraparound Services	In Progress
Labor Force & Skills Assessment	In Progress

Workstream Updates

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers
Equity-Centered Workforce Development Study Purpose: Assess the current state of workforce development in Delaware through a comprehensive and equity-focused lens in partnership with UWDE and others. DWDB partnered with the United Way of Delaware, the Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative, and the Urban Institute to expand the existing Equity-Centered Workforce Development study to meet the research needs of DEEP. In sum, this study takes a deep dive into the current state of workforce development in Delaware through a comprehensive and equity-focused lens. Report Link: Advancing Racial Equity in Delaware's Workforce Development System
Policy Review and Analysis Purpose: Analyze current workforce policies to ensure there are no inconsistencies, conflicts, duplication, or ambiguity that promote inequity or increase barriers for individuals and programs in Promise Communities. DWDB selected the Biden School of Public Policy & Administration of the University of Delaware (UD) to contract for this workstream in November 2022. The two deliverables for this project are the following:

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers

- A policy manual to support internal operations and ensure DWDB is following all correct and up-to-date federal, state, and board-recommended policies.
- A landscape analysis of state policies in relation to workforce development and DWDB partners.

Progress Updates:

- Task #1: Policies and Procedure Review:
    - IPA has created a policy manual to support the internal operations of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) board.
    - To date, the IPA team has researched and utilized best practices from other workforce development agencies and organizations; researched the workforce development landscape in Delaware to understand DWDB's role; reviewed and sorted through over 10 years' worth of DWDB policies; reviewed physical and electronic copies of policies; worked with DWDB leadership to determine which policies are still necessary and relevant to include in the manual; worked with the IPA editor and graphic designer to create a DWDB manual that is user-friendly and easy to update; presented to the DWDB Executive Committee on progress
- Task #2: Landscape Analysis of Workforce Development Policies
    - IPA is working to create a landscape analysis of state policies regarding workforce development. This analysis incorporates the policies of DWDB partners. The purpose of this landscape analysis is to understand policies in place at each agency and to determine any issues such as policy gaps, overlaps, or misalignments.
    - To date, the IPA team has collected all public-facing policies from all 21 of the DWDB partner agencies and programs; created a list of 40+ potential agency and program contacts to interview; developed a list of interview questions to dig deeper and better understand the landscape of workforce development in Delaware; discussed a process for analyzing interview feedback.

Gap Analysis of Entrepreneurial Resources

Purpose: Assess the landscape of innovation and entrepreneurship assets and identify gaps in access to capital and other resources.

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers
DWDB selected Social Contract (SC) to implement this scope of work in October 2022. SC spent the first quarter of 2023 in the planning and design phases of this work. During the planning phase, the team created a detailed engagement, data collection, and analysis plan to guide the work. In this plan, SC outlined the research questions, necessary data, engagement methods, data collection processes, and analysis methodology. SC also created an ecosystem map, which includes a detailed list of organizations that provide resources to entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs in Delaware. Using this list, the team created two surveys: One for organizations that provide entrepreneurial support and resources. One for entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs. The goal of the organization survey is to collect data on resources available in the state and the goal of the entrepreneur survey is to understand both the needs of entrepreneurs and the services they currently utilize. To date, the organizational survey was distributed to around 50 providers via email. Throughout the year, SC also hosted interviews and focus groups with entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs. Progress Updates: • Social Contract hosted an Entrepreneur Workshop on November 7th and brought together current and aspiring entrepreneurs, local organizations, industry experts, investors, and other stakeholders in the state to discuss and explore ways to enhance

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers
collaboration, increase access to resources, and leverage design thinking principles to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem. • Social Contract has completed the data collection phase including two surveys, four focus groups, and interviews with entrepreneurs and support organizations. • The data collected has been analyzed and compiled into a draft report which has been shared with DWDB. A resource map with the resources that were identified has also been compiled and shared.
Gap Analysis of Wraparound Services Purpose: Assess the landscape of wraparound services to identify opportunities to address employment barriers and connect employers and training programs with wraparound service providers. DWDB selected EDSi as the subcontractor to implement this scope of work in October 2022. The team has focused on developing a comprehensive services catalog and identifying service delivery providers and partners. EDSi identified core and supporting programs, documented location and services provided, identified service delivery partners, and identified key contacts for validation and expansion of the matrix and catalog. They have also reached out to service providers for additional details on services and identified service types and locations. Two EDSi team members conducted in person site visits at American Job Centers in Wilmington, Newark, Georgetown, and Dover. During the visits, they interviewed staff and observed referral processes. This was part of an overall effort to document service delivery and the relationship between WIOA workforce services and other community partner services. Progress Updates: • Task 2 – Develop Comprehensive Services Catalog and Task 3 – Identify Service Delivery Providers and Partners were completed and presented at the April all hands meeting. In addition to identifying and cataloging the programs, providers and partners

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers

the work also included numerous phone discussion and in-person visits to understand processes, protocols, and perceived gaps in knowledge of, access to and delivery of supportive services.

- Task 4 – Map Services and Providers to Illustrate Gaps – the catalog from Tasks 2 and 3 were used to develop an interactive mapping tool that shows the geographic location by provider and service type. This was completed in July.
- Task 5 – Analyze Service Gaps and Utilization data – Historical data from federal WIOA reporting was analyzed in context of available services. Additional data about traffic to One Stop Centers, referrals between partners, and other utilization metrics were analyzed and incorporated in the final report (Task 6)
- Task 6 – Gap Analysis Closeout Presentation and Recommendations – a comprehensive report of the process, findings and recommendations was drafted in August and has been updated and clarified on an ongoing basis based on feedback from DWDB and other partners.

Labor Force & Skills Assessment

Purpose: Assess the skill sets and employment interests of individuals within Delaware Promise Communities.

Social Contract is responsible for developing a labor force and skills assessment campaign in order to assess the skill sets and employment interests of individuals within Delaware Promise Communities. The project team designed a community engagement strategy that includes marketing, outreach, and data collection. The team has also held meetings with local labor, workforce, and community development stakeholders to introduce them to the overall project, present the preliminary community engagement concept and strategy, receive feedback, and gain buy-in to the campaign.

Progress Updates:

- The project team developed the skills assessment survey in partnership with Tech Impact and deployed the survey into communities in early September.

Business Decision Maker Survey Purpose: Comprehensive survey of Delaware business decision makers to understand the employment marketplace and the current needs of businesses. Report Link: Delaware Workforce Assessment: A Survey of Business Decision-Makers
• The Social Contract team also worked with a local social media and marketing company to design the campaign including the name Project Work4Success, as well as unique hashtags, social media assets and logos to distinguish and market the survey. The survey has been translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole in order to reach non-English speaking Delaware residents. • In order to collect survey data more effectively in person and connect with communities, SC onboarded and trained 5 subcontractors, named Community Workforce Coordinators (CWCs) to collect data for the Skills Assessment survey. SC hosted two onboarding sessions to train the CWCs and prepare them to collect survey data. • SC has hosted monthly professional development workshops and check-ins with the CWCs and co-sponsored 2 events with the CWCs and local community organizations within the communities across the state to collect survey data and provide resources to the community. 3 additional events are in planning. • Data analysis is ongoing and data collection will continue through January 15, 2024.

Success Stories

- Through the workshop hosted by Social Contract in September, research and workforce ecosystem partners had the opportunity to meet and learn about the progress of each project workstream and hear the findings that have been developed in the reports that are complete. In addition to the awardees, the DOL, Spur Impact and EDA were able to participate. The awardees and other workforce partners began to connect the projects to build a larger picture of equity in the workforce in Delaware and explored remaining questions about the landscape that need to be addressed in order to fully understand the current state of equity in employment across the state.
- Social Contract hired and trained 5 Community Workforce Coordinators, with a great depth of social capital within Delaware communities. The CWCs have already made great strides in connecting with local communities, identifying local events, and building relationships to more effectively deploy the skills assessment survey and build trust within their communities.
- Tech Impact was able to fully digitalize the surveying experience and increase the reach and security measures of the data collection process. TI also redefined Promise Communities at a more granular level, revealing variable specific regions of differential need otherwise missed by viewing outcomes at a higher level.
- The depth of the EDSi report has elicited substantial interest and feedback, and new awareness of best practices. There is excitement around the opportunities to apply the findings to generate greater usage of supportive services and improved outcomes.

- The University of Delaware was able to organize 10+ years of workforce policies, helping the DWDB uncover policies that need to be updated to better serve Delawareans. The policy review was also able to shine a light on the Governor's Reserve fund so the DWDB can utilize it effectively.

In an effort to continue to be on the cutting edge of new or emerging industries and occupation, Delaware is currently conducting a Clean, Green, and Blue (CGB) workforce transition analysis of each county throughout the State of Delaware and the training requirements for individuals transitioning into or entering the CGB workforce.

The Scope of Work includes the following:

1. Forecasted Job Compilation:
    a. Compile a list of forecasted job opportunities in the Clean, Green, and Blue sectors (e.g., Offshore Wind, Solar, Hydrogen, Solar, Marine Technologies, Aquaculture), etc. within the State of Delaware.
2. Transferable Skill Identification:
    a. Identify existing jobs in Delaware and the regional area where the skills are transferable to future Clean, Green, and Blue sector jobs.
3. Training and Certification Needs:
    a. Determine the additional training, certifications, or educational requirements needed for individuals to transition successfully into Clean, Green, and Blue sector roles, highlighting pathways from current occupations.
4. Program Catalog:
    a. Catalog existing training, educational, and certification programs relevant to transitioning into Clean, Green, and Blue sector jobs, including the organizations that offer them.
5. Gap Analysis:
    a. Identify gaps in existing education and support programs to inform future workforce development needs in the transition process.

Bellwether developed a report that tells the story of the Delaware Pathways initiative. The report will be used to reinforce support for Delaware Pathways and also to inform policymakers and stakeholders in other states pursuing similar goals. Additionally, several members of the board and partners are working with Bellwether to assess work-based learning experiences for students and how to increase them and make them more meaningful.

Delaware is in contract with West Ed to potentially develop a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS).

In accordance with WIOA Section 116(e), Delaware confirms there is coordination of labor and education annual reporting, and this information is available through websites and public meetings.

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)

The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) serves as a vital resource hub, offering a diverse range of comprehensive youth services designed to support individuals facing barriers to education and employment. Primarily targeting out-of-school youth aged 16-24 encountering obstacles in securing employment, as well as in-school youth aged 14-21 facing challenges in completing their education, DWDB's WIOA Title I Youth program serves as a bridge connecting eligible participants to a spectrum of services and activities. This program emphasizes guiding youth through educational and workforce systems via established pathways, tailored to meet each individual's distinct needs. The array of services provided includes raising awareness about career opportunities, aligning youth skills with suitable career paths, addressing educational or training barriers, facilitating access to educational and work-based learning opportunities, and offering ongoing support in achieving career objectives.

Eligibility for WIOA Title I Youth services is determined based on specific age criteria and circumstances, ensuring that those between 16-24 years old not enrolled in any school but facing education or employment barriers, as well as those aged 14-21 attending school, experiencing low-income challenges, and confronting barriers to education or employment, can access these resources. The overarching goal of the Title I Youth program remains the enhancement of education and training outcomes, ultimately enabling young adults to secure and sustain meaningful, self-sufficient employment. Furthermore, DWDB operates under Program Funding Policy (See below) that provides general guidance on State and Federal funding provided by DWDB. Annually, the board creates a Funding Guideline Policy (APPENDIX F) that prioritizes the allocation and utilization of all funds, including both State and Federal resources. These guidelines, in conjunction with various policies, including the High Demand Occupation list (APPENDIX A) and the RFP process, form an integrated framework to streamline youth activities.

A copy of a Youth RFP can be found in Appendix G & H.

Under Title I, the distribution of Youth funding is primarily solicitated through contracts obtained via competitive Request for Proposals (RFPs). In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs may be funded with Blue Collar, WIOA funds or any additionally funding received by DWDB. The Youth Committee will provide oversight for contracted youth programs on behalf of the board. The fund distribution process begins with the creation of the High Demand Occupation List. This list is developed by DWDB staff in collaboration with various entities such as the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Occupational Labor Market Information (OOLMI), Division of Employment and Training (DET), and DWDB partners. The Demand Occupation List determines the occupations eligible for funding in Delaware and is typically finalized before the June Executive Committee Meeting for approval.

Following this, annual Funding Guidelines are crafted as a policy document outlining spending priorities for the Program Year (July through June). This document formalizes the board's priorities for the use of both State and Federal funds within the workforce system. The guidelines might allocate funds for specific projects and are developed in June for the full Board's approval.

Contracts are formulated through a competitive RFP process, typically released in late December or early January. The DWDB and DET team use the current RFP template from Delaware's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a guide to align the RFP with DWDB and Partner priorities. Before submission to OMB for official release, the DOL staff reviews the funding guidelines, and final approval is granted by the Executive Director of DWDB and the Director of DOL-DET.

Evaluation teams, comprising at least three members, including a DWDB board member, are formed to assess the proposals. Panelists undergo training and individually review, and score written proposals. They select the "best proposals" for each category and may invite them for Proposal Clarification Day if needed.

After the clarification process, panels rank all proposals and make funding recommendations. Unused funds are brought to the consolidation meeting where final funding decisions are made. The aim is to fully award the best programs rather than spreading funds thinly across multiple programs. Any remaining funds may be reallocated to other categories, and a priority list of unfunded programs is developed in case of additional available funds.

Formal recommendations for funding programs are presented to the DWDB board for a vote by the DWDB Executive Director and the DOL-DET contracting lead. Contracts are prepared, negotiated, and administered by DOL-DET contracting staff, with the DWDB Executive Director and DOL-DET Director signing the contracts.

Program Funding Policy

Introduction: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) will fund multiple types of programs throughout the year. These will include youth programs, occupational skills programs, post-secondary education programs, and targeted tier one and tier two programs. All programming must ultimately lead to employment or increase the likelihood of a person being employed. The DWDB will not fund enrichment programs or education programs that do not directly lead to employment. The primary driver of accessible training is the state’s High Demand Occupation List, which is developed by the DWDB staff, with input from the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information (OOLMI), the core partners, and training providers. The DWDB intends to align occupational expenditures with the State’s Strategic Plan. The DWDB, primarily in partnership with DOL Department of Education and Training (DET), allots funds through its contracting process, the Individual Training Account (ITA) process, and grants.

Funds Allocations: Initial allocation recommendations will go to the DWDB Proposal Review and Certification Committee and the DWDB Executive Committee, which will review DET recommended initial funding allotments. The board is free to accept or reject, in whole or in part, the recommendations. DET (and partners as appropriate) will build work experience funds into allocation projection.

General Guidance: The DWDB will adhere to Delaware's state procurement policy, which establishes competitive procurement procedures through a request for proposal (RFP) process. The DWDB and DET deliver youth services primarily by soliciting proposals through an RFP from providers for both In-School-Youth and Out-of-School-Youth programming. The DWDB may also solicit proposals for adult and dislocated worker programming. The contract may be a mix of Federal WIOA funds, state Blue Collar Funds, and other funds that may become available through resource alignment activities. Even though the DWDB usually issues an RFP in early January for most of its contract services, the DWDB may issue other RFPs throughout the year as needed or as funding is received. The DWDB intends that partners and representatives of different agencies contribute and "braid" funds whenever possible when developing RFPs.

The DWDB issues the following guidance:

- The DWDB staff develops the RFP process. All proposals received are put through a competitive process and reviewed by panel members (consisting of no less than three members, with one being a DWDB member). Panels have the discretion to fund proposals in whole, in part, or not at all. When funding programs, RFP panels will—to the greatest extent possible—fund programs in full and not divide limited funds between programs.

- The Consolidation Committee, which comprises each panel lead, must establish a priority list for funding programs should additional funds become available. The DWDB Executive Director and the DET Director will reallocate returned funds to programs who are meeting or exceeding performance measures. Returned funds will not be reallocated to programs not meeting their measures as outlined in current contracts. The DWDB envisions reallocations will be proportional between successful programs; however, the DWDB Executive Director and the DET Director have latitude to reallocate funds disproportionately if a provider has an urgent need. If monies other than returned funds become available, an additional RFP will be issued.

- No more than 50 percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be used to fund adult training program and to underwrite such other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.

- Year–to–Year RFP Process**.** The DWDB directs its staff to annually update "The Steps to RFP Success" process prior to the December Executive Committee meeting. DWDB staff will present any changes to the process.

Awarding Additional Points for RFP Submissions. DWDB may add additional categories worth additional points from time to time. DWDB and DET staff may make recommendations for additional points to be awarded based on economic conditions, high needs training areas, or other reasons. These points will be listed in the RFP.

Contract Guidance. This section issues guidance for all contracts.

To the extent possible, definitions provided in the federal law and regulations are the definitions for all sources of funds, including Blue Collar, except the definition of eligibility.

The DWDB may, at its discretion, establish local performance measures for specific populations (*e.g.*, re-entry, underserved youth, and adults) when using state dollars. The DWDB will ensure local performance measures are established in an RFP document as appropriate.

Prior to executing a contract, proposers without current contracts will provide a copy of their most recent tax return or a copy of a prepared financial statement signed by a third-party financial professional to establish their fiscal soundness and eligibility. In the event a financial statement is too complicated for a layman's analysis, a member of DWDB or a subject matter expert will evaluate the document.

All Providers will offer training which provides the client with the opportunity to earn a Diploma, or a GED, or Industry Recognized Certificate as defined in USDOL TEGL 10-16.

Basic language, digital literacy, durable skills, numeric skills training, when appropriate, will be provided concurrently with skills training. As part of the RFP, proposers will be asked to describe their plan to meet this requirement.

The DWDB requires programs with a combination of activities—programs combining classroom training including internship, work-based learning, or clinical opportunities. Participants shall be paid for all work experiences.

Contractors will provide retention services, as necessary, including during the day and evening to meet performance measures for 12 months following exit, except for Adult Blue Collar. Adult Blue-Collar exits will require six months of follow-up.

The proposal rating criteria will favor those proposals that demonstrate the ability to operate quality, cost-effective training programs that result in high placement rates, long-term job retention, and credential attainment. Criteria may be expanded from time-to-time to reflect Board priorities. Any changes will be reflected in the RFP.

DWDB will strive to provide training based on each county's needs and in reasonable proportion to the population. This is a goal, not a hard and fast rule; submissions by geographic area may not support this.

Program providers shall define their staff qualifications in the proposal for any position for which they are requesting funding.

Proposers will ensure clients use Delaware Job Link to find a job. This will include a current updated resume built in the Delaware Job Link system.

Blue Collar adult training contracts will be hybrid. The normal standard for the hybrid is to fund as a 60% Cost Reimbursement and a 40% Performance Based contract.

DET and core partners will ensure all work experience requirements are paid.

Specific Youth Contract Guidance: This section provides general guidance on all youth contractors/proposers. Reference 20 CRF part 681.410(a).

Youth programs will primarily be contracted through the competitive procurement process. Proposals will be solicited via an RFP for In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth programs and services focused on individuals with one or more barriers to employment to prepare for postsecondary training or education and employment. In-School and Out-of-School Youth

programs may be funded with Blue Collar, WIOA funds or any additionally funding received by DWDB.

Youth proposers will identify the credential obtained when a program is successfully completed.

The Youth Committee will provide oversight for contracted youth programs on behalf of the board. Youth Committees may recommend policy direction to the DWDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth. Other tasks that a committee may take on are activities such as leveraging resources and coordinating services among schools, public programs and community-based organizations serving youth, recommending eligible youth service providers, providing on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs, and assisting with planning operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. A member of the Youth Committee will staff the youth RFP panels.

The program elements required under WIOA section 129(c)(2) and 20 CFR 681.410 and discussed further in TEGL 21-16 are:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention, and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
    - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
    - Pre-apprenticeship programs
    - Internships and job shadowing
    - On-the-job training opportunities
- Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local Board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123.
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
- Supportive services.

- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.
- Financial literacy education.
- Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career-exploration services.
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Potential providers must:

1. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, and developmental needs of such participant, for identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants.
2. Develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to one or more of the indicators of performance that shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including in appropriate circumstances, nontraditional employment) and appropriate services for the participant considering the assessment conducted.
3. Proved preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.
4. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.
5. Prepare clients for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.
6. Develop activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.
7. Create effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.
8. Provide at least 25 percent of their allocation to provide paid work experience activities.
9. Funded youth providers are not required to directly provide all program elements. All funded providers are required to ensure youth have access to all program elements:
10. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or

similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

11. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
12. Paid work experience that has as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:
    a. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
    b. pre-apprenticeship programs;
    c. internships and job shadowing; and
    d. on-the-job training opportunities.
13. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
14. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
15. Supportive services.
16. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
17. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
18. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
19. Financial literacy education.
20. Entrepreneurial skills training.
21. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
22. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
23. Education offered concurrently with – and in the same context as – workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Specific Adult/Dislocated Worker Funding Guidance: Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will primarily be contracted through the competitive procurement process and through Individual Training accounts (ITA) vouchers via the ETPL.

The Adult/Dislocated Worker Committee will provide oversight for contracted adult programs on behalf of the board. The Proposal Review and Certification Committee (PRCC) will provide oversight for programs on the ETPL.

The DWDB-approved ITA Process manual and policies will govern the steps for initial eligibility and subsequent renewal of providers seeking inclusion or maintaining their status on the Eligible Training Provider List.

The DWDB staff will annually update the ITA Manual in May for approval the Executive Committee or board each year.

American Job Centers, when appropriate, will assess career service applicants in reading and math skills.

American Job Center staff will determine and document eligibility for individuals involved in a career/training service.

Any local American Job Center office providing federal services that fails to achieve 85% of its goal in any year may be required to have a correction action plan.

Performance Measures: DWDB will only approve or renew ITA programs which meet or exceed Delaware's federally mandated performance measures. Performance measures are negotiated by members of DET and DWDB staff as well as board members. These negotiations are done every two years. For Credit programs at open enrollment degree granting institutions are exempt from the credential attainment requirement measure when applying for initial inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). For credit programs at degree granting institution on the ETPL will meet all performance measures when applying for subsequent renewal. Even so, the DWDB recognizes that some priority populations may require special considerations. The DWDB may at its discretion—on a case-by-case basis—allow providers serving targeted population some latitude during initial eligibility determination and subsequent renewal.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Adult programs will primarily be contracted through the competitive procurement process and through Individual Training accounts (ITA) vouchers via the ETPL. The Adult/Dislocated Worker Committee will provide oversight for contracted adult programs on behalf of the board. The Proposal Review and Certification Committee (PRCC) will provide oversight for programs on the ETPL.

(See Program Funding Policy in previous question or Appendix F)

Job seekers, especially those with barriers to employment, must be prepared with training and skills necessary to be included in Delaware's workforce. DWDB provides resources to serve individuals and helps employers meet their workforce needs. It enables workers to obtain good jobs by providing them with job search assistance and training opportunities.

The WIOA Title I, Adult program serves individuals who are age 18 and older, entitled to work in the United States, and those who have met selective service requirements if applicable. Priority of service is granted to Veterans and eligible spouses, public assistance recipients and

other low-income individuals, as well as individuals who are basic skills deficient and those with barriers to employment.

The goal of the Title I adult program is to provide career and training services to increase employability and remove barriers to employment. Career and training services include, but are not limited to, career counseling and planning, job search and placement assistance, job readiness training, on-the-job training, skill upgrading and retraining, transitional employment, adult education and literacy activities, and secondary and postsecondary education and training programs.

Industry focus will be based on high, in-demand occupations. Supportive services will also be available for individual needs to include transportation, childcare, tools, uniforms, and one-time personal expenses payment. Training will include certificate and degree training programs.

- Focus on re-entrants, justice involved individuals to include wrap around and OJT.
- Focus on youth, women, minorities, veterans, GED / literacy needs, and individuals below poverty level.

A copy of an RFP is available at Appendix I.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

The WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program serves adults aged 18 or over who have been or will be dislocated from employment due to job loss, a mass layoff, or permanent business closure. The program also serves qualified displaced homemakers, souses of members of the Armed Forces and previously self-employed individuals.

The goal of the Title I Dislocated Worker program is to assist individuals to reenter the workforce by providing career and training services. Career and training services include, but are not limited to, career counseling and planning, job search and placement assistance, job readiness training, on-the-job training, skill upgrading and retraining, transitional employment, adult education and literacy activities, and secondary and post-secondary education and training programs.

Dislocated Worker programs will primarily be contracted through Individual Training accounts (ITA) vouchers via the ETPL.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

Funding for Title II programs are done through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) that follows Delaware Department of Education guidelines. The DDOE's financial processes are based on generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act and in accordance with the Delaware Code, the State's Budget and Accounting Policy Manual and Division of Accounting guidance. In addition, the

management of federal funds includes procedures for compliance with the Delaware State Clearinghouse Committee, federal guidance and WIOA fiscal requirements.

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) distributes funds for Adult Education and Literacy Activities (AEFLA) under Section 203 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through a rigorous and transparent process.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Process: DDOE utilizes an RFP process to allocate funds to eligible providers who have provided evidence of demonstrated effectiveness. The RFP outlines the types of services eligible for funding and requires applicants to address specific considerations listed in the law.

- Public Announcements and Pre-Bid Meetings: Availability of funds is advertised through public announcements, directing interested parties to online platforms hosting the RFP application. Prior to submission, pre-bid meetings are held to explain the RFP components and answer questions from potential applicants.
- Evidence of Effectiveness: A pre-bid screening is required for providers seeking to be funded. Potential applicants must provide evidence of demonstrated effectiveness, including performance data demonstrating their ability to provide effective literacy skills and transition services to employment, further training, or post-secondary education.
- Review and Scoring Process: All applications undergo a thorough review by a team of community and state evaluators including the Delaware Workforce Development Board. Responses are scored based on predetermined rubrics included in the RFP package, ensuring transparency in the evaluation process.
- Selection Criteria: Programs receiving high scores and proposing services in high-need areas are selected for funding based on available federal and state allocations. Consideration is given to how proposed services align with WIOA goals and outcomes.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Funded programs are monitored quarterly to track performance towards negotiated performance targets and to ensure grant goals are being met. Technical assistance is provided to support programs in meeting their goals, while those consistently underperforming may face reduced funding or defunding.
- Compliance and Reporting: Providers must demonstrate compliance with WIOA requirements and support the purposes of the act, including equitable access to services, use of evidence-based practices, coordination with WIOA partners, and delivery of high-quality instruction aligned with workforce development goals.

Overall, DDOE's funding distribution process for AEFLA activities is designed to ensure effective and equitable delivery of adult education and literacy services to individuals with barriers to employment, ultimately supporting their successful transition to the workforce or post-secondary education.

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 [(WIOA TITLE II SECTION 231(C)(1)-(2)].

Availability of WIOA funds is advertised on public agency websites. The RFP application is hosted on the State of Delaware Bid Solicitation Directory and on the Delaware Department of Education Bid Solicitation website. This public process allows all eligible providers to apply for the competitive process.

RFP information is also shared with the Delaware Department of Education's Private Business and Trade Schools group that includes businesses approved by the Department to provide training services in the state.

Information of RFP availability is also hosted on the Partners of Delaware Libraries distribution listing, which has a statewide distribution that includes WIOA partners and community-based organizations and on the professional networking platform, LinkedIn.

All applications must respond to the questions in the RFP and use the forms included in the RFP package. All applications are scored on a rubric that is included in the RFP application package.

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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for the Visually Impaired have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that allocates Delaware's vocational rehabilitation funding. The resources are proportioned based on the population of individuals with significant visual loss and staff necessary to provide equitable services to the individuals who require vocational rehabilitation services. The current allocation to the Division for the Visually Impaired is approximately 14% of the overall budget.

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

The State aims to achieve interoperability among the management information systems for core programs by identifying alignment opportunities and establishing connections and data interfaces to optimize the exchange of shared data elements. Ongoing discussions are underway to establish these interfaces, potentially utilizing common intake forms or leveraging JobLink's registration system for data alignment.

Delaware has aligned and integrated the data and performance for the following programs: WIOA Adults • WIOA Dislocated Workers • WIOA Youth • WIOA National Programs • Wagner-Peyser • Trade Adjustment Assistance • TANF Employment and Training • Jobs for Veterans State Grants.

Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws interface with JobLink. Among the essential partners, Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education operate their own electronic systems. Similarly, other mandated One-Stop partners, including Job Corps, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, post-secondary Career and Technical Education programs, employment and training initiatives managed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Second Chance, each utilize distinct electronic systems. The Board remains committed to identifying opportunities for further alignment among these entities.

Consolidated wage and employment data are shared with the two partners not fully integrated into JobLink. The registration of all individuals prepared for employment in JobLink will facilitate this effort, although alternative methods of data alignment and integration, such as utilizing a common intake form, may also be explored. Upholding the integrity of Unemployment Insurance wage data remains a priority.

DJL serves as a unified information system catering to all DOL programs housed within Delaware's four American Job Centers, encompassing services for Youth, Adults, Dislocated Workers, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment Representative Program, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers Program, Alien Labor Certification, Trade Act, UI Profiling Reemployment Services, and the State Blue Collar. Customers seeking services through other core One-Stop partners are provided referrals services at One-Stop Career Centers. Delaware is seeking better processes to track participants as they receive assistance.

Furthermore, DJL extends seamless self-service access to a broad spectrum of employment and training services and information for employers, job seekers, staff, and training providers. This includes the DWDB's interactive list of ETPL Providers and Courses, Delaware's Job Bank, Resume Talent Bank, One-Stop Career Center services, bulletins, links to related sites, and connections to national electronic workforce tools like O*Net Online.

The potential for interfaces exists across all core programs to optimize the efficient exchange of shared data elements. Conversation to establish these connections and data interfaces are ongoing.

A major objective has been the elimination of redundant data collection to streamline the customer experience. All partners have access to JobLink to track customer participation, and the referral system monitors referred individuals through partner programs.

Delaware JobLink (DJL) is part of America's JobLink Alliance (AJLA), a consortium of more than eight states. AJLA has a storied history of keeping up with federal and state reporting requirements. AJLA works with states in the consortium to establish trainings on system updates and reporting requirements. State users have DJL as the primary case management system and Tableau as the reporting tool to display data/reports. Tableau allows users to pull data and view graphical reports, charts, and dashboards. These data sets include important client data, demographics, numbers of participants served, highest paid out occupations in training programs, and job order listings by company.

We are also working closely with our partners to utilize DJL as our referral system. This feature is operational with future updates needed for a better user experience.

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

Delaware integrates data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery by registering individuals prepared for employment in JobLink. This effort will help track participation across programs. Alternative methods, like exploring common intake forms, may also be considered to align data for efficient service delivery.

Delaware requires all approved training partners that enter into professional service agreements to utilize DJL as a case management system. This allows for monthly monitoring of performance of each agreement.

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

The State Board will support the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs by identifying further alignment opportunities among these entities. This alignment includes designing and implementing common intake procedures and data collection methods to improve service delivery to individuals, especially the unemployed, through seamless coordination and information sharing among partner programs. While these have not been implemented, Delaware continues to explore opportunities.

DET has worked closely with its vendor, America's JobLink Alliance (AJLA), to establish updates/upgrades to the systems that are used. Delaware JobLink (DJL) and the reporting tool, Tableau, have many important functions for reporting and case management. Some important upgrades that have been made are:

- Staff dashboards to visually review client details, job postings, and other data.

- Fiscal report – this displays the clients that were served in training programs and how much was paid for specified timeframes. Staff also have the ability to view and export the highest paid occupations.
- Job Seeker Demographics Report – allows staff to view clients served by specific enrollments and the sought after demographics and barriers for these clients.
- Calendar Feature – this has been implemented to allow staff to view and schedule clients into trainings directly from DJL.
- Expanded accessibility – a link has been implemented for job seekers to view jobs on the Career OneStop site which includes NLX, indeed, and ZipRecruiter jobs.

Updates to come:

- Virtual job fairs.
- Software program to create and upload a video, virtual cover letter, introduction, elevator pitch.
- Photo resumes.
- Chat feature added directly to DJL.
- Single Login between all assigned applications such as JobLink, CertLink, and Tableau.
- Use AI to suggest referrals based on questions asked and answered.
- Client referral system incorporated into DJL

Many partners have access to and use DJL. This includes registering clients in DJL when clients are job ready, referring clients to DJL, and entering job opening in DJL. Partners that have access include Community Service Block Grant, Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities, Delaware State Housing Authority, DVI, DVR, DOE, Wilmington Job Corps, Division of Libraries, DSS, Telemon, UI, and Stand by Me.

Delaware currently has the ability to track referrals in DJL.

Each partner across Titles I-IV, has its own reporting system that they submit required reports to meet federal requirements.

If partners add services inside of DJL or referrals are made, we have the ability to track this information.

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)).

The data-collection and reporting processes for WIOA core programs is yet not integrated. However, data-collection and reporting processes for all DOL programs and activities are executed in the DJL system. The data–collection and reporting processes for DOE programs is

carried out by the Literacy Pro system for the Adult Education program and the AWARE system for the Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Delaware has the ability to track levels of outcomes of our clients in DJL. This includes employment status at entry, credential attainment, employment at exit, quarterly employment outcomes after exit, and amounts paid during trainings. We currently have the ability to pull this data for each of our clients in Tableau.

The evaluation of participant achievements stands as a crucial undertaking. The Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET) is responsible for overseeing Title I and Title III programs.

To gauge participant success, DOL-DET utilizes the reports within its labor exchange system, Delaware Job Link. These reports serve as valuable tools for frontline leaders, administrators, and the DWDB, aiding in the assessment of ongoing success and the formulation of informed decisions for future funding. Within Job Link, individual and cohort data is captured, empowering leaders to identify areas needing improvement and reinforce positive trends. Compiled reports, summarizing collective data, are presented to the DWDB executive committee and the full board on a quarterly basis for comprehensive review.

DDOE Adult Education is able to track client entry, program participation, and completion through several methods. Through working with DOL, Higher Education, and community partners, Title II programs share data to ascertain student progress.

- For clients entering degree-granting institutions, a statewide data match with the resources of the Delaware P20 council will provide the required information.
- For clients entering DOL-funded specific skills training, a data matching process with DJL will yield the required information.
- For clients entering specific skills training not funded through DOL, Title II providers will work with clients and trainers to attain needed information.
- For clients entering or retaining employment, an agency data match process between DOL–DET and DDOE Adult Education will be developed to document participant progress.
- For clients who are dual enrolled in other WIOA Title programs, a data match process is being developed.

The DVR will run a scheduled task, monthly or quarterly, that will select candidate cases. The candidate cases will be "successful outcomes" that have not been previously selected for quarterly wage reporting. An Intermediate Database Table will be used to store all candidate

wage data information. This table will be used to create a file that will be forwarded to UI for wage data processing. The results from the UI process will then be used to update the Intermediate Database Table. Reporting of the wage information will be generated using the Intermediate Database Table.

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.)

On a quarterly basis, Delaware Unemployment Insurance wage records, complemented by additional wage records, are obtained through active participation in the State Wage Interchange system (SWIS) and are utilized to determine employment, retention, and wage gain-related outcomes for DOL programs. Quarterly extracts of information for all workers on the Delaware wage record database are maintained by the Division; access is restricted to designated DOL–DET staff in accordance with agreements and federal regulations. This comprehensive, historic wage record database facilitates the computation of the required U.S. DOL employment-related performance levels and also allows for the adoption of similar measures across the entire One–Stop system in order to track and set goals for the continuous improvement of the quality and effectiveness of services provided to customers. DDOE Adult Education will electronically share participant data with DOL–DET. The data will be scrubbed of any unique information that would identify a specific individual.

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.

To protect the information that Delaware JobLink collects, we maintain industry-standard security measures such as the following:

- Limiting the people who have access to our database servers;
- Masking the display of Social Security numbers;
- Using Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption to ensure that data passed between your browser and our web server remains private and secure; and
- Using individual password protection so only you can access your account. You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of your password.

All Title II programs will be informed of their responsibilities under GEPA provisions and are monitored to ensure that participant information is kept confidential and secure.

- All providers are required to share their processes with DDOE Adult Education regarding their privacy safeguards.

- Any Adult Education MIS design revisions are developed to ensure that program information is kept secure, confidential and is accessible only to appropriate parties.
- As part of the Intake Process, all Title II participants are requested to sign a release of information statements that has been approved by DOL–DET and DDOE. This release will allow the sharing of information between agencies for accountability and research purposes only.
- When sharing participant information electronically, only encrypted processes will be used to ensure privacy.

All information exchanged between DVR and the Division of Unemployment Insurance aligns with the State of Delaware Transmission Security procedures including encryption and meets privacy safeguards. The information exchanged is limited to those who process the State Wage Information System data.

DVR also uses encrypted applications to exchange information such as Personally Identifiable Information. DVR's case management system has additional levels of security, in addition to State of Delaware security measures for information technology, systems, and networks. All DVR locations have badge-only security access.

DVI uses encrypted e-mail when it is necessary to send information such as Social Security Numbers. The DVI case management system, the Visually Impaired Client Registry (VICR), has an additional level of security, username, and password, beyond that which is required to log into the State network. All DVI locations have badge-only security access.

All information exchanged between DVI and UI is encrypted.

All State of Delaware team members annually complete cybersecurity training. In addition, all employees affirm Acceptable Use Standards outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy and the State of Delaware Information Security Policy.

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.

Delaware will provide Priority of Service to all employment and training programs that are funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. Division of Employment and Training ensures the provision of priority of service with the following:

All AJC staff are trained to assess and offer services to eligible veterans and eligible persons as directed in the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (JVSG).

Priority of Service signage is posted at the entry points and throughout the AJC as well as in brochure format and on the following website: https://joblink.delaware.gov/veterans_priority

Workforce services can be obtained by visiting an American Job Center or through registration in Delaware JobLink (DJL).

Once this connection is made eligible veterans or eligible persons are assessed for significant barriers to employment (SBE). If appropriate, they will be referred to a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff member for continued assessments focused on knowledge, skills, abilities, and education leading to the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP outlines the barriers, goals, and services that the DVOP and eligible veteran or eligible person has agreed upon. Any identified training needs; the DVOP will recommend suitable services available through state and federal funding. Services include on-the-job-training, occupational skills training, registered apprenticeship, and work experience. The DVOP, LVER, AJC staff, eligible veteran or eligible person collaborate to explore veteran employment opportunities by providing job referrals to local, state, and federal job vacancies, job fair information, labor market information, job developments which can help an employer understand the benefits of hiring veterans/eligible persons and may lead to employment.

For all other eligible veterans or eligible persons without significant barriers to employment instead of a DVOP providing intensive services these services can be provided by other American Job Center staff that provide case management/other career related services.

"Priority of service" means, with respect to any qualified job training program, that a covered person shall be given priority over a non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training and placement services provided under the program. This would mean that the covered person receives access to the service or resources earlier than the non-covered person; or if the service or resource is limited that the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of the non-covered person. To be entitled to receive priority of service under any qualified employment and training program including WIOA programs, a veteran must meet each program's eligibility criteria.

WIOA includes a requirement to provide priority of service to specific groups of people, there is an order to be followed in the provision of services with veterans. The order of priority of services provided is as follows

1. Veterans and eligible persons, including surviving spouses – this would mean veterans and eligible persons who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive priority for services provided with WIOA Adult funds. This is provided regardless of the level of funds allocated.

2. Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible persons) that are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Adult funds.

3. Veterans and eligible spouses not given priority for WIOA Adult funding and

4. Non-covered persons outside all of the groups given priority under WIOA

Priority of service is determined and explained to the veteran or eligible person at intake. An American Flag in Delaware JobLink is a symbol that allows for easy identification of veterans and eligible persons. Veterans and eligible persons also receive advance notice of new job orders and same day view on job postings.

Policy 4.1 DET AJC Unit Policy- Priority of Service.

1.0 Purpose: This policy gives the priority of service to Veterans in regard to WIOA and JVSG employment and training services.

2.0 Policy Scope/ Details: Section: 134 (c)(3)E of WIOA (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title_20/chapter-V/part-680/subpart-E) establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated for adult employment and training services. Veterans, eligible spouses (covered persons), recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient are given priority of service for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under all Delaware Division of Employment and Training (DDET) funded programs.

This includes but is not limited to services covered under WIOA Title I Adult programs which are utilized to provide individualized career services, training services or both. These services can include but is not limited to; specialized assessments, developing an individual employment plan, counseling, work experiences, occupational skills training, and incumbent worker training.

This means that an individual who is included in a priority group either receives access to a service earlier than others, or if resources are limited, they receive access to the service instead of others. Individuals must first meet program eligibility requirements in orders to obtain priority of service.

The priority of service will be applied in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are included in the group's statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth, priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDB.
5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (T ANF) The TANF program is a required partner in AJCs, and in addition to cash assistance, can provide multiple supports for the priority populations in the WIOA Adult program. By closely partnering with the TANF program, the workforce system can help TANF participants obtain the skills they need to achieve self-

sufficiency. Many local areas have had great success in partnering with the TANF program to ensure participants are able to receive all the services they need.

3.0 Definitions: The term "covered person" in this policy means any of the following individuals:

1. A veteran
2. The spouse of any of the following individuals:
    a. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability
    b. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: (I) missing in action, (II) captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or (III) forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power
    c. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability
    d. Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

4.0 Procedures: Eligibility information will be given to the client in the following ways:

- Veterans' Priority Statement is posted at the home page of Delaware JobLink (DJL). It can be found at https://joblink.delaware.gov.
- Verbal notification during group or one-on-one orientations and assessments.
- Verbally for any new work registrant who comes into any of our four local AJC offices and satellite office/s. Priority of Service handouts is given to all veterans who come into any of our four local AJC

Core program areas of concentration shall be all DET Programs with specific emphasis on Apprenticeship and Training

5.0 Supporting Information

38 U.S. Code $ 4215 - Priority of service for veterans in Department of Labor job training programs I U.S. Code I US Law I LII / Legal Information Institute (cornell.edu)

TEGL 7-20 (https://www.dol.gOv/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/advisories/TEGL/2020/TEGL 7-20.pdf)

BILLS-1 13hr803enr.pdf (congress.gov), (https://www.congress.gOv/l 13/bills/hr803/BILLS-l 13hr803enr.pdf)

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 also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

As part of the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) entity will provide support in the certification of the One-Stop system, addressing any accessibility concerns that may arise within an American Job Center (AJC). Leveraging VR's specialized knowledge in this domain, recommendations will be provided, and assistance offered in program development where relevant to confirm Delaware is compliant with Section 188 of WIOA.

Each AJC location will display updated Equal Opportunity posters, featuring multiple points of contact for individuals who feel they have experienced discrimination under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Moreover, every screen within the Delaware JobLink portal will feature a link to the non-discrimination policy and contact details for individuals to report instances of discrimination.

WIOA mandates monthly partner meetings for all One-Stop collaborators to exchange information, including technical guidance from VR on catering to individuals with disabilities.

While individuals with undisclosed disabilities typically receive services within the general populace due to personal choice, specific services become available when disabilities are identified. The Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training (DOL–DET) serves as a Ticket to Work Employment Network provider. Through informational signage, videos, and discussions with One-Stop staff, individuals receiving social security are offered an initial assessment with a case manager to learn more about this program.

Each One-Stop designates a Ticket to Work case manager who collaborates closely with a VR representative to devise the most suitable service plan for an individual opting to enroll in the Ticket to Work program.

During the initial assessment interview, individuals can choose from three service options:

- One-on-one services facilitated by the Ticket to Work case manager, including referrals to supplementary services.
- Self-service job search for individuals not requiring case management, with the option to self-select additional One-Stop services.
- Referral to VR for more intensive services if deemed necessary. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation operates within each One-Stop.

Collaboration between disability experts and other One-Stop staff allows for streamlined service provision within the One-Stop facility. VR often directs individuals with disabilities to the One-Stop when immediate services are unavailable at VR, as both agencies operate within the same location and maintain close cooperation.

Providers under Title II of the Department Education (DDOE) offer services to participants requiring services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act. DDOE Adult Education trainings, in-person or electronically, are provided by DOE and local school districts to ensure all providers are well-versed in student rights and program responsibilities under these laws. A Student Accommodations Application Process has been deployed by DDOE Adult Education to identify, monitor, and track accommodation requests and provisions. DDOE Adult Education collaborates with Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for Visually Impaired to offer mutual clients the necessary support for success in the workplace.

All One-Stop locations comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring access through elevators or ramp access and automatic doors. These locations are situated along fixed and paratransit bus routes.

Each One-Stop contains a dedicated computer equipped with JAWS and a screen reader to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Interpreter services are available for individuals who are deaf.

DVR or other certified disability accessibility evaluation entities will conduct an accessibility checklist at least bi-annually to ensure continued compliance and accessibility enhancements.

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.

To ensure DOL–DET meets the needs of English Language learners and others, DET trains staff through monthly meeting to address Q&A's. Also, local American Job Centers (AJC) conduct monthly training sessions based on local county needs. All information is located in a commonly accessible staff folder and is shared and discussed by One-Stop Area Operations Managers and Supervisors.

1. Furthermore, each AJC has trained Employment Services Specialists in the Registration and Resource Room area that identify client's needs for English language learning. Staff then refers these clients to approved DDOE Adult Education certification classes, such as Delaware Technical Community College and University of Delaware.

2. For hearing impaired, all of Delaware's AJCs are in close proximity (same building) to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Due to this, sign language translators are easily accessible based on client's needs and requirements.

3. Besides the above, DOL-DET and WIOA partners refer clients based on their needs to local resources who could better serve their needs.

4. AJCs and WIOA partners have Applicant Services brochures in Spanish program guide is available in Spanish and Haitian Creole.

5. DOL-DET's case management system is equipped with a translation band for languages other than Spanish.

6. DOL-DET has access to the state's pool of interpreters that will aid in finding interpreters in other languages.

7. Finally, when a client enters an AJC a case manager will meet with them and provide necessary documents or services in their native language. This includes securing an interpreter and having documents translated. At time, when appropriate and available, DET staff can provide initial support in a client's native language.

Division of Employment and Training utilizes on call translation services which mediate in circumstances when a client is in need of translation of information conveyed or forms to be filled out. Additionally, English Language learners are assisted in the navigation of the DJL system through the Google translation feature which is easily accessible in the DJL portal.

For translation services, DET accesses the state of Delaware Vendor website https://mmp.delaware.gov/Contracts/# for the currently contracted vendors. Contracts are listed under Interpretation and Translation Services - Foreign Languages. This contract will provide the vendors and the languages as well as translation services they provide. Agencies are able to select a vendor to use to assist a client.

Delaware's approved vendors currently consist of 5 onsite interpretation vendors, 3 telephone based interpretation vendors and 12 written translation vendors that we can use for providing both interpreters and translation of documents needed for clients.

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.

The WIOA partners jointly developed Delaware's Combine Plan using several strategies.

1. Starting in January 2023, DWDB hosted a half day Breakthrough Lab. This lab was used to make meaningful connections and develop strategies to make an impact on workforce development for Delaware. This was the first step in developing goals for the workforce system. See Appendix N.

2. The monthly state level WIOA partner meetings were used as workgroup to ensure planning was on target and on track.

3. Presentations from each required and additional partner were provided at leadership meetings.

4. Surveys and polls were sent to leadership via the One-Stop Operator.

5. The combined state plan was an agenda item at each WIOA partner.

6. Executive Committee and Board meetings were used to check the progress of plan development.

7. Core partner and additional partner meetings held to discuss each section and discuss alignment of goals.

8. DWDB staff provided each author and editor their required sections and updated partners when the guidance was released.
9. DWDB staff connected with other agencies that received BIL grants.
10. DWDB staff worked via email to ensure authors and editors made deadlines.
11. Public outreach occurred at various stakeholder meetings.

- DACCTE
- CTE CADRE meeting
- DACTE Board meeting
- Delaware Workforce Development Board- Executive Committee meeting
- State Board of Education meeting
- Full DWDB board meeting

12. The final draft was reviewed with a collective group of editors and authors prior to submission.
13. Draft was put on DWDB website for public comment.
14. The Submitter coordinated with writers and leaders who had to submit corrections to ensure they were on time.

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,	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
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

The state of Delaware is a single service delivery area.

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

Delaware Executive Order #10 designated Delaware a single service delivery state. See EO 10 at Executive Order #10 - Governor Matt Meyer - State of Delaware

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

Delaware Executive Order #10 designated Delaware a single service delivery state. See EO 10 at Executive Order #10 - Governor Matt Meyer - State of Delaware

Below is a Draft Policy for appeals: This policy is currently in legal review with our DAG. Once the DAG approves the draft, this will be presented to the DWDB for review, approval and implementation.

POLICY: XXXXXXXXX DRAFT
SUBJECT: Appeals Process for Local Area Designation Policy

References: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 section 106(b)(5)
20 CFR § 679.290
20 CFR § 683.630
20 CFR § 683.640

Appeals: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 section 106(b)(5) and 20 CFR § 679.290 require a process for appeals by units of local government, combinations of local governments, or existing local workforce development areas that are denied designation or subsequent designation as a Local Workforce Development Area.

1. Any unit of local government, combination of local governments, or existing local workforce development area may appeal the Governor's determination based on a claim that either:
   • The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA section 106(b); or
   • The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the requirements contained in 20 CFR Part 679.

2. The parties will, to the greatest extent possible, resolve conflicts at the lowest level possible through informal resolution. This resolution usually occurs through discussions

between the applicant entity, the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB), and the Delaware Department of Labor.

3. The appellate process is:
   • Within 30 days of the issuance of the Governor's determination, the chief elected official(s) or authorized representative of the appellant may initiate an appeal by providing a written complaint to the DWDB Executive Director. The written complaint must address with specificity the basis for the appeal and include all supporting documentation. The complaint must be signed by the chief elected official(s) or authorized representative of the appellant.

• Within 14 days of receipt of a complaint, the DWDB Executive Director will provide notice of the appeal hearing, to be heard at the next regularly scheduled DWDB Executive Committee meeting where a quorum is reached. Alternatively, the Executive Director may elect to schedule a special meeting of the DWDB Executive Committee to hear the appeal to accommodate schedules or to ensure prompt resolution of the appeal. The DWDB Executive Director will post the hearing notice on Delaware's Government Information Calendar Website and will notify all relevant parties by email at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the hearing. Normal quorum rules will apply and the DWDB Chairperson or designee will chair the appeal hearing.

• At the hearing, the DWDB Executive Committee will hear from all parties to the appeal, review any evidence submitted by parties, and will deliberate and decide at the meeting using a majority vote of the quorum to ensure prompt resolution of the appeal. A written decision based on the determination of the Executive Committee will be issued by the DWDB Executive Director within 30 days after the hearing, but in no event later than 60 days from the filing of the complaint.

• Each appellant may only appeal once per designation determination.

4. If the DWDB Executive Committee determines a formal hearing with the full DWDB is necessary or if the appellant specifically requests such hearing, the DWDB Executive Director will notify the parties (in writing) that the matter has been scheduled for a formal full board hearing before the DWDB. The DWDB Executive Director will schedule a special meeting within 14 days of receiving the request.

• The DWDB will hear from all parties, review any evidence submitted by the parties, and will deliberate and decide at the meeting using a majority vote of the quorum to ensure prompt resolution of the appeal. A written decision based on the determination of the DWDB will be issued by the DWDB Executive Director within 30 days after the hearing, but in no event later than 60 days after the filing of the complaint.

• The process will ensure resolution of the appeal in a timely manner consistent with the requirements of 20 CFR § 683.630.

• If the appellant is dissatisfied with the State's final decision, or if a decision is not issued within 60 days from the filing of the appeal, the appellant may request review by the U.S. Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR § 683.640.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Appeals Policy for Funding the Infrastructure Cost of One Stop System

Background: WIOA makes improvements to the public workforce system including a requirement that partners dedicate funding for allowable infrastructure and other shared costs that are allocable to the partner and in proportion to the partner's use and the relative benefit received by the partner program. The Governor, through the assistance of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB), will make the final determination of each required partner's proportionate share of statewide infrastructure costs under the State funding mechanism. One-Stop partners may appeal the Governor's determination regarding their portion of funds to be provided for infrastructure costs. Reference: section 121(h)(2)(E) and 20 CFR § 678.700-678.755.

Policy: DWDB establishes this appeal process for addressing infrastructure cost allocations and proportional use concerns of the One Stop System.

1. One Stop partners will, to the greatest extent possible, resolve conflicts at the lowest level possible. This resolution usually occurs at the division or comparable unit level.
2. If the conflict cannot be resolved at the lower level, a One Stop partner may initiate an appeal by providing a written request to the DWDB Executive Director.
    a. Only a division director of a participating One Stop Partner directly affected by an allocation may initiate an appeal.
    b. One-Stop partners may appeal on the basis of a claim that:
        i. The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the proportionate share requirements of 20 CFR 678.735(a); or
        ii. The Governor's determination is inconsistent with the cost-contribution caps described in 20 CFR 678.736 and 20 CFR 678.738.
    c. The written request must specifically address the cost allocation/proportional use concern and detail the efforts made to resolve the impasse.
3. Within 14 days, the DWDB Executive Director will schedule an appeal hearing before the DWDB Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will schedule a special meeting for the appeal hearing within 60 days, as soon as a quorum and all parties to the dispute are available.
4. The DWDB Executive Director will post the special meeting notice on Delaware's Public Meeting Calendar Website. Normal quorum rules will apply, and the DWDB chairman will chair the appeal hearing.
5. The Executive Committee will hear from all parties and make a final determination using a majority vote of the quorum.

This policy was adopted by the DWDB on January 23, 2024, through a board vote and is made available to the partners via the appendix of the partner MOU.

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

Delaware established the below policy for state and federal workforce dollars.

Funding Guidelines Policy

Purpose. The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) establishes funding guidelines to supplement and complement its strategic plan. The guidelines not only establish a baseline of the service delivery for Delaware's publicly funded workforce system, but also serve as an annual policy document. The Funding Guidelines prioritize workforce investment for a Program Year (July through June). This document prescribes the use of both State and Federal funds in relation to the publicly funded workforce system and can segregate funds for special projects. The DWDB and required partners will develop funding guidelines for approval by the Executive Committee in September or the full Board in October. Overall, these guidelines and procedures are put in place to ensure that public funds are effectively and strategically utilized to support workforce development efforts in Delaware, with a focus on programs that lead to employment or enhance employability.

General. The DWDB funds various types of programs throughout the year, including but not limited to; youth programs, adult programs, dislocated worker programs, occupational skills programs, and post-secondary education/training programs. All programming must ultimately lead to employment and/or increase the likelihood of employment. The DWDB does not fund enrichment programs or education programs that do not directly lead to employment. Training is primarily driven by the state's High Demand Occupation List which looks to align occupational expenditures with the state's economic development and high demand/high growth industries. Funds are allotted through a competitive contracting process and the Individual Training Account (ITA) process, in partnership with Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET).

Priorities: DWDB establishes priorities annually to guide investments, and these recommendations are suggested for adoption by the workforce system.

Funding allocation recommendations are provided to the DWDB Executive Committee by DOL-DET. The Executive Committee will review DOL-DET recommended initial funding allotments. The board can accept or reject, in whole or in part, the recommendations.

General Guidance and Funding Background. The DWDB has funding authority through two sources; federal (WIOA) and state funds (State Blue Collar and Learning for Careers).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds:

- Youth
    - US DOL states that WIOA youth dollars must, at a minimum, be split 25% for ISY and 75% for OSY
- Adult

- Dislocated Worker
- Wagner-Peyser

State Blue Collar Funds: All moneys collected through the Blue-Collar Training Tax shall be deposited in the Special Administration Fund of the Department of Labor. This fund shall be dedicated to the establishment and implementation of programs to provide counseling, training, and placement of dislocated workers, to assist in school-to-work transition activities such as vocational guidance, training, placement, and job development, to provide for industrial training, to provide for career advancement training for state employees and to pay the administrative costs of such programs.

Breakdown of funds collected:

- 10% retained by Division of Unemployment Insurance for costs associated with the collection of the tax.

Remaining funds-

- 25% to the DIV of Small Business.
- 75% to a special fund to be administered by the Workforce Development Board ("Board") to be awarded to appropriate subgrantees to provide for services to dislocated workers, to assist in school-to-work transition activities and to underwrite such other innovative training programs as the Board may approve, under regulations promulgated by the Board in coordination with the Department of Labor. No more than fifty percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be used to fund adult training program and to underwrite such other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.
- DWDB spend authority cap is $3.9 million per year.

Learning for Careers: Delaware appropriates $500,000 to the Department of Labor for the creation of the LFC program. The Program's funds shall be used by the Delaware Workforce Development Board (Board) to engage employer groups, chambers, and associations in creating paid work experiences for youth. The purpose of the Program is to expand employer participation in youth employment programs in addition to increasing the number of youth served through summer youth employment programs, secondary school work-based learning and co-operative education programs, and postsecondary work-based learning and clinical/experiential learning programs. The funds for the Program will be administered by DET in coordination with the Department of Education through a competitive process administered under the Board to award the Program funds to applicants. The Board shall also be authorized to accept private donations and federal funding to support the Program. The Board is authorized to grant awards or enter contracts with an employer association, employer chamber, employer group, or state agency acting on behalf of a group of employers. The Board, with the consent of the Secretary of Education or designee and the Secretary of Labor or designee, may adopt implementing rules or regulations. The application for the award of funds under this Program and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant to this Section shall be available on the Board's website. By the end of each fiscal year, the Board must report to the General Assembly summary data on the awards granted.

Target Populations and Funding: Populations served are those that have barriers to employment prioritized by WIOA.

Youth: The DWDB and DOL-DET deliver youth services primarily by soliciting proposals from providers for both In-School-Youth and Out-of-School-Youth. The selection process is competitive.

Eligibility/Target Population: Out-of-school youth (OSY) and in-school youth (ISY)

An OSY is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school (as defined under State law);
- Not younger than age 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment; and
- One or more of the following:
    - A school dropout;
    - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
    - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
    - An offender;
    - A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway;
    - An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
    - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
    - An individual with a disability; or
    - A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

An ISY is an individual who is:

- Attending school (as defined by State law), including secondary and postsecondary school;
- Not younger than age 14 or (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under State law) older than age 21 at time of enrollment;
- A low-income individual; and
- One or more of the following:
    - Basic skills deficient;

- An English language learner;
- An offender;
- A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway;
- An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or
- An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Adult/Dislocated Worker: The DWDB and DOL-DET offer services for adult and dislocated worker through the solicitation of proposals from providers and establishing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and providing Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers for eligible individuals.

Eligibility/Target Population Adult:

- U.S. citizen or otherwise legally entitled to work in the United States;
- Age 18 or older; and
- Selective Service Registration (males who are 18 or older and born on or after January 1, 1960) unless an exception is justified.

Eligibility/Target Population Dislocated Worker:

- U.S. citizen or otherwise legally entitled to work in the U.S.;
- Selective Service Registration (males who are 18 or older and born on or after January 1, 1960), unless an exception is justified; and
- One of the following Dislocated Worker categories;
    - General dislocation; or
    - Dislocation from a facility closure/substantial layoff; or
    - Self-employed dislocation; or
    - Displaced homemaker; or
    - Dislocated/separating military service member; or
    - Souses of military service members.

Funding Mechanisms: Funding mechanisms help ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to support workforce development needs of targeted populations. The competitive nature of the process encourages providers to deliver high quality programs that

align with the goals and priorities of the DWDB. DWDB utilizes two primary methods to fund programs.

- Competitive Requests for Proposals (RFP) via contracts. Providers submit proposals and contracts are awarded based on evaluation criteria.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITA) via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligible individuals receive ITAs that can be used to access training services from approved providers on the ETPL.

Request for Proposals: The DWDB issues the following guidance:

1. The DWDB manages and approves the RFP process. (See below for the overview of the RFP procedures).
2. DWDB delegates authority to the RFP panels to make recommendations for funding programs.
3. Panel leads will meet and establish a priority list for funding other programs should additional funds become available.
4. The Executive Director of the DWDB, the Director of the DOL-DET will reallocate returned funds to programs meeting or exceeding performance measures. Returned funds will not be reallocated to programs not meeting their measures. If other funds become available an additional RFP will be issued.
5. Panels have the discretion to fund proposals in whole, in part, or not at all. When funding programs, RFP panels will – to the greatest extent possible – fund programs in full and not divide limited funds between programs.
6. No more than fifty percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be utilized to fund adult training programs and to underwrite other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.
7. Year – to – Year RFP Process**.** The board directs the DWDB staff to annually update "The Steps to RFP Success" Letter of Instruction prior to the December, Executive Committee meeting.

Requests for Proposal (RFP) Procedures. An overview of the RFP process:

1. Develop the high demand occupation list.
2. Develop funding guidelines.
3. Establish resources.
4. DWDB and DOL-DET develop RFPs.
5. Submit RFP to OMB.
6. Proposal orientation.
7. Solicit participation for review panels.
8. Receive proposals.

9. Internal review of proposals.
10. Develop categories by industry.
11. Panel review of the written proposals.
12. Proposal clarification (if needed).
13. Consolidation meeting.
14. Notify the board of funding recommendations.
15. Feedback for proposals (if needed).
16. Contract development and execution.

Contract guidance. This section issues guidance for all contracts. The contract may be a mix of Federal WIOA funds, state Blue Collar Funds, and other funds which may become available through resource alignment activities. Even though the DWDB has issued RFPs in early January for most of its contract services, the DWDB may issue other throughout the year as needed. It is the DWDB intent that partners and representatives of different agencies contribute and "braid" funds whenever possible as they prepare Requests for Proposal (RFP).

1. To the extent possible, definitions provided in the federal law and regulations are the definitions for all sources of funds, including Blue Collar, except the definition of eligibility.
2. The DWDB may, at its discretion, establish local performance measures for specific populations (e.g., Re-entry, underserved youth, and adults) when using state dollars. The DWDB will ensure local performance measures are established in an RFP document as appropriate.
3. Prior to executing a contract, proposers without current contracts, will provide a copy of their most recent tax return, or a copy of a prepared financial statement signed by a third-party financial professional to establish their fiscal soundness and eligibility.
4. All Providers will offer training which provides the client with the opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certification of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree), or a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent as defined in USDOL TEGL 10-16, Change 2.
5. Basic language and numeric skills training, when appropriate, will be provided concurrently with skills training. As part of the RFP, proposers will be asked to describe their plan to meet this requirement.
6. The DWDB requires programs with a combination of activities; it prefers programs combining classroom training including internship, and/or clinical, and actual work experience. All work experience shall be paid.

7. Contractors will provide retention services, as necessary, including day and evening requirements to meet performance measures for 12 months following exit, except for Adult Blue Collar. Adult Blue-Collar exits will require 6 months of follow-up.
8. The proposal rating criteria will favor those proposals that demonstrate the ability to operate quality, cost effective training programs that result in high placement rates, long term job retention, and credential attainment. Criteria may be expanded from time-to-time to reflect board priorities.
9. DWDB will strive to provide training based on each county's needs and in reasonable proportion to the population. This is a goal, not a hard and fast rule; submissions by geographic area may not support this.
10. Program providers shall define their staff qualifications in the proposal for any position for which they are requesting funding.
11. Proposers will include clients use Delaware Job Link to find a job. This will include a current updated resume built in the Delaware Job Link system.
12. Blue Collar adult training contracts may be hybrid. The normal standard for the hybrid is to fund as, a 60% Cost Reimbursement and a 40% Performance Based contract.
13. DOL-DET and core partners will ensure all work experience requirements are paid.

Specific Youth Contract Guidance. This section provides general guidance on all youth contractors/proposers.

1. Youth programs will be contracted. Proposals will be solicited for Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth programs.
2. In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs may be funded with Blue Collar and/or WIOA funds.
3. Youth proposers will identify the credential obtained when a program is successfully completed.
4. Contracted youth programs will:
    a. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, and developmental needs of such participant, for identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants.
    b. Develop service strategies for each participant directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators which identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including in appropriate circumstances, nontraditional employment), and appropriate services for the participant considering the assessment conducted.
    c. Preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.
    d. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education which leads to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

e. Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.

f. Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.

g. Effective connections to employers, including small employers, those in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

h. All providers are required to spend at least twenty – five percent (25%) of their allocation to provide paid work experience activities.

5. Preference will be given to training that align with DWDB growth and enabling sectors as identified in the Prioritize Sectors priority.

6. Funded youth providers are not required to directly provide all program elements. All funded providers are required to ensure youth have access to all program elements:

    a. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or

    b. For a recognized postsecondary credential.

    c. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate. Paid and unpaid work experience that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include – (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities.

    d. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

    e. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.

    f. Supportive services.

    g. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

    h. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.

    i. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

    j. Financial literacy education.

    k. Entrepreneurial skills training.

l. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

m. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

n. Education offered concurrently with – and in the same context as – workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Contract Extensions: DWDB has the authority to extend contracts when necessary. Contract extensions involve prolonging the terms of an existing agreement for a period of time. The duration of the extension is specified in the extension agreement. This could vary depending on the circumstances and needs at hand.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) General Rules. This paragraph provides general policy guidance.

1. The DWDB-approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) process manual will govern the steps for initial eligibility and subsequent renewal of providers seeking inclusion or maintaining their status on the ETPL.
2. The DWDB Management Analyst will annually update the Manual in May for approval by the Executive Committee in June of each year.
3. Individuals can access an ITA through an American Job Center (AJC)
4. American Job Centers, when appropriate, will assess career service applicants in reading and math skills.
5. American Job Center staff will determine and document eligibility for individuals involved in a career/training service.
6. Any local American Job Center office providing federal services that fails to achieve 85% of its goal in any year may be required to have a correction action plan.
7. American Job Centers will promote the importance of digital literacy skills to individuals by utilizing the Library North Star Digital Literacy and Learning Express programs.
8. DWDB will only add programs to the ETPL that train for occupations on the high demand occupation list.

Performance Measures. The DWDB will only approve and/or renew ETPL programs and/or contracts which meet or exceed Delaware's federally mandated performance measures. ETPL credit programs at open enrollment degree granting institutions are exempt from the credential attainment requirement measure when applying for initial inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Credit programs at degree granting institution on the ETPL will meet all performance measures when applying for subsequent renewal. Even so, the DWDB recognizes that some priority populations may require special considerations.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE 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.

Delaware intends to utilize the Governor's set-aside for both the required statewide activities as well as the allowable activities that support the State's strategic priorities and goals. Each year, the board develops a Funding Guideline Policy (refer to APPENDIX F) to define the allocation and deployment of all resources, which can include the governor's set aside. The Annual Funding Guidelines serve as a policy blueprint, outlining spending priorities for the Program Year spanning July through June. This document formalizes the board's directives regarding the utilization of State and Federal funds within the workforce system. These guidelines, coupled with the High Demand Occupation list (refer to APPENDIX A) and the RFP process, establish a comprehensive framework for directing investments statewide. DWDB may designate funds for specific initiatives formulated by committees and presented for endorsement by the full Board.

The state will use the Governor's set aside for required activities including the dissemination of the state's eligible training provider list through the DWDB staff, evaluating workforce program investments via the case management system and the board, and operation of a fiscal and management accountability system via DJL. Delaware is a single state board, however the DWDB staff does provide technical assistance to front line staff and supports the One-stop delivery system.

Other considerations of the DWDB for the use of Delaware's set aside will include, but not limited to enhanced employer engagement and sustainability strategies, development of career pathways and pre-apprenticeships, development and ongoing support of technology infrastructure and systems enhancements, comprehensive sector specific WIOA youth and adult program development, and investments in emerging industries.

Delaware aspires to optimize the strategic deployment of the Governor's reserve, acknowledging the need for a shift in the current utilization of funds to better align with our state's overarching goals and priorities.

While the DWDB will evaluate the best uses for the funds going forward, Delaware currently utilizes state set aside funding to support required and allowable statewide employment and training activities. Below are several of the required activities which Delaware currently funds with the Governor's set aside:

- A portion of Delaware JobLink (DJL). DJL is a federal reporting, case management and fiscal accountability system. DJL also provides direct client services. For job seekers and employers, it is a talent matching and career exploration tool. This system also houses the eligible training provider list including training providers cost and performance.
- Technical assistance to local One-Stops. Technical assistance is provided monthly in person to One Stop supervisors and case managers who administer WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.
- Monitoring and oversight of activities for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers.

These funds support a portion of the cost of the Business Service's Unit. This unit performs the activities required under 20 CFR §682.200 including acting as the lead for the state's rapid response unit. This unit also serves as the main outreach arm to the business community for hiring, recruitment and identifying workforce needs of Delaware employers.

Additionally, these funds support a portion of the cost of the Delaware Workforce Development Board staff who maintain the eligible training provider list.

These funds also support a portion of the operation of the fiscal and management accountability information system, based on guidelines established by the Secretary. Including a portion of the fiscal unit staff who manages the WIOA funds, the fiscal auditor who performs audits, and the MIS unit staff.

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.

Delaware conducts rapid response activities to dislocated workers primarily through employer outreach. Employers are identified and contacted through WARN notices and other notifications of mass layoffs. Because no two layoffs are identical, the needs of employers and dislocated workers will differ, as will the type and scale of needed services, the impact on the economy, and the availability of job opportunities. While Rapid Response must be consistent across all layoffs with respect to the quality, effectiveness, and timeliness of service delivery, the response must be customized and responsive to each specific event.

The most common activity is providing information to dislocated workers in the form of group settings or rapid response workshops. Workshops are held on-site at the employer location, union halls, community centers and other locations within the community. On-site rapid response workshops are generally held when there are larger groups of dislocated workers. At the employer's request, they may be held virtually.

These workshops are usually facilitated in conjunction with the DOL Division of Unemployment Insurance (DOL-UI). The staff from UI and DET cover topics such as services available through the local American Job Centers, job search and training opportunities, general Unemployment Insurance information, and other services available through DOL. At the conclusion of each workshop, participants provide feedback on other services they are interested in and offer suggestions on how to improve the Rapid Response workshop.

Based on the worker survey results and other information, Rapid Response provides a comprehensive array of reemployment-focused and career services, including referral to work-based learning opportunities such as the on-the-job Training (OJT) to accelerate reemployment. While most of the effort is expended in the early stages of a dislocation event or an impending dislocation, it is important to continue Rapid Response services until all worker and employer needs are met. Delaware has the distinct advantage of ensuring seamless service delivery to affected workers receiving Rapid Response services because the DOL–DET Rapid Response unit is part of the American Job Center integrated service design.

The state also established a Specialized AJC office within the Newark office which serves as a central service center for workers affected by mass layoffs. Newark Special Programs provides intensive services for job seekers with barriers to employment and functions as a centralized hub for coordinating reemployment services for job seekers with barriers to employment and functions as a centralized hub for coordinating reemployment services for dislocated and other workers affected by mass layoff. The unit also conducts targeted outreach to employers in support of special employer-driven programs and engages affected workers, labor unions, and employers rapidly when a mass layoff occurs.

DET Policy #400.00 Rapid Response Policy and Procedure, effective October 4, 2023

Policy Purpose Statement: This policy outlines the roles of the State Workforce Agency and Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training in providing services to clients who are in need of rapid response employment services delivery due to impending loss of employment.

Scope: Rapid response refers to the State Workforce Agency activities used to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying planning for, and responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities. Rapid Response resources may also be proactively directed to support businesses undergoing economic stress to mitigate potential layoffs or closings. Rapid Response must be delivered when one or more of the following circumstances occur:

- Announcement or notification of a permanent closure, regardless of the number of workers affected
- Announcement or notification of a mass layoff as defined in 682.305
- A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural disaster or other disaster
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition

Delaware's Rapid Response System provides services in four key areas:

- Informational resources and direct reemployment services for workers, including but not limited to, information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information on the impacts of layoffs on health coverage or other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment-focused workshops, and services in training.
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement, layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating the connections, networks, and partners to ensure the ability to provide assistance to dislocated workers and their families, such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial services.
- strategic planning, data gathering, and analysis deigned to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Community Relations Coordinator
2. Receive the WARN or Non-WANR notice from the employer.
3. Contacts the employer to schedule meeting to formulate rapid response service from DOL.
4. Receive initial adversely affected worker list.
5. Coordinates the scheduling of a Rapid Response Presentation by contacting staff from TAA, Unemployment Insurance, and Employee Benefits Security Administration Offices.
6. Enter WARN notices into DJL.
7. Business Service Representative
8. Assist with the Rapid Response Presentation and act as a facilitator as needed.
9. TAA Staff
10. Assist with the Rapid Response Presentation and initiative TAA petition as needed
11. Job Seeker
12. Selects WARN employer s layoff employer and DET can track job seeker's services.

Definitions and Acronyms

DET- Delaware Division of Employment and Training

DUI- Delaware Division of Unemployment Insurance

EBSA- Employment Benefits Security Administration (Federal)

RR- Rapid Response

TAA- Trade Act Assistance

UI- Unemployment Insurance

WARN- Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act

Policy: Rapid Response (RR) is a pro-active, business focused, and flexile strategy designed to respond to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers.

The State performs RR activities to dislocated workers primarily through coordination with employer outreach. Employers outreached are those that announce closures, submit WARN notices, and other notifications of a layoff. Affected employees of these employers are identified as being in need of RR services. Management of RR services also include determining whether a TA petition can be initiated on behalf of the employer.

Procedures: Once the Division is notified of or discovers a layoff event, the employer is contacted to determine the needs of the impacted worker(s) and works in conjunction with the employer to plan the RR activities.

Step 1: A Dislocation Event Occurs

A RR can be triggered by:

- Announcement or notification of a permanent closure, regardless of the number of workers affected.
- Announcement or notification of a mass layoff as defined in 682.305.
- A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural disaster or other disaster.
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

Step 2: A member of the Delaware workforce system partners becomes aware of the event.

If individuals in any of the roles below become aware of any of the triggered condition, they must complete the online Dislocation Event Form.

- DET Community Relations Coordinator or staff
- DUI Administrator
- Delaware Workforce Development Board leadership or staff
- Local WIOA Title I Leadership or staff

Step 3: Initiate the Communication Process

When the Dislocation Event Form is submitted, the community Relations Coordinator is automatically alerted and adheres to the following protocol:

- Community Relations Coordinator notifies the local area(s) impacted by the event, the Business Services Representative and the DUI's Administrator.

Step 4: Identify the Team Lead

The Community Relations Coordinator will be the lead coordinator for the RR activities. The Business Services Unit is responsible for supporting regional coordination of services and resources.

Step 5: Organize the Rapid Response Team

Once the core RR Team is determined, a meeting must be convened that includes the members of the core team, including the Community Relations Coordinator. Local Area Operations Manager, and designated DUI staff. Additional partners may also be included on the Rapid Response Team based on unique needs of each situation.

Step 6: Develop a Rapid Response Action Plan

The RR team works collaboratively to develop an action plan that strategically marshals and deploys coordinated workforce system services and resources to the needs of businesses and workers, addressing issues such as:

- What does the business want?
- What services can the system offer?

- What constraints may impact the ability to provide services, and how will the team operate within those limitations?
- Are there potential trade impacts?

Step 7: Implement the Action Plan

The RR team implements the action plan to engage with businesses and workers, providing services that may include, but are limited to, workshops, materials, employer meetings. Layoff aversion strategies, recruitment events, and training.

To ensure the accuracy of information shared with UI claimants, any material used to describe UI services must be pre-approved by the DUI Administrator.

*At the conclusion of each workshop, feedback is provided from the participants regarding other services they are interested in and suggestions on how to improve the RR workshop.

*The standard presentation is in the format of a PowerPoint that can be easily customized. It covers topics such as services available through the AJCs including Job Search and Training opportunities. It also covers general UI information and other services which are available through the Delaware Department of Labor.

D. DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

Division of Employment and Training has updated its current policy to address Rapid Response (RR) activities administered during a natural disaster and / or pandemic. In the event of natural disasters and/or pandemics, the Delaware Emergency Management agency (DEMA) is the point of contact for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In the event of a natural disaster or pandemic which may cause layoff events, DET will obtain guidance from (DEMA) so that job seeker and employer services can be carried out to those affected. DET will follow the procedures involved in RR activities in this policy and will tailor service delivery based on the needs of the employer(s) and job seeker(s) during that time. The collaboration with DEMA may also facilitate new strategies as needed based on the specifics of the particular event.

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.

Delaware provided early intervention (Rapid Response) to all worker groups when notified of a possible layoff or closure. In previous years, this included provision of these services to those identified in a TAA petition filing. However, while Rapid Response services generally continue, TAA petitions are no longer being approved as of 2022.

The State continues to administer remaining TAA funds for administrative purposes through September 30, 2026. Activities associated with TAA are limited to allowable administrative functions, including case management, participant support, and program closeout activities. No new training services are funded under current TAA resources.

Nevertheless, workers from any segment affected by layoffs will continue to receive reemployment and training services through WIOA Dislocated Worker programs and other workforce system partners to ensure continuity of service delivery.

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.

Delaware prioritizes work-based training models that benefit both employer and participants. These models are designed to connect job seekers to employment through structured, employer-driven training opportunities. They provide participants with the skills and experience needed to succeed in high-demand occupations while meeting the workforce needs of employers. Current employees can also take advantage of these opportunities to upgrade their skills for advancement opportunities within their company.

DET has established a Business Unit that serves as a centralized, coordinated structure for employer engagement and service delivery. This unit brings together key business-facing programs, including Business Services Representatives (BSRs), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Rapid Response (RR), Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), APEX (Advancing Pathways to Employment and Expungement), the Federal Bonding Program, and other employer-driven initiatives. Each of these programs are coordinated under a Business Unit administrator to ensure a unified and strategic approach to serving employers and job seekers.

Two employer-facing Business Unit programs to highlight are the BSRs and the OJT program. Currently, our BSRs serve as the primary point of contact and provide targeted outreach and relationship management to employers. A designated DET staff person works with an employer to determine their job fulfillment needs. An agreement detailing those needs and appropriate performance measures is created. DET staff will monitor the program for compliance and performance. BSRs also coordinate with internal programs and partners to connect employers to qualified candidates and support effective outcomes. The implementation

of this training model will allow the employer to receive assistance in training potential employees and provide current employees the opportunity to upgrade their skills for advancement within the company.

s The OJT program is structured to provide specialized **and** meaningful training to participants to help develop the necessary skills, training, and abilities to perform a specific job.

Incumbent worker training will permit an employer to provide training to their existing employees in an effort to provide skill upgrades designed to keep employers competitive and avert layoffs. This provides the opportunity for the employer to retain an employee during and after training.

By definition, an incumbent worker must be:

1. Employed;
2. Meet the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements for an employer-employee relationship; and
3. Have an established employment history with the employer for six (6) months or more.

The strategy for utilizing OJT's is to invest funds that will be driven to address the need to fill high priority occupations and related targeted industry clusters by local employers. High priority occupations are job categories, within selected industry clusters, that are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages These attributes align with creating a workforce employed in good jobs.

Under the OJT program, participants will be paid and given the opportunity to access training by an employer to engage in productive work that will lead to permanent employment.

Also, by providing reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant for that decreases the extraordinary costs of providing workplace training and additional supervision related to satisfactory job performance. The length of training time can be from 4 to 26 weeks.

By utilizing these strategies, the OJT experience can provide high quality work- based training which benefits both the employer and participant through collaboration. In order to ensure a high-quality training experience for the individual, an OJT contract will be limited to the period of time required for a participant to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is being provided. In determining the appropriate length of the contract, consideration will be given to the skill requirement of the occupation, the academic and occupational skill level of the participant, prior work experience identified in their Employment Development Plan (EDP). The "employment development plan" is an individualized career service that is developed jointly by the participant and the Case Manager prior to the beginning of training. The plan serves as an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals and achievement objectives that will be appropriate for the participant to achieve the employment goals.

Monthly monitoring will be conducted.

Learning for Careers (LFC)

The Delaware Workforce Development Board ("DWDB") in partnership with Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training ("DOL/DET") and Delaware Department of Education, ("DOE") (collectively "Delaware") partners to support services to directly engage the Delaware's business community and learners in activities that result in the creation or expansion of paid work experiences for youth and adult learners in Delaware. Career awareness, exploration, and paid work experiences must focus on middle and high skill, demand, and wage occupations as defined by the Delaware Department of Labor and listed on DWDB High Demand Occupation List. LFC must address an in-demand occupation or align to a Department of Education Career and Technical Education state model program of study.

The purpose of LFC investments is to expand employer participation in student education, training, and employment programs that lead to an increase in the number of:

- Youth served through summer youth employment or other DOL funded programs; or
- Secondary students participating in experiential work-based learning awareness, exploration, and immersion (e.g., internship, clinical, school-based enterprise, registered youth apprenticeship) activities; or
- Post-secondary students participating in work-based learning and/or clinical/experiential learning programs.
- Strengthen employer-led efforts to recruit youth (ages 16 to 24) into the workforce and/or to expand the capacity of employers to offer clinical, internship, apprenticeship, work-based learning immersion, or other types of cooperative education programs.

LFC has the following goals:

- Address business' pipeline/workforce needs by creating and/or expand their use of paid work experiences for students participating in summer youth employment programs or other DOL funded programs included in the definition of Employment and Training Providers, secondary school work-based learning, and postsecondary work-based learning and clinical/experiential learning programs; and
- Address the needs of students to explore career interests, contextualize learning/education, and/or gain professional and occupational skills.

DWDB is authorized to enter into contracts through a competitive process or by issuing grants to employer association, employer chamber, employer group, or state agency acting on behalf of a group of employers. The funds for the Program will be administered by DET in coordination with the Department of Education. LFC directly supports our strategic priorities of increasing alignment with businesses by fostering closer collaboration between businesses and educational programs, ensuring a skilled and adaptable future workforce that meets industry needs.

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).

The transfer of responsibilities to the Division of Employment and Training within the Department of Labor is crucial to integrating Registered Apprenticeship into Delaware's service design and delivery strategy. This shift provides Delaware with the chance to utilize AJC services for the benefit of both employers and jobseekers. In 2016, Delaware secured its first State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, offering funding that allowed for the expansion of the Registered Apprenticeship Program into new occupational areas and the enhancement of existing ones to better align with Delaware employers' needs. The injection of funds from the USDOL aimed at supporting the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships presents Delaware with an opportunity to implement three pivotal strategies that will further integrate these programs into the day-to-day operations of the workforce agency.

1. **Communication and alignment with the State's Business Services Unit.**

The Registered Apprenticeship unit is now reporting as a standalone unit working alongside the Business Services Unit. With frequent meetings, the Registered Apprenticeship team can identify any potential occupations and employers that may benefit from Registered Apprenticeship programs, and more importantly, the Business Services Representatives can continue to learn about Registered Apprenticeship as another workforce tool that they can refer employers to. Registered Apprenticeship has a referral process where it receives referrals from the Business Services Reps along with other partner education institutions and agencies. The Business Service Representatives can help to expand the outreach of Registered Apprenticeship through alignment. The status of referred Employers is reviewed as a part of our meetings and help to ensure that Delaware employers are informed about a variety of workforce tools. Another alignment is that every New Sponsors is automatically connected to a Business Services Representative if they want assistance in finding their next apprentice or simply their next employee. This connects them to the workforce system.

2. **Standard schedule of Registered Apprenticeship personnel available in each AJC**.

Each AJC has time every month where Registered Apprenticeship staff are available to have a presence in the AJC lobby to address jobseeker, employer, and AJC staff interest and questions about Registered Apprenticeship. This can further help connect jobseekers to a new career option as well as continue to orient AJC staff to this program. The working relationship with the AJC will help the Registered Apprenticeship staff better understand jobseeker needs.

3. **Support Related Instruction of Registered Apprenticeship through AJCs.**

Delaware is currently working on a policy and procedure to braid WIOA Adult and USDOL Apprenticeship grant that provides the funding for tuition and supportive services to targeted populations (e.g., Unemployed, Low Income, and Dislocated Workers) for the related instruction component of Registered Apprenticeship as well as case management and job placement support. The AJC staff will help recruit and refer candidates to this program. So far, the process is mirrored off the WIOA Adult ITA process. Having processes in place that are similar help further integrate Registered Apprenticeship into the service design and delivery of Delaware's workforce system. This process and the apprenticeship grant supporting it requires similar data collection and reporting as other USDOL workforce programs. This further integrates Registered Apprenticeship into the pathways that will be created for Employers and Jobseekers.

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).

Delaware has developed a comprehensive procedure establishing guidelines essential for determining eligibility and maintaining the continued qualification of entities seeking involvement in workforce training initiatives. It outlines a structured process that evaluates and ensures alignment with the mandates specified within WIOA Section 122, essential for fostering quality training opportunities within the workforce development landscape.

Enforcement of standards throughout the ITA process is essential to ensure Delaware's publicly funded workforce system is fair to all providers, provides the highest quality training to its citizens, and makes the best use of taxpayer dollars. To that end, the DWDB and providers, will take a multi-prong approach to quality control.

To ensure quality and promote monetary stewardship, the DWDB will rigorously enforce MOU compliance. In the rare likelihood that suspension is necessary, the suspension will last one year.

Providers will ensure:

1. They have sufficient funds to run their programs without the use of WIOA federal money.
2. They have a stable location. While the DWDB understands that the business world is dynamic and things change, it also understands that training facility stability is an indicator of a successful and viable organization.
3. They have a landline communication system, because it is easy for the unscrupulous to use mobile phone technology, The DWDB requires landline telephones for all providers. Failure to have an operating landline phone is non-compliance.
4. They have. adequate staff and training materials for students. Training providers will ensure that every student has sufficient equipment, books, and other materials required for instruction. All instructors must have the appropriate industry recognized certification and/or accreditation on file or visibly posted. Programs with inadequate and unqualified staff are non- compliant and will be suspended.
5. Tuition charged for WIOA students must be equal to or less than that charged to the public. Vendors charging more are grievously non-compliant and are subject to immediate removal from the list.
6. Programs which withhold learning materials until state payment is issued are grievously non-compliant and will be immediately suspended.

In the event a complaint is made against a provider, the DWDB will immediately suspend the program from the ITA list pending the resolution of the complaint (see policy below). The DWDB will notify the program provider when a complaint is filed and will ensure – to the greatest extent possible – the confidentiality of the complainant. Complaints must be specific and detailed. The DWDB will conduct an inquiry to determine if a violation occurred.

Policies Below:

Initial Application: Eligible Training Provider List—New Application Requirements Policy

Introduction: To maximize customer choice and assure that all population groups are served, a comprehensive process must ensure that a significant number of qualified Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) are available to customers. Reference § 680.450 and TEGL 8-19.

Policy: Prospective providers can submit applications anytime; however, only vetted providers and vetted programs may be recommended for approval to the Executive Committee or Full Board. For the initial eligibility screening, DWDB staff shall complete an initial monitoring visit form. DWDB staff will make an onsite visit to the prospective provider's training site to gather information for the form. The visit will determine whether the provider's facilities are adequate, are safe, and reflect an atmosphere appropriate to the trade being taught.

After the initial screening is completed, the provider will receive via email a .pdf copy of "The Provider Link User Guide." The provider must complete their provider profile application within Delaware JobLink (DJL). The DWDB staff will only accept complete applications from prospective providers. Complete applications in (DJL) must include:

1. A signed Memorandum of Understanding;
2. A complete information profile for each program with verifiable program-specific information and a statement of course costs and fees that match the course catalog used by the public;
3. Information supporting the provider's partnership with business, which may include information about the quality and quantity of employer partnerships;
4. Debarment disclosure;
5. Delaware Department of Education Certification;
6. A demonstration of at least one-year of experience training job seekers in high demand occupations and an established a track record in course completion and job placement;
7. A financial statement prepared by an accounting firm or a signed tax return; and
8. A copy of the provider's current business license.
9. Surety Bond

DWDB staff will recommend to the Executive or Full Board for approval/non-approval of initial applications for providers. Following provider approval, staff will inform the provider they can enter programs into DJL for consideration. The staff will review all the programs and develop recommendations for program approval based on, at least, the following criteria:

1. Does the provider program meet a high demand occupation?
2. Does this provider have an established track record of success for at least one year conducting training and job placement?
3. Does the program offer industry-recognized certifications and credentials?
4. Does the program lead to a recognized post-secondary credential?

5. Does the provider have enough revenue to succeed without the ITA funding?
6. Is the training site equipped to conduct training?
7. Can the training site transition to remote learning if necessary?
8. Does the provider offer trainings that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment including individuals with disabilities?
9. Are the programs submitted for approval currently available and ready for public use?

The Executive Board or Full Board may accept or reject the staff's recommendations in whole or in part. The Board is free to accept all prospective programs, some programs, or no programs and will vote to approve or deny.

When a program or provider is approved by the Executive Committee or Full Board, the DWDB staff will notify the provider of the approval via email.

The DWDB executive director will notify, in writing, via email non-approved providers or programs of the decision. At a minimum the letter will:

1. Be sent to providers via email within 30 days of the committee's decision;
2. Clearly inform providers of their opportunity to appeal;
3. Have the appeal process as a standalone attachment to the letter/email; and
4. Generally, explain the reason for non-approval.

Providers must collect and provide the following performance metrics based on aggregate data for **all** students in the program to ensure the program supports the ability for the individual to obtain an industry-recognized postsecondary credential, or employment upon completion of the program. This includes:

1. Employment 2nd & 4th quarter after exit;
2. Median earnings;
3. Credential attainment;
4. Total number of participants enrolled in the program;
5. Total number of participants completing the program; and
6. Total number of participants exiting the program.

In establishing eligibility criteria, Delaware will take into consideration information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA Title I, subtitle B. Eligible training providers receive initial eligibility for only one year for a particular program. Reference: WIOA § 680.450.

After the initial eligibility expires, the initially eligible training providers are subject to the application procedures for continued eligibility. Reference: § 680.460.

Registered Apprenticeships: All registered apprenticeship (RA) programs are automatically eligible to be included on the statewide ETPL. RA programs are not subject to the same application requirement, performance-information requirement, or period of initial eligibility procedures because they have already gone through a detailed application and vetting process. Reference: 20 CFR § 680.470.

The information required for an RA program to be added to the ETPL is:

1. Occupations included within the registered apprenticeship program;
2. Name and address of the RA Program sponsor;
3. Name and address of the related technical instruction provider, including the location of the facility if different from the program sponsor's address;
4. Method and length of instruction; and
5. The number of active apprentices.

Out of state training providers: The DWDB will only accept applications from training providers whose training facility is located out of state if:

1. The training provider and program is listed on the home state's ETPL.
2. If Delaware does not offer the training in all three counties.

Delaware encourages Delawareans to use ITA vouchers for in-state providers and programs. DWDB will evaluate new out of state provider applications on a case-by-case basis.

SUBSEQUENT RENEWALS: Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)—Renewal Application and Continuing Eligibility Requirements

Introduction: Retaining quality providers and ensuring provider stability is in the best interest of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB). To ensure Delawareans have access to training, which will give them a competitive edge in the labor market, it is essential the DWDB review providers, including their performance, to ensure only the best is renewed. This may result in longtime providers or select programs being removed from the list. Programs are removed from the list for two years. Providers may reapply on the two-year anniversary of the removal of a specific program. Reference 20 CFR § 680.460.

Training providers, who currently have programs listed on the ETPL and want to have their programs remain on the ETPL, must follow the procedures for continuing eligibility determination as follows and, in the timeframe, and manner determined by the state:

1. Review each approved program in Delaware Job Link (DJL). The provider must:

- Update provider information;
- Update information on each program pertaining to alignment of training with in-demand occupations, which must include a cost information for the program, such as tuition, registration fee, books, supplies, testing/exam fees, and graduation fees; and
- Update program data.

2. Attend the provider forum.

3. Submit all student performance data as referenced in WIOA sections 116 and 122 in a timely and accurate manner. This includes:
    a. employment 2nd & 4th quarter after exit;
    b. median earning;
    c. credential attainment;
    d. total number of participants enrolled in the program;
    e. total number of participants completing the program; and
    f. total number of participants exiting the program.
4. Meet the previous year's performance objectives.
5. Offer training programs which support demand occupations.
6. Update all contacts and emails.
7. Describe how the provider will ensure access to training services throughout the State, including rural areas and through the use of technology.
8. Address provider's ability to offer industry-recognized certificates and credentials.
9. Provide information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants.
10. Describe quality of the program of training services including a program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.
11. Describe the provider's ability to provide trainings that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.
12. Submit all state licensure requirements of training providers and licensing status of providers of training services, if applicable.
13. Submit a true and correct copy of the most recent audited financial statements or a signed and filed tax return.

When a provider submits its renewal application within DJL, the DWDB staff will check the performance measures. Training providers will be required to submit student level performance data on **ALL** participants in listed programs each year for inclusion on ETPL. This information will be submitted through the DJL program profile. Required performance indicators are employment second and fourth quarter after exit, median earnings, and credential attainment. Programs cannot be approved until data submission has been accepted and passed necessary validation of completion. The DWDB staff will flag any performance measure failure of a subsequent program renewal application for removal from the provider list.

Providers that wish to self-remove a program must fill out and submit a program removal form to DWDB staff prior to renewal date (typically July 1).

DWDB staff will recommend to the Board for approval or non-approval of providers and specific programs. Notably, successful programs no longer training high demand occupations are subject to non-renewal. DWDB Staff regularly updates the Board on providers and programs who have been removed from the ETPL.

The Board may only renew programs that achieve the performance measures, but the Board may otherwise approve or deny all of the DWDB staff's other recommendations, in whole or in part. The Board may approve all programs, some programs, or none of the programs.

When the Board or Executive Committee approves a subsequent renewal, the DWDB staff will notify the provider. The DWDB Executive Director will notify, in writing, non-approved providers or programs of the decision. At a minimum the letter will:

1. Be sent to providers via email within 15 days of the decision; and
2. Clearly inform providers of their opportunity to appeal.

In establishing eligibility criteria, Delaware will take into consideration information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA Title I, subtitle B.

Out of state training providers: The DWDB will only renew applications from training providers whose training facility is located out of state if:

1. All of the above renewal requirements are met.
2. The training provider and program is listed on the home state's ETPL.
3. If Delaware does not offer the training in all three counties.

Delaware encourages Delawareans to use Individual Training Account vouchers for in-state providers and programs. DWDB will evaluate new out of state provider applications on a case-by-case basis.

Adding registered Apprenticeship (RA) Program Sponsors to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

Introduction: All Registered Apprenticeship programs that are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency, are automatically eligible to be included in the State list of eligible training providers and programs. RA program sponsors that request to be an ETP are automatically included on the State's ETP list and will remain as long as the program is registered and active or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list. References: US DOL Regulation 680.470 dtd. August 19, 2016, Procedures for Including and Removing Registered Apprenticeship Programs on a State List of Eligible Training Providers and Programs.

General: Inclusion of a registered apprenticeship in the State list of eligible training providers and programs ensures job seekers are aware of registered apprenticeship opportunities and maximizes the program's visibility within the workforce system and allows an individual who is eligible to use WIOA title I, subtitle B funds to use those funds toward registered apprenticeship training.

Procedure: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) establishes this process for including registered apprenticeship programs on Delaware's State list of eligible training providers and programs. When initial acknowledgment of acceptance as a sponsor of Registered Apprenticeship has been issued by the State Apprenticeship Agency, the registered apprenticeship sponsor is invited to join the ETP list. The State Agency will provide the following required information:

1. Sponsor Name
2. Sponsor Address
3. Sponsor Phone Number
4. Sponsor Fax Number
5. Contact Name and Title
6. Contact Number
7. Occupation(s) included in the Registered Apprenticeship program
8. Name and Address of the Related Technical Instruction provider (if different from the sponsor's location)
9. The method and length of instruction
10. The number of apprentices (active, non-active, all)

The DWDB Staff will:

1. Work with the State Agency and RA to enter the required information in Delaware Joblink, which will be visible to the general public on the Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers.
2. Provide guidance to the sponsor with any questions regarding WIOA and its key provisions, such as the State list of ETP's, State Workforce Board and other aspects of the system.
3. The DWDB Executive Director will notify the sponsor, in writing, that they are now listed on Delaware's Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers.

The State Apprenticeship Agency will update the DWDB on the status of Registered Apprenticeship programs in order to ensure that it remains certified and removes any apprenticeship programs from the ETPL that are no longer registered either voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered.

Delaware has an MOU with Unemployment Insurance to support the collection of wage information for non-WIOA students. WIOA student data is collected by case managers.

Delaware requires providers to timely and accurately submit all required information within 30 days of the close of the quarter.

Monitoring

Introduction: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) has established an oversight and monitoring process that includes an annual onsite review of all program providers through monitoring visits and ongoing reviews of Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). These activities are required to fulfill the oversight responsibilities in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the federal and state funding they receive. To fulfill their role as a steward of federal and state funds, DWDB staff monitors to identify potential problems and areas where technical assistance or corrective action might be necessary.

Policy: Monitoring is performed through desk reviews and onsite visits. Monitoring activities include:

- A review of program and participant services to include the intake and referral process, eligibility certification, priority of service, registration, objective assessment, classroom training, on-the-job training, work experience, and supportive services;
- A review of program administration and management practices, including fiscal and accounting procedures, reporting, internal control systems (*e.g.*, protection of personally identifiable information (PII)); and
- A review of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity (EO) policy and procedures.

Frequency of Monitoring

Programmatic and fiscal monitoring is conducted each year with a minimum of one on-site visit per year. EO WIOA Section 188 monitoring is conducted once per year.

Due to the complexity of each funding source's compliance requirements, all newly funded providers will receive additional guidance in the form of an orientation site visit and initial site visit. DWDB reserves the right to conduct additional site visits as necessary.

Site visits can consist of the following types:

Pre-monitoring Site Visits

Procedure:

1. Before final approval of a new provider, DWDB will conduct a pre-monitoring site visit. The purpose of this visit is to determine the organization's capacity for meeting the application requirements and minimum standards for training services.
2. The review will be consistent with the regular monitoring DWDB conducts on its providers. Anything that the potential provider does not have in place, it must either develop according to the timelines set by DWDB or demonstrate its capacity to meet the requirement.
3. The site visit will be followed by a site-visit report to be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 30 business days after the visit. The report will include timelines that potential provider must adhere to receive application approval.
4. The DWDB may deny the application if documentation provided is inadequate. DWDB may also deny application initiation with the organization if the pre-monitoring site visit

causes DWDB to conclude that the organization does not have sufficient capacity to meet the application obligations or meet minimum standards.

5. DWDB will work with the organization as much as possible to assist them in the understanding the requirements of the application and site visit report. DWDB will provide trainings when possible and as needed by the organization to meet requirements.

Orientation Site Visit

Procedure:

1. Within three months of a provider commencing services, DWDB may schedule an orientation site visit with the provider. DWDB might not conduct the orientation site visit if DWDB determines that all the items to be reviewed and the information needed by the provider were covered during the pre-award site visit.
2. The site visit is an opportunity for the DWDB staff to make introductions with the provider and give an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the DWDB staff and the provider. Administrative organization staff will review the polices, monitoring tools, data requirements, and other application requirements.
3. At a minimum, the orientation site visit will consist of a review of the monitoring tools, the provider's administrative and programmatic policy and procedure manuals, personnel files, any services specific standards of care, and client files.
4. Each provider must undergo a DWDB accountant review. This review will include reviewing the provider's fiscal policies and financial records, as well as providing additional technical assistance as needed.
5. DWDB will verify that the provider's client-satisfaction process is in place.
6. Any recommendations for improvements and any required actions will be documented in a letter to the provider with a timeline. The provider is responsible for addressing those recommendations within the timeline provided. Failure to address the recommendations could result in sanctions, including disallowed expenses for that time.

Initial Site Visit

Procedure:

1. Within the initial application year, DWDB will schedule an initial site visit.
2. This site visit is an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of compliance guidelines and recommendations from the orientation site visit. Failure to address the required actions from the orientation site visit could result in sanctions.
3. The initial site visit will be a full review using all current monitoring tools including data and fiscal tools.
4. Any findings and recommendations will be documented in a site visit report to the organization as soon as possible, but no later than 30 business days after the visit.

5. Any findings will need to be addressed in a formal plan of corrections in accordance with the plan-of-correction policy.

6. Following the initial site visit, each provider will be monitored according to the DWDB monitoring policy.

Annual Site Visits

All providers providing training services funded by the DWDB shall receive one programmatic, pre-arranged site visit each year for the purpose of evaluating application compliance. Additional site visits may be conducted as needed. A formal written report of the site visit findings shall be provided to the provider by DWDB as soon as possible, but no later than 30 business days after completion of the site visit. Providers have 30 business days in which to respond in writing to the findings unless another timeline is given as a part of the site visit report. DWDB retains the right to make unscheduled site visits at any time when the need is indicated by specific circumstances.

Procedure:

1. DWDB staff will contact appropriate provider staff to schedule a date for the visit.

2. Written notification of the site visit will be sent to the organization staff 30 calendar days before the visit.

3. A copy of the monitoring tools to be used will be sent to the provider staff two weeks before the visit.

4. Monitoring staff will identify the staff to be present and activities planned.

5. The provider will be contacted the week prior to the site visit to confirm date and time of the visit.

6. Providers must confirm date and time of the visit.

7. Providers must submit to DWDB copies of policies requested at least seven calendar days before the scheduled visit.

8. Monitors will conduct desktop audits of the provider prior to the on-site review. The desktop audit may include a review of the timeliness of reports submitted by the provider, a review of organization or program policies and procedures, and a review of information in Delaware Job Links (DJL).

9. Employee or client interviews can be scheduled at DWDB's discretion, as needed to assist DWDB in determining organization compliance and effectiveness of service delivery. When scheduling and conducing client interviews, DWDB will strictly uphold client confidentiality procedures and ensure that clients fully understand that the interview is completely voluntary and that they may opt out at any time. The monitor will notify the provider in writing that she plans to interview employees or clients. The monitor will include the method for those interviews.

10. Monitoring staff will arrive at the designated provider site visit at the agreed upon date and time with all proper materials for conducting the site visit (site visit evaluation

instrument, copy of appropriate sections of application, schedule of provider submissions dates for required reports, etc.).

11. Monitoring staff will meet with the appropriate provider staff to summarize initial findings and recommendations.
12. Monitoring staff will complete a formal written report of the site visit, identifying specific recommendations and findings, and send the report to the provider as soon as possible but no later than 30 business days of completion of the site visit. The report will notify the provider that it must respond to all findings in writing within 30 business days or in another timeframe indicated by DWDB.
13. DWDB staff will evaluate the provider's written response and notify the provider in writing if the provider response is inadequate in any fashion. Staff shall notify the provider in writing when all findings are properly resolved.
14. The monitor will review the provider response and take further actions if the response is not received within the required timeframe or if findings are not resolved in a timely manner or the provider is otherwise noncompliant.

Supplemental Site Visits

Supplemental site visits will be conducted for any established provider as needed to assess compliance with guidelines. The DWDB reserves the right to conduct additional site visits as necessary, and the visits may be announced or unannounced.

Procedure:

1. DWDB staff will determine if a supplemental site visit is necessary.
2. DWDB staff will focus the review on newly established compliance criteria and may also review administrative and programmatic policy and procedure manuals, personnel files, client files, and any previous findings.
3. Employee or client interviews can be scheduled at DWDB staff discretion. When scheduling and conducting client interviews, DWDB staff will strictly uphold client's confidentiality procedures and ensure the clients fully understand that the interview is completely voluntary and that they may opt out at any time.
4. DWDB staff will communicate the results to the provider in the form of a supplemental site visit report as soon as possible but no later than 30 business days.
5. Any findings will need to be addressed in a formal plan of correction.

Follow-up Site Visits

When deficiencies are found that warrant additional site visits at a provider, DWDB staff will conduct follow-up site visits to verify that the plan of correction is being implemented. The DWDB reserves the right to conduct additional follow-up site visits as necessary to verify the implementation of a plan of correction.

Procedure:

1. DWDB staff will conduct a follow-up site visit when it is determined to be necessary to ensure that a provider is meeting application obligations and program standards. Follow-up site visits may also be conducted due to a change at the organization, such as a change in management, staff, address, or other circumstances that might warrant a follow-up site visit.
2. DWDB staff may conduct the follow-up site visit within 30 days following the adoption of the plan of correction.
3. DWDB staff may contact the provider to determine staff availability but is not obligate to do so.
4. The monitor will focus there, review on the findings from the site visit report, any changes made to address the findings in the adopted plan of correction, and any newly established compliance criteria.
5. Employee or client interviews can be scheduled at DWDB's discretion as needed to assist DWDB in determining organization compliance and effectiveness of service delivery. When scheduling and conducting client interviews, DWDB staff will strictly uphold client confidentiality procedures and ensure that clients fully understand that the interview is completely voluntary and that they may opt out at any time.
6. The monitor will send a letter to the provider regarding the follow up visit as soon as possible but no later than 30 business days of the visit. In the letter, the monitor will state that an adequate system has been implemented to address each finding or recommend further action by the organization.
7. Failure to implement the plan of correction and address each finding to the satisfaction of the administrative organization could result in disallowed expenses for that time, withheld reimbursements, or other sanctions.

Plan of Correction

Policy Statement: If gaps or deficiencies are found during the monitoring process, the monitoring report will include recommendations to address the identified problem areas. A plan of correction may also be required when deficiencies are found through desktop monitoring or if issues are identified between site visits. The type and extent of the issues identified will dictate the required corrective action. Recommended actions may include:

- Technical Assistance: The monitor will recommend the provision of technical assistance or additional guidance when a deficient condition is caused by inadequate information or training.
- Policy or Procedural Changes: The monitor will submit appropriate recommendations for procedural changes to result in acceptable performance.
- Corrective Action Plan: The monitor will recommend the creation of a corrective action plan if there are deficiencies which must be addressed by the ETPL provider.

CORRECTIVE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION: Providers must implement the recommended corrective action within the timeframe indicated in the monitoring report letter. The implementation will be closely tracked by the monitor to:

- Determine the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the approach; and
- To measure progress toward resolving the problem.

Procedure:

1. DWDB staff will notify a provider of any findings in a written site visit report. This report will be accompanied by a dated letter.
2. Providers are required to respond in writing to the monitor's recommendations to acknowledge that the corrective action plan is being implemented within 30 business days from the date of the letter, unless given another timeframe from DWDB.
3. The response will include a plan of correction. The plan of correction will detail the way the provider will address finding and will include a timeline of implementation for each step of the plan.
4. Failure to submit a plan of correction within the allotted timeframe could result in disallowed expenses for that time, withheld reimbursements, or other sanctions.
5. DWDB staff will review the plan of correction for appropriateness and will either adopt or revise the plan of correction.
6. Once the plan of correction has been adopted or revised, DWDB staff will follow the progress of the provider's implementation of the established plan of correction through follow-up visits. Providers may request extensions, in writing, if the extension is reasonable and provides justification for such an action.
7. Follow-up site visits will be conducted in accordance with the follow-up site visit procedures.
8. The DWDB reserves the right to schedule as many follow-up site visits as necessary to verify the plan of correction has been implemented.
9. Failure to implement a plan of correction will result in sanctions. This can include disallowing expenses, suspending reimbursements, or terminating the application.

Significant Site Visit Findings

When any site visit leads to the discovery of serious concerns about the quality of services that might negatively impact the health and safety of clients, DWDB staff will meet to determine the appropriate way the findings should be resolved and the appropriate sanction, if any, which should be imposed until the finding has been corrected. DWDB staff will work with other staff as appropriate.

Procedure:

1. DWDB staff will discuss the concern to determine the appropriate course of action that needs to be taken in accordance with DWDB policies to resolve the concern.
2. Depending on the severity of the concern, DWDB may elect to immediately institute sanctions against the provider until the situation is resolved.

3. DWDB will address the concern in any manner necessary to assure client health and safety, up to and including termination of the application or program.

Individual Training Account (ITA) Appeal Process Policy

Introduction: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) establishes this policy for Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Training Providers and/or programs to appeal when denied or removed from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This appeal policy applies to prospective providers whose institutions are denied inclusion on the ETPL, whose eligibility is terminated for failing to meet published performance measures or has been determined to have committed a substantial violation to the terms of their contract. This policy applies to ITA providers and programs only.

Federal Register/ Vol 8. Dated August 19, 2016, Part VI, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 20 CFR, § 683.630, (b) (ii).

Denial of Programs/Provider: Programs and/or providers must adhere to the Approval Criteria listed on the Delaware Workforce Development Boards website to be included on the ETPL. If the program and/or provider fails to follow all criteria, the program and/or provider will be determined to be ineligible.

Performance Measures: ITA programs are required to meet minimum standards aligned with Delaware's federally negotiated performance measures. The DWDB will remove programs and/or providers failing to meet minimum performance measures from the ETPL. The DWDB staff will evaluate provider performance during the renewal period.

Substantial Violation: A "substantial violation" pursuant to WIOA and WIOA regulations is defined as follows:

1. When a provider is determined to have intentionally supplied inaccurate information.
2. When a provider violates any one of the following two or more times within one program year:
    a. WIOA title I,
    b. WIOA regulations, including 29CFR part 38
    c. DWDB policies and procedures,
    d. MOU Agreement,
    e. Contracted information listed on the ITA form.
3. Any other contracted agreement with DWDB for services paid for on behalf of DOL participants with WIOA or any other funds.
4. With respect to the above, the first violation will result in a written warning and the second violation of either the same or any other of the above-listed items will result in a finding of a "substantial violation."

APPEALS PROCESS:

DWDB will:

1. The DWDB Executive Director will notify the Board at its next scheduled meeting of the failure and the requirement to remove the program from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
2. The Board will be notified of the failure and requirement to remove the program. The Board will acknowledge the poor performance and/or substantial violation and instruct the Executive Director to send a letter to the provider announcing the pending removal and advise the provider of the appeal opportunity. The DWDB will notify the provider via email and regular mail of the intent to remove the provider from the ETPL and include this policy as an enclosure to the letter.
3. The Executive Director will ensure all programs pending removal from the list/appeal are put in a hold status and not available for use.

The following is a four-step appeal process for providers:

1. Providers will have 30 calendar days to submit an appeal from the date of mailing of notification by the DWDB Executive Director of a denial or removal of a program from the Eligible Training Provider List.
    a. The DWDB will only accept written appeals.
    b. The written appeal must be received by the DWDB by the appeal due date.
    c. Include name of program(s) considered for removal.
    d. The provider/appellant must provide all supporting documents with the submitted appeal.
    e. A corrective action plan, which addresses the problem or the failure.
2. The DWDB Executive Director will review the appeal and will either favorably approve the corrective action plan or forward non-favorably considered appeals to the Board within seven calendar days.
    a. If the corrective action plan is approved however provider fails to fully implement, the DWDB Executive Director will remove the program/provider immediately.
3. The Board-will evaluate the appeal and decide the disposition of the appeal. The Board may ask the provider to attend the Board meeting. This is a public meeting. The DWDB Executive Director will contact the appellant by regular mail or email to notify them of the time and location of the Board meeting. If the appellant is not available, the Board will still review the appeal and render a decision.
    a. The provider/appellant may make a statement or present information in mitigation if it is consistent with the original appeal.
    b. The Board, at its discretion, can adjudicate the written appeal or direct the removal of the program from the ETPL.

4. If the Board does not favorably consider the appeal, the Executive Director will-if requested by the appellant - convene, within 14 calendar days, a panel of non-board member director-level officials to adjudicate the appeal.

    a. The non-board member panel will review the written appeal, the supporting documents, and may ask the provider/appellant and the DWDB Executive Director to discuss the issues relating to the appeal.

    b. There shall be no further right of appeal from the decision of the panel. All decisions of the panel will be final.

Programs removed from the ETPL must wait at least 2 years before applying for reinstatement.

Substantive Appeals: The DWDB will only accept substantive appeals. Substantive appeals typically concern the designation of a demand occupation, employment opportunities/results for those completing training; median earning's for specific occupations; and achieved performance measures.

Non-Substantive Appeals: Simple disagreement is not a substantive reason for appeal. Simply, "We don't agree" is not sufficient cause for an appeal.

Weight of Responsibility: If an appellant wants to change the reasons for an appeal after the process starts, the appellant must submit in writing an amended and revised appeal with any supporting documentation. The amended and revised appeal will then proceed by beginning again with step number 2 in the four step appeals process above.

The DWDB Executive Director is the point of contact for these appeal procedures.

Adding registered Apprenticeship (RA) Program Sponsors to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Policy

Introduction: All Registered Apprenticeship programs that are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency, are automatically eligible to be included in the State list of eligible training providers and programs. RA program sponsors that request to be an ETP are automatically included on the State's ETP list and will remain as long as the program is registered and active or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list. References: US DOL Regulation 680.470 dtd. August 19, 2016, Procedures for Including and Removing Registered Apprenticeship Programs on a State List of Eligible Training Providers and Programs.

General: Inclusion of a registered apprenticeship in the State list of eligible training providers and programs ensures job seekers are aware of registered apprenticeship opportunities and maximizes the program's visibility within the workforce system and allows an individual who is eligible to use WIOA title I, subtitle B funds to use those funds toward registered apprenticeship training.

Procedure: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) establishes this process for including registered apprenticeship programs on Delaware's State list of eligible training providers and programs. When initial acknowledgment of acceptance as a sponsor of Registered Apprenticeship has been issued by the State Apprenticeship Agency, the registered

apprenticeship sponsor is invited to join the ETP list. The State Agency will provide the following required information.

1. Sponsor Name
2. Sponsor Address
3. Sponsor Phone Number
4. Sponsor Fax Number
5. Contact Name and Title
6. Contact Number
7. Occupation(s) included in the Registered Apprenticeship program
8. Name and Address of the Related Technical Instruction provider (if different from the sponsor's location)
9. The method and length of instruction
10. The number of apprentices (active, non-active, all)

The DWDB Staff will:

1. Work with the State Agency and RA to enter the required information in Delaware Joblink, which will be visible to the general public on the Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers.
2. Provide guidance to the sponsor with any questions regarding WIOA and its key provisions, such as the State list of ETP's, State Workforce Board and other aspects of the system.
3. The DWDB Executive Director will notify the sponsor, in writing, that they are now listed on Delaware's Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers.

The State Apprenticeship Agency will update the DWDB on the status of Registered Apprenticeship programs in order to ensure that it remains certified and removes any apprenticeship programs from the ETPL that are no longer registered either voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered.

Delaware has an MOU with Unemployment Insurance to support the collection of wage information for non-WIOA students.

Delaware requires providers to timely and accurately submit all required information within 30 days of the close of each quarter.

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).

Historically during times of low unemployment and high employment and job opportunities, Delaware has not seen a demand for WIOA services that exceeds its capacity, hence all individuals who are eligible for services have received them.

During economic times when unemployment has been higher and job opportunities have been fewer, we typically see a demand for WIOA services that exceeds our financial capacity. During that time, priority of service comes into play. Once this occurs, any individual who is requesting WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker funding or services is put on a waiting/outreach list with the priority indicators reflected.

Policy 4.1 DET AJC Unit Policy- Priority of Service.

1.0 Purpose: This policy gives the priority of service to Veterans in regard to WIOA and JVSG employment and training services.

2.0 Policy Scope/ Details: Section: 134 (c)(3)E of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated for adult employment and training services. Veterans, eligible spouses (covered persons), recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient are given priority of service for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under all Delaware Division of Employment and Training (DDET) funded programs.

This includes but is not limited to services covered under WIOA Title I Adult programs which are utilized to provide individualized career services, training services or both. These services can include but is not limited to; specialized assessments, developing an individual employment plan, counseling, work experiences, occupational skills training, and incumbent worker training.

This means that an individual who is included in a priority group either receives access to a service earlier than others, or if resources are limited, they receive access to the service instead of others.

Individuals must first meet program eligibility requirements in orders to obtain priority of service.

The priority of service will be applied in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are included in the group's statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth, priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDB.
5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (T ANF) The TANF program is a required partner in AJCs, and in addition to cash assistance, can provide multiple supports for the priority

populations in the WIOA Adult program. By closely partnering with the TANF program, the workforce system can help TANF participants obtain the skills they need to achieve self-sufficiency. Many local areas have had great success in partnering with the TANF program to ensure participants are able to receive all the services they need.

3.0 Definitions: The term "covered person" in this policy means any of the following individuals:

1. A veteran
2. The spouse of any of the following individuals:
    a. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
    b. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: (I) missing in action, (II) captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or (III) forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
    c. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability.
    d. Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

4.0 Procedures: Eligibility information will be given to the client in the following ways:

- Veterans' Priority Statement is posted at the home page of Delaware JobLink (DJL). It can be found at Veterans' Priority - Delaware JobLink. https://joblink.delaware.gov/veterans_priority
- Verbal notification during group or one-on-one orientations and assessments.
- Verbally for any new work registrant who comes into any of our four local AJC offices and satellite office/s. Priority of Service handouts is given to all veterans who come into any of our four local AJC.

Core program areas of concentration shall be all DET Programs with specific emphasis on Apprenticeship and Training

5.0 Supporting Information

38 U.S. Code $ 4215 - Priority of service for veterans in Department of Labor job training programs I U.S. Code I US Law I LII / Legal Information Institute (cornell.edu)

TEGL 7-20 (https://www.dol.gOv/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/advisories/TEGL/2020/TEGL 7-20.pdf)

BILLS-1 13hr803enr.pdf (congress.gov), (https://www.congress.gOv/l 13/bills/hr803/BILLS-l 13hr803enr.pdf)

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Transfer of Funds Policy

Introduction: Section 133(b)(4) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows Workforce Development Boards to transfer, if such a transfer is approved, up to 100 percent of a program-year allocation between the local adult and local dislocated-worker programs. This transfer provides flexibility to provide services in the areas of greatest need.

Policy Statement

There are short-term and long-term effects on program operations that could result from transfers of funds. Transfer requests must be accompanied by an appropriate justification, clearly indicating reasoning the request is being made and how granting the request will benefit the delivery of workforce development services. At a minimum, the rationale for the transfer should:

1. Address the reasons for the transfer request, including current service level information and balances.
2. State how the fund transfer will impact the participant levels in both programs and whether there are adequate funds to maintain services to participants currently enrolled in the programs.
3. Provide assurances that services for Adults and Dislocated Workers will be maintained and describe the expected impact on WIOA performance outcomes for both funding streams.
4. Explain, if unforeseen events incur, how will service continue (*i.e.*, other funding streams available to serve Adult and Dislocated Worker populations).

All requests for transfer must include a written justification addressing each of the above-mentioned considerations and the reasons the transfer is necessary to provide adult or dislocated worker employment and training activities.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFER

For transfers of funds, a request must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (ED-DWDB) and the Director of the Delaware Department of Labor Division of Employment and Training (Dir. DET) for review of such transfer for a specific appropriation of adult or dislocated worker funding (*i.e.*, program year or fiscal year of appropriation). The request must specify the type of funding (whether adult or dislocated worker) to be transferred to the other program.

APPROVING A TRANSFER

Transfer requests are to be signed by the ED-DWDB and the Dir. DET and submitted to the Delaware Workforce Development Board Chair for final approval. The ED-DWDB will inform the Board at the next meeting of the full Board or Executive Committee.

REFERENCES

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, § 133(b)(4), Public Law 113-128. NPRM § 683.130 found at 80 Fed. Reg. 20877 (April 16, 2015) (to be codified at 20 C.F.R. § 683.130). O.A.C.

5101:9-31-02, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formulary allocation methodology. (July 24, 2014).

Policy Review Date: September 2023

Board Adoption Date: September 12, 2023

Transfer of Funds Request

1. Date of Request:

2. Program Year:

3. Direction of Transfer (Check One):

Adult program to Dislocated Worker program: ☐ Dislocated Worker program to Adult program: ☐

4. Amount of Transfer:	
5. Balance of Adult after transfer:	
6. Balance of Dislocated Worker after transfer:	

7. Considering the factors described under the Transfer of Funds Requirements section, provide a rationale for the following:
   a. The reason for the transfer, including current service level.
   b. How the fund transfer impact the participant levels in both programs and are there adequate funds to maintain services to currently enrolled participants?
   c. Assurances that services for Adults and Dislocated Workers will be maintained, a description of the expected impact on WIOA performance outcomes for both funding streams.
   d. If unforeseen events incur, how will services continue?

Signature _____

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

All transfer requests must be approved and signed off by the Director of the Division of Employment and Training, the Executive Director of the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB), and the Chair of the DWDB

Signature		Signature	
Name		Name	
Title	Director, Division of Employment and Training	Title	Executive Director, Delaware Workforce Development Board
Date		Date	

Signature _____

Name _____

Title Chair, Delaware Workforce Development Board

Instructions for Completing the Transfer of Funds Request Form

TRANSFER OF FUNDS REQUEST FORM

Line 1. Enter the date of the request.

Line 2. Enter the program year.

Line 3. Check the appropriate block regarding the direction of transfer. Only one type of transfer can be entered on each form.

Line 4. Provide the amount of the transfer. Do not include any amount previously transferred.

Line 5. Provide the balance for Adult after transfer.

Line 6. Provide the balance for Dislocated Worker after transfer.

Line 7. Provide the reason(s) for the transfer of funds along with any other pertinent data by answering questions a-d.

Enter in information for person filling out the form.

Submit for approval.

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).

Policy 4.4, DET AJC Policy – Co-enrollment, established on July 1, 2022

Purpose: This policy provides the reference information for co-enrollment of participants with WIOA funding.

Policy Scope/ Details: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (https://www.congress.gov/1 I 3/bills/hr803/BILLS-I I 3hr803enr.pdf) establishes a foundation to assist job seekers obtain the necessary skills and assistance in order to obtain sustainable career pathways. Co enrollment in different programs allows for the full utilization of funding sources to produce the best outcomes for job seekers. The following guidelines are provided to One Stop Centers in support of producing these outcomes and addressing concerns of performance reporting: TEGLs 4-20, 14-18, 16-21, 19-16

Procedures: Clients are accessed by case managers to provide the full range of services available to them to achieve a timely and successful outcome of skills advancement and job placement.

All information regarding each enrollment is entered in Delaware JobLink

Information of services for each enrollment is documented and shared across enrollments as per the Participant Individual Report Layout (PIRL) data elements and measure configuration.

Attachments:

Attachment A: TAA and D\\ Co-Enrollment Fact Sheet

TAA and DW Co-Enrollment Fact Sheet #2:

Perceived Barriers of Differing Eligibility & Benefit/Service Provision

The statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) Program are clear:

- Sec. 125. DECLARATION OF POLICY; SENSE OF CONGRESS. (Trade Reform Act of 2002)
    - DECLARATION OF POLICY. -Congress reiterates that, under the trade adjustment assistance program under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, workers are eligible for transportation, childcare, and healthcare assistance, as well as other related assistance under programs administered by the Department of Labor.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA) 2015, Sec. 239(f):

Any agreement entered into under this section shall provide for the coordination of the administration of the provisions for employment services, training, and supplemental assistance under sections 235 and 236 of this Act and under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act upon such terms and conditions as are established by the Secretary in consultation with the States and set forth in such agreement. Any agency of the State jointly administering such provisions under such agreement shall be considered to be a cooperating State agency for purposes of this chapter.

- Governor-Secretary Agreement:

The Department concludes that no additional regulatory language is needed in the WIOA rules to complete compliance with this new requirement, since [adversely affected workers] AAWs are eligible to be enrolled in the WIOA dislocated worker program upon request. The States, under the Governor-Secretary Agreement, are bound to the implementation of these rules. The Governor-Secretary Agreement binds the entire executive branch of the State government to the terms and conditions of the Agreement and the implementation of the TAA Program. {TAA Final Rule Preamble)

- AA Final Rule 20 CFR 618.325(a)(l):

A State must co-enroll trade-affected workers who are eligible for WIOA 's dislocated worker program. Workers may choose to decline co-enrollment in [BE1] . A State cannot deny such a worker benefits or services under the TAA Program solely for declining co-enrollment in WIOA.

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 04-20

WIOA emphasizes integrating services to better serve workforce customers. The TAA Final Rule furthers this effort by providing staffing flexibilities and requiring the co-enrollment of trade-affected workers with the WIOA DW program.

- TEGL No. 16-21, Attachment I:

To the extent trade-affected workers require assistance or services not authorized under the TAA Program, or for which TAA Program funds are unavailable or insufficient (including for required employment and case management services}, the state will make such assistance available through the American Job Center network, including OW and DWGs.

Data shows that co-enrollment between TAA and the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker (DW) program results in better performance outcomes that are significant and consistent over time. However, 41 percent of new TAA participants are co-enrolled with the DW program. 1

In order to encourage evidenced-based strategies for improved outcomes, this Fact Sheet addresses the perceived barriers to co-enrollment of differences in eligibility and benefit and service provision. (TAA and DW Co-Enrollment Fact Sheet #1 addresses the perceived barriers to co-enrollment of cost and performance.)

1 PIRL Data 1/1/2020-12/31/2020, as of 3/17/2021

Eligibility and Benefit and Service Provision Table

Eligibility Requirement for Program/Service	DW Program	TAA Program	Comment
TAA Certified Worker Group		✓	Only those workers who are covered by a certified petition are eligible.
Selective Service	✓		TAA does not have this requirement, but non-compliance with Selective Service is extremely rare. Individuals can register with the Selective Service and be eligible to enroll in the WIOA DW program.
Requires Birth Certificate			Neither program requires individuals to present their birth certificates to be eligible to receive services. However, for the TAA program, documentation is needed to prove the individual's age and eligibility to work in the United States.
Assessment	✓	✓	Both programs require an assessment to provide services. Furthermore, the assessments are not duplicative and the TAA assessment can build off of the DW assessment.
Training – 6 Criteria for TAA Training Eligibility		✓	These criteria for approving training are required for TAA, but also represent a best practice approach in determining appropriate training for an individual.
Training – Requires Use of WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)	✓		TAA must allow training through non-ETPL training vendors. However, many training vendors are already on the ETPL, so many TAA participants receive training from ETPL vendors. In addition, DW is not required to pay for any part of training for participants who are co-enrolled with TAA.

Scenarios

Perceived Barrier #1: Differing Eligibility and Regulatory Requirements

Discussion: There are numerous differences between WIOA and TAA program requirements for qualifying for various types of reemployment assistance. For example, there are differences in training approval criteria, availability and amounts of job search allowances, availability and amounts of relocation allowances, income support eligibility criteria, and different supportive services. Other differences between the TAA Program and WIOA include the availability and amounts of training funds and rules for reimbursing travel expenses.

Solution(s): States should ensure that local workforce staff possess a basic understanding of the TAA program, including similarities and differences with WIOA and other partner programs.

States are encouraged to establish policies that support the needs of all dislocated workers, including those impacted by trade, and to promote goals for seamless service delivery.

Coordination between partner programs to develop a common framework or tools for customers may have a positive impact. Products or tools may be developed using TAA case management and employment funds. States should also consult with their Regional Office for guidance on additional allowable activities that can be supported with TAA funding.

Perceived Barrier #2: Different Case Management and Financial Management Information Systems (MIS) Across Programs

Discussion: State agencies and local areas often have a separate MIS for the TAA Program and for other comparable programs such as WIOA, and sometimes even between various program benefit components within these programs. This can make it difficult for staff from different programs to effectively coordinate case management efforts and expenditures. Separate MIS sends a message that the TAA and WIOA programs are distinct, segregated, and that true seamless integration is not a priority.

Solution(s): A common MIS promotes the one system concept in a very tangible way.

Further, it may be the most effective means of promoting and supporting the seamless integration of services and co-enrollment. The PIRL reporting system was designed to allow participant information to be kept on one system. Where state policy does not allow for this, program staff may coordinate through other means.

Aside from integrating reporting systems, ensuring frequent communication between program staff occurs on

[BE1]

Perceived Barrier #3: Multiple Eligibility Documents and Paperwork

Discussion: Separate eligibility documents are burdensome to customers and staff and reinforce the notion of separate delivery systems.

Solution(s): A combined applicant/participant and financial management system is the ideal solution. An alternative would be to have a common application with common data elements that meet the reporting needs of all required partners.

Perceived Barrier #4: Different Assessment Systems and Individual Employment Plans

Discussion: Partner programs within the One-Stop system may have different types of assessment instruments that can result in participants undergoing multiple rounds of assessment. Additionally, partners do not always share the same definition of assessment. For some it is a very specific instrument, which has to be administered and scored, while for others it is more of a process of goals, needs, and/or skills identification. Even when there may be general agreement on the definition and purposes of assessment, there may be substantial differences of opinion regarding the results of the assessment. In addition, programs may have a specific or required format for an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Reemployment Plan.

Solution(s): It is critical that the partners work together to develop a common understanding of what the assessment should achieve, and the appropriate mechanisms for obtaining that

information. A next step toward integration could be the acceptance of partners' assessments or IEPs, and the elimination of redundant assessment or IEP steps. Additionally, assessment and IEP processes for co-enrollments should be addressed in appropriate State and local memoranda of understanding. Finally, the ideal solution would be the adoption of common assessment and IEP instruments that fulfill the requirements, needs and objectives of all partners.

Perceived Barrier #5: Co-Enrolling TAA Participants Reduces Resources for Other Dislocated Workers

Discussion: Some believe that the best way to serve dislocated workers as a whole is to refrain from practices such as co-enrollment. For example, even though TAA Program participants come with access to training funds and income support, from the perspective of some, providing services at the WIOA Title I level to co-enrolled TAA participants is a drain on available staff resources.

In the past, case management was considered an administrative expense for TAA Program participants. As a result, TAA Program funds could not be used to fund these services. However, since the 2009 amendments, costs for case management can be charged to TAA Program funds, but many states have failed to adjust their service models to take advantage of these funds.

Solution(s): Early intervention is critical to effectively serve dislocated workers, including those who are eligible for TAA. Given the delay caused by the TAA group eligibility process, co-enrolling TAA eligible workers in the DW program helps ensure expedited employment services, including training assessments. Case management and early intervention services increase customer service and lead to more positive outcomes. In addition, the current TAA Program requires that states spend at least five percent of their TAA Program funds for employment and case management activities. There is no maximum percent that can be expended on these activities.

Perceived Barrier #6: Lack of Sufficient TAA Program Funding to Provide Necessary Staff at the Local and State Levels

Discussion: Trade-affected workers may require more staff intensive services, e.g., job search assistance, relocation assistance, training, and follow-up. Service levels vary widely depending upon the available staff to provide these services to trade-affected workers.

Solution(s): TAA provides funding for employment and case management services. TAA funds are also used to support infrastructure and One-Stop operating costs. Local agreements should be established among the One-Stop partners that increase communication and include arrangements for cost pooling to enable utilization of other funding sources. The funding matrix available in the attachment to TEGL No. 15-12 provides some explanation of what benefits and services each funding stream may be used to provide. States should also consult with their Regional Office for guidance on additional allowable activities that can be supported with TAA funding.

A minimum of five (5) percent of TAA Program funds must be used for case management and employment services, but no maximum exists. This flexibility allows states to leverage program funds in a manner that may be customized for a variety of program needs.

Perceived Barrier #7: Lack of TAA Program Knowledge at Comprehensive One-Stop Centers or Affiliate One-Stop Centers

Discussion: The requirements of a comprehensive One-Stop center include making TAA services accessible to customers. A lack of adequate staff training, and information may result in insufficient information being provided to trade-impacted workers and incorrect eligibility determinations being made.

Solution(s): According to 618.305, the TAA Program is a required One-Stop partner under the WIOA statute and regulations. As a WIOA required partner, the TAA Program is responsible for providing access to TAA benefits and services to adversely affected workers through the AJC network. Under WIOA and the Trade Act, states must integrate TAA services into their one-stop delivery system; provide rapid response and appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a petition has been filed; and disseminate benefit information that provides workers an accurate understanding of the TAA Program's benefits and services in such a way that it is transparent to the worker applying for them. CSAs must also use their state's AJCs as the main point of contact for participant intake and delivery of TAA benefits and services.

Staff at comprehensive One-Stop and affiliate sites should have sufficient information and training to recognize potential eligibility for various partner program(s). Several States have developed reference and training materials to assist with co-enrollment. TAA Case Management funds are also available for providing this training to improve case management.

Perceived Barrier #8: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) Are Not Eligible for Dislocated Worker

Discussion: ATAA/RTAA is a benefit for workers age 50 or older who do not earn more than $50,000 annually in new employment. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA receive a wage supplement when the recipient accepts new employment at a lower wage. Because these participants must be employed, there is a perception that they do not meet the definition of WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker.

Solution(s): Co-Enrollment of TAA Participants in the Dislocated Worker Program is required, including for those who are recipients of ATAA/RTAA. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA meet the definition of Dislocated Worker; WIOA does not provide a deadline on the impact of a layoff. Furthermore, to be eligible for ATAA/RTAA, a worker must be earning no more than $50,000 per year and must be earning less than they were in adversely affected employment. The latter of these meets the definition of underemployed according to the WIOA statute, WIOA regulations, and administrative guidance found in TEGL 19-16. The income level, in some areas, would also qualify a worker for services.

Perceived Barrier #9: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) Do Not Need the Benefits of Co-Enrollment

Discussion: ATAA/RTAA is a benefit for workers age 50 or older who do not earn more than $50,000 annually in new employment. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA receive a wage supplement when the recipient accepts new employment at a lower wage. Because these participants must

be employed, there is a perception that they do not need to receive other services and be co-enrolled, especially given funding limitations.

Solution(s): ATAA/RTAA participants gain from services in the DW Program. If they are co-enrolled in the DW program, they can begin receiving employment and case management services while waiting to be determined eligible for the TAA Program. They may also need supportive services through the DW Program that cannot be identified at the point of enrollment. Additionally, data shows that RTAA participants who receive at least one case management services are more likely to retain their employment than those who do not.

Perceived Barrier #10: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance {ATAA) Do Not Want to be Co-Enrolled

Discussion: Depending on how co-enrollment is presented, a TAA participant may think that being co-enrolled is simply a burdensome paperwork exercise with no benefits. Also, TAA participants have often been identified as training averse; their default preference is always to go to work even if available employment is less than optimal either from a wage standpoint or in terms of sustainability.

Solution(s): Although older workers might be drawn to the immediacy of reemployment, it is likely they would benefit from the other services available under WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker and they must be made aware of them. Therefore, states must make every effort to present co-enrollment in a manner that is minimally burdensome for the participant and showcases the full scope of benefits, including in cases of ATAA/RTAA- only participation.

Future participant needs can be hard to predict. For example, a participant might need supportive services like transportation subsidies, childcare support, eyeglasses, etc. Co-enrollment guarantees the potential to address these types of needs.

Sec. 239 of TAARA 2015 requires "intake services." Therefore, states must provide intake services for the TAA Program, as well as an initial assessment, and must offer co-enrollment at that time, even to ATAA/RTAA-only participants. During these assessments, participants must be informed of the labor market conditions and all supportive services available (618.310(c)7). See also the reference below:

§ 618.335 Initial assessment of trade-affected workers.

(a) A State must carry out an initial assessment for each trade-affected worker as part of the intake process described in section 239(g) of the Act. When applicable, a State must use the results of an assessment developed by a partner program, supplemented, if necessary, as described in § 618.330(e).

(b) The results of the initial assessment will determine the best service strategy to assist the trade-affected worker in obtaining reemployment and provide insight into which benefits and services under the TAA Program and partner programs would be most beneficial to the worker.

Perceived Barrier #11: Participants Who Are Currently Employed Do Not Meet the Eligibility Criteria for Dislocated Worker

Discussion: First and foremost, an adversely affected worker is, by definition, a dislocated worker. Trade has a lifetime entitlement to apply for benefits. This means that a worker may in fact be employed at the time that they apply for TAA. That employment does not necessarily mean that they are ineligible for TAA or WIOA Dislocated Worker.

Solution(s): There are several different benefits available under the TAA Program. Each has its own eligibility criteria that must be met. The most common of these two benefits are TRA (extended unemployment) and training. A worker eligible for UI or TRA is immediately eligible for WIOA DW. For training, there must be no likelihood of suitable employment available to the worker. Suitable employment is defined in the TAA regulations at 20 CFR 618.110 as " ... work of a substantially equal or higher skill level than the worker's past adversely affected employment, and wages for such work that are not less than 80 percent of the worker's average weekly wage. Part-time, temporary, short-term, or threatened employment is not suitable employment." Thus, for training to be approved under the TAA Program, a worker, for WIOA purposes, is underemployed. There is no barrier to WIOA DW co-enrollment.

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)

As the final rule mandates co-enrollment of TAA participants in the WIOA and DW program (20 CFR Part 618.325(a)(1)) and must ensure the availability of a comprehensive array of services for Trade Affected Workers. The state must make co-enrollment available to trade affected workers that are eligible for other One Stop partner programs to ensure that all necessary and appropriate services, including supportive services are available to the worker. If a participant is determined to be a part of a certified work group, the participant will receive the information/documentation on TAA benefits and services - please see attached TAA Benefits and Services informational sheet. Trade affected workers may choose to decline co-enrollment in WIOA; however, the state cannot deny a worker benefits and services under TAA program because the worker declined co-enrollment in WIOA. See chart below for eligibility requirements for TAA and DW co-enrollment.

TAA Benefits and Services

If a worker is a member of a worker group certified by UDSOL, that worker may be eligible to receive the following benefits and services of a local American Job Center.

Employment and Case Management Services	Skills assessme information on programs)
Job Search Allowance	Reimbursemen

Employment and Case Management Services	Skills assessme information on programs)
Re-Employment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)	RTAA is a wage and is available reemployment. wage and the n
Relocation Allowance	Reimbursemen
TRADE Readjustment Allowance (TRA)	Income suppor full-time trainir to 130 weeks o
Training	Occupational Sk needs of a speci

The Delaware Department of Labor resource center offers services including information about employment and training opportunities, skills assessments, job placement, job counseling and other supportive services.

It is important to maintain contact with your local American Job Center to meet required deadlines, ensure proper understanding of the rules and receive guidance on benefits and services available to workers. Related Link: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/tradeact

4.0 Attachments:

Attachment A: TAA and D\\ Co-Enrollment Fact Sheet

TAA and DW Co-Enrollment Fact Sheet #2:

Perceived Barriers of Differing Eligibility & Benefit/Service Provision

The statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) Program are clear:

- Sec. 125. DECLARATION OF POLICY; SENSE OF CONGRESS. (Trade Reform Act of 2002)
    - DECLARATION OF POLICY. -Congress reiterates that, under the trade adjustment assistance program under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, workers are eligible for transportation, childcare, and healthcare assistance, as well as other related assistance under programs administered by the Department of Labor.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA) 2015, Sec. 239(f):

Any agreement entered into under this section shall provide for the coordination of the administration of the provisions for employment services, training, and supplemental assistance under sections 235 and 236 of this Act and under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act upon such terms and conditions as are established by the Secretary in consultation with the States and set forth in such agreement. Any agency of the State jointly

administering such provisions under such agreement shall be considered to be a cooperating State agency for purposes of this chapter.

- Governor-Secretary Agreement:

The Department concludes that no additional regulatory language is needed in the WIOA rules to complete compliance with this new requirement, since [adversely affected workers] AAWs are eligible to be enrolled in the WIOA dislocated worker program upon request. The States, under the Governor-Secretary Agreement, are bound to the implementation of these rules. The Governor-Secretary Agreement binds the entire executive branch of the State government to the terms and conditions of the Agreement and the implementation of the TAA Program. {TAA Final Rule Preamble)

- AA Final Rule 20 CFR 618.325(a)(l):

A State must co-enroll trade-affected workers who are eligible for WIOA 's dislocated worker program. Workers may choose to decline co-enrollment in WIDA. A State cannot deny such a worker benefits or services under the TAA Program solely for declining co-enrollment in WIOA.

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 04-20

WIOA emphasizes integrating services to better serve workforce customers. The TAA Final Rule furthers this effort by providing staffing flexibilities and requiring the co-enrollment of trade-affected workers with the WIOA DW program.

1 PIRL Data 1/1/2020-12/31/2020, as of 3/17/2021

Eligibility and Benefit and Service Provision Table

Eligibility Requirement for Program/Service	DW Program	TAA Program	Comment
TAA Certified Worker Group		✓	Only those workers who are covered by a certified petition are eligible.
Selective Service	✓		TAA does not have this requirement, but non-compliance with Selective Service is extremely rare. Individuals can register with the Selective Service and be eligible to enroll in the WIOA DW program.
Requires Birth Certificate			Neither program requires individuals to present their birth certificates to be eligible to receive services. However, for the TAA program, documentation is needed to prove the individual's age and eligibility to work in the United States.
Assessment	✓	✓	Both programs require an assessment to provide services. Furthermore, the assessments are not duplicative and the TAA assessment can build off of the DW assessment.
Training – 6 Criteria for TAA Training Eligibility		✓	These criteria for approving training are required for TAA, but also represent a best practice approach in determining appropriate training for an individual.
Training – Requires Use of WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)	✓		TAA must allow training through non-ETPL training vendors. However, many training vendors are already on the ETPL, so many TAA participants receive training from ETPL vendors. In addition, DW is not required to pay for any part of training for participants who are co-enrolled with TAA.

Scenarios

Perceived Barrier #1: Differing Eligibility and Regulatory Requirements

Discussion: There are numerous differences between WIOA and TAA program requirements for qualifying for various types of reemployment assistance. For example, there are differences in training approval criteria, availability and amounts of job search allowances, availability and amounts of relocation allowances, income support eligibility criteria, and different supportive services. Other differences between the TAA Program and WIOA include the availability and amounts of training funds and rules for reimbursing travel expenses.

Solution(s): States should ensure that local workforce staff possess a basic understanding of the TAA program, including similarities and differences with WIOA and other partner programs. States are encouraged to establish policies that support the needs of all dislocated workers, including those impacted by trade, and to promote goals for seamless service delivery.

Coordination between partner programs to develop a common framework or tools for customers may have a positive impact. Products or tools may be developed using TAA case management and employment funds. States should also consult with their Regional Office for guidance on additional allowable activities that can be supported with TAA funding.

Perceived Barrier #2: Different Case Management and Financial Management Information Systems (MIS) Across Programs

Discussion: State agencies and local areas often have a separate MIS for the TAA Program and for other comparable programs such as WIOA, and sometimes even between various program benefit components within these programs. This can make it difficult for staff from different programs to effectively coordinate case management efforts and expenditures. Separate MIS sends a message that the TAA and WIOA programs are distinct, segregated, and that true seamless integration is not a priority.

Solution(s): A common MIS promotes the one system concept in a very tangible way.

Further, it may be the most effective means of promoting and supporting the seamless integration of services and co-enrollment. The PIRL reporting system was designed to allow participant information to be kept on one system. Where state policy does not allow for this, program staff may coordinate through other means.

Aside from integrating reporting systems, ensuring frequent communication between program staff occurs on the co-enrolled participants (such as weekly huddles) can help ensure participant success.

Perceived Barrier #3: Multiple Eligibility Documents and Paperwork

Discussion: Separate eligibility documents are burdensome to customers and staff and reinforce the notion of separate delivery systems.

Solution(s): A combined applicant/participant and financial management system is the ideal solution. An alternative would be to have a common application with common data elements that meet the reporting needs of all required partners.

Perceived Barrier #4: Different Assessment Systems and Individual Employment Plans

Discussion: Partner programs within the One-Stop system may have different types of assessment instruments that can result in participants undergoing multiple rounds of assessment. Additionally, partners do not always share the same definition of assessment. For some it is a very specific instrument, which has to be administered and scored, while for others it is more of a process of goals, needs, and/or skills identification. Even when there may be general agreement on the definition and purposes of assessment, there may be substantial differences of opinion regarding the results of the assessment. In addition, programs may have a specific or required format for an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Reemployment Plan.

Solution(s): It is critical that the partners work together to develop a common understanding of what the assessment should achieve, and the appropriate mechanisms for obtaining that information. A next step toward integration could be the acceptance of partners' assessments or IEPs, and the elimination of redundant assessment or IEP steps. Additionally, assessment and IEP processes for co-enrollments should be addressed in appropriate State and local memoranda of understanding. Finally, the ideal solution would be the adoption of common assessment and IEP instruments that fulfill the requirements, needs and objectives of all partners.

Perceived Barrier #5: Co-Enrolling TAA Participants Reduces Resources for Other Dislocated Workers

Discussion: Some believe that the best way to serve dislocated workers as a whole is to refrain from practices such as co-enrollment. For example, even though TAA Program participants come with access to training funds and income support, from the perspective of some, providing services at the WIOA Title I level to co-enrolled TAA participants is a drain on available staff resources.

In the past, case management was considered an administrative expense for TAA Program participants. As a result, TAA Program funds could not be used to fund these services. However, since the 2009 amendments, costs for case management can be charged to TAA Program funds, but many states have failed to adjust their service models to take advantage of these funds.

Solution(s): Early intervention is critical to effectively serve dislocated workers, including those who are eligible for TAA. Given the delay caused by the TAA group eligibility process, co-enrolling TAA eligible workers in the DW program helps ensure expedited employment services, including training assessments. Case management and early intervention services increase customer service and lead to more positive outcomes. In addition, the current TAA Program requires that states spend at least five percent of their TAA Program funds for employment and case management activities. There is no maximum percent that can be expended on these activities.

Perceived Barrier #6: Lack of Sufficient TAA Program Funding to Provide Necessary Staff at the Local and State Levels

Discussion: Trade-affected workers may require more staff intensive services, e.g., job search assistance, relocation assistance, training, and follow-up. Service levels vary widely depending upon the available staff to provide these services to trade-affected workers.

Solution(s): TAA provides funding for employment and case management services. TAA funds are also used to support infrastructure and One-Stop operating costs. Local agreements should

be established among the One-Stop partners that increase communication and include arrangements for cost pooling to enable utilization of other funding sources. The funding matrix available in the attachment to TEGL No. 15-12 provides some explanation of what benefits and services each funding stream may be used to provide. States should also consult with their Regional Office for guidance on additional allowable activities that can be supported with TAA funding.

A minimum of five (5) percent of TAA Program funds must be used for case management and employment services, but no maximum exists. This flexibility allows states to leverage program funds in a manner that may be customized for a variety of program needs.

Perceived Barrier #7: Lack of TAA Program Knowledge at Comprehensive One-Stop Centers or Affiliate One-Stop Centers

Discussion: The requirements of a comprehensive One-Stop center include making TAA services accessible to customers. A lack of adequate staff training, and information may result in insufficient information being provided to trade-impacted workers and incorrect eligibility determinations being made.

Solution(s): According to 618.305, the TAA Program is a required One-Stop partner under the WIOA statute and regulations. As a WIOA required partner, the TAA Program is responsible for providing access to TAA benefits and services to adversely affected workers through the AJC network. Under WIOA and the Trade Act, states must integrate TAA services into their one-stop delivery system; provide rapid response and appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a petition has been filed; and disseminate benefit information that provides workers an accurate understanding of the TAA Program's benefits and services in such a way that it is transparent to the worker applying for them. CSAs must also use their state's AJCs as the main point of contact for participant intake and delivery of TAA benefits and services.

Staff at comprehensive One-Stop and affiliate sites should have sufficient information and training to recognize potential eligibility for various partner program(s). Several States have developed reference and training materials to assist with co-enrollment. TAA Case Management funds are also available for providing this training to improve case management.

Perceived Barrier #8: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) Are Not Eligible for Dislocated Worker

Discussion: ATAA/RTAA is a benefit for workers age SO or older who do not earn more than $SO,OOO annually in new employment. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA receive a wage supplement when the recipient accepts new employment at a lower wage. Because these participants must be employed, there is a perception that they do not meet the definition of WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker.

Solution(s): Co-Enrollment of TAA Participants in the Dislocated Worker Program is required, including for those who are recipients of ATAA/RTAA. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA meet the definition of Dislocated Worker; WIOA does not provide a deadline on the impact of a layoff. Furthermore, to be eligible for ATAA/RTAA, a worker must be earning no more than $SO,OOO per year and must be earning less than they were in adversely affected employment. The latter of these meets the definition of underemployed according to the WIOA statute, WIOA

regulations, and administrative guidance found in TEGL 19-16. The income level, in some areas, would also qualify a worker for services.

Perceived Barrier #9: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) Do Not Need the Benefits of Co-Enrollment

Discussion: ATAA/RTAA is a benefit for workers age SO or older who do not earn more than $SO,OOO annually in new employment. Recipients of ATAA/RTAA receive a wage supplement when the recipient accepts new employment at a lower wage. Because these participants must be employed, there is a perception that they do not need to receive other services and be co-enrolled, especially given funding limitations.

Solution(s): ATAA/RTAA participants gain from services in the DW Program. If they are co-enrolled in the DW program, they can begin receiving employment and case management services while waiting to be determined eligible for the TAA Program. They may also need supportive services through the DW Program that cannot be identified at the point of enrollment. Additionally, data shows that RTAA participants who receive at least one case management services are more likely to retain their employment than those who do not.

Perceived Barrier #10: Participants Who Only Receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) or Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance {ATAA) Do Not Want to be Co-Enrolled

Discussion: Depending on how co-enrollment is presented, a TAA participant may think that being co-enrolled is simply a burdensome paperwork exercise with no benefits. Also, TAA participants have often been identified as training averse; their default preference is always to go to work even if available employment is less than optimal either from a wage standpoint or in terms of sustainability.

Solution(s): Although older workers might be drawn to the immediacy of reemployment, it is likely they would benefit from the other services available under WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker and they must be made aware of them. Therefore, states must make every effort to present co-enrollment in a manner that is minimally burdensome for the participant and showcases the full scope of benefits, including in cases of ATAA/RTAA- only participation.

Future participant needs can be hard to predict. For example, a participant might need supportive services like transportation subsidies, childcare support, eyeglasses, etc. Co-enrollment guarantees the potential to address these types of needs.

Sec. 239 of TAARA 2015 requires "intake services." Therefore, states must provide intake services for the TAA Program, as well as an initial assessment, and must offer co-enrollment at that time, even to ATAA/RTAA-only participants. During these assessments, participants must be informed of the labor market conditions and all supportive services available (618.310(c)7). See also the reference below:

§ 618.335 Initial assessment of trade-affected workers.

(a) A State must carry out an initial assessment for each trade-affected worker as part of the intake process described in section 239(g) of the Act. When applicable, a State must use the

results of an assessment developed by a partner program, supplemented, if necessary, as described in § 618.330(e).

(b) The results of the initial assessment will determine the best service strategy to assist the trade-affected worker in obtaining reemployment and provide insight into which benefits and services under the TAA Program and partner programs would be most beneficial to the worker.

Perceived Barrier #11: Participants Who Are Currently Employed Do Not Meet the Eligibility Criteria for Dislocated Worker

Discussion: First and foremost, an adversely affected worker is, by definition, a dislocated worker. Trade has a lifetime entitlement to apply for benefits. This means that a worker may in fact be employed at the time that they apply for TAA. That employment does not necessarily mean that they are ineligible for TAA or WIOA Dislocated Worker.

Solution(s): There are several different benefits available under the TAA Program. Each has its own eligibility criteria that must be met. The most common of these two benefits are TRA (extended unemployment) and training. A worker eligible for UI or TRA is immediately eligible for WIOA DW. For training, there must be no likelihood of suitable employment available to the worker. Suitable employment is defined in the TAA regulations at 20 CFR 618.110 as " ... work of a substantially equal or higher skill level than the worker's past adversely affected employment, and wages for such work that are not less than 80 percent of the worker's average weekly wage. Part-time, temporary, short-term, or threatened employment is not suitable employment." Thus, for training to be approved under the TAA Program, a worker, for WIOA purposes, is underemployed. There is no barrier to WIOA DW co-enrollment.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

As new policies and procedures are developed, training for one-stop staff is completed. This training includes a dissemination of the policy and procedure and a review of the policy and procedure with Area managers. The one-stop staff must then sign off that they received, read, and understand the new policy and procedure. Any additional support needed from one-stop staff is available as requested or needed.

The TAA program is managed by a limited number of staff; however, information about the program will be included in staff on-boarding as well as during quarterly training sessions yearly. The TAA coordinator is available to consult with Area Operations Managers and Employment Services Specialist as needed. To help staff determine if a person is eligible for TAA eligibility screening questions are asked during intake/registration.

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. State's 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.[11] 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.

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

The DWDB has determined that Delaware will secure youth workforce investment activities through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. This process occurs annually or biennially, allowing for the potential extension of resulting agreements on a yearly basis. In the past, the state has sought comprehensive programs that either offer or connect young participants to all 14 required elements. Every proposal submitted in response to these RFPs undergoes evaluation by a team headed by a DWDB member, additional DWDB members, and relevant stakeholders or subject matter experts. The RFPs incorporate weighted criteria, establishing maximum point allocations, which the evaluation team uses to assign points to each proposal.
Historically, the criteria have encompassed various aspects:

- Demonstrated Ability
- Cost/Budget considerations
- Linkage Team (partnerships for referrals and businesses, and service delivery)
- Program Design assessment
- Outcomes evaluation

DWDB has established a Program Funding Policy which provides general guidance for funding administered by the board.

In the context of assessing providers' capacity to meet performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators of performance outlined in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA when awarding grants or contracts, each RFP explicitly specifies, "For all Providers with prior contracts with DWDB or DET, DET will furnish the Proposal Evaluation Team with historical performance data, which will factor into funding recommendations." This empowers DET to furnish the evaluation team with performance insights influencing funding decisions.

Furthermore, all resulting contracts undergo continuous monitoring of "real-time" performance against primary performance indicators. These indicators, defining success, include:

- Day 1, 30, 60, and 90 Outcomes: Assessing placement and sustained engagement in employment and/or post-secondary education.
- Credential Attainment
- Median Day 1 wage for employed individuals
- Measurable Skills Gains

This real-time performance data is systematically tracked, evaluated, and confirmed on a monthly basis in collaboration with providers.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING 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.

The State plays a pivotal role in supporting DWDB in achieving equitable outcomes for both in-school and out-of-school youth and has a robust structure in place to support and enhance youth programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Proposal review panels are comprised of board members and assisted and supported by DWDB staff and State Agency (DOL-DET) subject matter experts, offers recommendations on various crucial aspects. These include life skills training, expanding work-based learning opportunities, career exploration, credential attainment, high school or GED completion, and college or career readiness for graduating seniors.

1. Funding and resource allocation
2. Policy guidance and compliance
3. Technical Assistance
4. Partnership development
5. Identifying and scaling promising practices and new pilot programs
6. Data collection and analysis
7. Bridge the gap between education and industry needs

The Panel reports its recommendations to the full board at quarterly meetings, ensuring that these insights and proposed strategies are integrated into the broader state-level decision-making processes. This collaborative approach allows for comprehensive and informed policymaking.

DOL-DET organizes meetings with youth providers where discussions center on programs, successes, challenges, and practices. This interaction ensures a continuous feedback loop and enables the State to stay informed about ground-level realities and effective strategies implemented by service providers.

The State requires all youth providers to enter data into Delaware JobLink for each youth they work with. This data is used to track performance within each program and to identify any potential issues ahead of time. This data is shared with each provider monthly and any concerns are addressed at that time. Quarterly any performance issues affecting youth are addressed with the providers for correction prior to submission of final performance data.

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.

Youth programs are sought through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The RFP outlines that programs should offer youth a broad range of services starting at age 14. While not mandatory to directly provide all listed program elements, programs must ensure youth have access to each element for a comprehensive program. Proposals should specify which elements will be directly provided, by partners, through purchasing, or other means. Additionally, not all youth are required to receive every mandated program element; they should receive elements relevant to their education and employment goals as per their individual service strategy plans.

Successful providers must allocate 25% of the budget for work experience.

The State assist the workforce board in contract writing, monitoring, and program oversight by directly communicating with providers regarding performance. The State shares performance data covering the 14 required elements in WIOA Sec 129(C)(2) with the workforce board and track information through Delaware JobLink data entry, provider discussions, and on-site meetings.

Currently, monitoring staff review files containing service documentation, case notes, and the development and execution of Individual Service Strategy plans to ensure alignment and coherence. Providers input mandated elements into the case management and reporting system to aid monitoring.

Delaware is in the process of finalizing a strategic plan for Youth Registered Apprenticeship and developing an implementation plan. This plan aims to provide inclusive, industry-driven training to empower young individuals from diverse backgrounds, enhancing both their career prospects and Delaware's economy. By 2031, it seeks to become the leading earn-and-learn program in the state, fostering a resilient talent pipeline and addressing evolving workforce needs. Key values in the plan include diversity, equity, accessibility, innovation, affordability, and collaboration. Goals include reducing the average age of apprentices, increasing youth apprenticeship in non-traditional sectors. Strategic priorities include developing policies, aligning education systems, increasing awareness, building business cases, expanding intermediary sponsors, providing support for disengaged and underserved youth.

In addition to Youth Apprenticeships, Delaware aims to expand Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-registered Apprenticeship programs in non-traditional industries. Recent efforts include the Delaware Educator Apprenticeship Program established by House Bill 138, integrating the Registered Apprenticeship program as a pathway to educator qualification in Delaware's public school system.

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.

In School Youth:

1. Limitation: this barrier may be used for up to 5% of the total enrollment defined in the Agreement. Contractors shall manage this limitation during their enrollment process, and it will be monitored by the assigned Contract Specialist.
2. Definition: An individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment is a youth who has any of the following:
    a. Excessive school absences and/or chronic tardiness;
    b. Recipient of School/Department of Education issued disciplinary actions or violations;
    c. Failing grades in Math, English Language Arts, Science, or Social Studies in the current period, most recent completed school quarter, marking period, or appropriate reporting period;
    d. Demonstrated behaviors that indicate mental health/safety concerns that include treatment for gunshot wound, stabbing, blunt weapon injury, physical fight, suicidal ideation/attempt, self-inflicted injury, or clinical encounter that involves police;
    e. Individual who is a current or recovering drug and/or alcohol addict and is either been participating in or recently participated in a rehabilitation/recovery program;
    f. Enrolled or previously enrolled in an alternative school or detention center;
    g. Demonstrating Behaviors of Multiple Acute, Chronic or Trauma-Centered Stressors;
    h. Individual who has been part of or a member of a family with a child welfare investigation history;
    i. Resides in a Promise Community; or
    j. Individual whose parent/guardian is anyone of the following:
        i. currently or was previously incarcerated;
        ii. current or recovering drug and/or alcohol addict; or
        iii. has recently been treated for mental health issues

Out of School Youth

1. Limitation: this barrier can only be used for those youth who are also documented as low income. Contractors shall manage this limitation during their enrollment process, and it will be monitored by the assigned Contract Specialist.

2. Definition: An individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment a youth who has any of the following:

    a. Resides in a Promise Community;

    b. Poor work history, or no work history, or who has been fired from a job within the last six months prior to enrollment;

    c. Individual who has been part of or a member of a family with a child welfare investigation history;

    d. Demonstrated behaviors that indicate mental health/safety concerns that include treatment for gunshot wound, stabbing, blunt weapon injury, physical fight, suicidal ideation/attempt, self-inflicted injury, or clinical encounter that involves police;

    e. Individual who is a current or recovering drug and/or alcohol addict and is either be participating in or recently participated in a rehabilitation/recovery program;

    f. Previously enrolled in an alternative school or detention center;

    g. Demonstrating Behaviors of Multiple Acute, Chronic or Trauma-Centered Stressors;

    h. Meets the definition of Low-income; or

    i. Individual whose parent/guardian is anyone of the following:

        i. currently or was previously incarcerated;

        ii. current or recovering drug and/or alcohol addict; or has recently been treated for mental health issues

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 during the public comment period that represented a disagreement with the Plan.

The Delaware Department of Labor's (DOL) Division of Employment and Training (DOL/DET) is designated as the PACIA for the WIOA Title I (Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs) and Title III Employment Service Programs and shall be the Grant Recipient for funds allocated by the WIOA for the Title I and Title III Programs so identified.

The DOL Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DOL/DVR) and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division for the Visually Impaired are each designated as the PACIA for the WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) is designated as the PACIA for the Title II Adult and Family Literacy Programs, and for combined WIOA programs including the Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21st Century Act and the Prison Education Program.

Delaware makes substantial investments in comprehensive youth programs designed to implement long-term intervention strategies. These initiatives aim to assist both in-school and out-of-school youth facing barriers to secondary school completion, employment, and post-secondary enrollment. The primary goal is to ensure that these individuals achieve High School readiness for careers or college, obtain secondary credentials, or acquire certifications to kickstart their careers. These programs encompass a wide array of services (14 mandated elements) deeply rooted in case management. Delaware embraces inclusivity, ensuring that youth with disabilities are included in service delivery alongside other eligible youth.

During the summer of 2020, Delaware introduced state-funded summer youth programming interwoven with Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment funds. This targeted approach specifically addressed the needs of this demographic, providing additional support to ensure their success. Such initiatives often lay the groundwork for forging further connections and partnerships.

We strongly believe that a best practice involves investing in our community-based organizations (CBOs) to administer youth services, rather than solely focusing on service delivery within the confines of American Job Centers. CBOs possess the expertise to reach youth in their environments, effectively engage with them, leverage partnerships, and earn the trust of our young workforce. While these CBOs are encouraged and supported in utilizing the valuable resources provided by the workforce system, their primary focus remains on delivering services tailored to youth needs and achieving positive program outcomes. CBO's delivering youth services are held to WIOA performance measures and monitored by DET contracting staff. The State requires all youth providers to enter data into Delaware JobLink for each youth they work with. This data is used to track performance within each program and to identify any potential issues ahead of time. This data is shared with each provider monthly and any concerns are addressed at that time. Quarterly any performance issues affecting youth are addressed with the providers for correction prior to submission of final performance data.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Adult
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Dislocated Wo
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title I Youth
Delaware Department of Labor	WIOA Title III Wagner-Pey
Delaware Department of Labor	Trade Adjustment Assistan

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Labor	Jobs for Veterans State Gra
Delaware Department of Labor	Reemployment Services an
Delaware Department of Labor	DVR Title IV

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Education	Title II Adult Education and

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of Education	Career and Technical Educa

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	DVI

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	TANF
Delaware Health and Social Services	SNAP
Delaware Health and Social Services	Community Service Block G

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	Division of Aging Adults wi

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Health and Social Services	Office of Financial Empowe
Criminal Justice Council Authority	State Administrating Agenc
Department of HUD	Delaware State Housing Au

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of State	Division of Small Business
	Wilmington Job Corps

Delaware Agency	Program Role
Delaware Department of State	Division of Libraries
Telamon	NFJP
Wilmington Housing Authority	Youth Build
Newark Housing Authority	

Infrastructure Agreement Budget found in Appendix O.

The current MOU and IFA expires in 2028. We aim to foster improved collaboration, transparency, and efficiency within this crucial framework. Through streamlined communication channels, increased stakeholder engagement, and a focus on identifying common ground, we aspire to elevate the infrastructure agreement and reconciliation process to new levels of effectiveness. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment that encourages constructive dialogue, facilitates decision-making, and drives tangible progress in advancing our infrastructure agreement.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

Introduction: The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) will fund multiple types of programs throughout the year. These will include youth programs, occupational skills programs, post-secondary education programs, and targeted tier one and tier two programs. All programming must ultimately lead to employment or increase the likelihood of a person being employed. The DWDB will not fund enrichment programs or education programs that do not directly lead to employment. The primary driver of accessible training is the state's High Demand Occupation List, which is developed by the DWDB staff, with input from the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information (OOLMI), the core partners, and training providers. The DWDB intends to align occupational expenditures with the State's Strategic Plan. The DWDB, primarily in partnership with DOL Department of Education and Training (DET), allots funds through its contracting process, the Individual Training Account (ITA) process, and grants.

Funds Allocations: Initial allocation recommendations will go to the DWDB Proposal Review and Certification Committee and the DWDB Executive Committee, which will review DET recommended initial funding allotments. The board is free to accept or reject, in whole or in part, the recommendations. DET (and partners as appropriate) will build work experience funds into allocation projection.

General Guidance: The DWDB will adhere to Delaware's state procurement policy, which establishes competitive procurement procedures through a request for proposal (RFP) process. The DWDB and DET deliver youth services primarily by soliciting proposals through an RFP from providers for both In-School-Youth and Out-of-School-Youth programming. The DWDB may also solicit proposals for adult and dislocated worker programming. The contract may be a mix of Federal WIOA funds, state Blue Collar Funds, and other funds that may become available through resource alignment activities. Even though the DWDB usually issues an RFP in early January for most of its contract services, the DWDB may issue other RFPs throughout the year as needed or as funding is received. The DWDB intends that partners and representatives of different agencies contribute and "braid" funds whenever possible when developing RFPs.

The DWDB issues the following guidance:

- The DWDB staff develops the RFP process. All proposals received are put through a competitive process and reviewed by panel members (consisting of no less than three members, with one being a DWDB member). Panels have the discretion to fund proposals in whole, in part, or not at all. When funding programs, RFP panels will—to the greatest extent possible—fund programs in full and not divide limited funds between programs.

- The Consolidation Committee, which comprises each panel lead, must establish a priority list for funding programs should additional funds become available. The DWDB Executive Director and the DET Director will reallocate returned funds to programs who are meeting or exceeding performance measures. Returned funds will not be reallocated to programs not meeting their measures as outlined in current contracts. The DWDB envisions reallocations will be proportional between successful programs; however, the DWDB Executive Director and the DET Director have latitude to reallocate funds disproportionately if a provider has an urgent need. If monies other than returned funds become available, an additional RFP will be issued.

- No more than 50 percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be used to fund adult training program and to underwrite such other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.

- Year–to–Year RFP Process**.** The DWDB directs its staff to annually update "The Steps to RFP Success" process prior to the December Executive Committee meeting. DWDB staff will present any changes to the process.

Awarding Additional Points for RFP Submissions. DWDB may add additional categories worth additional points from time to time. DWDB and DET staff may make recommendations for additional points to be awarded based on economic conditions, high needs training areas, or other reasons. These points will be listed in the RFP.

Contract Guidance. This section issues guidance for all contracts.

To the extent possible, definitions provided in the federal law and regulations are the definitions for all sources of funds, including Blue Collar, except the definition of eligibility.

The DWDB may, at its discretion, establish local performance measures for specific populations (*e.g.*, re-entry, underserved youth, and adults) when using state dollars. The DWDB will ensure local performance measures are established in an RFP document as appropriate.

Prior to executing a contract, proposers without current contracts will provide a copy of their most recent tax return or a copy of a prepared financial statement signed by a third-party financial professional to establish their fiscal soundness and eligibility. In the event a financial statement is too complicated for a layman's analysis, a member of DWDB or a subject matter expert will evaluate the document.

All Providers will offer training which provides the client with the opportunity to earn a Diploma, or a GED, or Industry Recognized Certificate as defined in USDOL TEGL 10-16.

Basic language, digital literacy, durable skills, numeric skills training, when appropriate, will be provided concurrently with skills training. As part of the RFP, proposers will be asked to describe their plan to meet this requirement.

The DWDB requires programs with a combination of activities—programs combining classroom training including internship, work-based learning, or clinical opportunities. Participants shall be paid for all work experiences.

Contractors will provide retention services, as necessary, including during the day and evening to meet performance measures for 12 months following exit, except for Adult Blue Collar. Adult Blue-Collar exits will require six months of follow-up.

The proposal rating criteria will favor those proposals that demonstrate the ability to operate quality, cost-effective training programs that result in high placement rates, long-term job retention, and credential attainment. Criteria may be expanded from time-to-time to reflect Board priorities. Any changes will be reflected in the RFP.

DWDB will strive to provide training based on each county's needs and in reasonable proportion to the population. This is a goal, not a hard and fast rule; submissions by geographic area may not support this.

Program providers shall define their staff qualifications in the proposal for any position for which they are requesting funding.

Proposers will ensure clients use Delaware Job Link to find a job. This will include a current updated resume built in the Delaware Job Link system.

Blue Collar adult training contracts will be hybrid. The normal standard for the hybrid is to fund as a 60% Cost Reimbursement and a 40% Performance Based contract.

DET and core partners will ensure all work experience requirements are paid.

Specific Youth Contract Guidance: This section provides general guidance on all youth contractors/proposers. Reference 20 CRF part 681.410(a).

Youth programs will primarily be contracted through the competitive procurement process. Proposals will be solicited via an RFP for In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth programs and services focused on individuals with one or more barriers to employment to prepare for postsecondary training or education and employment. In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs may be funded with Blue Collar, WIOA funds or any additionally funding received by DWDB.

Youth proposers will identify the credential obtained when a program is successfully completed.

The Youth Committee will provide oversight for contracted youth programs on behalf of the board. Youth Committees may recommend policy direction to the DWDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth. Other tasks that a committee may take on are activities such as leveraging resources and coordinating services among schools, public programs and community-based organizations serving youth, recommending eligible youth service providers, providing on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs, and assisting with planning operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. A member of the Youth Committee will staff the youth RFP panels.

The program elements required under WIOA section 129(c)(2) and 20 CFR 681.410 and discussed further in TEGL 21-16 are:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention, and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
    - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
    - Pre-apprenticeship programs
    - Internships and job shadowing
    - On-the-job training opportunities
- Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local Board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123.
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
- Supportive services.
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.
- Financial literacy education.
- Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career-exploration services.

- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Potential providers must:

1.

a. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, and developmental needs of such participant, for identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants.

b. Develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to one or more of the indicators of performance that shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including in appropriate circumstances, nontraditional employment) and appropriate services for the participant considering the assessment conducted.

c. Proved preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.

d. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

e. Prepare clients for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.

f. Develop activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.

g. Create effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

h. Provide at least 25 percent of their allocation to provide paid work experience activities.

i. Funded youth providers are not required to directly provide all program elements. All funded providers are required to ensure youth have access to all program elements:

j. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

k. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.

l. Paid work experience that has as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:

m. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

n. pre-apprenticeship programs;

o. internships and job shadowing; and

p. on-the-job training opportunities.

q. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

r. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.

s. Supportive services.

t. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

u. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.

v. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

w. Financial literacy education.

x. Entrepreneurial skills training.

y. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

z. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

aa. Education offered concurrently with – and in the same context as – workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Specific Adult/Dislocated Worker Funding Guidance: Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will primarily be contracted through the competitive procurement process and through Individual Training accounts (ITA) vouchers via the ETPL.

The Adult/Dislocated Worker Committee will provide oversight for contracted adult programs on behalf of the board. The Proposal Review and Certification Committee (PRCC) will provide oversight for programs on the ETPL.

ITA General Rules: The DWDB-approved ITA process manual and policies will govern the steps for initial eligibility and subsequent renewal of providers seeking inclusion or maintaining their status on the Eligible Training Provider List.

The DWDB staff will annually update the ITA Manual in May for approval the Executive Committee or board each year.

American Job Centers, when appropriate, will assess career service applicants in reading and math skills.

American Job Center staff will determine and document eligibility for individuals involved in a career/training service.

Any local American Job Center office providing federal services that fails to achieve 85% of its goal in any year may be required to have a correction action plan.

Performance Measures: DWDB will only approve or renew ITA programs which meet or exceed Delaware's federally mandated performance measures. Performance measures are negotiated by members of DET and DWDB staff as well as board members. These negotiations are done every two years. For Credit programs at open enrollment degree granting institutions are exempt from the credential attainment requirement measure when applying for initial inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). For credit programs at degree granting institution on the ETPL will meet all performance measures when applying for subsequent renewal. Even so, the DWDB recognizes that some priority populations may require special considerations. The DWDB may at its discretion—on a case-by-case basis—allow providers serving targeted population some latitude during initial eligibility determination and subsequent renewal.

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 in Delaware are primarily administered through contracts and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Customer choice drives the selection process, primarily determined by the demand occupation list. Eligibility for funding is granted to occupations listed as in-demand. Among the training options, the eligible training provider list offers the broadest selection, encompassing hundreds of programs from a variety of providers, thus giving customers more choices.

Contracts tend to be more restrictive. Delaware's approach involves allocating State Blue Collar funding to contract programs, resulting in fewer programs funded to accommodate more students and/or cycles. The DWDB and DOL-DET issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs), typically in early winter, exclusively soliciting programs from the demand occupation list. Across Delaware's counties, it is typically observed that approximately 60 percent of funding for programs is allocated to New Castle County, 20 percent to Kent County, and 20 percent to Sussex County. Some programs do identify as a statewide program. While not an absolute rule, the DWDB notes that the majority of training programs seeking funding are located within New Castle County. According to Lightcast, these allocations align with the overall population distribution of New Castle County at around 63%, Kent County at 16%, and Sussex County at 20%, as well as the working population distribution for the state, with New Castle County at 56%, Kent County at 18%, and Sussex County at 26%.

State training dollars, such as Learning for Careers or Workforce Development (also know as TRAIN) or grant programs, if applied for and received, often offer greater flexibility compared to traditional programs. They can cater to specific needs, such as helping a dislocated worker return to work, which might not benefit the broader job-seeking population.

DWDB relies on occupation data provided by Delaware's Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information. Collaborating with the Delaware Department of Education (CTE Office) and the state's trade schools, the data is refined to establish an aligned list of approved pathways and occupations. This demand occupation list, approved by the DWDB, is then published, and used to include or renew ITA providers in Delaware Job Link. These occupations and providers are presented to clients as potential training opportunities.

Providers aiming to be initial or renewed providers must meet performance measures and offer training in a demand occupation. The DWDB establishes funding guidelines on an annual basis, shaping training and spending priorities. Both contract providers and ITA providers adhere to the demand occupation list, with the DWDB funding guidelines further refining board priorities and contract guidance.

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.

DWDB fulfills the functions of a Local board by:

- Developing and submitting a plan to the Governor that incorporates the entire state.
- Conducting workforce research and regional labor market analysis through our partnership with Office of Market Labor Information to make informed funding decisions, create strategies for investments, and understand regional labor markets.
- Convening, brokering, and leveraging workforce development system stakeholders through quarterly board meetings, committee meetings, and monthly partner leadership and countywide one-stop partner meetings facilitated by the One-Stop Operator.
- Career Pathways development and coordination with education providers in partnership with secondary and post-secondary partners throughout the state. This includes the partnership with Delaware Department of Education on various projects, including Credential of Value and Pathways. The Secretary of Delaware’s Department of Education and the president of Delaware Technical Community College hold positions as board members. Delaware also submits a Combined State Plan which include Career and Technical Education.
- Leading employer engagement efforts through our Business Liaisons and the Business Service team under Department of Employment and Training.
- Lead efforts to provide proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers.
- Develop strategies for using technology to maximize accessibility and effectiveness or workforce system.
- Providing programmatic, strategic, and operational oversight for youth activities, employment and training activities, and one-stop delivery system. Ensure the appropriate use and management of funds. DWDB develops yearly funding guidelines that are approved at the October full board meeting. The guidelines not only establish a

baseline of the service delivery for Delaware's publicly funded workforce system, but also serve as an annual policy document. The Funding Guidelines prioritize workforce investment for a Program Year (July through June). This document prescribes the use of both State and Federal funds in relation to the publicly funded workforce system and can segregate funds for special projects.

- Negotiation of performance measures. Our Performance Measure committee works with the DET and DWDB staff during performance negotiations.
- Selection of the operators and providers. The DWDB selects a One-Stop Operator through a competitive process. Providers are selected in two ways, through a competitive RFP process (targeting youth and adult occupational skills contracts) and through the ETPL (targeting adult and dislocated worker).
- The DWDB develops the state's strategic and operational vision through our Strategic Planning Committee, which is then approved by the Governor. The DWDB then assists in achieving of the vision and goals through committee work.
- DWDB recognizes the importance of budget development and its impact on workforce operations. While we have not actively participated in this process in the past, we are committed to starting now. Moving forward, we will contribute our insights, analysis, and recommendations to ensure effective allocation of resources and alignment with organizational goals and priorities.
- DWDB certifies the four American Job Centers to make sure the facilities are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals with disabilities. The board is fortunate to have both the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Secretary of Health and Social Services serve as board members for subject matter expertise.
- DWDB staff works collaboratively with the one-stop delivery partners to establish the MOUs and IFA, maximizing and continuing to improve quality of services, customer satisfaction, and effectiveness of services provided.

From a Title II perspective coordination occurs:

1. Title II RFP questions are shared with the DWDB Executive Director for recommendations prior to release of the RFP.
2. Title II RFP contains DOL job market information and DWDB State Plan as references for applicants to use in responding to the RFP.
3. Title II applicant responses regarding DWDB are shared with the DWDB Executive Director for review prior to funding of any Title II providers.
4. Title II is an active member of the WIOA Leadership Team that focuses on aligning processes of WIOA partners.
5. Delaware Secretary of Education, which administers Title II, is a board member. Department of Education Adult and Prison Education is invited to DWDB meetings though not a board member. Delaware Technical Community College is a board member and a provider of Title II adult education and skills development programs.

6. Title II and DOL Apprenticeship/Pre-apprenticeship have collaborated on providing blended funding for integrated education and training programs.
7. Title II programs and state administration are active members of the Adult Career Pathways initiative, which is a DWDB focus.
8. Title II state staff have served as reviewers for DOL applications.
9. Title II and DOL/DWDB are collaborating on reentry employment supports for returning justice involved citizens.

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.

The DWDB uses a single MOU with its partners. See Appendix for copies of the MOU.

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; 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.

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	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	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 monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	79.3
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	76.3
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8000.0
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the

plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	72.7
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	76.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	10500.0
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0
Measurable Skill Gains	42.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	67.5
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	74.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	2900.0
Credential Attainment Rate	75.7
Measurable Skill Gains	63.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

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 2026 and 2027.

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.

Staffing of Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange Services

Delaware staffs the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act primarily through State merit staff employees. Employment Services Specialists (ESS) I–III are merit system employees who are trained and experienced in delivering Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services consistent with federal requirements. Labor exchange services are delivered in person, virtually, and by phone to ensure broad accessibility and continuity of service statewide. Services include basic career services such as registration in Delaware JobLink, resume development, application assistance and submission, job search assistance, and job referral, as well as more individualized career services and case management when appropriate.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

Consistent with TEGL 07-25, Delaware's merit-staffed model supports full integration of Wagner-Peyser services within the American Job Center (AJC) system. State merit ESS staff coordinate with WIOA core program staff, Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff, and other required partners to ensure seamless service delivery to job seekers and employers. This integrated structure ensures that UI beneficiaries and other job seekers receive coordinated reemployment services regardless of program entry point, while maintaining the distinct roles required under federal law.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

Delaware's staffing approach prioritizes responsive and individualized service delivery. Merit staff assess customer needs and provide services tailored to employment goals, skill levels, and barriers to employment. By offering multiple service modalities—in-person, virtual, and telephonic—the State ensures customers can access services in a manner that meets their needs, including those in rural areas or with transportation barriers.

3. Access and Equity

State merit staff deliver services equitably to all customers, including Unemployment Insurance claimants, veterans, individuals with barriers to employment, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). Delaware remains committed to ensuring that priority populations receive services consistent with federal requirements and that labor exchange services are accessible statewide. Staff are trained to provide services in compliance with nondiscrimination requirements and to ensure meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency or disabilities.

4. Accountability and Merit Staffing Compliance

In alignment with TEN 10-23 and TEN 10-23, Change 1, Delaware is reviewing staffing and organizational structures to ensure compliance with the Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Final Rule and federal merit staffing requirements. Merit staff will continue delivering Wagner-Peyser services, and dedicated outreach staff will be assigned to the MSFW program to conduct ongoing, field-based outreach. Staffing levels, funding, and subrecipient arrangements are being evaluated, with adjustments made as needed to maintain compliance. The State will engage the U.S. Department of Labor for technical assistance as needed to support full implementation and sustained compliance by January 21, 2027.

5. Continuous Improvement and Strategic Workforce Planning

Delaware is committed to ongoing evaluation of staffing capacity, service delivery effectiveness, and alignment with federal requirements. Through regular operational reviews, leadership coordination, and strategic workforce planning, the State will ensure that Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services remain integrated, compliant, and responsive to labor market needs. Adjustments to staffing, funding, or service models will be made as necessary to strengthen service quality, maintain accountability, and ensure continued alignment with federal guidance.

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

All staff utilize professional development through Delaware Learning Center. This training is available for a variety of different training courses: such as time management, customer service, and more. During the on-boarding process staff are trained in the services of Wagner-Peyser, RESEA, WIOA, TAA, and all core partner programs. Annual staff training on all programs are conducted to review, refresh and update each quarter which can lead to improving productivity and performance making staff more efficient and effective in delivering services to jobseekers and employers. Quarterly training sessions will ensure that DET has company-wide training to help standardize work processes.

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

Strategies to Support Cross-Program Training, Awareness, and UI Eligibility Identification

Delaware has implemented coordinated strategies to promote cross-program training, awareness, and collaboration among Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES), WIOA core programs, and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. These strategies ensure integrated service delivery, accurate identification of UI eligibility issues, proper referral for adjudication, and consistent statewide implementation.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

Delaware's workforce system supports alignment across core programs through structured communication and shared training. Monthly One-Stop meetings are conducted for area managers to promote awareness, strengthen collaboration among partners, and ensure consistent policy implementation across programs. Each AJC also conducts monthly staff meetings to reinforce cross-program knowledge, review operational updates, and support coordinated service delivery. Time-sensitive updates occurring between meetings are distributed via email to maintain consistency and responsiveness statewide. All workforce policies include clearly defined procedures to ensure uniform and precise service delivery, supporting system integration and reducing service variability.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

During onboarding, ES and WIOA staff receive training on Wagner-Peyser services, RESEA, WIOA programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and core partner programs, including foundational instruction on Unemployment Insurance processes and claimant responsibilities.

AJC staff are trained to:

- Recognize potential UI eligibility concerns during customer interactions;
- Provide general guidance on claimant responsibilities;
- Assist claimants with filing electronic UI claims when appropriate; and
- Refer claim-specific eligibility or adjudication issues to UI merit staff.

This structured approach ensures customers receive timely assistance while maintaining program integrity.

3. Access and Equity

Dedicated State merit UI staff are present in each AJC to assist claimants with filing claims and to respond to claim-specific questions beyond the scope of ES and WIOA staff. This co-located model promotes accessibility and ensures that UI beneficiaries can receive coordinated workforce and UI assistance in one location. By cross-training workforce staff and maintaining accessible UI expertise within AJCs, Delaware promotes equitable access to accurate information and services for all customers.

4. Accountability and Proper Adjudication Authority

While ES and WIOA staff provide general information and claim filing assistance, UI eligibility determinations and adjudication remain the responsibility of State merit UI staff. When potential eligibility issues are identified, claimants are referred directly to UI staff to ensure proper handling under established UI procedures. This clear delineation of roles supports

federal merit staffing requirements, safeguards program integrity, and ensures compliance with applicable regulations.

5. Continuous Improvement and System Alignment

The Division of Employment and Training (DET) and the UI Division collaborate regularly to evaluate service overlap, identify operational improvements, and strengthen coordination strategies. Through recurring meetings, shared policy updates, and inter-division communication, Delaware continuously refines training, referral processes, and boundary clarification. This ongoing coordination ensures the workforce system remains responsive, aligned, and compliant while enhancing service delivery to job seekers and employers.

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

At each American Job Center (AJC), there is an online claim filing section available on the website for clients' convenience. Moreover, there is dedicated Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff present at every AJC to offer on-site assistance and support to individuals filing claims.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Delaware is committed to delivering reemployment assistance through a coordinated, customer-centered workforce system aligned with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser requirements. The State's strategy integrates Unemployment Insurance (UI) and workforce services to promote rapid reemployment, equitable access, and system accountability.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

Delaware integrates UI and AJC services to ensure seamless transitions from unemployment to reemployment. Key strategies include:

- Screening the UI claimant pool to identify individuals most likely to exhaust benefits and prioritizing them for reemployment services.
- Providing direct referrals to AJC Services Orientation (video or workshop format).
- Requiring UI claimants subject to work search requirements to register in Delaware JobLink.
- Coordinating referrals between UI, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and Trade programs to ensure comprehensive service delivery.

Dislocated workers impacted by foreign trade are identified and connected to appropriate employment and case management services to ensure alignment with available program benefits.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

Delaware's reemployment strategy emphasizes individualized and responsive services tailored to customer needs. After orientation, job seekers are referred to appropriate services, including:

- Basic career services (job search assistance, resume development, application assistance)
- Individualized career services (skills assessments, Individual Employment Plans, career counseling)
- Workshops covering job search strategies, interview preparation, career planning, and account creation in Delaware JobLink
- Mock interviews and guided job search activities
- Access to training services and supportive services when appropriate

AJC staff work directly with customers to assess skills, identify employment goals, and develop individualized reemployment plans that support rapid labor market attachment.

3. Access and Equity

Reemployment services are delivered through multiple modalities, including in-person, virtual, and workshop-based formats, ensuring broad accessibility for UI claimants and other unemployed individuals. Delaware ensures equitable access to services for priority populations, including dislocated workers, individuals impacted by foreign trade, and individuals with barriers to employment. Customers are informed of available training and education opportunities, supportive services, and partner programs to reduce barriers to reemployment.

4. Accountability and Program Integrity

UI claimants required to seek work are directed to register in Delaware JobLink and engage in documented reemployment activities consistent with program requirements. Screening processes and targeted referrals ensure that individuals at higher risk of benefit exhaustion receive early intervention services. Clear coordination between UI and workforce staff ensures that reemployment services are delivered in alignment with federal guidance while maintaining appropriate program boundaries and documentation standards.

5. Continuous Improvement and System Alignment

Delaware regularly evaluates reemployment strategies to strengthen alignment between UI and workforce programs. Through ongoing collaboration across divisions, the State assesses claimant engagement, service utilization, and outcomes to refine referral processes and improve service effectiveness. This continuous improvement approach ensures that Delaware's reemployment strategy remains responsive to labor market conditions, customer needs, and federal guidance while advancing rapid reemployment and long-term workforce attachment.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

Delaware coordinates and delivers labor exchange services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act through an integrated, merit-staffed

workforce system designed to promote rapid reemployment, equitable access, and program accountability.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

All UI claimants are required to register in the State's labor exchange system, Delaware JobLink (DJL), and create a resume as part of their work search requirements. Registration ensures claimants are connected to Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services and provides a seamless entry point into the broader AJC system.

Through DJL, claimants can:

- Search and apply for job openings
- Access labor market and occupational information
- Receive automated job alerts aligned with their skills and resume
- Make their resumes viewable to registered employers
- Access information on local education providers and training programs

UI claimants are also informed of available Wagner-Peyser services and other AJC partner programs to ensure coordinated workforce service delivery.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

Delaware provides both self-service and staff-assisted labor exchange services to meet the varying needs of UI claimants.

Self-service resources at AJCs include access to computers, phones, copiers, and fax machines to support job search activities and resume development within DJL.

Staff-assisted services include:

- Job search workshops
- Assistance navigating the DJL system
- Individualized labor market information
- Resume review and job matching assistance
- Referrals to veteran services
- Referrals to education, training, and supportive services

This tiered service model ensures that claimants can receive assistance at a level appropriate to their needs and supports individualized reemployment pathways.

3. Access and Equity

Labor exchange services are accessible both online and in-person to ensure equitable access statewide. By requiring registration in DJL while also providing staff assistance at AJCs, Delaware ensures claimants with varying levels of digital literacy or access to technology can fully participate in required work search activities. Priority populations, including veterans and

individuals with barriers to employment, are connected to specialized services and partner programs consistent with federal requirements.

4. Accountability and Program Integrity

Requiring UI claimants to register in DJL and maintain an active resume supports compliance with work search requirements and strengthens alignment between UI and Wagner-Peyser programs. Documentation within the labor exchange system enhances transparency and allows for appropriate monitoring of claimant engagement. Clear coordination between UI and workforce staff ensures that claimants receive accurate information regarding work search expectations while maintaining proper program boundaries and merit staff responsibilities.

5. Continuous Improvement and System Alignment

Delaware regularly evaluates labor exchange processes, claimant engagement strategies, and service utilization data to improve effectiveness and responsiveness. Ongoing coordination between UI and workforce leadership supports refinement of referral processes, system functionality, and customer outreach strategies. Through continuous assessment and alignment with federal guidance, Delaware ensures labor exchange services remain integrated, accessible, and responsive to labor market conditions and claimant needs.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

According to Delaware Regulations Section 3315, Title 19, Delaware Code Eligibility for Benefits, requires that a person register to work with the Division of Employment and Training in order to be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. If required to register with the Division of Employment and Training the claimant must register within three business days of filing a UI claim and keep this registration active while collecting UI benefits.

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

Delaware administers the work test for unemployment compensation claimants in accordance with **Section 3315, Title 19, Delaware Code**, and federal guidance under Wagner-Peyser and WIOA. The State's approach integrates eligibility assessments with job finding and placement services to promote rapid reemployment, equitable access, and system accountability.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

All UI claimants are required to register to work as a condition of eligibility by completing demographic information and building a resume in Delaware JobLink (DJL) within three business days of filing a claim, unless good cause is established. Exceptions may include union members in good standing or claimants with a definite return-to-work date. Claimants are randomly selected for the **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program**, which provides intensive career services to those receiving UI benefits. RESEA integrates labor exchange and workforce services, offering a coordinated pathway to reemployment while maintaining alignment between DET and UI programs.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

The RESEA program provides claimants with individualized reemployment support tailored to their skills and employment needs. Services include:

- Validation of work search activities
- Career guidance and planning
- Access to job search tools, workshops, and career resources
- Referral to education, training, and supportive services as needed

Claimants receive email or mailed notifications regarding RESEA appointments and are provided opportunities to reschedule if an initial appointment is missed. This approach ensures claimants have multiple chances to engage with services and reenter the workforce successfully.

3. Access and Equity

Delaware ensures that RESEA services and labor exchange resources are accessible to all claimants. Virtual and in-person options allow for flexible participation, and staff provide assistance for claimants with barriers to technology, limited English proficiency, or other challenges. By combining mandatory registration in DJL with individualized RESEA support, Delaware promotes equitable access to both self-service and staff-assisted reemployment services.

4. Accountability and Proper Adjudication

Claimants who fail to attend multiple RESEA appointments without good cause are referred to UI merit staff for adjudication, which may result in a denial of benefits. This process maintains program integrity and ensures compliance with state and federal regulations, while clearly defining roles between DET workforce staff and UI adjudicators. Structured validation of work search activities and RESEA participation reinforces accountability for both the State and the claimant.

5. Continuous Improvement and System Alignment

Delaware continually evaluates the effectiveness of RESEA and work test administration through data monitoring, outcome tracking, and inter-divisional collaboration. Feedback and performance metrics are used to refine services, improve customer engagement, and strengthen alignment between workforce programs and UI services. Ongoing assessment ensures that the State's administration of the work test remains responsive to labor market needs, claimant participation, and federal guidance, supporting timely reemployment for UI claimants.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Delaware provides UI claimants with coordinated access to education and training resources to support rapid reemployment, skill development, and long-term labor market competitiveness. These strategies are designed to integrate workforce and training services, promote equitable access, maintain program accountability, and support continuous system improvement.

1. Integrated Service Delivery

The Division of Employment and Training (DET) ensures that UI claimants receive information on training opportunities, work search requirements, and the features and benefits of registering in Delaware JobLink (DJL). Claimants are referred to their local AJC to access employment and training services under WIOA and other partner programs. Mandatory reemployment workshops serve as both an introduction to Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title III services and an entry point for referral to WIOA Title I and other partner programs. This collaborative approach ensures seamless coordination across programs and facilitates integrated service delivery within AJCs.

2. Customer-Centered Service Design

AJC staff provide individualized guidance and support to help UI claimants identify education or training opportunities that align with their career goals. Services include:

- Assistance with applying for training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
- Guidance on participation in WIOA Title I, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and other authorized programs
- Information on career pathways, skills enhancement, and occupational training opportunities

This approach ensures that services are tailored to each claimant's needs and designed to improve employability and labor market outcomes.

3. Access and Equity

Delaware promotes equitable access to training and education programs by providing in-person and virtual support to UI claimants. Priority populations, including dislocated workers, veterans, and individuals with barriers to employment, receive targeted assistance to access workforce, training, and supportive services. By offering information, guidance, and application assistance directly at AJCs, Delaware ensures that all claimants have meaningful opportunities to pursue skills development and training while receiving UI benefits.

4. Accountability and Program Integrity

All referrals and applications for training services are documented in Delaware JobLink and within AJC case management systems. Staff ensure that training programs meet eligibility requirements under WIOA, TAA, or other authorized funding sources. This documentation and adherence to federal eligibility criteria support accountability, program integrity, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

5. Continuous Improvement and System Alignment

DET and AJCs continuously evaluate training referral processes, claimant engagement, and program outcomes to identify opportunities for improvement. Feedback from staff and participants, along with performance metrics, is used to refine referral procedures, enhance access to training, and align workforce programs with current labor market demands. Ongoing monitoring ensures that UI claimants have timely access to the education and training resources needed to improve employment outcomes and advance career pathways.

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 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.

Agriculture is one of the top 5 economic industries in the State and forecasted to continue to be strong per our Departments of Agriculture and Labor. Agriculture growers continue to struggle with finding US workers and are becoming more dependent upon foreign workers. More Delaware farmers are converting to H2-A with only two farms currently using US workers. Delaware has two colleges and universities that have agriculture programs -University of Delaware and Delaware State University with multiple educational offerings within the agriculture/agriscience fields. The SWA will review this more closely to assess the Agricultural outlook throughout this AOP reporting period.

Delaware fruit and vegetable acreage varies each year but ranges from 45,000 to 55,000 acres statewide. Approximately 1/3 of the acreage goes to the fresh market and 2/3 of the acreage is processed by freezing, canning, or pickling.

Vegetables add significant value to Delaware's agricultural economy: $50 to $55 million to vegetable farmers, about ¼ of all crop income in the state. This is multiplied to even greater value with processing or packing. Our processing vegetable industry is the largest in the Mid-Atlantic. Delaware has 28,000-45,000 acres compared to Maryland (18,000 acres), New Jersey (8,300 acres), Virginia (2,400 acres), and Pennsylvania (11,000 acres). There are several processing plants located in Delaware and nearby states that freeze canned peas, lima beans, snap beans, and sweet corn including Hanover, Seabrook, Pict sweet, Friels, and J G Townsend Companies. Currently large amounts of pickling cucumbers and smaller amounts of peppers from Delaware growers go to B&G and Vlasic brands. Vlasic purchases our pickles to processed in North Carolina, Michigan, and other locations. B&G takes Delaware pickles to their processing plant just over the state line in Maryland. Smaller acreages of other vegetables and fruits from Delaware are also processed including spinach, greens, southern peas, and apples. Lima beans are the most important processing crop.

More acreage of lima beans are grown in Delaware than any other place in the world. There is an average of 12,000 of acres a year but it can get up to 25,000 acres in any given year. Vegetables and fruits grown for the fresh market include watermelons, cantaloupes, sweet corn, cabbage, green beans, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, peaches, apples, and strawberries. Delaware is a major watermelon producing region and there are approximately 3000 acres in the state. Sweet corn for fresh corn on the cob is grown on over 3500 acres.

The top five labor intensive core crops in Delaware that use migrant workers are: watermelon, cabbage, asparagus, apples, and pumpkins. More farms are reverting to the use of H2-A migrant

farmworkers to harvest their crops. Watermelon farms also continue to access personnel through licensed brokers and recruiters during the peak season. The peak season annually for harvesting and related labor are from June through September. While there is some local employment interest, most farmers are utilizing migrant workers to manage their farms. These farms are primarily located in the Kent and Sussex counties in Delaware.

The SWA confirms that our assessment is contrived from data within our State's Department of Agriculture, Labor, and Farm Associations, WIOA partners that serve migrant workers, i.e., Department of Education, the local and U.S Departments of Agriculture and Labor. We are working to receive additional data from the NFJP Grantee, Telamon during the plan period and will adjust to accommodate those needs if required.

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

Delaware fruit and vegetable acreage varies each year but ranges from 45,000 to 55,000 acres. Approximately 1/3 of the acreage goes to the fresh market and 2/3 of the acreage is processed by freezing, canning, or pickling.

Vegetables add significant value to Delaware's agricultural economy: $50 to $55 million to vegetable farmers, about ¼ of all crop income in the state. This is multiplied to even greater value with processing or packing. Our processing vegetable industry is the largest in the Mid-Atlantic. Delaware has 28,000-45,000 acres compared to Maryland (18,000 acres), New Jersey (8,300 acres), Virginia (2,400 acres), and Pennsylvania (11,000 acres). There are several processing plants located in Delaware and nearby states that freeze canned peas, lima beans, snap beans, and sweet corn including Hanover, Seabrook, Pictsweet, Friels, and J G Townsend Companies. Currently large amounts of pickling cucumbers and smaller amounts of peppers from Delaware growers go to B&G and Vlasic brands. Vlasic purchases our pickles to processed in North Carolina, Michigan, and other locations. B&G takes Delaware pickles to their processing plant just over the state line in Maryland. Smaller acreages of other vegetables and fruits from Delaware are also processed including spinach, greens, southern peas, and apples. Lima beans are the most important processing crop.

More acreage of lima beans are grown in Delaware than any other place in the world. There is an average of 12,000 of acres a year but it can get up to 25,000 acres in any given year. Vegetables and fruits grown for the fresh market include watermelons, cantaloupes, sweet corn, cabbage, green beans, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, peaches, apples, and strawberries. Delaware is a major watermelon producing region and there are approximately 3000 acres in the state. Sweet corn for fresh corn on the cob is grown on over 3500 acres.

The top five labor intensive core crops in Delaware that use migrant workers are: watermelon, cabbage, asparagus, apples, and pumpkins. More farms are reverting to the use of H2-A migrant farmworkers to harvest their crops. Watermelon farms also continue to access personnel

through licensed brokers and recruiters during the peak season. The peak season annually for harvesting and related labor are from June through September. While there is some local employment interest, most farmers are utilizing migrant workers to manage their farms. These farms are primarily located in the Kent and Sussex counties in Delaware.

Agriculture is one of the top 5 economic industries in the State and forecasted to continue to be strong per our Department of Agriculture and USDA. Agriculture growers continue to struggle with finding US workers and are becoming more dependent upon foreign workers.More Delaware farmers are converting to H2-A with only three farms currently using US workers. Delaware has two colleges and universities that have agriculture programs -University of Delaware and Delaware State University with multiple educational offerings within the agriculture/agriscience fields. The SWA will review this more closely to assess the Agricultural outlook throughout this AOP reporting period.

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

During Delaware's peak farm season, approximately 700-900 migrant workers come to Delaware from South Africa, Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. The core language used is Spanish from Latin American countries and Puerto Rico. Some workers are bilingual and can speak English. During the non-peak season, we anticipate approximately 35-50 migrant workers will be in the state. There is one year-round mushroom farm in the state. As farmworkers present needing supportive services, they are referred to local agencies in the community and WIOA partners in all American Job Centers that are geographically convenient. Most use the Dover and Georgetown AJC's. Those needs and services include but are not limited to, food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and employment and training services.

The SWA confirms that our assessment is contrived from data within our State's Agriculture Department and Farm Associations, WIOA partners that serve migrant workers,i.e., Department of Education, the local and U.S Department of Labor.

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:

The Senior Administrator oversees the SWA's Migrant Outreach Program. To further enhance its outreach efforts, the SWA utilizes the Wagner Peyser Flexibility Rule (TEN 13-19, issued January 13,2020) to fund and hire a Contractual position that conducts full time outreach during the peak season and highest MSFW activity (June -September at 37.5 hours per week for 150

hours per month) and part time during the non-peak season of at least 20 hours per week for 80 hours per month). This position is bilingual and has experience with migrant populations. The State has identified and has hired a full time Migrant Outreach Worker beginning 5/28/24.This position will work 37.5 hours per week statewide. Per the Wagner Peyser flexibility Rule, the state is employing this position contractually. The state plans to establish and request a merit position to perform this function within the next budget cycle. The Migrant Outreach Worker will join the FLC coordinator as part of the Migrant Outreach Team. This approach ensures the SWA has full coverage and that at no time will migrant outreach not be performed in the state.

This is a re-hire who previously performed the job duties and has established relationships with many stakeholders statewide. This position serves as the primary Migrant Outreach Worker and along with the Foreign Labor Coordinator serves as part of the Migrant Outreach Worker Team. Delaware has three geographical counties with migrant concentration in two of those counties, Kent, and Sussex. To preserve safety of assigned staff, migrant outreach shall be conducted by a two-person team and/or with cooperating agency personnel providing services. The SWA'S model shall comply with the required federal statue for Migrant outreach.

The SWA's goal is to continue to outreach at least 500 -600 migrants in the state annually. The Migrant Outreach Worker Team shall continue to conduct outreach to MSFWs to provide job services information, including offers of assistance for the full range of employment services available at the local office, specific employment opportunities currently available, information on the Employment Service Complaint System, and a basic summary of farmworker rights related to terms and conditions of employment. Outreach occurs at farms at the beginning of the Peak Season and coordinated at the sites of community-based agencies and partners where services are provided to MSFWs throughout the farming season. The state is and will continue to conduct outreach separately to locate and identify migrant workers traditionally not reached at the American Job Centers or in routine occurrences by working with community-based partners to provide specific and direct services to migrant workers. The SMA works closely with and serves as the back up to the Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator. Both personnel are cross trained in core program functions, federal guidance requirements and reporting. Per section 2 above the Outreach team shall conduct outreach to MSFWs to provide employment and training services, including offers of assistance for the full range of employment services available at the local office, specific employment opportunities currently available, information on the Job Service complaint system, and a basic summary of farmworker rights related to terms and conditions of employment. Per our MOU with the NFJP Grantee, the SWA shall coordinate outreach with the WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantees (Telamon or grantee) as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups whenever possible. The state is and will continue to conduct outreach separately to locate and identify migrant workers traditionally not reached at the One-Stop sites or in routine occurrences by working with community-based partners to provide specific and direct services to migrant workers.

The Migrant outreach Worker gains valuable experience and support by participating in migrant educational conferences, webinars, forums and learning opportunities as presented to support and strengthen knowledge needed for the MSFW program. These opportunities include but are not limited to the annual DOL Convening, (DOL provider network invitees), and other related conferences that shall be determined as opportunities present during this plan term. This includes Partner AJC One Stop Meetings held in all three (3) counties with diverse attendees from the education, health, criminal justice, Business Services Representative team

that work with Delaware employers and representatives from the non-profit and private sectors, the NFJP representative (Telamon) and with representatives from the AJC in each county. These meetings are convened by the DOL One Stop Operator. The SMA, and Senior Administrator also along with the FLC Coordinator, Migrant Outreach Worker attend these meetings. The SWA representatives provide information about career and supportive services, the availability of referrals to employment services and training, as well as specific employment opportunities, the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E.)

The Delaware SWA has a working alliance with the National Farmworker Jobs Program Grantee, Telamon, to provide supportive services, emergency housing and related employment services to the migrant seasonal farmworkers during their tenure in Delaware. The Outreach Team members provide this information in some cases during field visits, the Outreach worker may reissue the contact information to the workers for awareness and helps to facilitate direct contact, upon request, for MSFWs and/or the agricultural growers. The SWA, through its Senior Administrator, will continue to ensure regular meetings and information/resource sharing and reporting continue between the SWA, and Telamon representatives to support and further strengthen this partnership. Per our MOU with the NFJP Grantee, (Telamon) that is further defined and supports our working relationship to provide comprehensive employment services to migrants. Routinely, the SMA provides technical assistance as the subject matter expert to peers in collaborating agencies on AJC services (i.e., availability of training and other resources, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities). Additional outreach efforts are conducted and coordinated by direct contact with and through MSFW partner services:

- Visiting community groups and organizations, church groups, migrant school recruiters, and service agencies to exercise all possible efforts to contact MSFWs.
- Providing copies of the bilingual "Service to Farm Workers" pamphlet.
- Attending monthly meetings with other partner services, as necessary. The SWA thinks there are sufficient outreach resources in the state. Our resources include but are not limited to the following agencies and organizations that provide direct resource to migrants:
- La Esperanza, provides outreach and supportive services to include referral to local health services, legal services, childcare, etc.
- La Red provides direct medical services.
- Telamon (NFJP Grantee) provides onsite supportive services, health information and information on available medical services, emergency housing and employment services to MSFW's.
- Westside Family Healthcare provides health information and direct medica services.
- Bay Health Medical Center - Full-Service Healthcare center
- Kent/Sussex County Counseling -Mental Health services
- Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition

- Beebe Health Services -Full-service healthcare center
- Christiana Hospital and Healthcare services/Urgent Care Clinics
- Delaware Department of Education - Migrant Education Program
- Migrant Clinicians Network
- LULAC -League of United Latin American Citizens
- Latin American Community Center
- Local goods and services employers-i.e., laundromats, bodegas, restaurants, cleaning services and food trucks
- The Hispanic and African and Caribbean Affairs Commissions members are appointed by the State's Governor to promote awareness, advocate on behalf of and to aid migrants in Delaware. There are also various farmworker advocacy groups and churches statewide.

The State has identified and has hired a full time Migrant Outreach Worker beginning 5/28/24.This position will work 37.5 hours per week statewide. Per the Wagner Peyser flexibility Rule, the state is employing this position contractually. The state plans to establish and request a merit position to perform this function within the next budget cycle. The Migrant Outreach Worker will join the FLC coordinator as part of the Migrant Outreach Team. This approach ensures the SWA has full coverage and that at no time will migrant outreach not be performed in the state.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

The Senior Administrator and the MSFW team conducts outreach to and communicates regularly with Agricultural Employer groups and associations within the state and regionally to include ,state fruit and vegetable grower associations, attendance at Delaware agricultural fairs and conferences and workforce development meetings. Visits occur to local bodegas, laundromats, restaurants, farmstands and processing sheds that are used by local employers.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF.

The outreach team attend conferences, webinars, forums and learning opportunities as presented to support and strengthen knowledge needed for the MSFW program. These opportunities include but are not limited to the annual DOL Convening, (DOL provider network invitees and conferences that shall be determined as opportunities present during this plan term.

Routinely the SMA provides technical assistance as the subject matter expert to peers in collaborating agencies on support services and other organizations that provide services to migrant workers in the area and farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment. Also discussed are the availability of referrals to training, 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.

This includes Partner AJC One Stop Meetings held in all three (3) counties with diverse attendees from the education, health, criminal justice, Business Services Representative team that work with Delaware employers and representatives from the non-profit and private sectors, the NFJP representative (Telamon) and with representatives from the AJC in each county. These meetings are convened by the DOL One Stop Operator.

The state plans to conduct quarterly virtual and or in person training topics to include but not be limited to sexual assault, coercion, harassment, and human trafficking via our Industrial Affairs Division and WIOA partners to the outreach staff.

The SWA's goal is to continue to outreach at least 500 -600 migrants in the state annually. The Migrant Outreach Worker Team shall continue to conduct outreach to MSFWs to provide job services information, including offers of assistance for the full range of employment services available at the local office, specific employment opportunities currently available, information on the Employment Service Complaint System, and a basic summary of farmworker rights related to terms and conditions of employment. Outreach occurs at farms at the beginning of the Peak Season and coordinated at the sites of community-based agencies and partners where services are provided to MSFWs throughout the farming season. The state is and will continue to conduct outreach separately to locate and identify migrant workers traditionally not reached at the American Job Centers or in routine occurrences by working with community-based partners to provide specific and direct services to migrant workers. The SMA works closely with and serves as the back up to the Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator. Both personnel are cross trained in core program functions, federal guidance requirements and reporting. Per section 2 above the Outreach team shall conduct outreach to MSFWs to provide employment and training services, including offers of assistance for the full range of employment services available at the local office, specific employment opportunities currently available, information on the Job Service complaint system, and a basic summary of farmworker rights related to terms and conditions of employment. Per our MOU with the NFJP Grantee, the SWA shall coordinate outreach with the WIOA Title 1 section 167 grantees (Telamon or grantee) as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups whenever possible. The state is and will continue to conduct outreach separately to locate and identify migrant workers traditionally not reached at the One-Stop sites or in routine occurrences by working with community-based partners to provide specific and direct services to migrant workers.

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

Personnel are cross trained in core program functions, federal guidance requirements and reporting. The team gains valuable experience and support by participating in related conferences, webinars, forums and learning opportunities as presented to support and strengthen knowledge needed for the MSFW program. These opportunities include but are not limited to the annual DOL Convening, (DOL provider network invitees), as scheduled and other related conferences that shall be determined as opportunities present during this plan term. The team and staff from the Division of Unemployment Insurance are co-located in each AJC and attends DOL holds monthly and Quarterly DET Town Hall meetings to ensure familiarity occurs across core program information, including Unemployment Insurance issues, Career and Supportive Services, and by attending regional and national meetings with peers across core

programs. Employment Specialist from Unemployment Insurance are co-located with members of the Outreach Team in the AJC's and will benefit from information sharing and technical assistance mutually. Presentations are made from each Division. Additionally, members of the Outreach Team will seek and participate in opportunities for professional development throughout this term. These efforts enable direct access and knowledge of the UI program, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Industrial Affairs to support good knowledge sharing and develop good working relationships.

The Migrant Outreach Worker shall also participate in local, regional, and national training opportunities to include online courses and webinars about Migrant workers.

The Outreach Team will receive ongoing training on DOL operational programs by routinely participating in Monthly DOL and Quarterly DET Town Hall meetings to ensure their familiarity across core program information, including Unemployment Insurance issues, Career and Supportive Services, and by attending regional and national meetings with peers across core programs. Employment Specialist from Unemployment Insurance are co-located with members of the Outreach Team in the AJC's and will benefit from information sharing and technical assistance mutually. Additionally, members of the Outreach Team will seek opportunities for professional development throughout this term and shall participate in local, regional, and national training opportunities to include online courses and webinars in this subject area.

The State plans to conduct quarterly virtual and or in person training with relevant topics to include but not be limited to sexual assault, coercion, harassment, and human trafficking via our Industrial Affairs Division and WIOA partners for the Migrant Outreach staff.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

Employment Specialist from Unemployment Insurance are co-located with members of the Outreach Team in the AJC and will benefit from information sharing and technical assistance mutually.

The migrant outreach staff is part of the employment service personnel at the Delaware Department of Labor. The migrant outreach staff receive professional development training and activities in varied ways. These include but are not limited to participation in:

- AJC staff development meetings statewide
- Quarterly DET Town Hall Training meetings
- MSFW Team Development Meetings
- Business Services Unit Team Meetings
- DOL Town Hall Meetings which feature all operating divisions (IA, DET, DVR and UI)
- WIOA One Stop Meetings statewide which hosts training workshops on employment for jobseekers and employer services.
- Migrant Services associations as identified including Westside Migrant Health Advisory Council and DOE Migrant Education Council

- Local, regional, and national training opportunities to include online courses and webinars in this subject area
- 24-hour access to professional development courses through the Delaware Learning Center. Courses include but are not limited to topics such as, customer, service, diversity, equity and inclusion
- Other professional development opportunities as identified to support the provision of the quality services to jobseekers and employers

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS

The SWA state shall meet with the NFJP Grantee by July 15th, 2024, to discuss and develop a plan to coordinate outreach efforts together. The SWA via the Migrant Outreach Worker and the FLC Coordinator will continue to utilize established relationships within our WIOA partnerships. We meet monthly with DOE Migrant Education Coalition and as scheduled with the Westside Healthcare Migrant Advisory Group to identify migrant worker issues, personally or within family systems. This group is comprised of statewide healthcare providers, hospital representatives, behavioral health, Telamon, Departments of Education, Corrections, Health, and Social Services, etc.

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

The SWA continually strives to provide all customers with comprehensive and equitable AJC access to the complete array of state and federal employment and training programs. Universal access and integrated services, including access by migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs), is a central principle of the service delivery system. The basic tools used to conduct outreach to farmworkers includes personal contact, printed bilingual matter and/or bilingual digital video recordings. Upon outreach to the farmworkers, the Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult or WIOA Dislocated Worker staff provide one on one services. Referrals are also made to long–term, year–round employment opportunities as alternatives to seasonal or migratory agricultural work; and training opportunities; social services, including Federal and State assistance programs; and information regarding farm worker rights and the DOL–DET Complaint System are provided. The SMA ensures this occurs and routinely consults with statewide agricultural employers to determine what services may be needed and provided through the workforce system.

During the pre- and post-agricultural employer visits, the SMA coordinates with the outreach staff to ensure labor exchange information and materials to employers are provided. DOL–DET serves the agricultural community by locating, screening, and referring qualified workers from other areas through the Agricultural Recruitment System when qualified local workers are unavailable.

The SMA will ensure the following occurs for agriculture employers:

Visit agricultural employers prior to the beginning of their planting season to discuss their employment needs and advise them of support services that are available to workers and their families. To improve services to employers the SMA, FLC Coordinator and Administrator serve as subject matter experts to inform content and will begin production with the DOL Communications Coordinator by February 2024 with an intent to go public no later than April 2024.

The SMA gains valuable experience and support by participating in related conferences, webinars, forums and learning opportunities as presented to support and strengthen knowledge needed for the MSFW program. These opportunities include but are not limited to the annual DOL Convening, (DOL provider network invitees), National/State Monitor Advocate Leadership Conference as scheduled and other related conferences that shall be determined as opportunities present during this plan term. Routinely the SMA provides technical assistance as the subject matter expert to peers in collaborating agencies on support services and other organizations that provide services to migrant workers in the area and farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment. This includes Partner AJC One Stop Meetings held in all three (3) counties with diverse attendees from the education, health, criminal justice, Business Services Representative team that work with Delaware employers and representatives from the non-profit and private sectors, the NFJP representative (Telamon) and with representatives from the AJC in each county. These meetings are convened by the DOL One Stop Operator. The SMA, FLC Coordinator, Migrant Outreach Worker and Senior Administrator attend these meetings. The SWA representatives provide information about career and supportive services, the availability of referrals to employment services and training, as well as specific employment opportunities, the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E.) The Outreach Team receives ongoing training on DOL operational programs by routinely participating in Quarterly DET meetings to ensure their familiarity across core program information, including Unemployment Insurance issues, Career and Supportive Services, and attending regional and national meetings with peers across core programs. Employment Specialist from Unemployment Insurance are co-located with members of the Outreach Team in the AJC and will benefit from information sharing and technical assistance mutually. Additionally, members of the Outreach Team will seek opportunities for professional development throughout this term and shall participate in local, regional, and national training opportunities to include online courses and webinars in this subject area.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

DOL will use written and web notification to directly explain the employment complaint system to farmworkers, employers, community services partners and advocates. This will be printed

and voiced in English and Spanish. DOL also displays the ETA-approved employment service complaint system poster in each AJC.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

DOL currently does not market the Agricultural Recruitment System, however, the agency proposes to place related video and materials in English and Spanish or use existing USDOL marketing materials or videos that will explain and market the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers statewide and in every American Job Center.

The Delaware SWA has a working alliance with the National Farmworker Jobs Program Grantee, Telamon, to provide supportive services, emergency housing and related employment services to the migrant seasonal farmworkers during their tenure in Delaware. The Outreach Team members provide this information in some cases during field visits, the SMA may reissue the contact information to the workers for awareness and helps to facilitate direct contact, upon request, for MSFWs and/or the agricultural growers. The SWA, through its Administrator, will continue to ensure regular meetings and information/resource sharing and reporting continue between the SWA, SMA and Telamon representatives to support and further strengthen this partnership. Per our MOU with the NFJP Grantee, (Telamon) that is further defined and supports our working relationship to provide comprehensive employment services to migrants. Routinely, the SMA provides technical assistance as the subject matter expert to peers in collaborating agencies on AJC services (i.e., availability of training and other resources, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities). Additional outreach efforts are conducted and coordinated by direct contact with and through MSFW partner services.

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).

As noted in earlier sections, the Delaware DOL maintains several points of collaboration with partners to ensure services are maximized and costs are contained. Some examples include:

- An updated Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Human and Social Services, Division of Public Health to conduct pre–occupancy housing inspections and subsequent reported violations of Agricultural Growers who hire migrant seasonal farmworkers in accordance with OSHA federal and state laws.
- A working alliance and Memorandum of Understanding with the NFJP Grantee, Telamon continues to provide supportive services and alternative employment services to the migrant seasonal farmworkers during their tenure in Delaware. The State Monitor Advocate provides the contact information to the workers for awareness and helps to

facilitate direct contact upon request of the MSFW and or the Agricultural Growers. New opportunities for collaboration will continue to be pursued.

- The Delaware DOL, through the Administrator, State Monitor Advocate and Outreach Team, will increase outreach to human and social services to support our customer base of MSFW and Agricultural Growers by:
- Identifying and verifying services offered by and where mutually agreeable develop agreements with existing providers.
- Serving as the principal liaisons with the outreach partners
- Maintaining working relationships with Delaware State's Department of Agriculture, Farm Bureau, Women in Agriculture, Delaware State and University of Delaware Agriculture Cooperative Extension programs and other agencies that provide services to MFSW workers, Agricultural Growers, Employers, professionals and practitioners as identified. (Ongoing)
- Maintaining memberships of established Agricultural Growers Associations, Farm Bureaus, and other relevant professional organizations, as identified. (Ongoing)
- Participating in related conferences, webinars, forums and learning opportunities to support and strengthen knowledge needed for the MSFW program (As identified throughout each plan year)

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.

Notification of the Agricultural Outreach Plan was provided to the listed NFJP grantee, MSFW agencies, Agricultural Employer organizations, public agencies, and other interested employer organizations on 12/7/23. No comments were returned as of 1/7/24:

Telamon -NFJP Grantee

Westside Community Health

Delaware Health and Social Services /Public Health Division

Delaware Department of Education -Migrant Education

Delaware Hispanic Commission

Laesparanza

Crossroads Church

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Review the previous four years 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.

The State has met 1 to 2 out of 5 performance measures most of the previous four years. The goals that were not met are explained in the grid below and strategies to address herein:

1. Reviews of significant offices- Delaware is not a significant state, does not have a significant office or county.
2. Field checks conducted when 10 or more job orders have been placed though the Agricultural Recruitment System. -Delaware does not meet this criterion due to employer hiring process through approved Farm Labor Contractors.
3. Field checks conducted when 9 or fewer job orders (but at least one) have been placed through the Agricultural Recruitment System- Delaware does not meet this criterion due to employer hiring process through approved Farm Labor Contractors.
4. Outreach contacts per week **-Delaware averages 700-900 MSFWs during the Peak Season (June-September) and then they leave. All other workers are local. We are unable to reach the 40 outreach contacts ratio outside of the Peak Season. The workers are not here. We will continue to conduct outreach to locate and provide services to MSFWs in the area.**
5. Timely processing of complaints **-Delaware had minimal complaints (2) within the last 4 years. In both instances they were resolved within the 45-day period and informally.**

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.

Outreach

At issue is there routinely one reporting Quarter July to September where the State meets its reporting requirement due to the number of migrant workers that are in the state at that time. During other reporting Quarters the state finds there are minimal migrant workers in the state therefore we cannot report what we do not see.

The State believes it has enhanced overall MSFW Program management and has a good working relationship with agriculture employers and improved in outreach to farmworkers through strategic planning and community-based partnerships that serve migrant workers. Farmworkers and Agricultural employers are contacted on a scheduled basis, and there has been a significant increase in the development of additional strategic partnerships with direct service providers to support farmworkers as needed. We will continue to seek out migrant workers in the state directly and work with our partners strategically to address this area.

System Reporting

Delaware believes it was not consistently identifying all migrant workers and capturing all the services the SWA provided due to a system error. The SWA had an ETA Monitoring review in March 2023 with findings.

Service Delivery-Monitoring Reviews of the American Job Centers

Delaware is not a significant state, does not have a significant office or county. Delaware does understand the importance of monitoring and has implemented a routine schedule of monitoring the local American Job Centers to support awareness and education about migrant workers and to ensure equitable services are provided. To date all AJC's have received monitoring within the past year with no significant findings. This has assisted our employment service staffing with increasing their understanding of the MSFW federal guidelines and requirements to ensure that migrant workers receive equitable employment services to non-migrant workers at the Delaware Department of Labor. All AJC's will be monitored annually.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved of this 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

The State Plan must include	Include
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 5 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 if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes
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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	61.5
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,150.0
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 (WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(D)(II)(I))

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)).

In 2010, DDOE adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCRS) as the state's academic standards. In 2013, DDOE Adult Education adopted the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. The implementation of the CCR standards was multi-faceted. State staff and program administrators discussed the importance and value of the CCR standards. Next, state and program staff were trained as leaders in "unpacking" of content standards. Professional development focusing on the standards was designed and delivered statewide. Representatives from all programs participated in national trainings and shared the information with colleagues upon returning to their sites. The state office monitored PD attendance and provided technical assistance where requested. Finally, the state monitored program performance targets to provide technical assistance where required as demonstrated by the data.

To support continuous improvement in the implementation of CCR standards, a Schoology site has been dedicated to CCR standards and is accessible to staff and administrators. This site is continuously updated with resources including LINCS offerings, model lessons, and CCRS based content videos. Asynchronous chat rooms have been established on Schoology to allow adult education staff to engage in statewide discussions regarding best practices and concerns. In addition, new adult educators are introduced to the CCRS during the New Teacher Orientation course which is also hosted on Schoology. Based on teacher surveys, annual professional development sessions are presented during Winter and Summer Academies and an Annual Virtual Conference. The academies are presented both in person and virtually. Topics presented include increased understanding and implementation of standard- based instruction, universal design, and integration of employability and digital skills to respond to the needs of the Delaware job market.

To provide programs with additional assessment options that increase alignment with these standards and the implementation of integrated education and training service models, the State's Adult Education Assessment Policy has expanded progress assessments to include both TABE 13/14 and CASAS GOALS 2 tests for pre- and post-testing purposes in Adult Basic Education Programs. For English as a Second Language Programs, the allowable state assessments included BEST Plus 3.0 and CASAS Reading and Listening STEPS. Achievement of vocational training milestones, the successful passing of occupational or technical exams or evidence of trade-related benchmarks have also been designated as evidence of measurable skills gains to promote innovation and flexibility in adult education services that emphasize academic skills and vocational training in preparation for the workforce.

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.

The Delaware Department of Education is recipient of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding. The Secretary of Education has authority of State law to receive, hold and disburse Federal funds made available under this plan and the Director of Adult and Prison Education Resources Workgroup has authority to submit this plan. As required, the DDOE must submit a State Plan regarding the adult educational services provided under this funding. In addition, under Delaware Code, Title 14 § 122 "Rules and Regulations", the DDOE shall adopt rules and regulations, consistent with Delaware law for the provision of adult education and family programs including but not limited to adult basic education, literacy education, adult high school, prison education, apprenticeship programs and family literacy. This plan serves as the basis for Delaware's operation and administration of each provision of the AEFLA funds. Further, DDOE complies with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act. The provision of adult education services, including family literacy services, also aligns with the Delaware Secretary of Education's Strategic Plan that starts with students and builds for impact. The plan includes nurturing strong partnerships with families and communities through adult education opportunities that respond to Delaware's job market needs while also strengthening the parent's ability to support their children in school.

This plan is made available for public comment on the DDOE website and DDOE's Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Funding for Title II programs follows Delaware Department of Education guidelines and complies with Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. The DDOE's financial processes are based on generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) in accordance with the Delaware Code, the State's Budget and Accounting Policy Manual and Division of Accounting guidance. In addition, the management of federal funds includes procedures for compliance with the Delaware State Clearinghouse Committee, federal guidance and WIOA fiscal requirements. Through the DDOE's Request for Proposal (RFP) process, any eligible provider can apply for grant funding in alignment with WIOA Section 225 (Correctional Education), Section 231 (Adult Basic Education), and Section 243 (Integrated English Language and Civics Education). Availability of funds is advertised through public announcements. The public announcements direct interested parties to websites where the RFP application is hosted - the State of Delaware Bid Solicitation Directory and the DDOE Bid Solicitation website. Prior to submission, a voluntary pre-bid meeting is held to explain the various components of the RFP application, review submission dates and answer any questions that may arise from the interested parties. Questions and answers arising during and after the meeting but before the question submission deadline are posted on the DDOE Bid Solicitation website and on the State of Delaware Bid Solicitation Directory to ensure that all applicants have access to the same information. Prior to a full application review, all applicants must provide evidence of demonstrated effectiveness by providing three years of performance data demonstrating the applicant's ability to effectively provide literacy skills and to transition learners to employment, further training, and/or post-secondary education. All applications that satisfactorily demonstrate effectiveness receive a full review of the submitted proposal. If an application does not satisfactorily demonstrate effectiveness, the proposal may not proceed to a full review and may not be eligible for funding. All applications are reviewed through the same evaluation

process. Responses are scored on a predetermined rubric by a panel of community and state representatives. The scoring rubrics are a part of the RFP package ensuring that the process is transparent. Since Delaware has only one statewide Workforce Development Board (DWDB), responses to questions relevant to the DWDB are shared with the Board's Executive Director or designee for review and scoring. The scores of the DWDB representative along with the scores of content experts, a Department of Labor representative, a Division of Libraries representative, and a community-based organization rep are compiled by the DOE Finance Office and forwarded to the Director of the Adult and Prison Education Resources. The applications that receive high scores and provide services in high need areas are selected for funding based on the available federal and state allocations. Programs receiving funding are announced on the DDOE and the State of Delaware Bid Solicitations websites to further ensure transparency. As part of the bid process, programs that offer integrated education and training (IET), pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship proposals can receive higher point scores. Proposed IETs must provide skills for jobs aligned with the Workforce Development Board's High-Demand listing. Programs are encouraged to braid funding from additional sources, such as the Delaware Department of Labor, employers, Workforce Development Board, and foundations.

DDOE determines areas of high need for adult education services based on American Community Survey/US Census data regarding the number of individuals with low literacy rates and/or the number of individuals with limited English Language skills. The RFP requires that each respondent address how it will provide services in high need areas that align with WIOA goals and outcomes. WIOA Title II language, the Delaware Workforce Development Board's State Plan and Delaware Department of Labor Employment and Training (DDOL-DET) high-demand job data is referenced in the RFP application. The application requires an applicant to explain how it will provide one or a combination of the following services: adult education; literacy; workplace adult education and literacy activities; integrated education and training activities in alignment with the Governor's Executive Order #1 – Expansion of Youth Apprenticeships; apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships; family literacy activities; English language acquisition activities; integrated English literacy and civics education; workforce preparation activities and/or integrated education and training activities. As part of the RFP, applicants can offer to provide instruction in Delaware's correctional facilities including prisons and work-release centers.

The five pillars of workforce development are integrated into all phases of Delaware's Adult Education system – the RFP funding process, service delivery system, multiple instructional formats, and leadership activities.

1. Industry driven strategies are addressed in the development of integrated and education projects and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education projects. These projects must focus on high demand jobs that lead to upward work mobility and can include apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. Funded projects are developed in collaborations with employers or industry advisory boards.

2. Work mobility is addressed through the use of labor market data as justification for service provision; attainment of educational credentials leading to employment and postsecondary training; completion of industry recognized certificates and stackable credentials; use of technology for instruction and service delivery; and an emphasis on the development of digital skills to prepare learners for Delaware's Workforce. This

pillar aligns with the Governor's "Literacy Emergency" proclamation and the emergence of the Delaware Literacy Alliance with its Adult Education sub-committee. The Governor recognizes that literacy impacts all Delawareans from birth to grave including the individual's ability to access high paying jobs and the ability to upskill to better jobs.

3. Integrated systems are addressed through Adult Education Leadership activities that share data between the Department of Labor and the Department of Education to address employment outcomes, employer satisfaction, and dual enrollment in WIOA programs. Since some adult education programs also receive Perkins post-secondary funding, Perkins funding was used to upgrade the Adult Education LACES MIS to support Perkins reporting requirements.

4. Accountability is evident throughout Adult Education in Delaware. From the RFP process to quarterly data reviews and annual National Reporting System requirements, accountability is recognized and achieved through a collaborative partnership between programs, the Workforce Development Board, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education.

5. Flexibility and Innovation remain a foundation of WIOA funded Adult Education programing. From varied service delivery strategies such as in-person, distance and hybrid formats to multiple instructional approaches and models evidenced by direct instruction, programmed instruction, work-based learning, Adult Education strives to meet employer needs while also preparing the adult learner for entry into and advancement within Delaware's job market.

The RFP states that AEFLA funding is made available only for individuals deemed eligible under AEFLA regulations.

The RFP process requires each applicant to address one or more of the 13 considerations listed within the law:

(1) support of a state literacy resource center;

(2) development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology;

(3) development and dissemination of curricula including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;

(4) development of content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways;

(5) provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title and in measuring the progress of programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the State adjusted levels of performance;

(6) development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary education institutions or institutions of higher education;

(7) integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupations skills training, including promoting linkages with employers;

(8) activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities;

(9) identification of curriculum frameworks and alignment with rigorous content standards that specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition taking into consideration the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards adopted by the Delaware Department of Education; the adult skills and literacy assessments approved by USDOE and used in Delaware; the common indicators of performance in addition to any other indicators deemed necessary by the Delaware Department of Education; standards and requirements for entering postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education; and where appropriate, the content of occupations and industry skills standards widely used by business and industry in Delaware

(10) development and piloting of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention;

(11) development and implementation of programs and services for adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners and low skilled students;

(12) outreach to instructors, students and employers; and

(13) any other activities of statewide significance that promote workforce development.

RFP applicants identify the types of services they are offering and explain in detail how they will provide these services. Applicants may choose to deliver one or more types of services from the above listing.

In addition to responding to the thirteen considerations listed above, applicants must also explain how the proposed services support the Workforce Development Board's state plan, e.g. identification of barriers to employment and better coordination of services to reduce barriers; support of career pathways for low skilled adults, youth and individuals with disabilities; more effective outreach to employers and continued development of industry/sector partnerships; alignment with industry needs; strengthening worker mobility through attainment of educational credentials, industry recognized credentials, pathways for stackable credentials; and flexibility and innovation of delivery systems. Information and data from the Delaware Department of Labor and the Delaware Workforce Development Board is cited within the RFP application as resources to increase providers' knowledge of services needed.

All applicants must provide sufficient evidence that proves their capacity to deliver the services needed. If a respondent cannot provide satisfactory evidence of demonstrated effectiveness, the application does not proceed to a full review. For applications that demonstrate past effectiveness, the proposed services are reviewed and rated based on responses to the considerations listed above and, in the RFP, including the proposed budget. A rubric describing minimum and maximum scores for responses to each section is included in the application package. Individual applications are evaluated by the designated review panel resulting in a total score for each application. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to those applications receiving high scores for the geographic areas in which they propose services. The RFP for providing services to adult learners is developed on a four -year funding cycle with program performance reviewed on a quarterly basis and compared to the performance targets

negotiated with USDOE/OCTAE. Each funded program completes a continuing services application in the years between the RFP applications. This continuing services application reports the successes and challenges encountered by the program along with any innovations and best practices implemented in the fiscal year. The information compiled from these reports is discussed at ABE meetings with presentations by programs to support the continuous improvement process.

The RFP for Leadership monies is developed on a five-year funding cycle with program performance measured on an annual basis. The funded provider of leadership activities completes a continuing services application in the years between RFP applications. The continuing services application documents the leadership activities completed in that fiscal year and the focus for activities in the next fiscal year.

Based on a continuous monitoring of statewide and local program performances, general technical assistance to all programs in meeting WIOA performance targets is offered throughout the year at monthly administrator meetings and at monthly tech assistance sessions. Based on individual program performance, providers not meeting their performance targets receive targeted technical assistance. Programs exhibiting a consistent inability to meet performance targets can receive reduced funding and may be defunded. Accountability is built into the system with programs and staff acknowledging performance targets and progress towards targets throughout the year. Programs monitor student progress and employment outcomes with state quarterly reviews and sharing of information at monthly administrator meetings.

All respondents must provide the following information on how they will support the purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

- Provision of services and supports to adults with barriers to employment including low skilled; English Language learners; displaced homemakers; low income individuals; Indians, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth exiting foster care; individuals with substantial cultural barriers; migrant and seasonal farmworkers; long term unemployed; individuals exiting SSA, title IV, part A; and single parents;
- Demonstration of the ability to provide services required in the RFP;
- Equal access to and ability to participate in the services being offered;
- Use of valid and reliable data demonstrating past effectiveness in delivering literacy services to adult sub-populations including those targeted as possessing barriers to employment;
- Support of the WDB's state plan while preparing participants for the entry into and advancement within the workplace and/or postsecondary education and/or training options;
- Flexible scheduling of service provision that will support successful completion of studies;
- Use of accelerated instruction, in person and virtual delivery formats, and technology to provide additional learning opportunities for learners who may also be employed or experience changing work schedules or other barriers preventing in person attendance;

- Provision of evidenced based reading instruction geared to adult learners;
- Provision of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and/or English language acquisition instruction based on best practices, current scientifically valid research, and effective educational practice;
- Delivery of contextualized academic instruction that aligns with the state's workforce development plan and Common Core/College and Career Readiness Standards;
- Strategies that will engage participants in knowing and exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- Use of trained staff that meet DDOE Adult Education certification requirements;
- Delivery of high-quality professional development focused on program delivery and improvement to staff;
- Coordination of services with WIOA partners, postsecondary education and training entities, one-stop centers, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations for the development of career pathways;
- Coordination with other state and community entities to support supplemental services needed by participants to successfully complete their studies;
- Provider's experience with maintaining high quality data management that can measure student and program progress toward specific objectives;
- Location in an area with a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition and civics education programs based on valid and reliable data.

All programs funded through Title II are required to deliver work preparation instruction; basic academic skills; critical thinking; digital literacy skills; self-management skills and/or integrated education and training programs to meet participants' unique needs and in accordance with federal and state goals. To meet the increasing impact of artificial intelligence (AI), capacity building in AI skill development will continue in alignment with the Delaware Department of Education's AI policies and guidance.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS (WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(D)(II)(II)(BB))

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.

To support correctional education services, the DDOE issues a request for correctional services as part of the Adult Basic Education RFP process. Funding for correctional education services is an addendum to the ABE RFP to be completed only by vendors desiring to provide the services outlined in Section 225 of WIOA. Applicants may elect to offer academic, integrated education and training and/or transitional reentry services. The funds allocated to this component cannot exceed 20% of the state's total Adult Basic Education allocation. Vendors are selected based on several factors including: (1) the range of services being offered; (2) the locations where services will be provided; (3) use of technology in providing services; and (4) intensity of services.

This funding is divided by service delivery location. Services can be provided in Delaware's Department of Correction prisons or in the DOC's work-release centers. All applicants, regardless of location, must partner with the DOC to provide services. All providers receiving this funding must also collaborate with WIOA partners to facilitate transitions to community services upon release from work-release centers.

Services to incarcerated students are also provided through Perkins' Postsecondary funding. As a result of this funding, additional vocational courses are offered at selected prisons to prepare exiting offenders for a successful reentry to their communities and professional development opportunities are offered to vocational instructors ensuring that instruction reflects current industry standards.

Within this RFP, each applicant addresses how it proposes to prepare reentering offenders for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and/or entry into postsecondary training or education. The proposal also asks applicants to describe the transitional services offered in support of the Governor's Re-entry Collaborative. Information and data from DDOL and the Delaware Workforce Development Board are included in the application as resources for respondents to better understand the re-entry landscape. RFP applicants must address topics such as instructional delivery strategies; integration of work readiness skills in preparation for Delaware's job market; continuous program improvement; alignment with the state's Workforce Development Plan; and linkages with the One Stop Centers in gaining unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and reduced recidivism.

Each respondent's application is reviewed and scored based on the above considerations and the proposed budget. A pre-determined rubric describing minimum and maximum scores for each section of the application is included in the application package. All responses are scored

on this rubric by a team of community and state evaluators. Since Delaware has only one statewide Workforce Development Board (DWDB), responses to questions relevant to the DWDB are shared with the DWDB Executive Director for Board or designee for review and scoring. The scores of the DWDB representative along with the scores of content experts, a Department of Labor representative, a Division of Libraries representative, and a community-based organization representative are compiled by the DOE Finance Office and sent to the Director of the Adult and Prison Education Resources. The applications that receive high scores and provide services in locations accessible to students under the Department of Correction's supervision are selected for funding based on the available federal and state allocations. Funded programs are listed on the DDOE and the State of Delaware Bid Solicitations websites to ensure transparency. All programs must provide satisfactory information on demonstrated effectiveness prior to a complete review of the application. If programs do not provide satisfactory evidence of demonstrated effectiveness, the application may not be reviewed. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to those applications with high scores for the services being proposed. Funding is based on a four year cycle with performance monitored quarterly and annually. Each funded program completes a continuing services application in the years between the RFP applications. The continuing services application documents information on the funded program's strengths, challenges and innovations for the fiscal year and its areas of focus for the coming year.

Based on statewide program performance, technical assistance in meeting WIOA performance targets is offered statewide to all selected correctional services providers. Dependent on individual program performance, programs not meeting performance targets receive specifically targeted technical assistance. Programs exhibiting a consistent inability to meet performance targets can receive reduced funding and may be defunded. This process mirrors the process used for awarding Adult Basic Education grants to selected providers.

As a part of the application process, all respondents must provide the following information:

1. Demonstration of ability to provide the requested services through sharing data on similar services offered previously.
2. Use of valid and reliable data reflecting past effectiveness in delivering literacy and workforce skills in a correctional setting.
3. Correctional instructional services based on evidence-based practices.
4. Support of the Workforce Development Board’s strategic plan while preparing participants for the entry into and/or postsecondary education and/or training options.
5. Flexible scheduling of service provision that will support successful completion of studies.
6. Incorporation of accelerated instruction and technology, where permitted, for learners who could benefit from these options.
7. Provision of evidence-based reading, writing and mathematics instruction geared to adult learners.
8. Provision of workplace readiness skills.

9. Collaborative initiatives with the Department of Correction.
10. Use of trained staff that meet DDOE Adult Education certification requirements.
11. Delivery of high quality professional development focused on program delivery and improvement to staff.
12. Coordination with WIOA partners, postsecondary education and training entities, one-stop centers, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations for the development of adult career pathways.
13. Coordination with other entities to support transitional services needed by participants to successfully complete their studies; and
14. Provider's experience with maintaining high quality data management that can report measurable participant outcomes and monitor program progress.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM (WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(D)(II)(II)(CC))

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.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program services are established and operated by the DDOE Adult and Prison Education Resources Workgroup. The DDOE seeks to support these programs through a collaborative effort using various funding streams such as WIOA Title II funding, DOL pre-apprentice and apprenticeship funding and state vocational training monies. These services are funded through the same RFP process as used for Adult Education services. Programs wishing to provide IELCE services must complete the IELCE Services component of the ABE RFP application package. The evaluation of these requests follows the same process as used for the ABE application evaluation.

The IELCE component is an optional component to be completed only by providers desiring to provide the services outlined in Section 243 of WIOA. These services are funded through the IELCE allocation of the state's WIOA Adult Basic Education grant. Selection of providers is based on the need for IELCE services as determined by an analysis of American Community Survey/US Census and state data, response to employer need, and ability to concurrently integrate language acquisition, academic skills and vocational training into a process that will benefit participants and employers.

Within the RFP application, each applicant addresses how it proposes to prepare English Language Learners for unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. The proposal also addresses the services offered in alignment with the Workforce Development Board's state plan. Information and data from DDOL and the Delaware Workforce Development Board is included in the application as resources for respondents to consider. RFP applicants must address topics such as the use of technology to provide instruction; best practices for ELL instruction; continuous program improvement; outreach to instructors and students; collaboration with employers to ensure that needed skills are being taught; linkages with the DDOL One Stop Centers and other WIOA partners to support English language learners in gaining unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Each respondent's application is reviewed and scored based on the above considerations and the proposed budget. Prior to an application being reviewed for funding, all applicants must provide evidence of demonstrated effectiveness by providing three years of performance data showing the applicant's ability to improve literacy and vocational skills and transition learners to employment and/or further training/education. All applications that satisfactorily demonstrate past effectiveness continue onto to a full review of their proposal. If an application does not satisfactorily demonstrate past effectiveness, the proposal may not proceed to a full review and may not be eligible for funding. All applications are reviewed through the same evaluation process. Responses are scored on a predetermined rubric by a team of community and state agency representatives. The scoring rubrics are a part of the RFP package. Since Delaware has one statewide Workforce Development Board (DWDB), responses to questions relevant to the DWDB are shared with the DWDB Executive Director for Board or designee for review and scoring. The scores of the DWDB representative along with the scores of content experts, a Department of Labor representative, a Division of Libraries representative, and a community-based organization representative are compiled by the DDOE Finance Office and sent to the Director of the Adult and Prison Education Resources. The applications that receive high scores and provide services in high need areas are selected for funding based on the available federal allocations. Requests for proposals are based on a four-year funding cycle with performance monitored quarterly and annually. Each funded program completes a continuing services application in the years between the RFP applications. The continuing services application is a report of the program's strengths, challenges and innovations for the current fiscal year and the areas of focus in the next fiscal year.

Based on statewide program performance, technical assistance in meeting WIOA performance targets is offered statewide to all IELCE providers. Based on individual program performance, programs not meeting performance targets receive individualized targeted technical assistance. Programs exhibiting a consistent inability to meet performance targets receive

reduced funding and may be defunded. This process mirrors the process used for awarding Adult Basic Education grants to selected providers.

As a part of the application process, all respondents must provide the following information:

(1) Demonstration of the ability to provide requested services based on similar services previously provided.

(2) Use of valid and reliable data reflecting the benefit of IELCE services in the proposed area; effectiveness in delivering literacy and workforce skills to English Language Learners; and the need for the specific occupation or occupational cluster training being proposed.

(3) Support of the Workforce Development Board's strategic plan while preparing participants for the entry into or promotion within the workplace and/or postsecondary education and/or training options.

(4) Equity in providing access to and participation in the services being offered.

(5) Flexible scheduling of service provision that will support successful completion of studies.

(6) Incorporation accelerated instruction and technology for academic instruction for learners who can benefit from these options.

(7) Provision of evidence-based reading, writing and mathematics instruction geared to adult learners.

(8) Provision of workplace readiness skills within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

(9) Strategies that will engage participants in knowing and exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

(10) Use of trained staff that meet DDOE Adult Education certification requirements.

(11) Delivery of high-quality professional development focused on program delivery and improvement to staff.

(12) Coordination with WIOA partners, postsecondary education and training entities, one-stop centers, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations for the development of career pathways.

(13) Coordination with other entities to support supplemental services needed by participants to successfully complete their studies.

(14) Provider's experience with maintaining high quality data management that can report measurable participant outcomes and monitor program progress.

(15) Valid and reliable data that the services will be provided in locations accessible to the targeted populations.

This project is designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency through an integration of education and training activities delivered concurrently.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program provides instruction in reading, writing and speaking competencies, comprehension of the English language and citizenship

skills to English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their native countries. Instruction is delivered through a contextualized approach focusing on workforce preparation for a specific occupation or occupational cluster designated as 'high demand" by the Workforce Development Board. Instruction in academics, work readiness and specific skills training is coordinated through integrated lesson plans based on the alignment of subject matter across the three areas of study.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program integrates into classroom instruction Delaware data regarding employment opportunities and occupations. Programs incorporate DDOL website and print resources into student activities. Title II programs use the WIOA partner referral process to support learners in completing their educational and career goals through coordination of services rather than duplication of services.

The skills trainings offered through this project must be based on high-demand industries and occupations for the area being served based on Delaware Workforce Development Board data. All trainings must lead to employment that enables economic self-sufficiency. Program transition supports and DOL collaboration facilitates placement in unsubsidized employment. Funding for this program can be provided through a combination of DOE, DOL and employer-based funding.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP (WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(D)(II)(III))

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

The State uses the State Leadership funding under section 223 of WIOA to carry out the following required activities:

(1) the alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core program and one-stop partners through actions such as: providing technology assistance to co-located one-stop classes; sharing of compiled adult education data with other WIOA partners to develop streamlined inter-agency processes; data matching with DOL Unemployment Insurance to determine employment after second and quarter after exit; supporting programs in performance student surveys for those not included in the DOL data match; and providing information to DOL to determine dual enrolled students. While there is no one integrated system as of yet, Adult Education integrates data with the WIOA Core Partners through an MOU and monthly partner meetings and special project meetings.

(2) the operation of high-quality professional development programs to improve instruction including reading instruction and dissemination of information about promising models and practices through activities such as summer and winter academies for professional development. Academy topics focus on areas most requested by programs and indicated by performance outcomes, e.g. Reading and Math instruction best practices; distance learning best practices; and trauma informed care informed practices.

(3) the provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities concerning rigorous and scientifically valid research in reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics; English language acquisition; and distance education. Throughout the year, teachers and administrators are asked to identify professional development areas needed at the

local level. Based on responses, statewide research-based professional development is delivered through the annual conference and the winter and summer academies. Additionally, in response to quarterly monitoring of individual program report cards, programs exhibiting poor performance are provided technical assistance to assist them in identifying causes and possible solutions, e.g. poor ESL performance could result in supplemental professional development on best instructional practices for English Language Learners and/or effective strategies for increasing ESL retention. General assistance to programs regarding the use of technology to support system and inter-agency efficiencies through the LACES system or through instructional online/offline software packages are scheduled through Teacher Tech and Data Tuesdays@2 sessions.

(4) improved delivery of distance learning programming to support adult learners with barriers to participation such as transportation or childcare; fluctuating work schedules; and multiple family responsibilities. The state continues to share distance learning resources developed in coordination with the IDEAL Consortium in addition to program sharing of resources at monthly administrator meetings. Topics covered include program capacity when offering distance learning options, staffing requirements, student expectations, maintenance of distance learning platforms, and specific technical assistance requested by programs as needed;

(5) the monitoring of instructional delivery and continuous improvement in adult education and literacy activities is conducted through the development of quarterly report cards for each funded programs and the creation of a compiled statewide report in addition to monthly reports posted in Schoology. Regularly scheduled Data Tuesday@2 chats address tech issues impacting instructional delivery and continuous improvement. Teacher Talks, Schoology trainings, and the quarterly newsletter disseminate information on the delivery of instructional and programmatic models. The monthly administrator meetings hosted as part of Leadership activities also include discussions of programmatic models and best practices and introductions of WIOA partners and employers that local programs can partner with. Built on the efficiencies of a virtual model, a hybrid monitoring process is currently conducted to monitor WIOA funded programs. This tri-annual in-depth monitoring incorporates a virtual review of documents prior to a monitoring visit along with an in-person visit by a team of state and peer reviewers.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

The State will use State Leadership Activities to fund the following permissible State Leadership activities:

- the support of a state network for literacy resources;
- professional development to support the use of instructional technology;
- dissemination of curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;
- development of models for integrated education and training and career pathways;
- provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve WIOA objectives;

- development and implementation of a system to assist in transition from adult education to postsecondary education;
- integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupations skills training including promoting linkages with employers;
- identification of curriculum frameworks and aligning with rigorous content standards;
- development of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention;
- development of services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners;
- outreach to instructors, students, and employers;
- improved delivery of distance learning programming to support adult learners with barriers to participation such as transportation or childcare; fluctuating work schedules; and concurrent family responsibilities heightened by job market conditions. The state continues to share distance learning resources developed through a collaboration with the IDEAL Consortium of World Ed in addition to program sharing of resources at monthly administrator meetings. Topics covered include program administrator considerations when offering distance learning options; staffing requirements, maintenance of distance learning platforms, and specific technical assistance requested by programs as needed;
- other activities as designated by the WIOA partners for implementation of WIOA.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY (WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(D)(II)(V))

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.

Title II programs rely on several data points to determine program quality, effectiveness and continuous improvement. These include:

- quarterly desk audits to monitor program progress towards performance targets based on MIS data input;
- technical assistance meetings with programs that are in danger of not meeting performance targets;
- on site and virtual state and peer monitoring visits to ensure that programs are delivering services as described in the grant application and established in legislation;
- student surveys to evaluate service quality from a client perspective;
- staff surveys to evaluate delivery of professional development from an instructor perspective;

- data analysis to determine gaps and strengths in equitable provision of services to populations with barriers to employment; and

provision of evidence based reading instruction and professional development regarding reading instruction to programs on an annual basis. Every program must have at least one trained staff member who can provide high quality reading instruction and support other program instructors in the reading content area. This provision directly aligns with the Governor's proclamation of a "Literacy Emergency" and Adult Education's participation in the Delaware Literacy Alliance.

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
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	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	
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 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)

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter informa**
Applicant's Organization	Delaware Depa
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter informa**
First Name	Maureen
Last Name	Whelan
Title	Director of Adu
Email	maureen.whela

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

The State Plan must include	Include
I assure that the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a).	Yes

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

Delaware's funding for this project complies with the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act as included in the Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) portion of this plan and Section III.b.5.B.i (Common Elements).

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	51.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8,061.0
Credential Attainment Rate	50.0
Measurable Skill Gains	67.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 N
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	First
Parent Training and Information Center	First
Client Assistance Program	Second
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	First
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Second
Business, Industry, and Labor	First
Business, Industry, and Labor	First
Business, Industry, and Labor	First
Business, Industry, and Labor	First
Disability Advocacy Groups	First
Disability Advocacy Groups	Second
Person with a Disability	First
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	First
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	N/A
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Second
State Workforce Development Board	Second
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Second

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.

With active and on-going engagement with Boards and Commissions, the SRC composition requirements are met. New Member Onboarding was implemented to support the nine first

term SRC members to the roles and responsibilities. The State Rehabilitation Council meets quarterly as required in Section 105(F) of the Rehabilitation Act.

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 SRC provided feedback and recommendations to DVR, after carefully reviewing information and data shared with the SRC, during our Annual Retreat Meeting. The SRC's Annual Retreat Meeting is held each year in November. During the Annual Retreat Meeting the SRC reviewed DVR's progress on the comprehensive system of personnel development and each of the four (4) goals established for DVR in collaboration with the SRC. The four (4) current goals are:

GOAL 1. Provide quality career pathway opportunities for people with disabilities.

GOAL 2. Support training programs that reflect high demand opportunities in the labor market.

GOAL 3. Enhance pre-employment transition services and transition career services to transition-aged individuals with disabilities.

GOAL 4. Communications, Marketing and Outreach

The SRC was presented with information and data during the Annual Retreat and the SRC was encouraged to ask questions and share comments during the DVR presentations and at the conclusion of each GOAL discussion. Each SRC member was asked to rate how well DVR performed against each of the four (4) goals by assigning a number rating (1-5 with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating). SRC members were also asked to provide any additional comments or new recommendations for each GOAL. The SRC members recorded their ratings and recommendations on a Form, which was collected and retained by the SRC Chair. The SRC Chair tabulated all of the SRC member responses and assigned each Goal an overall rating (which represents an average of all SRC member ratings received). All SRC member comments were also shared with DVR.

Overall, the SRC rated DVR's program effectiveness and progress toward all State Plan Goals as a 4.5 out of 5. The SRC recommended that DVR consider a focus on homeschooled children with disabilities and possibly hosting a Home School Summit. Further, the SRC encouraged DVR to increase their social media presence and outreach.

In addition to the SRC Annual Retreat, the SRC regularly provides input and suggestions to DVR during our quarterly full Council meetings and during our committee meetings. The SRC maintains an active Participant Satisfaction Committee which meets quarterly (at a minimum). This Committee takes a detailed look at the survey methodology, including the specific questions asked on the satisfaction survey, how often a Participant is asked to provide feedback about their experience and about any gaps in regard to Participant satisfaction with their services. The SRC is currently taking a comprehensive look at DVR's overall Participant Satisfaction process and researching how other States fulfill this mandate. Due to some membership changes on the full Council and on this Committee, the SRC anticipates they will complete their review of the Participant Satisfaction process this calendar year.

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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation appreciates the ongoing support and collaboration with the SRC. It is excited to collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council to achieve the performance measures and recommendations. DVR accepts the SRC recommendations to implement the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide quality career pathway opportunities for people with disabilities. - Agree

DVR's Business Relations team leverages its resources for training and employing individuals with disabilities while addressing the workforce needs of Delaware businesses.

The DVR Business Relations team connects businesses with a pool of qualified candidates and offers the necessary support services to help participants thrive in their roles. Valuable resources include the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), which connects participants to various resources, including Job Postings, Geographic-Specific Resumes, Recruiter Access, Compliance and Application Reports, Hiring Data, and Interview Capability and Delaware JobLink. In collaboration with the State of Delaware's Department of Human Resources Talent Acquisition, DVR continues to promote the Selective Placement Program and Employment Network.

Additionally, the Business Relations team is involved regularly in Chamber of Commerce meetings and events throughout the state and attended career and resource fairs to share the resources available to Delaware employers and individuals through the Department of Labor and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The DVR Business Relations team engaged with businesses to provide information about DVR business services and discuss ways to collaborate in serving the community to provide quality employment and career services. The DVR Business Relations Team facilitated 44 Employment Readiness Workshops for participants.

DVR continued to collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division for the Visually Impaired to secure technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON). The primary focus has been to implement systems change to enhance competitive integrated employment in Delaware. This is the third year Delaware has been a NEON Core State.

Benefits Counseling:

- Benefits Counseling Professional Development
- Benefits Planning Communication Materials
- Monthly Benefits Planning Information Sessions
- Enhanced self-employment resources for participants and the DVR team to support self-employment as a viable option:

- DVR Self-Employment Technical Assistance via the National Disability Institute (NDI)
- New Self-Employment Policy & Tools Launched
- Partnership with the Delaware Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Self-Employment Community of Practice for DVR Counselors via National Disability Institute

Goal 2: Support training programs that reflect high demand opportunities in the labor market-Agree

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to collaborate with workforce development partners, state agencies, businesses, and community providers to promote opportunities for participants to achieve competitive integrated employment. DVR is encouraged by the commitment and collaboration to explore opportunities such as incentives, training programs and apprenticeships, and the acquisition of additional resources for job seekers with disabilities. DVR values the teamwork and support of its partners in strengthening the workforce system while pursuing opportunities to improve processes and address challenges.

GOAL 3: Enhance Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and Transition Career Services to transition-aged individuals with disabilities- Agree

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted the following activities:

- Targeted Professional Development of Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Pre-Employment Transition Coordinators
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Programs
- Specialized Programs
- Transition Cadre
- Summer Career Exploration experiences
- increased engagement with new transition students and transition students served

GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing, and Outreach- Agree

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted the following activities:

Outreach/Education initiatives:

- Career and Community Engagement Events
- School Transition Fairs, Information Sessions,
- Updated Brochure and Publications
- Enhanced Social Media Platforms
- DVR website maintenance and updates
- Chamber of Commerce Events and Business Networking Activities

- Increase outreach efforts to minority and underserved populations to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services.
- Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, such as independence, sense of community, and financial independence.
- Enhanced Participant Satisfaction Survey Delivery to Participants via A.I.to increase feedback.

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;

During 2025, Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, General and Blind, conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA was conducted using electronic surveys and individual and focus group interviews with individuals with disabilities, community partners, team members, and businesses. A total of 662 individuals participated in the DVR segment of the CSNA:

Participants: 496, Partners: 95, DVR Team: 67, Business: 4

The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

1. The need for transportation to and from work, especially in the rural areas, was cited as the most pressing rehabilitation need for individuals with disabilities.
2. Other commonly cited needs included training, job skills, soft skills, workplace accommodations, educating employers about the abilities of individuals with disabilities, and assistive technology.
3. DVR serves many individuals who need supported employment services. More than half of their consumers are individuals with cognitive impairments, and many need the extended services provided in the SE model once stabilization on the job occurs. The quality and availability of SE services vary across the state and has been impacted by the staff turnover at CRPs.
4. The CRPs in Delaware do not provide customized employment services, and DVR does not provide this service in-house. There are individuals with the most significant disabilities in Delaware that could benefit from CE, so this is a service gap that needs to be addressed in the future.
5. Employer perceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities are still a significant barrier to employment and education of employers is a significant need.

6. Individuals with mental health impairments are experiencing a delay in services due limited access to mental health evaluations, treatment and clinical services.

7. Affordable housing emerged as a significant need in the last 4-5 years in Delaware. Many participants are facing significant economic challenges because of the high cost of rent and lack of affordable housing. The need for housing stability is a pressing concern for many DVR consumers and directly affects their ability to participate in a rehabilitation plan.

8. Financial planning, literacy and empowerment services were noted as an important need for individuals with disabilities. While there are benefits planning services available, DVR consumers need more in-depth financial literacy services.

9. There is a need for broadband internet access in the rural areas of the State. Several partner programs indicated that often consumers in the rural areas do not have access to broadband internet access either because there isn't any available, or they do not have the money to pay the monthly fee.

The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by DVR:

1. The most common geographic area identified as potentially underserved for both agencies was the rural areas of the state. The lack of transportation, vendors and awareness of DVR and DVI were cited as common barriers to accessing services for individuals living in rural areas.

2. Hispanic individuals were the only group by race that was commonly cited as potentially underserved. This was noted as a likely consequence of government mistrust, resident status, fear of profiling and lack of awareness of DVR and DVI services.

3. The rehabilitation needs of minority individuals with disabilities were not noted as being markedly different from other consumers except for those unable to speak English, and then language interpreters were considered essential for DVR and DVI access and service delivery.

4. Individuals who are deaf and use sign language to communicate were noted as potentially underserved because of the lack of interpreters in many areas.

5. Although not cited as being underserved, the increase in older individuals seeking employment due to increases in the cost of living was noted as an emerging population that DVR should be aware.

Section 1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

1. Help finding a job was most important.

2. Transportation

3. Assistance with current job

4. Determining accommodations

5. Support with college or post-secondary type education
6. The number of individuals with supported employment listed as a goal on their IPE steadily increased from almost 8% in PY2021 to almost 21% at the end of PY2023.
7. DVR serves many individuals who need supported employment services. More than half of DVR participants are individuals with cognitive impairments, and many need extended services provided in the SE model when stabilized on the job.
8. Supported employment services can be improved by enhancing transportation, additional training, job skills, soft skills, benefits planning, workplace accommodations, educating employers about abilities of individuals, and assistive technology.
9. Job training, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention, supported employment, vocational/postsecondary education, and assistive technology are needed.
10. Services were not readily available: housing, personal care attendants, vehicle modifications, maintenance or income assistance, mental health treatment, health insurance, and medical treatment.
11. Barriers to getting or keeping a job; limited job skills/work experience, lack of education or training, limited job search/interview skills, employer concerns about participants ability to do the job, and lack of available jobs.
12. Employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, limited job skills/work experience, transportation, lack of education or training, concern over loss of Social Security benefits or other benefits such as Medicaid, lack of job search/interview skills, lack of soft skills and lack of available jobs were the top barriers.
13. Limited job skills/work experience in the first position in the results, employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, lack of soft skills, criminal offences, transportation and concern over loss of benefits were found to be the top listed in the results.
14. Fifty-eight percent of respondents agreed supported employment services were available to people with the most significant employment challenges. However, supported employment services can be improved by addressing timeliness/speed of services, longer assessments, follow-along for people with more types of disabilities, transportation, longer follow-along, more service providers, professional development for service providers, and better communication.

DVR will enhance training opportunities for community rehabilitation providers and DVR staff on high-quality customized and supported employment services. DVR training will focus on transition to extended services, when the transition is appropriate, and on an individualized basis.

DVR and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services will continue to enhance their partnership and strengthen the working relationship in efforts to reduce confusion and delays with transition from VR funding to extended SE services. DVR will explore training opportunities available on trauma informed care for counseling staff. DVR will encourage

families of SSI-eligible youth to apply for long-term funding from their Medicaid waiver program for extended services when they are considered working in SE. DVR will increase opportunities to learn self-advocacy skills and identify resources and ways to deliver financial empowerment services to our consumers. DVR will continue to be an active partner with the other WIOA core partners which provides many regular opportunities for information sharing, planning and an overall effort to streamline services. During the monthly partner meetings, DVR shares information about vocational rehabilitation and learns what is available from other partners. DVR will also continue to participate in the Early Start to Supported Employment initiative This sharing of information with our stakeholders will enhance communication with our partners and improve the overall services that DVR provides in the community.

DVR will continue to explore opportunities to engage with stakeholders. This includes educational programs, community organizations, transportation providers, the medical community, several councils, service providers, employers, other state agencies, families, and consumers. DVR will continue to be an active partner with the other WIOA core partners which provides opportunities for information sharing, planning and an overall effort to streamline services. During the monthly partner meetings, DVR shares information about vocational rehabilitation and learn what is available from other partners. DVR will also continue to participate in the Early Start to Supported Employment initiative and Community of Practice. This sharing of information with our stakeholders will enhance communication with our partners and improve the overall services that DVR provides in the community.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Respondent feedback indicates the opportunity to enhance outreach to Hispanic community groups in Delaware to increase community awareness of services available. In addition, enhance resources including alternate languages and formats, expand hours of operation and community access, increase staff recruitment of bilingual skills, especially Spanish and staff training.

- Identify and address the impact of increasing population shift of relocating retirees to the state and older adults re-entering the workforce due to the increase cost of living and decreasing retirement funds. Enhance partnership with Delaware Aging and Disability Resource Center.
- Representation on transportation committees and boards to advocate for transportation needs.
- Enhance collaboration between DVR and DVI to better serve individuals who are DeafBlind
- More outreach to Hispanic, Spanish speaking and other communities such as The Latin American Community Center in Wilmington and La'Esperanza Center in Sussex County.
- Regular review of diversity composition of those served to ensure that disparities in representation are for those who need VR services and due to limited access or outreach.

The CSNA also highlights one important consideration is the percentage of participants served by race and ethnicity as compared to the state U.S. Census. Statewide Delaware averages exceed

the National averages for ethnic diversity in the categories of Black or African Americans (9.9% higher) and for Puerto Rican (1.3% higher). The statewide Delaware average for Hispanics or Latinos is 8.3% lower than National average.

In the United States 2023 Census for the State of Delaware 58% identified as White, 21.7% as Black or African American, 11.1% Hispanic or Latino, 0 .0% Other Hispanic or Latino 4.3%, Mexican 3.6% Puerto Rican 3.0% Cuban 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 7% American Indian & Alaska Native, 0.1% Asian, 4.3% two or more races. 4.3% The data on Disability, Race and Ethnicity shows the Hispanic or Latino population in Wilmington at 18.8% followed by Kent County at 18.2%, next Sussex at 11.1% and New Castle is 9.2%,

Within the Delaware VR data set for PY'24, 54% identified as White, 44.2% Black or African American, 8.2% as Hispanic or Latin, 0.6% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1.5% as American Indian/Alaska Native, and 2.7%% as Asian. 44.8% identified as female, 54.8% identified as male. 4% prefer not to answer.

It is also noteworthy to highlight 52.9% identified as having a cognitive disability followed by 25.1% having mental health. Thus, in addition to enhanced outreach to the unserved or underserved, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will also expend resources to engage services and service providers and continue to collaborate with community partners for resources and services to serve those with cognitive and mental health disabilities.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The needs of individual with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System:

1. While the working relationship between DVR, DVI and the DET centers is good in many areas, the relationship is almost exclusively one of referral. There are very few examples of braided funding.
2. Accessibility in the DET centers is a challenge in some areas of the State, especially related to serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments. The assistive technology was noted as rarely functioning, and when it was, staff at the centers do not know how to use it.
3. Staff at the DET centers need training on how to work with individuals with disabilities. DVR and DVI staff note that DET center staff simply refer individuals with disabilities straight to their agencies without any attempt to meet their needs in the centers or to accommodate them.
4. *Individual Survey: Delaware DET Job Centers – DVR and DVI Use and Accessibility*

DVR Accessibility Questions	Yes
Have you ever tried to use the services of the DET (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?	6.9%

DVR Accessibility Questions	Yes
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	14.8%
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the DET (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	32.0%

Delaware DET Job Centers – Training and Employment

Individual survey respondents from DVR indicated the services they sought at the DET Job Centers did not result in desired outcomes for the majority of respondents.

DVR will enhance collaboration efforts with DET centers to create and facilitate opportunities for cross-training staff in both systems for smoother transitions across agencies. DVR will identify cases where braided funding and joint planning opportunities and highlight the cases to encourage continued replication. Enhanced collaboration with DET to develop customized training opportunities for clients.

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 needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in Delaware are similar to all individuals served by DVR in some areas and different in others. Similarities include the need for transportation to and from school and work, training, job skills and soft skills. Commonly noted differences include the need for work-based learning experiences, in-depth vocational evaluation, coordinated services with school staff, and the establishment of accommodations in postsecondary education.
2. Soft skills development is critical for youth and students with disabilities.
3. Self-advocacy skills are needed by youth and students with disabilities.
4. Benefits planning is needed to help young people and their families understand that it is possible to work and eventually achieve self-sufficiency or at least reduce the level of dependency on SSI.
5. All five of the required pre-employment transition services are beneficial and needed for students with disabilities in Delaware. DVR has focused on increasing the availability of work-based learning experiences in PY 2024, and this has helped to expose students to the real world of work and the necessary soft skills to be successful in the future.
6. Some schools are resistant because of the time that is required during the school day to deliver the services.
7. The mental health of many youth and students served by DVR presents a major barrier to employment. There is a need to develop more resources to address these barriers. DVR needs to cultivate partnerships with mental health organizations that serve youth

with mental health impairments and integrate transition services into the behavioral health treatment process.

8. Increase awareness of DVR services in the school and with family members.
9. There is a service gap noted between students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transition services and youth that are justice involved, in foster care, or who have dropped out of school. While DVR is aware of the need to serve these youth, the critical partnerships to reach them and establish service models have not been uniformly developed across the state and the available resources are limited to accomplish this outreach

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The CSNA indicates:

1. Additional clinical vendors are needed to provide diagnoses for mental health impairments that to determine eligibility. This is complicated by limited mental health services in several communities throughout the state, with some rural areas having no access to any mental health services.
2. Customized employment is needed in the State.
3. Supported Employment services need to be developed and improved. The capacity of CRPs to provide the services varies throughout the state and many areas have to wait long periods for consumers to receive services because of limited capacity of service providers to serve the individuals referred.
4. Opportunities to improve the quality of employment outcomes obtained by CRPs.
5. The payment process can be slow for delivered services causes CRPs to hesitate to expand the menu of available services as they do not have the resources to implement new services without available funding.
6. Driver evaluation services for individuals that need vehicle modifications are needed.
7. Develop CRPs for employment services of all kinds in the rural areas of the State.

The need of Business and effectiveness in serving employers:

- Increase the understanding and willingness of employers to hire/accommodate employees with disabilities.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require 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

Annually DVR and the SRC facilitate a Retreat to review performance, survey results, and establish new goals and priorities for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The SRC met in November of 2025 to review the Goals and Priorities recommended for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

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, POST-SECONDARY 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

During the quarterly and annual SRC Retreat , DVR reviews progress towards goals.

As an agency whose mission is to support dual customers, individuals with disabilities and businesses, the goals align with WIOA Performance Measures, Strategic Priorities, and workforce development. The monthly data review and quarterly RSA Data Dashboard resources assist DVR in analyzing the achievement of goals, priorities, and strategies.

GOAL 1. Provide quality employment outcome for people with disabilities.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Enhance relationships with business community through participation in the Chamber of Commerce, CSAVR Employment Resources and government and non-governmental agencies. DVR will measure this by tracking employer outreach and participation in community outreach events, developing new partnerships with other agencies and advocacy groups. Performance indicator: compare employment outcomes to business

contacts; utilize 9169 to measure effectiveness in serving employers; use available data and feedback from employers when hiring individuals with disabilities; expand the pool of employers by 10% during this period.

2. Provide technical assistance to employers on the benefits of employing individual with disabilities and working with DVR. DVR will track this through employer contacts and services provided to employer.

3. Increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for participants with significant barriers to employment. DVR will enhance collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Providers to share labor market trends, increased engagement, and monitor data to identify increase in employment opportunities. Performance indicators include: Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Most Significant Disabilities have higher hourly wages in meaningful employment at exit and remain employed second and fourth quarter after exit.

4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment on the well-being of the client. DVR will continue to provide early engagement and share available VR services to potential participants, families, community and partners. DVR will collaborate with Transition Coordinators at school (DOE) and DDDS to increase services to SE Youth, Early Start to Supported Employment and will measure through Pre-ETS data and those applying for services at transition age. Performance indicator: increase extended services to MSD Youth by 10%.

5. Review opportunities to promote financial independence. DVR will continue to provide individualized services while reviewing opportunities for participants to gain skills, experiences, and resources necessary to earn a sustainable income. DVR will work in collaboration beginning with state agency partners to increase Work-Based Learning opportunities for youth and individuals with disabilities to enhance skill development.

6. Increase outreach efforts to minority participation to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services. DVR will continue to seek opportunities to outreach and increase coordination with partners such as the Division of Employment and Training. Areas of opportunity include rural areas, veterans, and youth (to include home schooled youth). DVR will increase efforts by 10% during this period and measure by number of referrals received, outreach events, and employer contacts developed.

7. Enhance self-employment opportunities. DVR has been receiving technical assistance in self-employment to include policy revision, identifying local resources, and training to increase understanding of self-employment opportunities among staff. DVR has new tools and resources available for counselors and participants to walk through the process of taking a business idea to feasibility and plan. DVR has started a monthly Self-Employment Community of Practice and is working on an asynchronous training of seven lessons for staff. DVR is seeking to expand knowledge and understanding of the process to the DVR team to enhance self-employment as option for supported employment participants.

DVR measures success through tracking and monitoring of businesses engagement, outreach activities, and self-employment. During the weekly reporting from the Business Team

and monthly data review, DVR analyzes the strengths and opportunities and adjust accordingly to ensure achievement of the goals.

GOAL 2. Support training programs that reflect high demand opportunities in the labor market.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Focus on Career Pathways a. Enhance collaboration with WIOA partners in the development of Career Pathways programs for both youth and adults. b. Access professional development resources for the DVR team and Community Rehabilitation Providers on accessing credential-bearing programs that lead to employment within identified Career Pathways.
2. Business-Recognized Credentials a. In conjunction with WIOA partners, including the Delaware Technical and Community College and the Department of Education, identify and/or develop training opportunities in each county that lead to credentials and employment in the top five fields of employment in each county.
3. Coordination with WIOA Partners

- Increase the access and utilization of training programs by individuals with disabilities
- Provide technical assistance to WIOA Partners on disability etiquette, accommodations, accessibility, and vocational rehabilitation

During the quarterly and annual SRC Retreat , DVR reviews progress towards goals. DVR measures success through engagement activities with WIOA partners, the exchange of labor market information during bi-weekly meetings, quarterly vendor meetings, aligning policies with WIOA Partners that focus on career pathways and credentials. DVR tracks access and achievement of credentials through its data dashboard and adjusts strategies if necessary.

GOAL 3. Enhance Pre–employment Transition Services and transition career services to transition–aged individuals with disabilities.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Quality of Pre-Employment Transition Services a. Maximize the number of students who receive Pre-ETS by increasing remote and in-person services b. Enhance collaboration with districts, charters, and private schools through outreach and opportunities
2. Quality of Transition Services

- Promote resources available to support informed career decision making
- Enhance collaboration with districts, charter, and private schools through outreach and opportunities
- Maximize the number of students who receive transition services by increasing participation in transition services
- Maintain the 4 Project Search locations and analyze opportunities to expand locations.

DVR measures success through tracking and monitoring of transition services, student, parent, and district engagement, outreach activities, and Project Search performance. During the weekly reporting from the Transition Team and monthly data review, DVR analyzes the strengths and opportunities and adjust accordingly to ensure achievement of the goals.

GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing and Outreach

1. Participant Satisfaction Surveys
2. Outreach/Educate the public and legislators through a. Data b. Success Stories c. Social Media platforms d. Monthly updates to DVR website
3. Increase outreach efforts to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services
4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, independence, sense of community, and financial independence

DVR measures success through tracking and monitoring of outreach and communication activities. DVR utilizes increased social media activity and communication platforms as a measure of success. DVR also reviews participant satisfaction survey results during bi-weekly Team meetings to identify strengths and opportunities for additional development.

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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) made significant progress toward achieving its strategic goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs. Efforts focused on enhancing collaboration with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services through technical assistance from the State Employment Leadership Network, increasing quality employment outcomes through strengthening business partnerships, customized employment services, and enhanced supported employment collaboration. DVR expanded access to labor market-driven training and credentialing opportunities through workforce and community partnerships. Transition services for students with disabilities were strengthened through coordinated planning, quality assurance activities, and collaboration with education and community stakeholders. Additionally, DVR increased communication, marketing, and outreach efforts through public awareness initiatives, participant engagement, website updates, and targeted outreach to underserved populations. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation goals include enhancing the availability of services and resources in all three counties, expansion and accessibility of Supported Employment providers, and increasing quality employment outcomes.

DVR remains committed to strengthening supported employment services through rapid engagement, systems change, professional development, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The DVR and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) partner on case reviews of mutual clients including quality reviews; monthly cross agency-collaboration and development and education of both teams to strengthen services for clients. DVR and DDDS are collaborating on a marketing campaign targeted for businesses and participants to increase access of supported employment services.

Systems change initiatives to address transportation, limited-service providers (which impacts timeliness of services), and professional development remain an area of focus.

GOAL 1: Provide quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

The DVR Business Relations Team connects with businesses throughout Delaware to build and maintain strong working relationships. The Business Team partners with businesses to understand the hiring manager's staffing needs, and the job duties of the positions available so they match DVR participants with the right employment opportunities for their skills, abilities, and interests, serving the dual customer of both business and participant.
The Business Relations Specialists work closely with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure participants' success with their employment goals and that they have the support and guidance they need during their job search. The Business Relations Specialists provide VR Counselors and participants labor market information and trends. , career job fairs, and networking, DVR seeks to bring the best career opportunities to participants. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation customizes services to meet the needs of the individual.

DVR remains committed to strengthening supported employment services through rapid engagement, systems change, professional development, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The DVR and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) partner on case reviews of mutual clients including quality reviews; monthly cross agency-collaboration and development and education of both teams to strengthen services for clients. DVR and DDDS are collaborating on a marketing campaign targeted for businesses and participants to increase access of supported employment services.

Systems change initiatives to address transportation, limited-service providers (which impacts timeliness of services), and professional development remain an area of focus.

GOAL 2: Support training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides career guidance and assistance to individuals with disabilities in mapping out career pathways in occupations that build on interests, skills, abilities, and preferences. The goal is to match the participant to job opportunities that offer the potential for upward mobility with the needed credentials to advance. VR Counselor's conduct career assessments to gather information for person centered employment planning assisting to eliminate barriers that may interfere with success. VR Counselors coordinate participant assessments focused on strengths, areas for growth, challenges, opportunities, and goals.

Job skill training providers assist participants with the appropriate training opportunities leading to recognized credentials. DVR collaborates with Employment and Training for DVR participants to have access to Individual Training Account (ITA) providers. The credentials that DVR participants obtain are industry recognized and recorded at exit of the training program.

DVR collaborates with community service providers and workforce training partners in the provision of training services. Delaware DVR's aim is to work with skills and training programs to build a strong labor force within the occupation sector, with better benefits, more stability, and/or higher pay. Collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Delaware Workforce Development Board and Employment and Training includes VR Counselors access to Employment and Training's Delaware Job Link portal to over two hundred and eighty approved and vetted ITA training providers to assist DVR participants with obtaining the skills necessary to pursue employment in their chosen career fields. Additionally, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitations' Contracting Unit has solicited and awarded contractual agreements to partners to provide competitive integrated employment training and assessment programs for VR participants.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partners via the following platforms: technical assistance for disability-related accommodations, accessibility, and awareness, monthly leadership meetings, WIOA One-Stop/AJC meetings, participation in the WIOA Adult Pathways work group, attendance of the WIOA annual convening, collaboration on the combined State Plan under WIOA, and attendance of the Career Pathways Conference.

GOAL 3: Expand opportunities for students to transition from school to work.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to monitor the quality of Transition Services through quality assurance activities, provision of training, utilization of tracking tools, case management reports, referrals, Quarterly Team meetings and individual counseling sessions.

DVR collaborates and coordinates with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Department of Education. The goal is to ensure the students and families are supported in the transition process and that there is a seamless transition from the educational system into adult services. The DVR team collaborates with education and community- based organizations to actively participate in school-sponsored activities, resource fairs and other career events.

GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing and Outreach

1. Participant Satisfaction Surveys
2. Outreach/Educate the public and legislators through

- Data
- Success Stories
- Social Media platforms
- Monthly updates to DVR website

3. Increase outreach efforts to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services

4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, independence, sense of community, and financial DVR reviews participant satisfaction surveys monthly. DVR engages in outreach activities to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and enhanced its social media presence.

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

DVR actively reviews and monitors its performance on the measures in section 116 of WIOA. The division's case management system, has accessed several enhancements to comprehensively gather, monitor, and report performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2023 Performance
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	46.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,021
Credential Attainment Rate	51.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	61.3%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers*	N/A

The results of the statewide PY24 indicators are represented in the table below. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to access technical assistance and provide training to the DVR team on performance indicators, engagement strategies, case management and data quality, increasing quality case reviews, refining its data validation processes, and updating and maintaining its casework and case management system manual.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Performance
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	47.6%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,371
Credential Attainment Rate	54.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers*	N/A

DVR and the Division of Unemployment Insurance continued its Memorandum of Understanding agreement to obtain employment data in the second and fourth quarters following closure. DVR, along with the other Core WIOA Partners, use the State Wage Information system to gather employment information regarding participants who have obtained employment outside of Delaware.

Each quarter DVR submits a request for Unemployment Insurance wage data of DVR participants. The UI Wage Request is returned to DVR with two files attached, a Wage file and a Case Management File. The Case Management System file is uploaded to the Case Management System. DVR also uploads the DVR participant list to SWIS to determine if DVR participants

earn wages in other states. SWIS files and UI files are not stored once the wages have been uploaded.

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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation through innovation and expansion resources supports the SRC's Resource Plan to maintain NCSRC membership, attend NCSRC professional development and Council development.

In collaboration with the State Independent Living Council and a Center for Independent Living, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation utilizes innovation and expansion resources to provide independent living and advocacy skills, and an on-campus experience to transition-aged youth.

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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides supported employment services for individuals considered to have the most significant disabilities and for whom long term funding has been secured for extended services or natural supports can be developed on the job. To qualify for extended support services for DVR, individuals must be a youth that requires supported employment services. Youth are eligible for extended supports through DVR for a maximum of four years or until the age of 25, whichever occurs first. Individuals who do not meet this requirement will receive assistance securing other potential sources of funding for extended services (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities, PASS plans etc.)

DVR will provide quality supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR strives to increase the number of people served to ensure eligible people with the most significant disabilities have a greater opportunity to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Supported Employment Title VI funds are to be used for the provision of supported employment. Allowable costs include:

Ongoing Support Services are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment. Ongoing support services begin at the time of job placement and last until the transition to extended services. Extended services include an assessment of employment stability and the provision or coordination of specific services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability. Other examples include the provision of skilled job trainers for the individual at the worksite, social skills training, follow-up services, and facilitation of natural supports at the worksite. Title I funds may also be used for ongoing supports.

VR Extended Services are only available to youth with the most significant disabilities. Youth may receive extended services up to four years or until reaching age 25, whichever comes first. Other sources of extended services are provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resources.

- (Basic VR) Title I funds are used for all services that are not allowable Title VI funds but necessary for supported employment eligible consumers to achieve their employment outcomes. Examples include:
- job placement
- situational assessments
- skills training
- interview clothing
- assistive technology

DVR utilizes the services of vendors, on a fee-for-service basis, to provide comprehensive supported employment services for those individuals with the most significant barriers to employment. Participants and/or their representatives select the vendor to provide these services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funds supported employment services statewide for participants under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act and allocates all funds for services. Program Funds are used to purchase supported employment services from Community Rehabilitation Providers under a Purchase of Services Agreement with DVR. In order to provide supported employment for all participants who require services, Title I funds are used to supplement the Title VI, Part B allocation. Supported employment is competitive integrated employment, with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has a long-standing partnership with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS)for supported employment (SE) services. Individuals with intellectual disabilities who need long term supports in order to obtain and maintain employment are referred to DVR and DDDS. The individual works with a Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) of their choice to complete a Supported Employment Career Profile and community-based assessment to identify a vocational goal and the necessary supports to be successful in employment. The CRP assists the individual with job placement and

coaching until the individual is stable on the job. At that time, DVR pays the CRP the final milestone payment at which time DDDS provides funding to the CRP for the long term supports in order for the individual to remain on the job. DVR will continue to monitor the case for an additional 90 days once the individual enters into long term supports services through DDDS; however, no additional funding is provided by DVR. For individuals not eligible for DDDS services, but needing long term supports to be successful on a job, DVR assists the individual to identify other sources of long term funding or natural supports on the job.

DVR has quarterly focused conversations with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to strengthen collaboration through resource sharing and development, case reviews, reconciliation of funding strategies, and education. DVR has increased efforts of monitoring vendor services as a method for quality review and communication with all partners.

Although Delaware's SE services continue to be enhanced with collaborative partnerships with the Department of Education (DOE), DDDS, Local Education Agencies (LEAs). and DVR, there are still many students who are potentially eligible for SE services who are not being referred. Each year the DOE identifies the number of students in the state who are enrolled in school and have a disability typically meeting the criteria for DDDS services and/or requiring SE services to obtain and maintain employment. There are a variety of factors which influence the referral process for students including:

- school staff not believing a student can work (low expectations, lack of understanding of adult services and supports available, etc.),
- families not supporting employment as a goal for their chiId (safety concerns, fear of losing benefits, lack of understanding of adult services and Supported Employment, low expectations etc.),
- students not choosing employment (limited or lack of exposure to career options, limited understanding of disability and support needs, lack of training in self-advocacy, etc.), and
- lack of CRP availability and experience to provide SE services to individuals with the most significant disabilities (personnel shortage/lack of training and/or experience).

Goals and priorities for supported employment (SE) services include:

• expanding SE services to more students prior to them exiting from high school by providing more outreach to schools, students and families

• connecting students to adult services while still in school, thereby eliminating gaps in services,

• providing students opportunities to participate in assessments and career exploration activities

• increasing student understanding and preparation for work and the chance of becoming employed right out of high school and providing them access to a team of professionals all working towards the same goal.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) will revisit and revise the MOU that supports mutually shared participants expanding access to DVR placement supports.

DVR leverages long–term extended services that are funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and re-engaging opportunities to leverage resources for transition students and youth with mental health disabilities with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. By leveraging the long–term supports through DDDS and DSAMH, DVR is able to expand supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities up to four years or until a student with disabilities reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. Once a student with disabilities reaches age 25, alternate sources of extended service supports are identified.

Goal 1: Ensure fiscal policies, procedures and practices are fully aligned with Title VI regulations and fiscal controls are implemented.

Goal 2: Provide the DVR team with continual professional development, oversight and guidance regarding Title VI fiscal regulations in relation to purchased services and reasonable, allocable, allowable, and necessary costs. Ongoing professional development will include the non-delegable nature of this provision in WIOA, technical assistance, and tracking of supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation administers the Supported Employment Program under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act. Supported Employment occurs in an integrated setting where individuals with the most significant disabilities receive minimum wage or above for work. In the absence of the services available as part of supported employment, many of the participants would not obtain or retain employment.

The Division is focused on providing quality services using the following strategies:

*Quality Assurance Reviews of all supported employment programs operated by rehabilitation providers. DVR meets with Community Rehabilitation Programs on a quarterly basis to review progress and resolve programmatic issues.

*Oversight monitoring in partnership with long term funding agencies. At least quarterly, representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) meet with DVR to address issues related to the smooth transition from DVR services to the extended services. In addition, DVR is represented on the Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDDS) Day Service Advisory Committee which includes supported employment.

* Ongoing professional development of the DVR team

In 2024 and 2025, DVR received technical assistance from the VRTAC-QE to enhance capacity to provide Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) professional development in Supported Employment in the following areas:

- Federal policy and historical overview of supported employment
- Components of a customer profile to include situational assessments, vocational evaluations, and functional resumes
- Discovery
- Job development for career paths
- Matching a customer's strengths with the prospective employer's business needs
- Job-site training strategies (e.g., natural cues, workplace supports, compensatory strategies, instructional strategies, assistive technology) and their applications
- High-quality, long-term support plan.
- Alternative funding sources for supported employment
- SSI and SSDI
- Impact of working on benefits

In addition, there is on-going Customized Employment Bootcamp training offered on the discovery process, job development, business engagement and coaching to front line team members of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP), local education agencies (LEAs), DVR, families and businesses.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and Local Education Agencies to identify referrals for supported employment services. Primary indicators for supported employment are:

*Demonstrated inability to maintain employment utilizing traditional employment programs without extended follow–along services as the result of a most significant disability.

*Indication that, due to the significance of the disability, the individual is not likely to obtain and maintain employment in the absence of intensive services from DVR and extended services from DDDS or natural supports.

Individuals with the most significant disabilities who are identified for supported employment services will have the following services available; Title 1 funds are used for the 1st and 2nd milestone payments and available Title VI funds are used once job placement has occurred:

1. Supported employment career profile/assessment to identify the individual’s unique strengths, resources, interests, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities.
2. Development of a Job Placement Plan to identify a suitable vocational goal based off informed choice and career profile data.
3. Job placement in an integrated work environment based on the results of the job placement plan.

4. Intensive job coaching/training services on–site and/or off–site to enable the individual to become stabilized in his or her employment.

5. Upon stabilization, DVR and the agency identified to provide extended services commence the transition to extended services. DVR will be the lead service provider, facilitating communication with the individual, the employer, and the extended service provider for a minimum of 90 days following stabilization.

Individuals with mental illness who are receiving services from the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health are primarily served with traditional DVR supports including job coaching and through the ACT teams. Individuals for whom more intensive supported employment needs, including individuals with dual diagnosis, may be served through supported employment vendors.

With a goal toward competitive integrated employment (CIE) for all — including individuals with disabilities — the Delaware General Assembly enacted HB 122, the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act on June 29, 2021. HB 122 mandated the phased elimination of subminimum wage employment by January 2024. The legislation anticipated the need for careful planning and therefore outlined components to address the resource and funding requirements to ensure all individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability, could become employed in CIE.

The key priorities contained within this Competitive Integrated Employment for People with Disabilities Implementation Plan for HB 122, the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act (Section II) and as identified by both the Employment First Oversight Committee (EFOC) and Employment First Task Force (EFTF) and adopted by the EFOC, are as follows:

1. Expand the pool of employers participating in supported employment programs

2. Invest in strengthening and diversifying the provider network delivering employment support services

3. Ensure cross-agency collaboration and support to maximize system capacity and employment outcomes.

4. Focus on employment opportunities at an earlier age, incorporating employment into goal setting as early as possible in the transition process:

DVR continued to collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division for the Visually Impaired to secure technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON). The technical assistance received is used to address the priorities in the Implementation Plan and systems change to enhance competitive integrated employment in Delaware. This is the third year Delaware has been a NEON Core State. The milestones include:

- Exploration and commitment to pilot quality incentive recommendations across NEON Partners

- Employment Awareness Campaign Analysis and Communications Engagement

- Benefits Planning Technical Assistance for NEON Partners

- Progress in Building a Shared Foundation Collaboration with SELN (State Employment Leadership Network).

The 2025 Core State Plan achievements were:

- Benefits Planning Education
- Benefits Planning Communication Materials
- Research and review on model employment awareness campaigns
- Analysis of 2024 Provider recommendations for quality and efficiency incentives.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Division for the Visually Impaired are committed to continuing systems change collaboration ultimately enhancing competitive integrated employment.

In addition, the division uses needs assessments, surveys, and community engagement to identify and address the needs of unserved and/or underserved populations.

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).

To provide supported employment services throughout Delaware, DVR is reviewing its cooperative agreement with the agency that serves individuals with intellectual/cognitive disabilities, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS). The agreement is monitored by workgroups that review the program, identifying best practices and areas that need improvement. As delineated in the cooperative agreement, DVR and DDDS collaborate to provide supported employment services to transition–age students, youth, and to adults with cognitive disabilities. The Contract Administrator engages with the DDDS to ensure best practices for the transition from DVR to DDDS Long Term Supports.

DVR maintains a protocol with DDDS to allow for clients to achieve timely access to long-term supports following stability on the job. This process assists individuals who have an identified need for ongoing job coaching. Steps include DDDS' Case Manager working with the individual to discuss waiver work support providers and the process for selection of a provider. Following a vendor call, the approved transfer form is completed identifying key information on the business site, wages, schedule, level of support, technology and natural support plan and selected work support provider. The VR Counselor works closely with the individual and case manager to ensure a smooth transition.

For individuals with cognitive disabilities, DVR and DDDS have a long-standing agreement on the Supported Employment (SE) process and financial responsibilities of each agency. For out of school youth and adults being referred to SE, typically the referral is made to DDDS and then

sent to DVR with supporting documentation. DVR will assist the individual with selecting a SE provider and provide funding to that provider for:

1.) supported employment career profile and community-based assessments,

2.) development of a job placement plan,

3.) job placement,

4.) job coaching/training, and

5.) stabilization/closure.

DVR pays the final milestone of stabilization/closure once the individual has stabilized and is ready to transition to long term support. DVR continues to monitor the case for an additional 90 days, however once DVR payment ends at stabilization, funding shifts to DDDS for extended services, when available. DVR, DDDS and the providers work together to ensure individuals with disabilities receive quality and seamless SE services. The WIOA provision allowing VR to provide extended services is an additional resource; extended services are only available to youth under WIOA funded by VR. This does not impact the process for those who qualify for DDDS.

In regard to students, the only variation to the process is the responsibility of the schools to identify and inform students and families of the SE opportunity and assist with helping families to connect to the related services. The school refers the student to DDDS for Supported Employment 2 years prior to high school exit. This model, Early Start to Supported Employment (ESSE), increases the collaboration with Adult Service Providers and schools, facilitates better communication and sharing of information and increases employment opportunities for students. SE providers are able to include information from the schools and observations of the students in the SE Career Profile and assessment process and begin job development while the student is still in school. The providers also share information with the school to help them better understand how they can support students with more targeted skill development and employment preparation related to the student's employment goals and the needs of the businesses. Funding for ESSE remains the same as for general SE services.

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

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.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services
N/A	3,411

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services
N/A	961

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 VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not under an 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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation does not forecast implementing an order of selection.

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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation does not forecast implementing an order of selection.

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?

No.

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.

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.

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.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed
Admin Support	18
VR Counselors	38
Fiscal	4
Administration	13
Information Technology	4
Business Relations	5

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

The ratio of qualified VR Counselors to clients is approximately 1:145.

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

The 2025 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium indicates Delaware's disability population comprises 14.3% of the Delaware population (145,000). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves 3% of Delawareans with disabilities. While DVR will continue to strengthen its outreach to people with disabilities, DVR anticipates serving 4,536 individuals in 5 years.

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
"none"	"none"

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.

DVR requires VR Counselors to possess educational credentials necessary to effectively perform rehabilitation counseling functions supporting the career goals of individuals with disabilities.

To expand the talent pool, DVR has a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor series. This classification has three levels. The entry level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, a Social or Behavioral Science, or a related field with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and essential functions specific to serving individuals with disabilities. The second level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Bachelor's Degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and experience in vocational rehabilitation. The third level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Master's Degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and two years experience in vocational rehabilitation. DVR supports on-going professional development, tuition assistance, and professional association membership to support VR Counselors. The qualifications, as outlined in the career series ensures DVR VR Counselors are aligned with the State's approved personnel standards for VR Counselors before they are assigned the task of determining participant eligibility, as permitted by 34 C.F.R. § 361.42(a)(1)(iii)

DVR continues engagement with the Department of Human Resources to review the compensation of the VR Counselor series. DVR continues to advocate for incentives to retain and recruit VR Counselors.

DVR employs a multifaceted approach to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified VR Professionals. Recruitment efforts focus on attracting candidates with relevant educational backgrounds, experience in vocational rehabilitation and/or transferable skills, and a demonstrated commitment to serving individuals with disabilities. To support retention and professional growth, DVR provides structured onboarding, mentoring by experienced VR Counselor IIIs, and access to a comprehensive learning management system that supports continuing education and skill development. DVR serves on the CSAVR National Human Resource Professional Network Leadership Committee to identify additional opportunities to recruit and retain qualified individuals through networking and sharing of resources.

DVR maintains a relationship with the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, Wilmington University and Delaware Technical & Community College to regularly offer practicum/internships and recruit qualified individuals to fill vacancies for students pursuing degrees in Social or Behavioral Sciences, Education, or a related field. DVR is exploring resources available through the State's Internship program to afford high school and college level individuals an opportunity to work in the VR Program.

The State of Delaware's Selective Placement Program offers state agencies the opportunity to interview qualified individuals with disabilities without having to post a position. This program was developed to recruit more individuals with disabilities. The Division provides training on Selective Placement statewide to all VR Counselors and Employment Services Specialists, community partners, and markets to state agency hiring managers.

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.

DVR is committed to professional development.

DVR ensures VR Counselors receive structured supervision, mentoring, and targeted training. DVR VR Counselors are supported through a formal onboarding and training process known as the New Counselor Training Academy, ongoing professional development, and continuous quality assurance monitoring to ensure the DVR team maintain the knowledge and competencies required to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services in compliance with federal and state requirements.

Once hired, VR Counselors engage in a New Counselor Training Academy. New VR Counselors participate in a formal mentoring relationship for a one-year period, during which they receive individualized guidance, coaching, and performance feedback. DVR’s emphasis on ongoing professional development, quality assurance oversight, and career-long learning and engagement, skill progression, and retention while ensuring continuity and quality of services provided to individuals with disabilities.

The VR Counselors onboarding includes a competency checklist of core elements in the provision and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services. This comprehensive, multi-modal new counselor training academy includes:

- DVR policies and procedures governing service delivery
- In- depth training of legislation, regulation, policy, and processes from referral through case closure using various training modalities,
- Counseling and guidance
- Informed choice
- Including hands-on practice with coaching
- Practical application of learned concepts by new counselors observing experienced counselors
- Vocational rehabilitation processes
- Understanding and application of eligibility criteria, determination of severity of disability, completion of the comprehensive assessment, plan development and approval, provision of rehabilitation services, monitoring of employment, and appropriate closure decisions and practices, and practicum (Hands on Case Management)
- Effectively seeking and synthesizing disability, vocational, and labor market information
- Utilizing assessments, determining service needs
- Rehabilitation technology,
- Labor Market Information
- Workforce development

VR Counselors regularly participate in case consultations and clinical supervision with the District Administrators and VR Counselors III to develop and refine skills needed to make sound clinical decisions and provide comprehensive vocational counseling and guidance. While this initial period of training focuses on new counselors, all Counselors are provided the opportunity to engage with the training academy. The VR Counselors Training Plan includes a competency checklist of core elements in the provision and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, regular coaching is available from VR Counselors III and District Administrators.

DVR regularly provides access to a broad range of professional development opportunities through workshops, webinars, conferences, and distance education to enhance skills and knowledge. Training topics commonly available includes ethics, case management, rehabilitation technology, assessment, job development and service delivery. Resources are shared to gain knowledge through research in rehabilitation and expand professional development to ensure team needs are met.

DVR evaluates the effectiveness of staff training and professional development through a structured quality assurance and monitoring framework. Case reviews, documentation audits, and supervisory oversight are used to assess staff competency, compliance with policy, and service quality. Findings from quality assurance reviews and an annual Training Needs Assessment are used to identify training needs at the individual, district, or statewide level. When trends or recurring issues are identified, DVR implements targeted or impromptu training to address gaps and reinforce best practices. This feedback loop ensures that training content remains responsive to program needs, regulatory requirements, and service delivery outcomes. Through this continuous improvement process, DVR ensures that professional development activities contribute to improved case quality, regulatory compliance, and positive employment outcomes for individuals served.

DVR has facilitated professional development in the areas of Supported & Customized Employment from the University of Wisconsin- Technical Assistance Center- Quality Employment, Benefits Planning, Self-employment through National Disability Institute, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Pre-Employment Transition Services, Fiscal Basics training, Clinical Supervision for District Administrators , Department of Labor Leadership Academy, and VR Leadership opportunities such as Pathways, LEADVR, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, and more.

DVR supports virtual learning platforms, resources available through the VR Technical Assistance Centers, Communities of Practice, and professional network and membership organizations for the ongoing professional development of the DVR team.

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.

Delaware does not have state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirements for its VR classifications. Delaware has established minimum qualifications that require all VR Counselors to possess an appropriate Bachelor's level degree, experience working with individuals with disabilities, and when possible, are eligible to obtain the appropriate nationally recognized certification. VR Counselor recruitment continues to identify minimum qualifications that meet or exceed requirements. DVR works closely with the Department of Human Resources to ensure the team responsible for the initial screening of applicants is knowledgeable of the education and experience requirements needed to assure qualified personnel.

Currently, 22 of the 38 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation or a related field. DVR is having increasing difficulty successfully recruiting and retaining VR Counselors. Currently, when circumstances prohibit DVR from hiring a Master's prepared Rehabilitation Counselor, DVR often recruits at an entry-level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor classification. District Administrators encourage VR Counselors to pursue the additional coursework to gain a Master's degree and/or a CRC. DVR assists these team members to connect with universities offering financial assistance and provides tuition assistance to complete graduate coursework.

While it is not a requirement by the State to possess or be eligible to sit for the CRC, DE DVR does hold the Certification directly related to the field of helping people with disabilities achieve employment in high regard. All Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are required to attend training annually directly related to serving people and businesses in regard to supporting people with disabilities.

DVR has established minimum education and experience requirements for all positions providing rehabilitation services to ensure personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. All team members providing vocational rehabilitation services are required to possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their job duties. In addition to the education requirements described in section i(3)(A), Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor III must possess one to two years' experience in vocational rehabilitation working directly with individuals with disabilities.

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.

Within the Division, a VR Counselor position has been designated as Rehabilitation Counselor for Deaf or Hard of Hearing. DVR has experienced challenges with recruiting and retaining an individual fluent in American Sign Language. However, DVR utilizes ASL interpreters, Video Remote Interpreting, and relay services to communicate with participants who are deaf or hard of hearing. DVR also requires the VR Counselor providing services to complete professional development in ASL and deaf culture.

Within New Castle County, one position is designated for a bilingual, English and Spanish, Counselor to serve the Hispanic population. There are currently four team members who speak both English and Spanish fluently. All offices have access to interpreter and translation resources and LanguageLine to ensure effective communication.

DVR ensures that critical forms are available in common foreign languages, including Spanish, and translates these forms to additional languages when needed. DVR continues to explore technological options to improve options for ensuring appropriate modes of communication, including Video Remote Interpreting and tools available through virtual meeting platforms, and contracted vendors through State of Delaware Marketplace . While these tools cannot fully replace live interpreter services, they can support on-demand communication and minimize delays.

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 DVR and the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) work closely to provide Transition services to high school students with disabilities. DVR has an assigned VR Counselor to all public, and many private, charter and alternative schools in the state. DVR and the Department of Education's Exceptional Children's Resources collaboratively coordinate transition services.

Monthly Transition Cadre meetings provide transition stakeholders an opportunity for professional development, collaboration, best practices exchange, and enhance post–school planning and outcomes for transition–age youth. Stakeholders include the Department of Education, Local Education Agency personnel, DVR, community partners and state agencies.

Professional Development opportunities are shared and funded collaboratively to support the emerging needs of students with disabilities.

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 Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's Transition program works collaboratively with Department of Education partners, educators, other state agencies and Community Rehabilitation partners to identify students with disabilities that may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. DVR has dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors providing transitioning services in public and vocational schools. In addition, DVR collaborates with charter, private, and correctional facilities to provide access to vocational rehabilitation services.

The Transition Services team is part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors covering the State of Delaware. The VR Counselors attend and participate in the Individualized Education Program process two years prior to exiting school. The DVR VR Counselors provide information about VR and Pre-ETS services, activities and opportunities the students have participated in and observations, and referrals to other resources. In addition, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) collaborates with local agencies to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to transition students aged 14-22 potentially eligible for DVR services. Currently, DVR contracts with nine vendors who are monitored by DVR for quality assurance, continuous improvement, and access to compliment transition services in Delaware

Transition services in Delaware begin at age 14, however, most referrals are received while the student is in the second year from exiting school. VR Counselors meet with students to explore goals, abilities, capabilities, challenges, supports, and services aimed towards achieving employment. This engagement is person-centered and individualized to include comprehensive vocational assessments, career exploration, workplace readiness, work-based learning, self-

advocacy training, preparation for post- secondary education, and assistive technology assessments. The Transition Counselors benefit from technology to maximize their relationships with students, families, educators and partners. The Transition team also works in collaboration with partners from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDDS) for students requiring extended supports in a work environment. Together the teams collaborate to identify early in the process the needs, resources, and coordinate services.

Pre-ETS Coordinators serve students 14 years of age assisting them to explore and develop their career pathways. The primary focus is to ensure the students ' career goals align with courses and work-based learning experiences including internships and apprenticeships.

There is continued collaboration between DVR and Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) to provide intensive educational support for graduating transition students enrolled in remedial programs at DTCC. The supported education project provides workshops in Math, English and Reading to transition-age youth, along with some additional specialized study skills training. Over the years, the initiative has grown from one campus to all four DTCC campuses statewide. This initiative has been beneficial for students to receive more adequate support while in college.

In Delaware, Project SEARCH is a collaboration between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, local school districts, host businesses and a Community Rehabilitation Provider. Delaware currently has four Project SEARCH partnerships; three hospitals and a state agency and includes four school districts. The students selected for the program are in their last year of high school and serves as transitional programing. The students learn specific work skills that are transferable to employment opportunities in integrated settings. The program design includes a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands on training through three worksite rotations. The worksite rotations are identified by interests expressed by the students in which gives them opportunity to experience and learn skills. The program peaks with individualized, competitive, integrated employment. Nationally the average is seventy percent success. Delaware's program success has been recognized nationally as it consistently has achieved 80-100% employment success for the graduates of the program model. Delaware is evaluating Project SEARCH expansion opportunities.

Delaware continues for the 8th year as a leading partner with the National Alliance for Partnership in Equity (NAPE) Pipeline to Career Success initiative for student with disabilities. This initiative is designed to increase the enrollment, graduation and transition to post-secondary education and competitive employment for students with disabilities through Career Technical Education career pathways.

PIPEline's objective is to increase the number of students with disabilities who:

1. Enroll in CTE career pathways;

2. Participate in related work-based learning experiences in authentic employment settings;

3. Earn college and career credentials in CTE career pathways;

4. Graduate from high school with a CTE career pathway.

5. Continue their education and training beyond high school; and

6. Enter in-demand employment

DOE, DVR, DVI, and DDDS partner and collaborate on the initiative. Subject matter experts develop, modify, and adapt the program involvement process for equity (PIPE) curriculum, instructional tools and supporting resources to increase the success rate of diverse students with disabilities in CTE career pathways. The initiative supports school administrators and CTE staff to collaboratively engage with state agencies to focus on increasing work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities. This initiative has shown to be very successful and continues to expand in the state. The Pipeline provided the opportunity for students from the Delaware juvenile system to participate in a pilot during the 24-25 School Year. The pilot was a success and opened doors for opportunities incorporating students' voice.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to identify ways to increase opportunities for students and creatively develop new initiatives. DVR is analyzing opportunities to increase summer Pre-ETS opportunities and develop unique opportunities to increase exposure to work-based learning and exploratory experiences. The Delaware Pre-ETS team initiated a program of opportunities for students with disabilities interested in participating in exploratory Pre-ETS activities in the summer of 2025. The team's goal is to continue exploring ways to expand summer career exploration opportunities in a variety of industries.

DVR continues to evaluate opportunities to expand services and engage additional partners. In addition, DVR is expanding its communications footprint through social media and a strong participation in community events such as Transition Fairs, College Fairs, Career Fairs, and resource events.

DVR will continue to access technical assistance and guidance from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT-C) to align with best practices.

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 Memorandum of Agreement between the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Delaware Department of Education, Exceptional Children's Resources and Delaware Local Education Agencies is in place to coordinate and facilitate transition services of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services, including:

- Pre-Employment Transition Services;
- Assistive technology evaluations;
- Work experience development;
- Strategies for successful job placement;
- Career exploration;
- Resources and referrals

DVR provides consultation and technical assistance to DOE to plan for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services through monthly collaborative Cadre meetings, participation in parent information session/night at local schools, regular attendance at IEP meetings, and support at school's sponsor college and career fairs. VR counselors are invited to the IEP's of students starting at age 14. They are responsible to provide guidance and information of VR services and community resources including Pre-ETS.

Since May 2015, DOE and DVR have held monthly Transition Cadre meetings with districts and charter schools throughout the state to engage and enhance transition services. Stakeholders receive training, technical assistance, and opportunities to work with teams at the state and local level. Throughout the school year, DVR works closely with the local schools to develop and

participate in student and Parent Information Sessions, Career and College Fairs and Transition Fairs.

DOE shares information with VR of students that have IEP's and 504 plans. These students are identified as students that are potentially eligible for services. Each school coordinator communicates directly with the VR leaders and counselors assigned at the schools. The collaborative efforts are geared to engage the students as early as age 14. VR counselors are invited to school events such as IEP's, Family nights, and school fairs. The VR Counselors are responsible to share at these events information about VR services, Pre-ETS services, transition services, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and overall scope of services available for students that are eligible for VR services. The school and VR team members collaborative engage with students and families to share resources and completing referrals and or application for services.

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.

DVR's Business Relations Team's provides support to assist youth and adult job seekers with developing resumes, preparing for interviews, completing applications, and connecting with employers. In addition, the Business Services team provides onsite support during employer onboarding. DVR's Business Relations team facilitates employer informational tours to increase industry knowledge for youth with disabilities and adult job seekers. Examples of information tours have included various industries such as information technology, retail, electrical, HVAC, production, education, and communications. DVR's Business Relations Team's dual customer focus provides support and guidance to youth and adult job seekers, employers, and community partners. In alignment with Governor Meyer's Executive Order #1, DVR is developing a host of work-based learning experiences, information sessions to enhance the career exploration for youth and students with disabilities. Specifically, DVR's Business Team collaborates with the Department of Human Resources for State of Delaware Career Fairs for Youth assisting students to apply for State of Delaware internships, Selective Placement and the Employment Network.

The Business Relations Team uses information from the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information such as the Delaware Career Compass, the Delaware Monthly Labor Review and other labor market information as a guide for creating career opportunities and establish linkages with business. In addition, DVR promotes utilization of Delaware JobLink to match job seekers and business.

The Business Relations Specialists also frequently collaborates with other WIOA Partners such as the Division of Employment and Training to attend community outreach and Career Job Fairs, and local employers' hiring needs to bring the best career opportunities to youth and adult participants.

The Business Relations team currently functions from a dual customer perspective and exists to:

• Assist the DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to obtain meaningful & quality opportunities for all assigned job seekers.

• Identify and prepare both youth and adult DVR job seekers, including adults, transition students, and pre-employment transition students in a timely manner in response to employer recruiting needs.

• Build solid relationships and engage business and industry in collaborative activities as a resource to meet their workforce needs.

• Partner with the State of Delaware Department of Human Resources Talent Acquisition Team and the Division of the Visually Impaired to support the State of Delaware Employment Network; a Work Experience Development Program created to provide work experience opportunities for people with disabilities to gain useful, employment-based knowledge and experience within varied state government career paths. In addition, increase state agency knowledge and participation in the State of Delaware's Selective Placement to advance hiring opportunities for people with disabilities seeking employment in State government.

• Work closely with local workforce development agencies, schools and community–based organizations who seek to build relationships with employers by engaging in career fairs, parent nights and other activities.

• Facilitate statewide communication, training, marketing, resource sharing and other activities related to consumer placement in competitive integrated employment and work-based learning opportunities and business development.

• Work closely with state and local Chamber of Commerce, SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management), and other professional organizations to promote a structure for networking and sharing information.

The DVR Business Relations team works with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program to assist businesses with Federal contracts to fulfill the Section 503 requirements regarding employment of individuals with disabilities. The OFCCCP has referred businesses that are seeking compliance to DVR for assistance. Federal contractors send lists of open positions to the Business Relations Unit. In addition, Business Relations Specialists work with the State's office of Government Support Services where Government contracts are awarded.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of VR services. Utilizing best practices, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will also:

• Engage employers in activities as strategic partners.

• Collaborate with employers to help identify high demand industries and occupations in Delaware.

• Promote and encourage apprenticeships, OJT, internships, and other work–based learning opportunities.

• Provide labor market information and other tools and resources that address workforce needs.

• Promote the Talent Acquisition Portal to highlight Delaware's workforce talent and connect job seekers with a larger network of employers.

The Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) deploys resources to employers including:

- Pre-Employment Assessment and Boarding
- Recruitment and Retention
- Disability Awareness Training
- Employment Law Education
- Consultation and Support
- Financial Advisement
- Employee Assistance
- Access to VR support at all levels
- Assistive technology
- Workplace accommodations
- Tax credits and workforce incentives

DVR is an active member of the Delaware Workforce Development Board's Business Cohort. This collaborative initiative provides Business Relations professionals the opportunity to share resources, strategically address workforce needs and provide an extensive marketing and outreach network.

DVR received technical assistance resources through the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center -Quality Employment during this period. This provided DVR's Business team with tools and strategies focused on building capacity to connect with businesses, identifying business needs, and supporting their efforts to hire and retain people with disabilities in their workforce. The DVR Business team will continue to enhance their skills in areas such as analyzing business-driven strategies and tools, engaging business partners, working collaboratively with companies to analyze staffing challenges and identifying opportunities to leverage hiring individuals. In addition, Business Relations team members receive professional development in job development and placement, labor market and career information, marketing to business customers, employment readiness, soft skills training, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other areas to ensure customer responsiveness.

L. 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;

DVR partners with the Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC) of the Center for Disability Studies' Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative. Locations are available in Kent/Sussex County and New Castle counties and include a vast inventory of equipment, software, communication devices and items that support people with all disabilities. The ATRCs house equipment that may be loaned to individuals. DVR works in conjunction with the ATRC to identify vocationally applicable equipment. DVR clients work with ATRC team to assess the individuals' needs, select, and use equipment, to assist with education/training or employment. Upon successful identification of assistive technology, a recommendation for the purchase of that equipment is provided to DVR.

As required by the Assistive Technology Act, DVR maintains representation on the Assistive Technology Loan Advisory Board.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

According to the Delaware Occupational and Labor Market statistics, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting jobs will decrease by 4.17% by the year 2030. However, when participants express interest in careers in the industry, DVR utilizes the following resources to assist with career readiness and employment development:

1. Delaware Department of Agriculture training and certification programs to assist consumers interested in Grain Inspection, Nutrient Management, Pesticide Applicators, and Farm Food Safety.
2. AgrAbility Program Resources: Although Delaware is no longer an active State participant in the AgrAbility program through the United States Department of Agriculture, DVR has access to several resources available to all states such as the National AgrAbility Project. Upon request, DVR connects with the National AgrAbility Project for information and services remotely, such as recommendations on types of technologies or technical assistance navigating the social services system. Additional resources include an assistive technology toolbox, publications, and archived webinars.

[1]Long-Term Industry (delaware.gov)

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains and continues to enhance collaboration with workforce development agencies to support Out of School Youth. DVR is an active member of the WIOA Leadership team and engages with partners to address the needs of Out of School Youth. DVR will also revisit its collaboration with the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services to identify and address needs.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

State use contracting in Delaware falls under the purview of the Commission for Statewide Contracts to Support Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (the Commission). The

Commission codified by DE Code 16 § 9600 is designed to encourage and assist individuals with visual impairments and other disabilities to achieve maximum personal independence by assuring an expanded and constant market for their products and services. They routinely work together to develop new set-aside opportunities and ensure existing contracts are operating within the established guidelines and regulations. DVR is appointed to the Commission.

To operate the set-aside contracts effectively and fairly, the Commission utilizes one or more Central Nonprofit Agency (CNA) as primary contractors of set-aside opportunities. Using the state procurement process, a CNA Request for Proposal is published on a quarterly basis to attract multiple types of contractors. Once contracts are secure, the CNA has the option of subcontracting or performing the job themselves. Regardless of the choice, the CNA is responsible for ensuring the contracts maintain the proper ratios of employees with and without disabilities and provide the goods/services as described in the contract.

There is currently one CNA in Delaware, the Ability Network of Delaware (A.N.D.), who subcontracts the work to several community rehabilitation providers. The set-aside opportunities in Delaware are temporary staffing and janitorial. DVR works collaboratively with the A.N.D. and their subcontractors to help participants secure positions and provide employment supports and other services to ensure success on the job.

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.);

DVR has active relationships with state agencies that access employment services through Medicaid resources under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

The Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) administers Title XIX of the Social Security Act for the State of Delaware. DVR collaborates with the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) while providing Supported Employment services to participants with intellectual disabilities. Eligible individuals may receive extended employment services made possible through amendments of the DDDS Home and Community Based Waiver programs, HCBS 1915(i), HCBS 1915(c) and HCBS (b)(4).

DVR aims to revitalize the partnership with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to coordinate the provision of evidence-based Supported Employment to eligible participants who have severe and persistent mental health needs. Employment services are made possible through Section 1115 of the Medicaid demonstration waiver as authorized by Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

DVR continues to work with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDDS) to maintain effective and efficient inter-agency relationships.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and DVR partner to provide a continuum of service delivery for supported employment clients for extended services and supports.

The agencies processes delineate which agency is responsible throughout the supported employment process. DVR is responsible through employment stabilization and beyond. DVR provides funding to the SE provider for 1.) discovery and community-based work assessments when needed, 2.) job placement, and 3.) stabilization/closure. DVR pays the 3rd and final milestone once the individual has achieved stabilization on the job determined by the Supported Employment Team. Once DVR pays the final milestone DDDS, through a community provider, assumes responsibility for the long-term follow-along extended services. The goal is to have a streamlined process that assists in identifying all available programs and resources, expand and improve employment services to people with significant disabilities, and maximize the use of comparable benefits. In instances when the individual has not applied for or does not qualify for extended follow along funding DVR will continue to support the person on the job for up 24 months. The VR Counselor is responsible to connect the family and provide counseling and guidance on resources for ongoing supports.

The Early Start to Supported Employment Model provides Supported Employment Services to students with developmental disabilities transitioning from school to work. The model has been refined adding Customized Employment principles and working with providers to begin services earlier, in the year prior to the student's exiting year. The Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are reviewing their cooperative agreements to reflect newly implemented effective practices.

DVR, DDDS, the Department of Education, DVI and a community provider support a comprehensive professional development curriculum. On a semi-annual basis, a Customized Employment Bootcamp program is offered to train DVR, DDDS, DSAMH, DVI, the Department of Education, Local Education Agencies, charter schools and community rehabilitation providers. This program is jointly funded by DVR, DDDS and DOE and offers training on effective supported employment and business engagement processes. This training facilitates skill building, networking and cross-agency understanding and collaboration to better serve mutual participants and local businesses. Both agencies also strongly encouraged and support Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators certification to improve the quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

DVR is revitalizing its Memorandum of Understanding with the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health to address the employment needs of individuals with significant mental illness. The goal is for a collaborative framework and sharing of resources and expertise for both agencies to establish and maintain an employment program.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) maintains relationships with other agencies, both public and private, that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DVR maintains cooperative agreements with public and private non–profit agencies such as programs that

serve individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse disabilities, and community rehabilitation programs.

DVR maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with a public institution of higher education, Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC). DVR and DTCC collaborate to provide supported education services to DVR clients who are enrolled as first semester students or first year students at DTCC who could benefit from additional assistance. . The program provides additional training in study skills, time management, study techniques, workshops, and extra help in math, English and reading, and teaching advocacy for students to be successful in the school environment. DVR Counselors work collaboratively with DTCC Academic Advisors that serve as Disability Coordinators at their respective campus to assist DVR participants with accommodation plans.

The Division of Social Services, Division of Employment and Training and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation collaboratively support Delaware's Advancement through Pardon and Expungement (APEX) program to address barriers to employment for job seekers with criminal histories to seek high quality high demand employment. The job seekers who are eligible under the law for expungement and/or pardon are assisted throughout the process by APEX via form completion, filing, payment of finger printing and court documents and representation at court expungement hearings and/or Pardon Board Reviews.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

All DVR Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations are established in accordance with Delaware Code, Title 29, Chapter 69 (State Procurement). Agreements that meet applicable competitive bidding thresholds are publicly advertised and processed through the State of Delaware Procurement Portal

Consistent with state procurement requirements, agreements that fall below the applicable bidding thresholds are still executed in compliance with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and internal approval requirements. The State of Delaware Procurement Portal serves as the centralized platform for competitive solicitations and provides guidance for entities seeking to do procurement business with the State.

The Contracting unit within Government Support Services manages all statewide contracts for goods and services and administers agency contracts, as requested. This team is the State of Delaware's central contracting unit that acts on behalf of State agencies, local government units, authorized volunteer fire companies, and School Districts.

In Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023–September 30, 2024), DVR awarded Purchase of Services Agreements to 30 entities, 14 of which were nonprofit organizations, to provide Competitive Integrated Employment Services. These agreements support individuals with significant disabilities by increasing the successful placement in integrated employment and supporting employment retention for at least 90 days

DVR maintains contractual arrangements for Supported Employment Services (SE) for individuals with the most significant disabilities, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Training programs, and other services. DVR explores individualized opportunities for agreements that support meaningful employment consistent with the consumer’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice.

DVR continues to maintain effective working relationships with their contracted service providers through quarterly meetings that include administrative and operational updates, resources, and policy changes. DVR is committed to Provider engagement, collaboration, program development, standardization of reporting and quality improvement through the Contractor Provider Quarterly Meeting and one on one meetings.

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:

The VR agency must select the "Edit" button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
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).

The State Plan must include
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 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.

The State Plan must include
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 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):

The State Plan must include
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[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Delaware General VR Agency)

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

Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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

Elisha Jenkins

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

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

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[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.

[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.

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
Name of Signatory	Elisha Jenkins
Title of Signatory	Director
Date Signed	February 18, 20

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.

The submission of expected levels is the first step in the negotiations process. Once the expected levels of performance have been submitted, State VR programs may begin negotiations with RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division. 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 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 (ESE)

The ESE indicator has been defined in the ESE final rule and PY 2024 was the first year of data for the newly defined performance indicator. However, a minimum of at least two baseline years of data must be collected to support a statistical adjustment model that could produce sufficiently reliable estimates for the purposes of performance negotiations and state performance assessments. The Departments, in accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(c)(4) and 34

CFR §§ 361.190(c)(4) and 463.190(c)(4), will collect and monitor state ESE performance results for at least PY 2024 and PY 2025 to establish a credible baseline and provide technical assistance. After PY 2025 data are collected the Departments will develop a statistical adjustment model for ESE in accordance with section 116(b)(3)(A)(viii) of WIOA. Since the ESE indicator is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs when feasible. While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,630.0
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

The State Plan must include	Include
I assure that the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a).	Yes

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) affirms compliance with Description B of its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (page 340) and Description C Goals, Priorities and Strategies (page 355).

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

The State Plan must include	Include
I assure that the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a).	Yes

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation affirms the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a) Description B of its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (page 340) and Description C Goals, Priorities and Strategies (page 346-350, and 353-360).

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

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 N
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	Second
Parent Training and Information Center	First
Client Assistance Program	Second
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	First
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Second
Business, Industry, and Labor	Second
Business, Industry, and Labor	Second
Business, Industry, and Labor	Second
Business, Industry, and Labor	First
Disability Advocacy Groups	First
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	First
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	n/a
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	First
State Workforce Development Board	Second
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Ex Officio
Representatives of an individual who is blind or visually impaired and has difficulty representing themselves or are unable to represent themselves due to their disabilities .	Vacant

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 Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) tracks Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) appointments and collaborates with the Council Chair to comply with federal requirements. The VRAC has a membership committee focused on recruitment and engagement. DVI also coordinates with the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions, which processes applications and submits candidates for appointment.

Currently, there is one vacancy for a Council member representing individuals who are blind and unable to self-advocate due to disability. DVI and VRAC are working with the Governor's Office to fill this role while maintaining the blind-to-sighted ratio. The opening has been shared with relevant registries, advocacy groups, councils, partners, and on social media, with ongoing efforts to find a qualified candidate by 9/30/2026.

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 VRAC and DVI engaged in an in-depth review process during full council meetings, which included an examination of performance measures, program activities, annual reports, an overview of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), and the status of current goals. To ensure a thorough evaluation, the VRAC Chair established an ad hoc committee tasked with conducting a detailed review of the CSNA recommendations, existing goals and priorities, and other agency initiatives. This committee also assessed current goal attainment and identified emerging areas of need.

The committee reviewed the CSNA in relation to current goals, leading to recommended updates that address the changing needs of people with visual impairments. They focused discussions on agency performance, outreach, community education, and service delivery to those with significant disabilities, transitioning youth, and underserved groups including the Hispanic and deaf blind communities.

Attention was given to performance measures related to students and supported employment. The committee identified specific areas that require ongoing focus and improvement. Additionally, members reviewed recent and upcoming training initiatives, which included benefits counseling, in-house service delivery training, educating businesses, collaboration with the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), and instruction in assistive technology.

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) highlighted significant barriers faced by individuals who are blind, particularly with respect to employment. Consumer feedback underscored that many of these challenges stem from employers' limited understanding of accommodations, assistive technology, and the capabilities of people with visual impairments. This lack of awareness directly affects the ability of these individuals to secure meaningful employment opportunities.

In response to these identified challenges, the committee placed a strong emphasis on outreach initiatives. Key activities included engaging employers, educating the community, building medical partnerships, and collaborating with statewide associations. These efforts were designed to foster greater awareness among employers and the broader public about the skills and potential of individuals who are blind, as well as the resources and supports available to facilitate their employment.

The committee also explored strategies to enhance collaboration between the two State Rehabilitation Councils. Recognizing the value in pooling resources and expertise, members discussed the benefits of joint outreach events and coordinated representation at community engagements. By working together, both agencies aim to increase public awareness and improve operational efficiency, ultimately creating more inclusive opportunities for individuals with visual impairments.

The VRAC recommendations regarding goals and strategies were as follows:

1. Increase employment outcomes for all VR consumers, including Supported Employment and transition students exiting high school, by at least 5% compared to the previous year.

2. Enhance employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments by pursuing jobs that offer better salaries and greater chances for career advancement.
3. Maintain minimum median earnings of $18.00/hour for second quarter following exit.
4. Formulate approaches to enhance engagement among participants and employers.
5. Maintain existing partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) while actively establishing new relationships with additional providers to broaden opportunities for participants.
6. Continue to expand pre-ETS opportunities by partnering with additional providers who specialize in services for youth with visual impairments.
7. Increase the number of students participating in pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) by 10%.
8. Ensure all transition students with visual impairments are offered opportunities to participate in at least one internship, work-based learning experience, or apprenticeship before leaving secondary education.
9. Strengthen partnerships with employers and the community to create more opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for people with visual impairments.
10. Engage in proactive outreach at job fairs and reestablish connections with employers who have previously hired DVI job seekers.
11. Continue to support consumers in making informed choices by establishing vocational goals through industry-specific training programs focused on high-demand occupations identified in the Delaware labor market. These programs should clearly show how industry-recognized credentials correspond with the training received and employment opportunities.
12. Further promote awareness and actively foster consumer engagement with DVI as a trusted resource and distinguished service provider.
13. Maintain and standardize use of the business partner tracking system.
14. Create a comprehensive strategy to enhance targeted outreach for all visually impaired communities, including Hispanic, deaf-blind, and low-incidence groups.
15. Continue to use advocates to support outreach and engagement.
16. Utilize social media to expand the consumer spotlight series highlighting employment journeys of people who are blind or visually impaired, showcasing both their challenges and achievements.
17. Collaborate with the VR General SRC to develop strategies aimed at enhancing employer education, including comprehensive initiatives to inform and engage employers.
18. Enhance employer education; strategies and objectives remain appropriate, but the methodology requires adjustment for greater effectiveness.

19. Continue developing customer satisfaction instruments with the objective of achieving full implementation by the start of the program year 2026. Collaborate with the VR General State Rehabilitation Council to facilitate continuity in creating effective surveys and addressing key topics and interests.

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

1. Increase employment outcomes for all VR consumers, including Supported Employment and transition students exiting high school, by at least 5% compared to the previous year. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
2. Enhance employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments by pursuing jobs that offer better salaries and greater chances for career advancement. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
3. Maintain minimum median earnings of $18.00/hour for second quarter following exit. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
4. Formulate approaches to enhance engagement among participants and employers. The **agency agrees with this recommendation.**
5. Maintain existing partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) while actively establishing new relationships with additional providers to broaden opportunities for participants. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
6. Continue to expand pre-ETS opportunities by partnering with additional providers who specialize in services for youth with visual impairments. **The agency agrees with this recommendation. Increase** the number of students participating in pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) by 10%. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
7. Increase the number of students participating in pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) by 10%. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
8. Ensure all transition students with visual impairments are offered opportunities to participate in at least one internship, work-based learning experience, or apprenticeship before leaving secondary education. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
9. Strengthen partnerships with employers and the community to create more opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for people with visual impairments. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
10. Engage in proactive outreach at job fairs and reestablish connections with employers who have previously hired DVI job seekers. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
11. Continue to support consumers in making informed choices by establishing vocational goals through industry-specific training programs focused on high-demand occupations

identified in the Delaware labor market. These programs should clearly show how industry-recognized credentials correspond with the training received and employment opportunities. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**

12. Further promote awareness and actively foster consumer engagement with DVI as a trusted resource and distinguished service provider. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
13. Maintain and standardize use of the business partner tracking system. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
14. Create a comprehensive strategy to enhance targeted outreach for all visually impaired communities, including Hispanic, deaf-blind, and low-incidence groups. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
15. Continue to use advocates to support outreach and engagement. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
16. Utilize social media to expand the consumer spotlight series highlighting employment journeys of people who are blind or visually impaired, showcasing both their challenges and achievements. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
17. Collaborate with the VR General SRC to develop strategies aimed at enhancing employer education, including comprehensive initiatives to inform and engage employers. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
18. Enhance employer education; strategies and objectives remain appropriate, but the methodology requires adjustment for greater effectiveness. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**
19. Continue developing customer satisfaction instruments with the objective of achieving full implementation by the start of the program year 2026. Collaborate with the VR General State Rehabilitation Council to facilitate continuity in creating effective surveys and addressing key topics and interests. **The agency agrees with this recommendation.**

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 2025 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) identified the rehabilitation and VR service needs of individuals with visual impairments and significant disabilities. For the first time, DVI and DE-General (DVR) conducted the CSNA jointly, sharing costs and resources. They partnered with San Diego State University for its vocational rehabilitation expertise. The survey

collected input from consumers, CRPs, interest groups, business partners, DVI staff, and community partners using electronic surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Key needs identified for individuals with the most significant disabilities served by DVI include persistent transportation challenges, especially in rural areas, and employer misconceptions regarding the abilities of people who are blind or visually impaired. Additional common needs are access to assistive technology, benefits counseling to address concerns about losing financial support when employed, mental health counseling for grief related to vision loss, adjustment to blindness training, affordable housing, and computer training to improve job readiness. Also noted was the lack of Supported Employment (SE) or Customized Employment (CE) services provided by DVI.

According to the DVI individual survey, the main barrier to employment reported was employer concern about my ability to perform the job because of my disability. Both the limited number of available jobs and lack of transportation were equally noted as the second most common barriers. While the lack of disability-related accommodations at work was recognized as an obstacle seven times, it was mentioned less frequently by participants when asked to list their top three employment barriers.

DVI will take proactive steps to better address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment. The agency will begin by providing Supported Employment (SE) training to its staff, improving data collection to identify and track current SE cases, and implementing processes to ensure SE participants are properly identified and served moving forward. Additionally, DVI intends to enhance its relationship with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and collaborate closely with DVR, ideally participating in SE training together. Additionally, DVI will conduct technology assessments for eligible consumers who are unable to demonstrate marketable skills prior to the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), utilizing the comprehensive Assistive Technology Checklist for Assessment. This approach ensures that necessary technology is identified and incorporated into the IPE services from the outset. DVI will continue to focus on expanding opportunities within the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by obtaining more sites for future operators.

DVI will continue to utilize benefits counseling and Stand by Me, a personal financial coaching program sponsored by the State of Delaware and the United Way, services for consumers. Additionally, DVI will seek technical assistance and training from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (VRTAC) to provide financial empowerment services to its consumers. By leveraging resources from VRTAC and its partner, the National Disability Institute (NDI), DVI will offer expert financial literacy service and further support the needs and goals of its consumers.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Analysis of the needs of individuals from different ethnic groups, including those potentially unserved or underserved, revealed several key themes. Rural areas were most frequently identified as underserved due to challenges like limited transportation, a shortage of service vendors, and low awareness of DVI programs. Hispanic individuals emerged as the only racial group consistently cited as potentially underserved, primarily because of government mistrust,

concerns about resident status, fear of profiling, and insufficient knowledge of available services. While the rehabilitation needs of minority individuals with disabilities generally mirrored those of other consumers, non-English speakers and DeafBlind individuals faced significant barriers, making interpreters essential for access and service delivery. Additionally, the growing number of older adults seeking employment—driven by rising living costs—was noted as an emerging group that should be monitored, though they were not specifically cited as underserved.

DVI will prioritize expanding outreach to rural areas to raise awareness of its services, working closely with local schools and community partners in those communities. The agency will also explore recruiting staff with bilingual skills, especially in Spanish, to better serve non-English speaking populations. In addition, DVI will strengthen engagement with all community organizations, including those focused on the Hispanic culture and people who are DeafBlind, to further promote available services. Recognizing the absence of DeafBlind consumers as primary diagnoses within its caseload, DVI will collaborate with relevant partners to ensure individuals who are DeafBlind are properly identified and supported, leveraging its expertise to address their unique needs. These efforts reflect DVI's commitment to advancing access across Delaware communities.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The CSNA revealed several challenges for individuals with disabilities served by various components of the statewide workforce development system. The collaboration between DVI and DET centers is predominantly referral-based, with limited instances of joint funding initiatives. Accessibility continues to be a concern at some DET centers, especially for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, as assistive technology may be non-functional, and staff often lack familiarity with its operation. Additionally, DET center staff require further training to support individuals with disabilities effectively, as there is a tendency to refer such individuals directly to external agencies rather than accommodating their needs within the centers.

Through consultation and technical assistance, DVI has worked closely with the Division of Employment and Training—which oversees operations at the American Job Center (AJC)—to ensure that centers are equipped with screen readers, large monitors, zoom text, and adaptive keyboards. These enhancements improve physical accessibility for individuals with visual impairments, enabling them to access resources available to the public. DVI will reengage to ensure equipment remains current, and AJC staff receive appropriate training.

DVI will enhance collaboration with DET centers by facilitating cross-training opportunities for staff across both systems, ensuring smoother transitions and improved service delivery for individuals with disabilities. The agency will actively identify and showcase successful cases of braided funding or joint planning to encourage replication of best practices throughout the organization. Furthermore, DVI intends to work closely with DET centers to develop customized training programs tailored to the unique needs of consumers, thereby strengthening workforce development and accessibility. These actions are designed to foster greater cooperation between agencies, address accessibility challenges, and improve outcomes for individuals with visual impairments and other disabilities within Delaware's workforce development system.

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.

According to the CSNA, the needs of students and youth with blindness and visual impairments are consistent with other students with disabilities in Delaware in some regards, and different in others. The reoccurring themes included the following:

1. Transportation is a major barrier to employment, and the need for reliable transportation is the most pressing employment need.
2. Other similar needs include job skills, soft skills development, work experience of any kind, job search, and interview skills.
3. Assistive technology evaluation, provision and training are much more of a need for students and youth with blindness and visual impairments. It is essential that these students and youth learn how to use AT as early as possible in their school years so that they are proficient upon entering postsecondary education and/or employment.
4. Employer education about the capabilities of blind youth is essential. Employers have a lot of misconceptions and fears about hiring blind people, so self-advocacy is a paramount need as well as employer awareness.
5. Independent living skills (O&M, Braille, ADLs) were noted as especially important for blind students and youth. Learning how to live independently increases self-efficacy and contributes to future work success.
6. DVI provides creative and helpful pre-employment transition services programs for students, though they would like to develop more work-based learning experiences. The agency does have pre-ETS vendors that provide the five required services.
7. All five required pre-ETS activities are needed by youth and students with blindness and visual impairments.
8. DVI supports unique pre-ETS activities such as sending students to the Carol Center in Boston, the Envision Level-up program in Wichita, and Space Camp.
9. DVI staff coordinate transition services with the schools, and IPEs are developed in concert with the IEP. The TVIs at the schools are important partners for DVR staff and work closely to ensure that school and DVI services are aligned.
10. WBLEs could be expanded and built to include more variety and different work sites and types.

DVI will continue supporting innovative programs that foster independent living skills, career exploration, and assistive technology use. DVI will work with pre-employment transition services vendors to broaden individualized work-based learning opportunities that reflect students' interests. The agency is committed to providing families with training and information—including success stories and guidance on employment's impact on SSI benefits—to promote high expectations for their children. DVI will ensure that pre-ETS services include

access to mental health resources for students and families statewide. Efforts will be made to develop diverse work experiences, engage employers, and explore collaboration with Title I Youth programs at DET centers to expand youth work experiences. Additionally, DVI will seek ways to incentivize vendors to create more work-based learning experiences and analyze previous successes to support future replication. Additionally, DVI will work closely with Local Education Agencies to ensure students with visual impairments are aware of the agency and services.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The CSNA consistently noted several challenges in DVI's partnerships with community providers. While DVI delivers most client services internally, it relies on external vendors for pre-employment transition, job coaching, and career placement in coordination with its business consultants. A notable gap remains as few vendors currently serve individuals who are blind or visually impaired, especially regarding job coaching services required by many DVI consumers that exceed current vendor capacity. Furthermore, there is limited availability of local optometrists and ophthalmologists for DVI clients, underscoring the necessity to broaden provider partnerships. Additionally, DVI faces a shortage of Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) providers, which may result in service gaps as an increasing number of clients with secondary disabilities seek ongoing employment support.

DVI recognizes the importance of cultivating relationships with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and is committed to providing training and technical assistance to strengthen their capacity to address the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The agency will implement targeted updates to enhance community rehabilitation programs across the state. DVI will continue delivering ongoing training on vision-related topics to its two principal employment service vendors and will extend these initiatives to additional providers, thereby increasing the pool of qualified professionals serving DVI consumers. Recognizing the value of collaboration, DVI maintains partnerships with optometrists and ophthalmologists and intends to broaden outreach efforts to encompass the wider medical community. In partnership with DVR and DDDS, the agency is examining a Value-Based Purchasing model designed to incentivize CRPs in supporting DVI consumers to achieve career-level employment. DVI will also engage with DVR regarding participation in quarterly meetings with providers to facilitate information sharing and recruit additional CRPs.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require 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

DVI is fortunate to that the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council consistently provides valuable feedback and advises the agency during the regular course of work throughout the year. The VRAC members are committed to promoting quality outcomes for people with severe visual impairments and dedicated to taking an active role in developing goals, assisting with outreach, and collaborating for assessment activities. DVI and the VRAC routinely review program data, performance measures, consumer satisfaction, and annual reports, 2025 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), previous goal attainment and opportunities for improvement.

The VRAC and DVI jointly developed and agreed to the new goals and priorities after several meetings with the VRAC state plan committee and the full council. The VRAC Chair convened an ad hoc to meet several times over a two-month period. During the committee meetings, the group reviewed and discussed the CSNA recommendations and key takeaways, goals and priorities, and other agency initiatives. The committee discussions, focused on overall agency performance, outreach and community education, and service needs for individuals with the most severe disabilities, youth in transition, and individuals from underserved and diverse communities, provided DVI with invaluable feedback. The feedback was used to develop and customize the goals for the 2026 state plan update. The committee presented the recommendations for 2026 goals and strategies to the full Council for review, discussion, and voting.

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, POST-SECONDARY 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

Goal 1: Provide high quality employment outcomes for individuals with visual impairments

1.1 Performance Objective and Measure: Increase employment outcomes of total VR consumers, Supported Employment and transition students exiting high school by a minimum of 5% over previous year.

1.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Maintain an employment rate of 40% at second quarter and 40% at fourth quarter following exit from the VR program.1.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Maintain median earnings of no less than $18.00 per hour second quarter following exit from VR program.

Goal 1 Strategies

1. Comprehensive staff training, collaborate with WIOA core partner and American Job Centers (AJC), collaborate with the VRAC, SRC, DVR, the SILC, and other partners that will result in successful career outcomes for people who have severe visual impairments.
2. Enhance outreach plan to include VRAC suggestions and Council's increased participation. Plan will address targeted outreach to employers, vision medical professionals, CRPs, community partners, and the general public. Examples of tools include social media, community events, job fairs, networking events, and video spotlight series.
3. Continue to support consumers in making informed choices by establishing vocational goals through industry-specific training programs, aligned with career pathways and focused on high-demand occupations identified in the Delaware labor market. These programs should show how industry-recognized credentials correspond with the training received and employment opportunities that result in measurable outcomes.
4. Enhance career development and job coaching for in-demand, high-paying, and advancement-oriented positions by strengthening partnerships with local CRPs, providing vision-specific training, collaborating with national providers specializing in services for the blind and visually impaired, and connecting successful VR consumers with current job seekers for guidance.
5. Collaborate with workforce partners to seek opportunities for braided funding and increased training options. Utilize Workforce Pell Grants, as authorized under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which is federal financial aid for students enrolled in high-quality, short-term workforce programs based on the latest labor market information to refresh the state's in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Goal 2: Provide quality Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with visual impairments

2.1 Performance Objective and Measure: Continue to maintain current partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation providers offering pre-ETS services while exploring new relationships with CPRs that specialize in services for youth with visual impairments.

2.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Increase the number of students receiving pre-ETS services by 10% over previous year.

2.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Through internal and external service provision, ensure all transition students are provided opportunities to participate in at least one WBLE prior to exit from secondary education.

GOAL 2 STRATEGIES

1. Comprehensive staff training, collaborate with WIOA core partner and American Job Centers (AJC), collaborate with the VRAC, SRC, DVR, the SILC, and other partners that will result in successful career outcomes for people who have severe visual impairments.
2. Enhance communication and IEP coordination between VR Counselors and Local Education Agencies by increasing collaboration with the DVI Education program Teachers of the Visually Impaired.
3. Engage youth by offering WBLE opportunities to all students, foster parent engagement by utilizing partnerships with PIC, LEAs and DVI Education program. Utilize the community of blind and visually impaired advocates to provide support and resources to students.
4. Continue to expand pre-ETS opportunities from providers that specialize in services for the blind and visually impaired to effectively prepare consumers for opportunities with jobs in demand, high paying jobs and jobs that lead to career advancement. DVI will also engage with its past successful consumers to provide resources and advice to current job seekers.

Goal 3: Enhance employer and community partnerships leading to competitive, integrated employment for individuals with visual impairments

3.1 Performance Objective and Measure: In collaboration with the VRAC, increase opportunities to engage and educate employers regarding the benefits of employment of individuals with visual impairment, accommodations, assistive technology, and support provided by DVI and CRPs. Reengage with past employers and actively participate in job fairs and networking events.

3.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Maintain current partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) related to training, supported employment, customized employment, career development, and job coaching services and develop new partnerships with providers specializing in serving individuals with visual impairments.

GOAL 3 STRATEGIES

1. Comprehensive staff training, collaborate with WIOA core partner and American Job Centers (AJC), collaborate with the VRAC, SRC, DVR, the SILC, and other partners that will result in successful career outcomes for people who have severe visual impairments.
2. Enhance outreach plan to include VRAC planning suggestions and foster their increased participation. Plan will address targeted outreach to employers, vision medical professionals, CRPs, community partners, and the general public. Examples of tools

include social media, community events, job fairs, networking events, and video spotlight series.

3. Increase opportunities to educate employers, CRPs, and community partners by offering training for sensitivity, awareness, sighted guide, accessibility, and accommodations.

Goal 4: INCREASE AWARENESS OF DVI SERVICES AND IMPROVE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Performance Objective and Measure: Track outreach to determine effectiveness and use data to plan targeted outreach.

4.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Enhance plan for increasing outreach to all communities including the underserved Hispanic and DeafBlind communities.

4.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Develop a series of videos to post on DVI's website and social media accounts that showcase consumer stories, awareness of blindness and visual impairments, and services offered by DVI.

4.4 Performance Objective and Measure: Effectively measure consumer satisfaction by updating and refining the customer satisfaction system.

GOAL 4 STRATEGIES

1. Comprehensive staff training, increase service providers, collaborate with WIOA core partners, collaborate with the SILC and other partnerships that will result in successful career outcomes for people who have severe visual impairments.

2. Develop a plan for increasing targeted outreach and creating videos for the Division website and social media platforms to foster awareness and showcase service delivery.

3. Engage youth by offering WBLE opportunities to all students and fostering parent engagement utilizing partnerships with PIC and LEAs. DVI will also utilize our blind and visually impaired advocates to provide support and resources for students.

4. DVI will seek additional educational resources from providers that specialize in services for the blind and visually impaired to effectively prepare consumers for opportunities with jobs in demand, high-paying jobs, and jobs that lead to career advancement. DVI will also engage with its past successful consumers to provide resources and advice to current job seekers.

5. Continue working with the VRAC to complete and deploy the updated customer satisfaction process by 9/30/2026.

6. Refine system to track outreach events and use data to plan effective community engagement.

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

Goal 1: Provide high quality employment outcomes for individuals with visual impairments.

1.1 Performance Objective and Measure: Increase employment outcomes of total VR consumers, Supported Employment, and transition students exiting high school by a minimum of 5% over previous year.

Partially Achieved: The employment outcomes of total VR consumers did not increase from the previous year, seeing 32 successful outcomes in PY2023 and 22 in PY2024. DVI intends to tighten the focus on employment outcomes in the upcoming year. It should be noted that the focus has been on good quality outcomes, which tend to take longer to identify. Furthermore, the VR program has suffered a large amount of turnover throughout the year, which has caused additional challenges.

1.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Maintain an employment rate of 40% at second quarter and 40% at fourth quarter following exit from the VR program.

Achieved: An employment rate of 51% at second quarter and 52% at fourth quarter following exit was achieved.

1.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Achieve median earnings of no less than $18.00 per hour second quarter following exit from the VR program.

Achieved: DVI participants achieved a median earning of $21.67 per hour during the second quarter following exit from the VR program.

Goal 2: Provide quality Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with visual impairments.

2.1 Performance Objective and Measure**:** Continue to build current partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation providers offering pre-ETS services.

Achieved: DVI maintained statewide partnerships and expanded to providers outside the state to offer more options for pre-ETS services.

2.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Increase the number of students receiving pre-ETS services by 10% over the previous year.

Achieved: The number of students receiving pre-ETS services increased 17.5% over the previous year.

2.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Through internal and external service provision, ensure all transition students can participate in at least one WBLE prior to exit from secondary education.

Achieved: 100% of pre-ETS students in secondary education were offered the opportunity to participate in WBLE. DVI is contracted with multiple vendors who provide WBLE opportunities

for students. DVI has only been tracking paid WBLE opportunities and was not capturing volunteer or internship opportunities in the past. DVI continues to improve the tracking procedure for this service to gain higher accuracy in reporting.

Goal 3: Enhance employer and community partnerships leading to competitive, integrated employment for individuals with visual impairments.

3.1 Performance Objective and Measure: In collaboration with DVI's SRC and other community partners, develop and track formal/informal opportunities (i.e., individual and group employer outreach activities, collaboration activities with other disability groups, conferences, workshops, etc.) to engage and educate employers specifically around the employment of individuals with visual impairments.

Partially Achieved: DVI staff members participated in numerous employer engagement and outreach events including networking events, job fairs, conferences, and social media campaigns. Business development staff invite participants to job fairs giving them a chance to market themselves to multiple employers and practice job-seeking skills. DVI and the VRAC are in the process of developing a coordinated plan to increase and track joint activities to promote the employment of individuals with visual impairments.

3.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Maintain current partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) related to training, supported employment and/or placement services.

Achieved: DVI maintained relationships with CRPs and developed new relationships, adding three new CRPs that provide training, SE and placement services. Two of these vendors specialize in serving individuals with visual impairments.

Goal 4: Increase awareness and improve access to DVI services.

4.1 Performance Objective and Measure: Develop system to track staff outreach events to ensure DVI participation.

Achieved: DVI's Communication Manager tracked outreach and events that were attended. The estimated number of participants at each event was also captured. DVI has also created outreach kits, which are housed at each office. These kits include small assistive technology devices as well as documentation on a variety of topics related to DVI's services and awareness related to vision loss and blindness. The kits have proven to be a quick and efficient way to ensure that employees have the necessary items to set up at outreach events.

4.2 Performance Objective and Measure: Develop a plan for increasing targeted outreach to all visually impaired communities to include closed and low-incidence communities that utilizes visually impaired advocates for engagement.

Achieved: DVI participated in community outreach events, which were intended for low-incidence populations. DVI has provided information and education at events specifically for veterans, the unhoused, the LGBTQ+ community, and Delaware's Latino community. DVI created regular sensitivity and awareness training to CRP staff, other state agencies, first responders, and employers that were unfamiliar with blindness and visual impairment. DVI staff worked with providers to engage and educate community employers of all sizes by visiting locations to collaborate on strategies to employ the most significantly disabled jobseekers.

4.3 Performance Objective and Measure: Develop a series of videos to post on DVI's website and social media accounts that showcase consumer stories, awareness of blindness and visual impairments and services offered by DVI.

Achieved: DVI highlighted five consumers who wanted to share their success stories. Communications staff created and published video interviews through social media platforms, monthly newsletters, email campaigns, and statewide listservs.

4.4 Performance Objective and Measure: Develop a plan to participate in community events hosted by state legislators to increase awareness and promote services.

Achieved: DVI staff have been in attendance at Senator Lisa Blunt-Rochester's Annual Constituent Resource Fair; obtained a joint resolution to recognize White Cane Day, and attended the proclamation signing that recognized Disability Employment Awareness Month Proclamation.

4.5 Performance Objective and Measure: Work with our VRAC to develop effective customer satisfaction surveys and target hot topics interests.

Partially Achieved: DVI staff and the VRAC collaborated on a project to update the customer satisfaction process and survey instruments used at various stages of the VR process. The VRAC has taken an active role by reviewing, making recommendations, and providing valuable input. This project is ongoing, but changes are expected to be implemented in 2026.

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

The overarching goals for the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) align with compliance and performance expectations under Section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the five pillars of Executive Order 14278. Building on evaluation of agency data, federal reporting, and regulatory guidance, DVI has expanded its activities in Program Years (PY) 2024 and 2025 to strengthen collaboration with workforce partners, enhance counselor expertise, improve data quality, tighten internal controls, and evaluate program outcomes with greater accuracy.

DVI continued delivering targeted training of the WIOA performance measures policy and process to ensure Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff to ensure consistent understanding and implementation. DVI employment specialists maintain a connection with consumers after exiting the VR program to ensure successful rehabilitation remains intact and gather the after-exit data necessary to report on performance. Additionally, DVI has a formal data-sharing agreement with the Division of Unemployment Insurance to obtain employment data for the second and fourth quarters after program exit and continues is part of the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to verify employment outcomes for individuals working outside Delaware as needed.

DVI works closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DE-G) to review performance measures and fiscal data. This structured collaboration has proven effective and will continue as reporting systems evolve. The continued modernization of data tracking systems and collaboration with the general agency will strengthen internal oversight.

Previously, DVI used the Visually Impaired Client Registry (VICR) as its primary case management platform, a decades old system which was prone to data entry challenges and inconsistencies which contributed to incomplete and inaccurate reporting. In PY25, VICR was replaced with a new, fully accessible case management system which is expected to significantly enhance data collection, validation, and integrity. The new platform provides improved functionality for tracking participant progress, managing performance data, and supporting compliance with WIOA accountability standards. Most importantly, the new system has built-in internal controls to limit human error when entering data.

As a state, Delaware exceeded all negotiated performance levels for PY24. DVI also exceeded negotiated levels for retention with the same employer during the second and fourth quarters after exit, demonstrating strong employment stability among participants. Separately, DVI did not meet the negotiated levels for Credential Attainment (CA) and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) which underscores the need for renewed focus on data quality and documentation. While DVI's relatively small participant base minimizes the impact on overall statewide performance results, data gaps are evident in performance dashboards. DVI has collaborated with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Information Systems to identify consumers included in the denominator for these calculations. Through the remainder of PY25, emphasis will be placed on documenting, recording, and uploading all relevant data to complete performance calculations. Additionally, DVI will continue to work with the National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center to strengthen understanding of CA and MSG measures and ensure continued improvement in performance accountability, data integrity, and reporting accuracy.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	0.45
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	0.45
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,000
Credential Attainment Rate	0.51
Measurable Skill Gains	0.47
Effectiveness in Serving Employers*	N/A

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).

DVI utilizes innovation and expansion resources to increase opportunities which are specifically designed to address the independent living and self-advocacy needs of people with visual impairments, including transition-aged youth, using national experts and partners. These initiatives contribute to the expansion of pre-ETS and advanced independent living training for college-bound high school students. Additionally, DVI seeks resources from industry experts to provide comprehensive training for supported employment, customized employment and business engagement. DVI also continues to partner with the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, the Division of Vocational

Rehabilitation, National Alliance on Partnership in Equity (NAPE), and local school districts to program designed to ensure the success of students with disabilities in high school career and technical education (CTE) pathways. Finally, DVI reserves innovation and expansion resources to support the VRAC Resource Plan and encourages the Council to seek professional development opportunities through the NCSRC.

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.

DVI will ensure people with visual impairments, who face multiple barriers to employment due to the severity of their disability(s), will have the opportunity to achieve successful employment outcomes by utilizing a person-centered approach, customizing employment, ensuring informed choice, and encouraging self-advocacy. DVI will utilize Title I and Title VI funds to ensure consumers have the support, customization, coaching, and skills needed to successfully obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment. The following plan outlines DVI strategy for allocation of Title VI funds and continuous improvement.

1. Reserve 50% of the Title VI allotment for the provision of supported employment services, including extended services, for youth with the most significant disabilities.
2. No less than 10% of non-Federal expenditures are used as match towards the 50% allotment reserved for supported employment services, including extended services, for youth with the most significant disabilities; match must be met by September 30 of the FFY of appropriation to fully expend or carryover any unobligated portion of the reserved funds.
3. Administrative costs for Title VI are not to exceed 2.5%.

Supported Employment Title VI funds will be used for the provision of supported employment only after the consumer is actively working in community integrated employment setting. Allowable costs include:

1. **Ongoing Support Services** are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment. Ongoing support services begin at the time of job placement and last until the transition to extended services. Services may include activities such as an assessment of employment stability, and the provision or coordination of specific services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability. Other

examples include the provision of skilled job trainers for the individual at the worksite, social skills training, follow-up services, facilitation of natural supports at the worksite. Title I funds may also be utilized for ongoing supports.

2. **VR Extended Services** are only available to youth with the most significant disabilities. Youth may receive extended services for up to four years or until they reach the age of 25, whichever occurs first. Extended services are ongoing services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment and can be provided by a state agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resources.

(Basic VR) are used for all services that are prohibited under Title VI but necessary for supported employment eligible consumers to achieve their employment outcomes. Examples include:

1. Job placement
2. Comprehensive assessment
3. Skills training
4. Interview clothing
5. Assistive technology

DVI utilizes the services of vendors, on a fee-for-service basis, to provide comprehensive supported employment services for those individuals with severe visual impairments and the most significant barriers to employment. Consumers and/or their representatives select the vendor to provide these services.

Ongoing training is conducted with all counselors that emphasizes the provision of extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities, under appropriate circumstances, can be provided up to four years or until they reach the age of 25, whichever occurs first. It is critical that this training identifies the non-delegable nature of this provision in WIOA. Counselor development will also ensure accurate use and tracking of supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities. DVI will continue to provide staff with training, oversight, and guidance regarding Title VI fiscal regulations to ensure costs are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary.

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.

DVI will continue to provide Supported Employment services to individuals with visual impairments and co-occurring disabilities including, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, physical impairments and disabilities due to mental health, that make long-term

supports necessary for the individual's success in maintaining integrated and competitive employment.

DVI will evaluate reemployment needs and workforce inequities. We will develop creative ways to work with CRPs as they overcome workforce challenges.

DVI will continue to assure that all opportunities meet the requirements of competitive integrated employment, earn minimum wage or higher, and have access to the same workplace benefits available to all employees.

DVI will continue to focus on the provision of quality services by assessing the level of employment integration and competitiveness. DVI will continue to assess workplace access and accessibility meets the needs of people with visual impairments. Additionally, all contracted vendors shall maintain a program of professional development for those employees within its organization who provide job placement services by participating in training opportunities for on-site trainers, employment specialists and SE managers.

Supported employment services begin at job placement; however, vocational rehabilitation funds can be used to provides necessary VR services prior to job placement. The scope and extent of contracted supported employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities shall include:

- Assessment services to assist consumers to select an appropriate vocational goal consistent with their unique strengths, resources, interests, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.
- Job development and job placement in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) based on the assessment results.
- Comprehensive onsite or offsite job coaching to enable the individual to become stabilized in their employment.
- Upon stabilization, DVI will coordinate extended services with the identified agency/entity/resource. After successful transition to extended services, DVI will continue to facilitate supports and services to address any issues that may potentially impact job retention until 90 days after the successful transition to extended services.
- VR may provide extended services as necessary to employed youth or up to 48 months or until they reach the age of 25, whichever occurs first, if external extended resources are not available.

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).

In Delaware, eligible people with developmental disabilities have access to comprehensive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), VR services from DVI or the Department of Labor/Vocational Rehabilitation Division (DVR-General), and school-to-work transition services from the Department of Education.

General VR (DVR): Since DVI is the agency for the blind and DVR is the general VR agency, it is extremely important that the agencies work collaboratively to ensure all qualified people with developmental disabilities receive VR services. As such, the general and blind agencies maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which defines the relationship between the two VR agencies. This formal interagency agreement defines responsibilities, dispute resolution procedures, financial responsibilities, and procedures to effectively coordinate among the agencies.

Division for Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS): DVI collaborates with DDDS for the provision of Supported Employment (SE) services to consumers with blindness and intellectual disabilities. If eligible, individuals may receive extended services from DDDS through one of three Medicaid HCBS waivers. Each waiver has defined criteria for eligibility, the services available are very similar. They include employment navigation, career exploration and assessment, individual & small group SE, Social Security benefits counseling, financial coaching, non-medical transportation, personal care (including a self-directed component), Orientation & Mobility, and assistive technology. The waiver is intended to compliment VR services by offering extended services, personal care and customized services for people who may have had unsuccessful employment experiences. To avoid gaps in services, interagency coordination begins before the consumer completes the SE process with DVI. Once DVI makes a referral, DDDS performs an individualized review of eligibility, application status (if applicable), and existing resources. The goal is to have a streamlined process that assists in identifying all available programs and resources, expand and improve employment services to people with significant disabilities, and maximize the use of comparable benefits. DDDS currently uses three Medicaid waivers for the provision of SE extended services.

Early Start to Supported Employment Model (ESSE): For several years, DDDS, DVI, DVR, and DOE have collaboratively worked with eligible students, aged 14 and above, to ensure successful transitions from school into employment, training/education, or both. DVI-VR works closely with all agencies to encourage SE eligible students with visual impairments to participate in the ESSE model. ESSE was designed to minimize gaps between exiting school and beginning employment by encouraging students with intellectual disabilities to begin the SE process up to three years prior to exiting school. The goal is for students to experience the success and possible pitfalls of employment before their secondary education program ends.

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

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.

The numbers below reflect the total number of people who could be eligible and served in FY2027 based on trends and internal data. DVI reviewed data related to population, people with vision difficulties, and the number of people who could be determined eligible due to severe visual impairments. This data consistently showed that approximately 40% of people with severe vision impairments received DVI services and reflected a 3% annual increase, as proven by long-term agency trends.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services
n/a	202

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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.

DVI used the same methodology described in f.1.A, combined with agency data, to arrive estimates for supported employment. DVI reviewed data to conclude that 4.8% of people served require extensive and long-term supports. The estimated cost for the next fiscal year is based on an average of $19,200/person using Title 1 and Title VI funds.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services
n/a	10

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 VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

The designated state unit does not foresee implementing an 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 Division for the Visually Impaired anticipates having sufficient resources and funding streams to serve all eligible individuals making application for VR services which will preclude DVI from implementing an order of selection wait list.

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.

The designated state unit does not foresee implementing an order of selection.

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?

No

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."

Delaware DVI is not requesting a waiver of 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.

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.

Managers of each program within DVI are responsible for evaluating training needs for the staff in their unit. Regarding the provision of VR services, DVI has a Social Services Senior Administrator (SSSA) who oversees the VR program, including career services and the Business Enterprise Program. The SSSA is responsible for employee development and determines training needs through performance planning and evaluation, requests from or conversations with staff, case reviews, RSA 911 errors and customer satisfaction surveys. Based on feedback, training is developed and coordinated to address program needs. In addition, with the use of tuition reimbursement, DVI encourages counselors to take the necessary courses to obtain Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credentials to fortify the knowledge, skills and abilities used to carry out their job duties. Once courses are complete, DVI will fund the CRC test and ongoing continuing education.

DVI counselors work statewide with consumers of all eligible ages and provide the full array of services, such as assessment, eligibility determinations, benefits counseling, job site visits, school visits/IEP meetings, wrap around service referral and coordination, person centered case management, and counseling & guidance. Additionally, DVI counselors participate in outreach events, CSAVR/NCSAB conferences, workforce development and American Job Center collaboration, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (DVI-SRC).

In addition to the staff providing direct VR services, the agency is responsible for the comprehensive service provision to address a wide range of needs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. These ancillary positions provide either technical, administrative, fiscal, or support roles that assist VR services. These positions are state-funded, and staff utilize a time tracking system (Timesheet Plus) to determine time and effort toward the support of VR consumers and the VR grant.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed
Administrative Specialist I	2

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed
Office Manager	0
Employment Specialist - Adult	2
Employment Specialist - Youth	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (II & Senior)	5
VR District Administrator	1
Business Enterprise Program Director	1
Business Enterprise Employment Specialist	0
VR Senior Administrator	1
*Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist	4
*Vision Rehab Therapist	4
*Assistive Technology Trainer	3
*Fiscal Staff (all positions)	6

*Positions are agency staff that utilize at a time tracking system to allocate staff time used for VR.

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

1:45

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

DVI expects to serve 226 people in PY31.

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.

Delaware does not have an institution of higher education with a program to prepare Vocational Rehabilitation professionals. VR professionals are encouraged to pursue regional or online training programs.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program
n/a	n/a

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.

DVI has partnership with the University of Delaware, Salus University, Delaware State University, Wilmington University, Delaware Technical & Community College, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Pennsylvania College of Optometry to provide internships for graduate students majoring in Rehabilitation Education and other closely related fields of study. These partnerships afford an intern the opportunity to participate in the work environment of VR Service delivery and the delivery of other services to support VR consumers during the VR process. Interns are assigned working mentors in the VR program, as well as working in partnership with other field services to gain the broad scope of knowledge needed to become a successful rehabilitation professional. DVI utilizes the internship process to introduce college students to the vision rehabilitation field and assess their qualifications for employment should a vacancy exist. DVI has a long-standing practice of hiring VR Counselor (VRC) with master's degrees; however, the talent pool may be expanded through utilization of the VRC career ladder classifications. This classification has three levels, VRC-I, VRC-II, Senior VRC, each with varying levels of essential job functions and qualifications including education, skills, abilities, and experience. DVI supports professional development, tuition assistance, and professional association membership for counselors.

Career Ladder Qualifications

VRC-I: bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Social or Behavioral Science or a related field with knowledge with skills, abilities, experience, and essential functions specific to serving individuals with disabilities.

VRC-II: master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field or Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) designation with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and experience in vocational rehabilitation.

Senior VRC: master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field or CRC designation with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and

essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and two years' experience in vocational rehabilitation.

The qualifications, as outlined in the career ladder above, ensure DVI counselors are aligned with the State's approved personnel standards for VR counselors before they are assigned the task of determining consumer eligibility, as permitted by 34 C.F.R. § 361.42(a)(1)(iii).

DVI is an equal opportunity employer and seeks to ensure employment opportunities are available to qualified individuals. DVI hiring managers are trained in the Delaware Department of Human Resources (DHR) policies, procedures, practices, and resources to ensure equitable recruitment and retention of employees. Examples include, but not limited to, Americans with Disabilities Act, Alternate Work Arrangements, Anti-Nepotism, Employee Rights Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, Merit System Recruitment Procedures Manual, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, Respectful Workplace and Anti-Discrimination Policy, Standards of Conduct.

DVI works with DHR to utilize the Selective Placement Registry. This Registry lists qualified persons with disabilities from various backgrounds who have been determined eligible to fill specific job classifications within the state. State agencies are free to select qualified individuals from this registry without going through the normal state recruitment process, thereby streamlining the process for any qualified individual with a disability who may choose to apply for positions. Additionally, DHR worked with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities-Employment First Oversight Commission to develop a paid work-based learning program for people with disabilities interested in gaining the experience necessary to qualify for state positions. This program offers potential candidates the opportunity to experience positions that match their career aspirations, skills, and education. Their time in these work experiences can be counted towards the required qualifications of the position. These efforts, combined with recruitment through two vocational rehabilitation agencies in Delaware and those in contiguous states, provide DVI with robust ways to source and employ qualified people with disabilities. DVI shares vacancies with various networks including advocacy groups, Councils, program chairs of universities in the region that prepare professionals in rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, and teachers of students with visual impairments. They are asked to encourage qualified members, specific to the vacant position, to apply when vacancies occur. Additionally, all supervisors are provided guidance to support and retain employees with disabilities through the DHR Americans with Disabilities (ADA) policy, ADA coordinator guidance, and accommodation assistance from the DHR team. DVI will continue to work with DHR to expand the VR pool of candidates.

The state continues to allow for workplace flexibility through the Alternate Work Arrangement (AWA) which provides employees with the possibility of working flexible schedules or a combination of virtual and in-person work. This policy made it possible for counselors to geographically expand, serve people in a larger area, encourage a better work life balance, and increase staff retention.

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.

DVI staff receive annual performance reviews based on expectations related to agency goals and the expectations of the position. The annual review, online surveys and regular meetings with staff provide opportunity to discuss staff training needs and outline plans for ensuring staff have access to training opportunities. DVI encourages professional development in areas such as best practices, assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology and utilizes distance learning, webinars, regional and national conferences in addition to training provided through YesLMS. DVI uses YesLMS to assign and track professional development.

Based on performance evaluations and needs assessments, the Social Services Senior Administrator for VR, and other supervisors work with staff to provide them with the training needed to perform their job duties as efficiently and effectively as possible. DVI also seeks training and guidance from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM), the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Collaborative (NTACT:C), and other national experts to ensure staff have a wide variety of development presented by experts in the VR field. DVI also continues to partner with the Delaware general agency, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for training initiatives and events.

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.

Currently, all counselors at DVI have master's degree in Rehabilitation, or a related field. The agency follows recruitment practices established by the state to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel. It is not a requirement of the State for VR Counselors to hold their CRC; however, DVI encourages counselors to take the necessary courses to obtain Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credentials to fortify the knowledge, skills and abilities used to

carry out their job duties. DVI supports counselors through the use of tuition reimbursement, once courses are complete, DVI funds the CRC test, association fees, and ongoing continuing education.

Delaware does not have state approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirements for its VR classifications. As described in i.2.B, the VRC career ladder begins with minimum qualifications and progresses through to those who are highly qualified CRCs. This provides DVI the flexibility to fill critical gaps, encourage further education, and promote from within. DVI works closely with DHR to educate the recruitment team and assure proper candidate screening.

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.

When an applicant for services requests an interpreter, DVI staff reviews and selects from a list of local professional interpreting services with whom the State of Delaware has contractual agreements. The state contract offers hundreds of languages, sign language interpreters, and written transcription services. The multi-language and sign language services are available in person or virtually and all can be accessed on demand. All written materials are disseminated in the appropriate media: Braille, large print, tape, or electronic file, as well as Spanish for various forms/brochures.

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.

Every program within DVI provides services to students with visual impairments. This includes VR, Education, ILS, Orientation & Mobility, and the AT Training Center. DVI administration and staff maintain a close working relationship with the DDOE administration as well as administrators and educators within each school district. DVI staff work with every district and charter school to support students with visual impairments to address their education needs, teach the expanded core curriculum, and coordinate participation in transition and pre-ETS services.

The DVI Education Administrator participates in Special Education Leadership meetings and the VI Collaborative along with DDOE representatives, school districts, families, and other stakeholders. The Education and VR Administrators participate in the monthly transition cadre meetings along with VR Transition Counselors, TVIs, district transition personnel, DOE administrators, other state agencies, families, and community providers.

DVI is part of the Delaware Community of Practice on Transition and is a partner on various transition initiatives, including PIPEline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities, regional transition planning meetings, LEA sponsored transition events, and transition related job fairs.

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.

DVI is uniquely positioned to coordinate the transition of students with visual impairments from school to VR services through the comprehensive structure of the division and the agency's participation in statewide transition activities. DVI has both an Education Services and a VR program offered by the Division, which allows the agency to begin working with children as soon as a visual impairment is identified.

The DVI Education Program employs Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) who provide assessment, direct instruction, and consultation services to approximately 350 students with visual impairments annually through an itinerant model. The TVIs work with local education agencies (LEAs), Charter Schools, private schools, and parents of home-schooled children statewide to ensure all students with visual impairments can access educational programs equal to that of their peers. Although TVI services are funded through the state and are separate from all vocational rehabilitation funds, the relationship provides the DVI-VR program with the opportunity for early identification of students who may be potentially eligible for VR services, to educate and engage families early in the transition process, and to assist the VR Counselors and schools with coordinating and planning for transition services, including pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS).

DVI recognizes the need to get information to families as early as possible. As such, the VR program employs a Pre-ETS Coordinator who works closely with the internal VR and Education teams to ensure updated information and forms related to Pre-ETS and VR services are made available to families and schools prior to students beginning the transition process. Given the additional supports often required for students with visual impairments to participate in Pre-ETS, DVI encourages the application for VR services for students who meet the definition of a student with a disability:

- Enrolled in a recognized education program.
- at least 14 years old but less than 22.
- has a disability (i.e., receives services under an IEP or 504 plan, or has a disability for purposes of section 504).

This allows the VR Counselor to become an integral part of the student's IEP team and to assist with the coordination of services to prepare the student for vocational success upon completion of high school. These services can include comprehensive vocational assessment, career exploration, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, self-advocacy training, preparation for post-secondary education or training, assistive technology (AT) assessment and training, independent living (ILS)/low vision services, and orientation and mobility (O&M).

Referrals for VR services are received primarily from the DVI Education Program; however, they are accepted from any source. DVI recently employed a newly licensed teacher of the visually

impaired, whose own visual impairment and active involvement in the NTACT-C Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI), inspired her to inquire about assisting DVI with transition. The plan is to expand her teaching role to include the internal coordination of transition and pre-ETS activities. This TVI will work closely with the VR Pre-ETS Coordinator and leadership to develop seamless procedures to ensure ease of access for transitioning youth and their families.

DVI continues to develop several transition programs for students with visual impairments to participate in during breaks in the school year. All programs within DVI collaborate to provide students with visual impairments opportunities to learn and practice a wide range of career and independent living skills. The programs provide the students and DVI team opportunities to build rapport and get to know each other, the students become familiar with the services DVI offers, and students spend time with and learn from peers from across the state. These programs include Transition Spring Break, Children's Beach House, and Camp Abilities. DVI coordinates these programs with community partners, such as Delaware State University, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP), local businesses, the University of Delaware, etc. These programs incorporate the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), transition activities and pre-ETS, all critical for students with visual impairments. Additionally, students participate in career-focused activities such as the NASA Space Camp for Students with Visual Impairments in Huntsville, AL, Envision Level Up provided by Wichita State University in Wichita, KS, and several transition programs offered by the Carroll Center for the Blind in Boston, MA.

To further educate the community and transition stakeholders about agency services, DVI participates in several statewide transition activities along with other core partners. The Education Administrator, designated TVIs, VR Transition Counselors and the VR District Administrator participate in monthly Transition Cadre meetings, hosted by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), and attended by Delaware's General VR agency (DVR), LEAs, Charter schools, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), other state agencies and families. DVI is also involved in a statewide initiative, PIPEline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities, a pilot program developed to use data to build structured programming and interagency teams to facilitate authentic inclusion of students, including those with the most significant disabilities, in career and technical education (CTE) career pathways and work-based learning experiences while in high school. DVI will continue to attend transition and career focused events through the DOE and LEAs DVI plans to increase opportunities for students to participate in transition activities by:

1. DVI will continue to partner with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in support of students interested in participating in Project SEARCH (PS) program to ensure proper supports for participants with visual impairments

2. DVI will continue to partner with organizations to access pre-ETS services. Community Integrated Services and Opportunity Center, Inc (OCI) provide community-based programming related to Work-based Learning Experiences, Workplace Readiness Training, and five core services. Sky's the Limit provides programming for students on all five core PreETS services. All organizations are engaged with DVI regularly to provide continuous improvement and respond to the needs of students and OCI represents CRPs on the VRAC.

3. The programs coordinated by DVI are separate and tend to have a specific focus (i.e., career prep, college prep, ILS skills, educational sports, etc.). Programming also occurs in the summer to accommodate the availability of students. DVI will continue to develop programs that are weekend or week-long transition events that feature experts in the field of visual impairments as guest speakers or program hosts.

4. DVI VR Counselors will continue to provide input into the IEP goals when invited. Counselors will use the IEP with students to assist in developing the individualized plan(s) for employment (IPE).

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.

The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), all Local Education Agencies (LEA), and DVI outlines roles and responsibilities of the LEAs and DVI about the consultation and technical assistance provided for the transition of students with visual impairments from school to post-school activities, including VR services. The MOU was fully executed by August 9, 2016, and is currently being updated and revised by all parties. Additionally, DVI is working with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division or Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Department of Education to develop a MOU that outlines roles and responsibilities of all four entities.

The purpose of the Interagency Agreement is to ensure, through a cooperative effort, that a free, appropriate public education is provided to all children and youth with visual impairments who are served by the DVI, and the LEAs under the general supervision and direction of the DDOE. This agreement also ensures that students are offered and provided, when eligible, appropriate transition services leading to competitive employment outcomes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, as well as Medicaid funded employment services funded through the 1915(i) Pathways program.

The MOU between DVI and DDOE defines the DVI-VR transition services and pre-ETS activities in great detail. Information was extracted and summarized to respond below.

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.

DVI provides consultation and technical assistance as summarized below:

1. Conduct training activities with appropriate staff members concerning the MOU and its implementation.
2. Coordinate training with DDOE and LEAs regarding specific procedures to be followed by DVI, DDOE and LEAs related to coordination of educational programs, placement, and appointment of educational surrogate parents for children and youth with visual impairments who are receiving cooperative services from those agencies.
3. Provide visual impairment (VI) education and transition related consultant services to LEAs that employ a TVI or related staff providing VI support (consultant services such as programming, in-service training, ordering of equipment, evaluation, transition and pre-ETS services, and coordination of inclusive placements in the least restrictive environment).
4. Provide in-house training for DVI education staff on best practices, at least annually.
5. Provide information as requested to school personnel on access to “long term support” necessary to assist individuals to live independently in the community.

6. DVI's VR team participates in statewide transition activities with DOE and school personnel to allow for the exchange of information related to pre-ETS activities, VR services and to continue collaboration with LEAs on a statewide level.

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;

Under the MOU, DVI is authorized to provide transition services to youth with disabilities, ages 14-22, in accordance with pre-employment transition services requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program. DVI, in collaboration with the local educational agencies involved, shall provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

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;

The roles and responsibilities of each agency are documented in the MOU, and become effective under the following conditions:

- When either DVI, an LEA, or a sub-contracted agency provides educational and/or transition related services to a child or youth with a visual impairment or,
- When a child or youth with a visual impairment is identified as eligible for DVI education services and/or DVI Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

DVI roles and responsibilities

DVI is responsible for ensuring conducts operational oversight of DVI staff & related funding. This includes requesting annual state funds sufficient for the provision of education services provided by DVI teachers, applying for IDEA sub-grants and high need grants, conducting annual census for American Printing House for the Blind annual quota funds, and purchasing and maintain all textbooks and equipment for children with visual impairments, organize and fund diagnostic and low vision examinations, purchase the prescribed glasses or low vision aids,

DDOE roles and responsibilities

1. The DDOE shall ensure that services for children and youth with visual impairments shall be provided in accordance with the IDEA and State regulations.
2. DDOE provides DVI with funding opportunities including IDEA sub-grant and high need sub-grant funds, when available.
3. DDOE provides monitoring oversight and communicate findings of monitoring noncompliance to DVI and/or LEA responsible for provision of services.

4. DDOE collaborate on policy development and coordinate with DVI and LEAs in the development of policies and procedures designed to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate public education for children and youth with visual impairments.

5. DDOE provide technical assistance to DVI in the development of additional interagency agreements, as needed, with LEAs and other public and private agencies.

6. Disseminate and provide technical assistance to DVI and LEAs on the rules and regulations pertaining to the education of children and youth with visual impairments contained in the IDEA and State Regulations.

7. Provide consultation on coordination of services between DVI and LEAs.

8. Conduct training activities with appropriate staff concerning this Agreement and its implementation, in cooperation with DVI, which delineates specific procedures to be followed by DVI, DDOE, and LEA school personnel in the coordination of educational programming and placement for youth with visual impairments who are receiving cooperative services from those agencies.

9. Participate in the DVI Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) as required and the Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind when requested.

10. Provide technical assistance to DVI and review and approve proposals for federal funds based upon the annual count of students served to supplement services for children and youth with visual impairments, and to provide technical assistance to obtain such funds.

LEA(s) roles and responsibilities

1. Provide special education services to children and youth with visual impairments in compliance with the IDEA, State and Federal rules and regulations that apply in providing a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

2. Include appropriate staff from the DVI in the IEP and IFSP processes for children and youth with visual impairments. Notify appropriate DVI staff, including TVIs, Orientation & Mobility instructors, Assistive Technology Professionals, Child Youth Counselors, Employment Navigators, and DVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, of IEP and related meetings within 10 school days. Convene meetings as appropriate including times when coordination of services is needed such as when DVI notifies the LEA of a change in available services (see #26 under DVI above).

3. Ensure informed written consent for release of information is obtained from adult students or parents of minors prior to sharing information with the DVI staff. All sharing of student records will be in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the IDEA and State law and regulations. DDOE staff will encourage parents to contact DVI directly to learn about programs and resources that may be available to their children.

4. After parent approval (e.g., signature of DVI VR application), verify, collect and provide information relevant to secondary transition (defined in MOU) to DVI VR Counselors.

5. Develop the IEP and IFSP in collaboration with the appropriate DVI staff based upon assessment and feedback provided. Include VI-related services as related services with each service identified (e.g., TVI direct or consult, Orientation & Mobility direct or consult, VR Rehabilitation Counselor services).

DDOE and DVI jointly agree to:

1. Request funding for jointly operated programs on an annual basis sufficient for the provision of a free appropriate public education for children and youth with visual impairments served in collaborative programs.
2. Seek federal funding to supplement services for children and youth with visual impairments including, but not limited to, America's Schools Act (ASA)-Title I (H), Carl Perkins Vocational Technical Education Act-Title II (CPVTEA) & IDEA-B.
3. Coordinate the development of policies and procedures necessary to ensure the provision of appropriate services and compliance with federal and State rules and regulations.
4. Coordinate legislative activities that impact children and youth with visual impairments; specifically, to propose amendments to the Delaware Code to further delineate responsibilities of DVI and DDOE and to propose improvements in funding and policy.
5. Review and revise certification requirements for teachers of children and youth with visual impairments.
6. Share responsibility for the planning and provision of transition services for students who will be moving between the educational system and DVI, other adult service providers, and the community.
7. Coordinate services with LEAs to maintain staff levels sufficient to meet student needs.
8. Cooperate in the development of new programs and in the revisions of existing programs.
9. Reviewing assessment approaches to ensure that assessments are appropriate for age and the individual's disability, as well as that transition planning needs of youth with disabilities and the requirements of the participating agencies are met. If student goal is higher education, a discussion between agencies to determine what current assessment information is needed/required for successful student outcome. Both parties agree to conduct appropriate and timely assessment without regard to financial considerations/obligations.

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.

The MOU provides details related to outreach to and identification of students to assess their potential need for transition and pre-employment transition services. The agreement includes

the process for receiving internal referrals from DVI teachers, collaborating with schools, disseminating information to reach individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

The MOU defines the coordination of transition activities provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. It outlines transition planning roles DVI and educational personnel to facilitate the development and implementation of a student's individualized education plan (IEP). It includes the DVI vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) role in the process and includes a detailed description of transition services, pre-employment services.

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

The MOU outlines the documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act about students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

Delaware legislators passed a law in FY21 which prohibits use of subminimum wage certificates starting 10/01/2024. When the law passed, Delaware had just two businesses that utilized certificates allowable under section 14 (c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 USC § 214(c). Both businesses were closed since the public health emergency began in 2020 and both have discontinued subminimum wage practices.

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.

The MOU states that DVI will enforce limits on the use of subminimum wage and maintain documentation according to the standards in this section. DVI shall ensure that no entity in Delaware, including a contractor or subcontractor of the entity, which holds a special wage certificate as described in section 14 (c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 USC § 214(c) may compensate an individual with a disability who is age 24 or younger at a wage (referred to in this section as a subminimum wage) that is less than the Federal minimum wage. This statement is followed by a detailed explanation of all standards, details, and exceptions.

The MOU assures that the DDOE will not enter into any form of contract or cooperative agreement with an entity for purposes of operating a program in which youth with disabilities are employed at subminimum wage.

The MOU assures that the LEAs will provide Policy Development by assuring that the LEAs will not enter into any form of contract or cooperative agreement with an entity for purposes of operating a program in which youth with disabilities are employed at subminimum wage. Subminimum wages for individuals with disabilities officially became illegal in Delaware on January 31, 2024. The Jamie Wolfe Employment Act, signed in October 2021, mandated a phased elimination of certificates.

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.

DVI-VR Business Services Structure

The Delaware business community plays a crucial role in the workforce system and the vocational success of DVI consumers. As such, it is critical for DVI to continually develop, cultivate and support employers throughout the state. Like our WIOA partners, DVI has embraced the dual-customer model and continues to build capacities of the Employment Service Specialists (ESS) who are tasked with employer outreach and engagement, as well as technical assistance to VR counselors and consumers. The ESS positions exist to assist the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) in obtaining employment for job seekers by building relationships with corporations that result in jobs and related opportunities.

DVI has two ESS positions who are directly supervised and supported by the VR District Administrator who is responsible for VR daily operations and staff supervision. An additional ESS position has been dedicated to the coordination of pre-ETS activities (Pre-ETS Coordinator) and services. The entire VR program, including career services and the Business Enterprise Program is overseen by a Social Services Senior Administrator who is responsible for the VR program administrative duties such as: supervising and supporting the VR District Administrator; establishing and maintaining quality assurance and performance measures, ensuring VR regulations are met, submitting required federal performance reports, updating policies and procedures, reviewing personnel training records, and providing technical assistance to VR staff. The established structure allows for statewide oversight, information sharing and a collaborative approach to employer engagement.

DVI-VR Business Services Activities

The DVI ESS team will continue to be responsible for the following efforts:

1. Assist VR Counselors by obtaining meaningful employment for job seekers.
2. Develop work-based learning experiences (including internships, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and fellowships), and opportunities for pre-employment transition services.
3. Join and actively network with professional organizations and groups such as the Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
4. Recruit and prepare consumers with responding to employer recruiting needs.
5. Assist employers with their workforce needs through engagement and collaboration.
6. Provide site surveys and solutions to help businesses identify reasonable accommodations, physical barriers, and safety needs.
7. Coordinate blindness sensitivity training for business and their employees.

8. Help advance the hiring of people with visual impairments in State government through the Agency Aide and Selective Placement program.
9. Collaborate with schools, CRPs, and community organizations by engaging in events designed to enhance workforce development (job fairs, transition conference/events, etc.).
10. Promote awareness of blindness related obstacles to continued employment.

Supporting consumers requires the ESS to help job seekers develop resumes, prepare for interviews, complete applications, and connect with employers. Their goal is to offer a delicate balance of guidance and assistance designed to teach functional job search skills, foster independence, provide comprehensive support (as dictated by need), and obtain meaningful employment. Currently, the ESS provides direct support in the workplace and/or discreetly assists the consumer to self-advocate as they work through the process of securing workplace accommodations.

The DVI ESS team is responsible for promoting and marketing the employment of persons who are blind by using multiple outlets and techniques to reach employers. In addition to developing new business, ESS personnel are tasked with cultivating new opportunities from existing business partnerships. As business relationships are formed and nurtured, the ESS acts as a resource, offering a variety of services designed to minimize common workplace barriers to companies who wish to increase recruitment efforts or better support employees with severe visual impairments. In addition to acting as a conduit connecting job seekers with employers, the ESS provides consultative advice, technical assistance, linkages to community resources, or any other means by which to assist the company.

The DVI ESS team will continue to provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations, assistive technology, and facilities and workplace access through collaboration with community partners and employers, across States and nationally, to enable the employers to recruit, job match, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or who are applicants for such services. DVI will continue to assist employers with utilizing available financial support for hiring or accommodating individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to, a renewed agreement with the Division of Employment and Training regarding utilization of the Work Opportunities Tax Credit for individuals with visual impairments. DVI will continue to develop relationships with employers to craft customized supported employment opportunities in integrated settings that is consistent with the individual's unique skills, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

The VR team will continue to provide the following services and coordination:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) and Employment Services Specialists (ESS) will continue to enhance communication and collaboration with all DVI programs, community partners and business partners to provide more work-based learning and work-based readiness services for students. Some of the services provided to prepare students for competitive integrated employment will be soft skills, internships, interviewing skills, networking skills, resume building, technology training and job shadowing.

- Maintain the Business Partners tracking database which continues to evolve and assists the ESS team to better meet the needs of business partners by tracking services used or needed to onboard new employees with visual impairments. It is also be used to track technical assistance to business partners, number of consumers hired and location of placements (county, city, etc.). The intention is for the team to use the database to demonstrate successful outcomes, develop work-based learning, and initiate paid and unpaid internships that allow students to explore different careers as well as to identify opportunities for job development and promote workplace inclusion.

- ESS will continue to coordinate development efforts, contact new businesses, and increase networking through business-oriented organizations such as, Society of Human Resource Managers, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, WIOA partners, state and local boards, and economic development offices. Collaborating with WIOA and economic development partners to leverage business contacts, share resources and expertise, and coordinate services that are beneficial to businesses and promote inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments.

- The ESS team will continue to improve efforts to cultivate new opportunities from existing business partnerships. Using facilitated planning targeting DVI and Business partner inputs, the ESS will identify opportunities to create more work-based learning experiences (including paid internships, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and job shadowing); developing new pre-employment transition strategies; and supporting businesses with recruiting qualified applicants with visual impairments. These efforts will provide increased probabilities for successful outcomes.

- ESS team will support employer engagement by providing businesses access to all DVI services. The VR Program will continue to regularly updates marketing materials and training for consumers and businesses. Workplace inclusion services, such as vision-specific on-site training; Americans with Disability Act worksite training; information and resources related to federal contracting and Section 503; assistance with identifying workplace accommodations; access to the latest assistive technology; and workplace accessibility and access for the blind. DVI ESS will also provide technical assistance to businesses with the necessary paperwork to access hiring incentives (i.e., Federal tax credits, Delaware Disability Employment tax credit, and on-the-job training wages.

- The ESS team will serve as points of contact for businesses needing guidance regarding support to remove disability-related obstacles to employment and the provision of reasonable accommodations for work-based learning experiences, onboarding, and retention of employees, including Assistive Technology and worksite assessments.

Labor Market Information

As of December 2025, Delaware's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 5.2%, marking the highest level since September 2021. The state experienced a significant increase in unemployment, with the number of unemployed workers rising by 8,300 over the year compared to December 2024, amid a year-over-year rise of 1.6 percentage points from 3.6%. Meanwhile, area unemployment rates – which are not seasonally adjusted – were mostly lower. New Castle County, Wilmington, Middletown, Kent County, Dover and Sussex County were all down. The Private Education and Health sector led the increase in Delaware over the

last year with an increase of over 300 jobs, while Manufacturing jobs saw the sharpest decline, losing 600 since December 2024.

The state unemployment rate continues to be higher than the national rate (3.7%) and of two of three contiguous states, two of which are below the national average (MD 4.2%, PA 4.2%, NJ 5.4%). ADVI also reviewed the current labor market to identify gaps and opportunities related to jobs for people who are blind. According to the National Federation of the Blind, more than 70% of people with severe vison loss are not working full time and 27.7% live with income below poverty level.

Emerging Industries

Emerging industries, such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and clean energy can provide opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired provided candidates are equip with diverse skill sets (often technical), adaptability, and creative problem-solving ability.

DVI will continue to work with workforce partners on initiatives related to emerging industries and occupations to ensure people with visual impairments and blindness are provided appropriate career development resources.

Looking Ahead

According to the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information, the fastest growing occupations over the next six years will be nurse practitioners (54.14%), physician assistants (37.20%), medical and health service managers (36.77%), physical therapy assistants (35.55%), and financial examiners (34.70%). I There are some key takeaways to consider when planning for the next four years including:

- The rise in remote work will increase the need for technology and training
- Baby boomer generation are retiring at a rapid rate, taking years of knowledge with them but opening doors for restructuring of jobs.
- People with bachelor's degrees are still twice as likely to be employed as those without. Increase training and education for youth and adults.
- Identity high demand career opportunities both locally and nationally.
- Develop small business engagements target chambers of commerce, Small Business Association, and increase use of the American Job Center resources.
- Work with CRPs to identify social service positions needed.
- Target remote and part time positions to enhance both employer and job seeker flexibility.
- Outreach, outreach, outreach – there is a greater need to educate employers (especially small business) about the benefits of hiring DVI consumers.
- Engage job seekers and employers with regular job fairs, meet & greets, mentoring, paid internships, job shadowing (take advantage of successfully closed consumers as networkers and mentors).

DVI-VR Business Services Transition Activities

DVI will reestablish the coordination of summer youth program and utilize relationships with the City of Wilmington, New Castle County and employers in Kent and Sussex Counties to provide opportunities. Before the public health emergency, each site reserved several positions specifically for students with visual impairments. This opportunity resulted in businesses being more informed and better prepared to understand the abilities and potential accommodation needs of individuals with visual impairments and provided students access to work experiences that align with their skills and abilities.

DVI will continue to utilize existing CRP that offer group and individualized pre-ETS transition services, including workplace readiness training and work-based learning experiences and work to establish additional partnerships. The CRP staff can provide individualized pre-ETS activities as well as work in collaboration with DVI on the various group programs offered to students during school breaks. Through the engagement of their employer partners, the CRPs have created opportunities for students to job shadow, participate in informational interviews and worksite tours and gain work experience through paid or unpaid internships.

DVI will continue to be a core partner in the *PIPEline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities* program. This program works closely with LEAs, state agencies and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to identify opportunities to promote and support the inclusion of students with disabilities in CTE career pathways. Delaware DOE has made a great effort to assist LEAs with aligning their CTE offerings with the high growth fields in Delaware, specifically to the labor market needs in the various regions the LEAs are located. A major component of this program is ensuring all students have access to work-based learning experiences that are incorporated into the CTE pathways, utilizing an existing partnership with employers who provide the work and training opportunities. DVI will continue to participate in Cadre meetings to help identify gaps in educational pathways, develop best practices for skills needed after school to enter the workforce and to help educational staff with identified barriers to employment.

The DVI ESS team will provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to employers on workplace accommodations, assistive technology, and facilities and workplace access through collaboration with community partners and employers, across States and nationally, to enable the employers to recruit, job match, hire, and retain qualified individuals with disabilities who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or who are applicants for such services. DVI will assist employers with utilizing available financial support for hiring and providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to, a renewed agreement with the Division of Employment and Training regarding utilization of the Work Opportunities Tax Credit for individuals with visual impairments. The Division for the Visually Impaired will continue to develop relationships with employers to craft customized supported employment opportunities in integrated settings that is consistent with the individual's unique skills, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

L. 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;

DVI partners with the Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) which is run by the University of Delaware Center for Disability Studies. With locations in all Delaware counties, the ATRC has a vast inventory of equipment, software, communication devices and items that support people with all disabilities. As required by the Assistive Technology Act, DVI maintains representation on the Assistive Technology Loan Advisory Board. In addition to the ATRC, DVI operates statewide assistive technology training centers which are state-funded and dedicated solely to the needs of school-aged students who are blind or severely visually impaired and is an active member of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities Statewide Electronics Accessibility Committee.

The ATRC and DVI offer rehabilitation technology assessment and evaluation services for consumers across all stages of the VR process, one-to-one demonstrations and device borrowing program. Rehabilitation technology includes a range of services and devices that supplement and enhance individual functions, such as job redesign or worksite modifications that improve the work environment for individuals with visual impairments.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

According to the Delaware Occupational and Labor Market statistics, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting jobs will decrease by 4.17% by the year 2030[1]. However, when consumers wish to pursue careers in the industry, DVI utilizes the following resources to assist with career readiness and employment development:

1. Delaware Department of Agriculture training and certification programs to assist consumers interested in Grain Inspection, Nutrient Management, Pesticide Applicators, and Farm Food Safety.
2. AgrAbility Program Resources: Although Delaware is no longer an active State participant in the AgrAbility program through the United States Department of Agriculture, DVI has access several resources available to all states. For example, the National AgrAbility Project provides certain information and services remotely, such as recommendations on types of technologies or advice about navigating the social services system. Additional resources include an assistive technology toolbox, publications, and archived webinars.

[1]Long-Term Industry (delaware.gov)

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

DVI maintains and continues to establish relationships with workforce development agencies to utilize the out-of-school programs that would benefit job seekers. DVI is an active member of the WIOA partner leadership team and participates in ongoing initiatives for quick navigation through services and data sharing. DVI provides vocational services to out-of-school youth with visual impairments in collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Programs through

cooperative relationships. Additional partners include: DE Department of Labor General Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment & Training, Unemployment Insurance, DE Health & Social Services, Division of Social Services, Division of State Service Centers, Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, Office of Financial Empowerment (Stand by Me Financial Coaching), Department of State, Division of Libraries, DE Division of Social Services, DE State Housing Authority, Ticket to Work - Full Circle Benefits Counseling, Office of Economic Development, Community Rehabilitation Service Providers.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

State use contracting in Delaware falls under the purview of the Commission for Statewide Contracts to Support Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (the Commission). The Commission codified by DE Code 16 § 9600 is designed to encourage and assist individuals with visual impairments and other disabilities to achieve maximum personal independence by assuring an expanded and constant market for their products and services. They routinely work together to develop new set-aside opportunities and ensure existing contracts are operating within the established guidelines and regulations. DVI is appointed to the Commission as an Ex-Officio member and as such, is actively engaged in the state use set-aside process.

To operate the set-aside contracts effectively and fairly, the Commission utilizes one or more Central Nonprofit Agency (CNA) as primary contractors of set-aside opportunities. Using the state procurement process, a CNA Request for Proposal is published on a quarterly basis to attract multiple types of contractors. Once contracts are secure, the CNA has the option of subcontracting or performing the job themselves. Regardless of the choice, the CNA is responsible for ensuring the contracts maintain the proper ratios of employees with and without disabilities and provide the goods/services as described in the contract.

There is currently one CNA in Delaware, the Ability Network of Delaware (A.N.D.), who subcontracts the work to several community rehabilitation providers. The set-aside opportunities in Delaware are temporary staffing and janitorial. The DVI Vocational Rehabilitation unit works collaboratively with the A.N.D. and their subcontractors to help consumers secure positions, evaluate assistive technology needs, and offer other services to ensure success on the job.

DE Code 16 § 9606 defines Business Enterprise Program (BEP) priority to vending contracts in State buildings. The DVI Director is a non-voting member of the Commission. This provides a chance to gain input from stakeholders and aids in the ongoing preservation and development of State opportunities prioritized for BEP.

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 Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) administers Title XIX of the Social Security Act for the State of Delaware. DVI collaborates with the Division for Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) while providing Supported Employment (SE) services to consumers with visual impairments and intellectual disabilities. Eligible individuals may receive extended employment services made possible through amendments of the DDDS Home and Community Based Waiver programs, HCBS 1915(i), HCBS 1915(c) and HCBS (b)(4).

DVI partners with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to coordinate the provision of evidence-based SE to eligible visually impaired consumers who have severe and persistent mental health needs. Employment services are made possible through Section 1115 of the Medicaid demonstration waiver as authorized by Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

DVI, DMMA, DDDS, and DSAMH are all situated under the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

In Delaware, people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, who meet the eligibility, have access to comprehensive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS). DVI collaborates with DDDS the for the provision of SE services to consumers with blindness and intellectual disabilities. If eligible, individuals may receive extended services from DDDS through one of three Medicaid HCBS waivers. Each waiver has defined criteria for eligibility, the services available are very similar. They include employment navigation, career exploration and assessment, individual & small group SE, Social Security benefits counseling, financial coaching, non-medical transportation, personal care (including a self-directed component), orientation & mobility, and assistive technology. The waiver is intended to complement VR services by offering extended services, personal care and customized services for people who may have had unsuccessful employment experiences. To avoid gaps in services, interagency coordination begins before the consumer completes the SE process with DVI. Once DVI makes a referral, DDDS does an individualized review of eligibility, application status (if applicable), and existing resources. The goal is to have a streamlined process that assists in identifying all available programs and resources, expand and improve employment services to people with significant disabilities, and maximize the use of comparable benefits.

DVI and DDDS are both housed under the Department of Health and Social Services and members of the Employment First Oversight Commission (EFOC), the governing body for ensuring people with disabilities are provided the opportunity to enter jobs and develop careers.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

DVI and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) collaborate to provide Evidence-based Supported Employment (SE) to eligible visually impaired consumers who have severe and persistent psychiatric needs. The DSAMH PROMISE program uses a team approach to integrate employment support services and comprehensive mental health services. Eligible participants receive career exploration, on-the-job supports, transportation, personal care, orientation and mobility training, assistive technology, and other services to help them gain and maintain employment. The waiver is intended to complement VR services by offering extended services, personal care, and customized services for people who may have had unsuccessful employment experiences. Like DVI, DSAMH is also situated under the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) which provides DVI with quick access to Division leadership if needed to resolve consumer issues.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

DVI collaborates with a variety of public and private agencies and programs that are not performing activities through the statewide workforce development system to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired and solutions to employment barriers. While DVI is committed to working collaboratively with its WIOA partners, it recognizes the importance of maintaining other strong partnerships to provide exceptional customer service to businesses and individuals with disabilities. Cooperation with private and non-profit service agencies, related government agencies, and other professional organizations has long been a cornerstone of public VR services for the blind in Delaware. Such collaborations help to overcome the complex and multiple barriers that confront people with disabilities who want to work or stay independent in their communities.

DVI maintains strong relationships with public institutions of higher education including Delaware State University and the University of Delaware. DVI is actively involved in, or has ongoing relationships with, several councils whose missions are related to individuals with disabilities including the Employment First Oversight Commission and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities.

DVI has established partnerships to ensure the following services are available to consumers: government employment/internship opportunities; pre-employment transition service opportunities; daily living (home energy, housing, child care, etc.) assistance; financial coaching; peer counseling; access to Medicaid for supported employment transitions; public access & accessibility (streets, buses, etc.); accessible materials creation; access to vision related medical community; higher education; access to books and periodicals in multiple formats; and braille enrichment.

Partner agencies include: DE Division of Developmental Disabilities; DE Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance; DE Division of Public Health; DE Division of Substance Abuse & Mental Health; DE Department of Transportation; DE Department of Human Resources; DE Department of Corrections; DE Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families; New Castle County Government; City of Wilmington Government; BlindSight Delaware; Library of Congress; National Federation of the Blind; Delaware Association of Optometry; DE School for the Deaf; University of Delaware; Delaware State University; Delaware Technical & Community College; Wilmington University; Ability Network of Delaware (formerly the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities) and Community Rehabilitation Providers.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

Delaware is a small state with a close-knit community of private nonprofit VR service providers who generally serve two designated state agencies (Blind & General). Historically, DVI provided most services using internal staff and referred a very small number of participants to CRPs. DVI understood the importance of offering choice and using providers who specialize in placement services, so an initiative was launched to utilize the services of providers and to build more relationships. This initiative began in FY20 and has resulted in partnerships with two local CRPs who provide all vocational services and one CRP who specializes in adjustment to blindness and peer support services. This partnership has resulted in 75% increase in the use of vendors for all community-based services including assessments, job placement, job coaching, supported employment, and Pre-Employment Transition services as well as services for comprehensive benefits counseling and entrepreneur preparation and training. Additionally, DVI VR counselors routinely review training opportunities with consumers. These options include the

programs supported by the DE workforce development system and innovative online training designed specifically for job seekers who are blind or visually impaired.

DVI continues to search for partnerships and contracts with providers that specialize in, or aspire to specialize in, services designed for people who are blind and utilizes organizations located outside of Delaware to secure highly specialized services specific to visual impairments.

Regardless of the method by which cooperative agreements are formed, DVI offers service providers on-site training to introduce techniques and strategies to support people who are blind. Vendors are provided training sessions related to blind sensitivity, blind etiquette, assistive technology, and more. During the sessions, DVI professionals ask attendees to wear blindfolds and/or goggles that depict various types of vision loss, while they perform tasks such as pouring a drink and icing a cupcake. The attendees are also provided with Sighted Guide instruction and experience using a white cane. Since launching the training, DVI has conducted six sessions for over fifty CRP staff. The DVI staff also provide guidance to providers by evaluating common barriers faced by blind consumers and recommending solutions. Examples of recommendations include updated assistive technology (software, screen readers, etc.) as well as low tech tools (bump dots, large-face devices, etc.).

When seeking partner organizations, DVI adheres to the State procurement process, shares solicitations through the State bid portal, and gains approval from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services as required. The procurement process is outlined in the newly revised grants manual which includes policies, procedures, and internal controls.

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:

The VR agency must select the "Edit" button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the

The State Plan must include
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.
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:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
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.

The State Plan must include
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 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).

The State Plan must include
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 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 (BLIND) 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[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired

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

Delaware Department of Health and Social 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

Deborah Talley

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

Director, Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired

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.

[1] PUBLIC LAW 113-128. [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. [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.

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[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.

[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.

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
Name of Signatory	Deborah Talley
Title of Signatory	Division Directo
Date Signed	February 20, 20

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.

The submission of expected levels is the first step in the negotiations process. Once the expected levels of performance have been submitted, State VR programs may begin negotiations with RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division. 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 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 (ESE)

The ESE indicator has been defined in the ESE final rule and PY 2024 was the first year of data for the newly defined performance indicator. However, a minimum of at least two baseline years of data must be collected to support a statistical adjustment model that could produce sufficiently reliable estimates for the purposes of performance negotiations and state performance assessments. The Departments, in accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(c)(4) and 34 CFR §§ 361.190(c)(4) and 463.190(c)(4), will collect and monitor state ESE performance results for at least PY 2024 and PY 2025 to establish a credible baseline and provide technical assistance. After PY 2025 data are collected the Departments will develop a statistical adjustment model for ESE in accordance with section 116(b)(3)(A)(viii) of WIOA. Since the ESE indicator is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs when feasible. While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,630.00
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

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 2026 and 2027.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

The State Plan must include	Include
I assure that the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a).	Yes

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

Compliance can be found in:

d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals; 1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs, goal 4.2.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

The State Plan must include	Include
I assure that the proposed project complies with the requirements in section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1228a).	Yes

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

Compliance can be found in:

d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals; 1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs, goal 4.2.

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. 24 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.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE 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) (TITLE 20, UNITED STATES CODE (20 U.S.C. 2301 ET SEQ.))

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, statutory references in this section are to Pub. L. 115–224,— *The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* ("Perkins V" or "the Act"). (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) The term "the State" used throughout this section refers to the State Perkins Eligible Agency and "the State Plan" refers to the "Perkins State Plan".

(OMB Control Number: 1830-0029)

A. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

1. Describe how the State plan was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V. See Text Box 1 for the statutory requirements for State plan consultation under section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V.

2. Consistent with section 122(e)(1) of Perkins V, each eligible agency must develop the portion of the State plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the

State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act. If a State agency, other than the eligible agency, finds a portion of the final State plan objectionable, the eligible agency must provide a copy of such objections and a description of its response in the final plan submitted to the Secretary. (Section 122(e)(2) of Perkins V)

3. Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the State plan. (Section 122(d)(14) of Perkins V)

Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation

- (c) PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible agency shall—
    - (A) Develop the State plan in consultation with—
        - (i) Representatives of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs, including eligible recipients and representatives of 2-year minority serving institutions and historically Black colleges and universities and tribally controlled colleges or universities in States where such institutions are in existence, adult career and technical education providers, and charter school representatives in States where such schools are in existence, which shall include teachers, faculty, school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, career and academic guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals;
        - (ii) Interested community representatives, including parents, students, and community organizations;
        - (iii) Representatives of the State workforce development board established under section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) (referre to in this section as the ''State board'');
        - (iv) Members and representatives of special populations;
        - (v) Representatives of business and industry (including representatives of small business), which shall include representatives of industry and sector partnerships in th State, as appropriate, and representatives of labor organizations in the State;
        - (vi) Representatives of agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth, including the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths established or designated under section 722(d)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(d)(3));
        - (vii) Representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations located in, or providing services in, the State; and
        - (viii) Individuals with disabilities; and

Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation
○ (B) Consult the Governor of the State, and the heads of other State agencies with authority for career and technical education programs that are not the eligible agency, with respect to the development of the State plan. • (2) ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES.—The eligible agency shall develop effective activities and procedures, including access to information needed to use such procedures, to allow the individuals an entities described in paragraph (1) to participate in State and local decisions that relate to developmen of the State plan. (3) CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNOR.—The consultation described in paragraph (1)(B) shall include meetings of officials from the eligible agency and the Governor's office and shall occur— ○ (A) During the development of such plan; and ○ (B) Prior to submission of the plan to the Secretary. (Section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V)

The Delaware State Plan under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act, public law 115-224 (Perkins V), was developed as part of the Delaware Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Combined State Plan, public law 113-128. The Delaware State Board of Education (the Eligible Agency: SBE) in coordination with the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) and the Delaware Department of Education worked in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) and 112(c)(1) of the Act. Per section 112(c)(2), the Eligible Agency developed effective activities and procedures to allow for individuals and entities to participate in state and local decisions related to the development of the Delaware Perkins State Plan. All information needed to use such procedures can be found here.

Per section 112(c)(1), the Eligible Agency developed the Delaware Perkins State Plan in consultation with members of those representative stakeholder groups defined in the Act. The Career and Technical Education Office solicited stakeholder feedback through closed convenings (i.e., CTE Cadre) and public meetings (i.e., DWDB, SBE, P-20 Council, Delaware Advisory Council for Career and Technical Education). The Eligible Agency posted the Delaware Perkins State Plan for formal public comment from January 4, 2024, to March 8, 2024. All meetings conducted by the Eligible Agency were public meetings, from which meeting agendas, and other informational material can be found here.

Per section 122(e)(1), the Eligible Agency in consultation with the appropriate state agencies, developed the portion of the Delaware Perkins State Plan relating to the amount and uses of funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education. No objections were received from those State Agencies. Comments submitted through the stakeholder engagement process can be found here.

Per section 122(d)(14), the Eligible Agency provided opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing during the state plan development. Opportunities to comment in person were provided (see section II.A.1). Opportunities to comment in writing were provided from January 4, 2024 to March 8, 2024 through an open public survey, found here. Further, the opportunity to provide in person public comment was provided at the January 18, 2024, and February 15, 2024, State Board of Education meetings when the Delaware Perkins State Plan was discussed. An open public comment period was also provided through action of the Eligible Agency from January 4, 2024 to March 8, 2024. Public meetings were also held to provide in person and in writing public comments on the Delaware Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Combined State Plan, which includes the Delaware Perkins State Plan. All opportunities to provide in person and in writing public comments were posted on the State Board of Education website, found here, the Delaware Workforce Development Board website, found here, and the Delaware Department of Education website, found here. Meeting agendas, and other informational material can be found here. All notices and public meetings were published in accordance with state public meeting laws and requirements.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development
    - a. Provide a summary of State-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the State, including the degree to which the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the State identified by the State workforce development board. (Section 122(d)(1) of Perkins V)
    - b. Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)
    - c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)
    - d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under

section 124(a) of the Act. See Text Box 2 for the required uses of State leadership funds under section 124(a) of Perkins V. (Section 122(d)(7) of Perkins V)

Text Box 2: Required Uses of State Leadership Funds

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

From amounts reserved under section 112(a)(2), each eligible agency shall—

- (1) Conduct State leadership activities to improve career and technical education, which shall include support for—
    - (A) Preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations;
    - (B) Individuals in State institutions, such as State correctional institutions, including juvenile justice facilities, and educational institutions that serve individuals with disabilities;
    - (C) Recruiting, preparing, or retaining career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, or paraprofessionals, such as preservice, professional development, or leadership development programs; and
    - (D) Technical assistance for eligible recipients; and

(2) Report on the effectiveness of such use of funds in achieving the goals described in section 122(d)(2) and the State determined levels of performance described in section 113(b)(3)(A), and reducing disparities or performance gaps as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II).

(Section 124 of Perkins V)

- 2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study
    - a. Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the State level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients. (Section 122(d)(4)(A) of Perkins V)
    - b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 1321 [1] will—
        - i. Promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;
        - ii. Expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and

- iii. Support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)

- c. Describe how the eligible agency will—
  - i. Make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand;
  - ii. Facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points;
  - iii. Use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate;
  - iv. Ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations;
  - v. Coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate;
  - vi. Support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities; and
  - vii. Improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations. (Section 122(d)(4)(C) of Perkins V)

Text Box 3: Statutory Definition of Career Pathways
The term ‘career pathways’ has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102)

Text Box 3: Statutory Definition of Career Pathways

(7) Career pathway.--The term "career pathway'' means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

- (A) Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- (B) Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act''; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred t individually in this Act as an "apprenticeship'', except in section 171);
- (C) Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- (D) Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforc preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (E) Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- (F) Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at leas 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
- (G) Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. (Section 3(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [Public Law 113- 128])

(Section 3(8) of Perkins V)

- d. Describe how the eligible agency, if it opts to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education. (Section 122(d)(4)(D) of Perkins V)
- e. Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs. (Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V)
- f. Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V. See Text Box 4 for the statutory requirements for local applications under section 134(b) of Perkins V.
- g. Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See Text Box 5 for the requirements for the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.

- h. Provide the eligible agency's definition for "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.

Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

- (b) CONTENTS.—The eligible agency shall determine the requirements for local applications, except that each local application shall contain—
- (1) A description of the results of the comprehensive needs assessment conducted under subsection (c
- (2) Information on the career and technical education course offerings and activities that the eligible recipient will provide with funds under this part, which shall include not less than 1 program of study approved by a State under section 124(b)(2), including—
    - (A) How the results of the comprehensive needs assessment described in subsection (c) informed the selection of the specific career and technical education programs and activities selected to be funded;
    - (B) A description of any new programs of study the eligible recipient will develop and submit t the State for approval; and
    - (C) How students, including students who are members of special populations, will learn about their school's career and technical education course offerings and whether each course is part a career and technical education program of study;
- (3) A description of how the eligible recipient, in collaboration with local workforce development boards and other local workforce agencies, one-stop delivery systems described in section 121(e)(2) o the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3151(e)(2)), and other partners, will provide—
    - (A) Career exploration and career development coursework, activities, or services;
    - (B) Career information on employment opportunities that incorporate the most up-to-date information on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the comprehensive needs assessment described in subsection (c); and
    - (C) An organized system of career guidance and academic counseling to students before enrolling and while participating in a career and technical education program;
- (4) A description of how the eligible recipient will improve the academic and technical skills of student participating in career and technical education programs by strengthening the academic and career an technical education components of such programs through the integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical education programs to ensure learning in the subjects that constitute a well-rounded education (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965);
- (5) A description of how the eligible recipient will—
    - (A) Provide activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency;

Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

- (B) Prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields;
- (C) Provide equal access for special populations to career and technical education courses, programs, and programs of study; and
- D) Ensure that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis o their status as members of special populations;

- (6) A description of the work-based learning opportunities that the eligible recipient will provide to students participating in career and technical education programs and how the recipient will work wit representatives from employers to develop or expand work-based learning opportunities for career an technical education students, as applicable;
- (7) A description of how the eligible recipient will provide students participating in career and technic education programs with the opportunity to gain postsecondary credit while still attending high schoo such as through dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high school, as practicable;
- (8) A description of how the eligible recipient will coordinate with the eligible agency and institutions higher education to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development, of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel and paraprofessionals who meet applicable State certification and licensure requirements (including any requirements met through alternative routes to certification), including individuals fron groups underrepresented in the teaching profession; and
- (9) A description of how the eligible recipient will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions such recipient wi take to eliminate those disparities or gaps.

(Section 134(b) of Perkins V)

Text Box 5: Statutory Requirements for Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

- (c) COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive financial assistance under this part, an eligible recipient shall—
  - (A) Conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment related to career and technical education and include the results of the needs assessment in the local application submitted under subsection (a); and
  - (B) Not less than once every 2 years, update such comprehensive local needs assessment.
- (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The comprehensive local needs assessment described in paragraph
  - (1) Shall include each of the following:

Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

- (A) An evaluation of the performance of the students served by the eligible recipient with respect to State determined and local levels of performance established pursuant to section 11 including an evaluation of performance for special populations and each subgroup described in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.
- (B) A description of how career and technical education programs offered by the eligible recipient are—(i) sufficient in size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students served b the eligible recipient; and (ii)(I) aligned to State, regional, Tribal, or local in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the State workforce development board described in section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) (referred to in this section as the ''State board'') or local workforce development board, including career pathways, where appropriate; or (II) designed to meet local education or economic needs not identified by State boards or local workforce development boards.
- (C) An evaluation of progress toward the implementation of career and technical education programs and programs of study.
- (D) A description of how the eligible recipient will improve recruitment, retention, and training of career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel paraprofessionals, and career guidance and academic counselors, including individuals in groups underrepresented in such professions.
- (E) A description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students, including— (i) strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations; (ii) providing programs that are designed to enable special populations to meet the local levels of performance; and (iii) providing activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

(Section 134(c) of Perkins V)

- 3. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations
  - a. Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—
    - i. Will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act;
    - ii. Will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population;
    - iii. Will be provided with programs designed to enable individuals who are members of special populations to meet or exceed State determined levels of performance described in section 113, and prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;

        - iv. Will be provided with appropriate accommodations; and
        - v. Will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

- 4. Preparing Teachers and Faculty
    - a. Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations. (Section 122(d)(6) of Perkins V)

[1]Based on the context of this requirement, the reference to the local application process under "section 132" appears to be a typographical error in the Perkins V statute. The correct section for local applications in Perkins V is section 134. Therefore, eligible agencies should respond to this item using the provisions in section 134 of Perkins V.

The Delaware Perkins State Plan was developed as part of the Delaware Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Combined State Plan, found here, public law 113-128. Delaware envisions an aligned education and workforce system that aids youth and adult learners to progress in their careers and supports employers to recruit and train a skilled workforce. Underpinning this effort is an aligned career pathways system that spans the administration of federal and state education and workforce development activities. Per section 122(d)(1), Delaware's career pathways system spans the administration of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). As such, Delaware's career pathway system represents the alignment of education and training programs to in-demand occupations and occupational clusters to help youth and adult learners to advance through higher levels of education and employment. The identification of occupational characteristics, such as middle- and high-skill occupations, high-demand occupations, and high-wage occupations, is coordinated across state agencies and related federal programs to systematically identify critical workforce needs and guide the administration of CTE as part of a statewide career pathways system that is responsive to labor market needs and occupational trends. Career pathway programs connect skill development activities and support services for youth and adult learners, beginning in the public education system through the development and implementation of CTE programs of study, and continuing through adult education, postsecondary education, and other occupational training programs. CTE programs of study provide a structured approach for delivering academic and technical education through an aligned sequence of courses that build through secondary and postsecondary instruction. Students who complete a CTE program of study attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent and an industry recognized credential, certificate, or license which holds value at the professional and postsecondary level, leads to a registered apprenticeship program, and/or leads to an Associate and Baccalaureate degree program.

Per section 122(d)(2), Delaware seeks to ensure that 65% of our workforce will earn a college degree or professional certificate by 2025, matching the percentage of occupations requiring such skill. Additionally, Delaware seeks to ensure that all students will graduate from high school prepared for continuing education and a career. Approximately, 48% of Delaware youth and 64% adults are prepared to enter middle- and high-skill occupations, and 48% of all high school graduates have met college and career readiness benchmarks through the state accountability model under ESSA. The success of this vision will be measured by the impact on youth and adult learners as students graduate high school and enter postsecondary education and the workforce. Students, educators, employers, and community-based organizations will provide feedback to continuously improve the delivery model and ensure Delaware's education and workforce system has the greatest impact on its residents. To accomplish this vision, Delaware has developed the following goals. These goals seek to further coordinate activities across state agencies and partnering organizations as well as to help accelerate work, engage additional partners, and ensure success.

1. Build a comprehensive system of career preparation that aligns with the state and regional economies. To ensure that youth and adult learners have an opportunity to pursue a great career, we will scale the statewide career pathways system and provide support to educators and employers to effectively serve youth and adults.

2. Scale and sustain meaningful work-based learning experiences for students in grades 5-14. To ensure that learning occurs both in the classroom and in the workplace, we will continue investing in the Office of Work-Based Learning, a statewide workforce intermediary, to place students into meaningful work experiences and support employers to recruit and onboard student talent.

3. Integrate our education and workforce development efforts and data systems. To establish a direct link between education and training programs and changes in state and regional labor markets, we will create a connected service model for students with disabilities, students from low-income communities, and students with other barriers to employment; and additionally, implement a workforce data quality campaign.

4. Coordinate financial support for Delaware's education and workforce system. To address pervasive issues in our education and workforce system that might otherwise prohibit youth and adult learners from moving directly into continuing education and employment, we will coordinate activities that support a diversified funding model that includes public, private, and philanthropic support.

5. Engage employers, educators, and community organizations. To ensure that the path to a meaningful career is accessible for every youth and adult learner, and that the state's economy remains strong, we will develop a robust communication and partnership strategy to coordinate the delivery of support services and skill development activities across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Per section 112(d)(2), CTE programs of study are an integral component of Delaware's career pathways system, the Delaware Workforce Development Board's strategic plan, and help to prepare an educated and skilled workforce. CTE programs of study include opportunities for secondary and postsecondary students to participate in career counseling and work-based learning experiences. In addition, CTE programs of study help to align supports and services for

learners who are at-risk in high school, youth and adults who have been incarcerated, and youth and adults who have barriers to continuing education and employment. This includes braided resources across Perkins V, WIOA, and ESSA for individuals with disabilities, individuals from low-income communities, and other at-risk populations defined under WIOA, ESSA, and Perkins V. These activities help every youth and adult learner to achieve their education and career goals as well as enter and advance in a career. This work is guided by the belief that CTE programs of study:

1. Prepare students for success in a career and postsecondary education. The terms "career ready" and "college ready" are synonymous. In order to earn a livable wage in today's economy, Delawareans must possess a credential beyond a high school diploma and be prepared to continue their education in the form of two- and four-year college or university, certification programs, registered apprenticeship, formal job training, and/or military service. CTE programs of study align academic and technical knowledge at the secondary and postsecondary levels by creating multiple entry and exit points for students to pursue a career and continue their education. Students who complete a CTE program of study have the opportunity to develop professional skills, earn an industry recognized credential, and continue their education while simultaneously engaging with employers to familiarize themselves with the culture of work.

2. Align education and workforce needs in partnership with relevant stakeholders. A dynamic workforce development system begins in the K-12 setting and involves established relationships with state agencies, service providers, business representatives, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. These partners play a vital role in aligning education and training programs to ensure that all youth and adult learners can move efficiently into employment. Partnership with employers, industry associations and chambers, and institutions of higher education is essential to continuously improve Delaware's career pathway system and to guide the development and implementation of CTE programs of study that are responsive to the changing workforce needs. CTE programs of study establish a direct link between the public education system, postsecondary education, and changes in regional and state labor markets.

3. Improve youth and adult learner outcomes by connecting academic and career success measures. Programs of study measure student achievement in academic and technical areas and promote employability skills. These opportunities produce higher levels of student achievement by defining a rigorous technical and academic course sequence at the secondary and postsecondary levels that relates to a student's career aspirations. Further, CTE programs of study provide a context for students to apply knowledge and career ready practices through project and problem-based learning that is authentic and reflects real-world application. An aligned accountability model across Perkins V, WIOA, and ESSA is applied to collect and review data to drive a process of continuous improvement, including making decisions regarding the viability of existing programs and the development of supports and infrastructure for youth and adult learners with barriers to employment and continuing education. These data serve to benchmark state and local performance, direct resources to support student equity, close achievement gaps, and ensure every learner is on a path to continuing education and gainful employment.

Per section 122(d)(4)(A), Delaware has implemented a model of career preparation that includes the development of both state- and locally- developed CTE programs of study for demand-driven occupations and occupational groupings. All CTE programs of study are required to align academic and technical instruction, span the secondary and postsecondary education systems, and meet the prerequisite expectations of employers to ensure that youth and adult learners have the opportunity to continue their education and seek gainful employment. Further, all state- and locally- developed CTE programs of study define labor market alignment and employer partnerships, outline educator licensure requirements, define value-added opportunities, as well as career & technical student organizations (CTSOs). Delaware supports the following CTSOs: Business Professionals of America (BPA), DECA, Family, Careers and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Educators Rising, National FFA Organization, HOSA-Future Health Professionals, SkillsUSA, and Technology Student Association (TSA).

At the secondary level, CTE programs of study are planned and approved according to the Delaware administrative code governing CTE (see 14 DE Admin. Code 525) and must align with Delaware administrative code requiring each student to complete a career pathway prior to high school graduation (see 14 DE Admin. Code 505). Local education agencies (LEAs) seeking approval for a CTE program of study will submit an application using the process outlined in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

The list of all state-model CTE programs of study for secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions is available here. Accompanying each state-model CTE program of study application is a labor market assessment and memorandums of understanding that define articulated and dual enrollment coursework at the secondary program level. When a local education agency (LEA) successfully applies for and adopts a state model CTE program of study, all program requirements must be adhered to without modification; however, LEAs and postsecondary institutions are encouraged to continuously improve the instructional model and identify best practices to meet the unique needs of the local community and students that are served. A timeline for program of study adoption or transition, implementation, and continuous improvement is outlined in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Each state-model CTE program of study is mapped to a demand driven occupation or occupational grouping and includes a defined course sequence and instructional outline, as well as opportunities for students to earn college credit and industry recognized credential(s) and participate in work-based learning experiences. Support for school administrators and counselors is provided, along with course specific professional learning opportunities for teachers through the Delaware Department of Education. Further, the defined course sequence includes knowledge and skill statements or learning competencies for each course within the program that include academic and technical skills and the inclusion of employability skills. All Delaware state model CTE programs of study are developed in conjunction with representatives from business and industry, secondary and postsecondary educators, and community stakeholders. State-model CTE programs of study are made available across secondary and postsecondary institutions, the juvenile justice system, and in institutions that serve individuals with disabilities and correctional institutions.

Per section 122(d)(4)(B), a LEA may choose to develop a local CTE program of study for an occupation or occupational cluster where there is not already an existing state-model program

or where an alternative skill training model is required. The process to develop a local CTE program of study is a collaborative practice that mirrors the state-model CTE program of study application process. This includes the review of labor market information and in-demand occupations defined under WIOA, resulting in the submission of a Delaware CTE Program of Study Application for approval through the Delaware Department of Education. The program application requires the LEA to include knowledge and skill statements or learning competencies for each course within the program, relevant academic and technical skills for each course, and the inclusion of employability skills. The process to develop, implement, and improve local CTE programs of study at the time of plan development can be found in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

The Delaware Department of Education oversees the CTE program of study approval process, evaluates the ongoing viability of CTE programs, reviews academic and technical skill competencies and related standards alignment across secondary and postsecondary coursework, and works to ensure alignment of program instruction, evaluation, and teacher certification criteria. Program evaluation is conducted through a continuous improvement cycle at the state and local levels, which includes the local needs assessment and local plan, as well as local and state performance management routines. This includes the design and administration of an evaluation plan to collect and review relevant data and student outcomes. Data are disaggregated and analyzed at the postsecondary institution level and at the school district or charter level, which are further disaggregated into the specific campus or high school and at the specific program level for all student subgroups such as gender, race/ethnicity, and special population status to inform programmatic decisions. Each CTE program of study is revised on a five-year cycle to ensure continuous program improvement and student access to high-quality CTE programs of study.

Middle grade CTE programs are developed to serve youth in grades five (5), six (6), seven (7), and eight (8) based on the LEA configuration of schools and the needs of the LEA as documented within the local needs assessment and local plan. Attention is provided to student on-boarding and/or outreach activities occurring as youth transition from elementary grades into middle grades and also for youth transitioning between grades eight (8) and nine (9) or into high schools. Middle grade CTE programs prepare youth to enter high school and include structural support for academic and technical coursework that aligns to continuing education and in demand careers. Middle grade CTE programs also focus on social and emotional learning, which can include college and career advisement, counseling and social supports, strength identification and development, as well as targeted partnerships between the LEA and out-of-school education providers or informal education and training providers. These services may expand beyond the typical school day or school year to provide youth with year-round education and training as well as expand access to CTE for special populations. The process for middle grades CTE program development and approval is documented in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

At the middle grades and high school levels, student advisement and remediation programs are part of a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) for youth that are offered in conjunction with state- and locally-developed CTE programs of study. These programs are supported through federal and state funding streams and staffing models as part of a comprehensive local system of CTE for all youth to demonstrate academic and technical readiness prior to high school

graduation and successful transition into/across the postsecondary education system and the workforce.

Student advisement programs must align with the student success planning requirement under Delawareadministrative code (see 14 DE Admin. Code 507) and the K-12 school counseling requirement under Delaware administrative code (see 14 DE Admin. Code 545). Remedial education programs are offered at the high school level and must provide targeted interventions to youth who are below academic grade level proficiency, are not on-track to graduate high school, or who require targeted intervention prior to transition into postsecondary education and the workforce. The process for student advisement and remedial program development and approval is documented in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Postsecondary CTE programs are developed based on the prerequisite expectations of business and industry and align technical and academic skills and knowledge. Further, postsecondary CTE programs provide students with opportunities to engage employers, participate in work-based learning experiences, and apply academic and technical knowledge. In Delaware, postsecondary CTE programs span short- and long-term credential programs, the registered apprenticeship system, and two-year degree programs to create a system of stackable credentials and connected degree programs.

Postsecondary CTE programs link to local education agencies as well as to the adult basic education system and the prison education system. These designed points of entry and transition create opportunities for youth and adult learners to build skills to enter and progress through education and training systems and placement into employment. Further, this work expands access to CTE programs for special populations and reflects Delaware's career pathway system and shared education and workforce goal to increase the number of youth and adult learners with valued industry credentials and degrees. Collaboration amongst these system providers is organized though state leadership activities and financial support.

Credential programs are required to meet the shared expectations of the Eligible Agency and the Delaware Workforce Development Board. Approval of short- and long-term credentials programs is documented in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures. This effort seeks to align administrative processes for education and training providers operating postsecondary CTE programs under the Act and adult programs operating under WIOA. The following guidelines help those institutions of higher education and postsecondary vocational institutions that are listed in the Delaware Perkins State Plan (see section C.7.a) to ensure alignment of postsecondary CTE programs to the statewide career pathway system. As such, short-term credential programs must:

a. Provide not less than one hundred and forty-four (144) clock hours and not more than six hundred (600) clock hours of instructional time, and may:

1. include integrated education and training; and
2. measure the prior proficiency (e.g., through credit for prior learning (see here) or pre-assessment of skill/proficiency) of the student and award related clock hours as a means to accelerate that student to complete the program.

b. Ensure training is aligned with those middle- and high-skill occupations or in-demand occupations in the State as determined by the Delaware Workforce Development Board, see here;

c. Provide to students, upon completion of the program, a recognized postsecondary credential that meets the hiring requirements of potential employers;

d. Provide to students, upon completion of the program, a recognized postsecondary credential that satisfies any applicable educational prerequisite requirement(s) for professional licensure or certification, so that students who complete the program and seek employment qualify to take any licensure and certification examination needed to practice or find employment in the State of Delaware or in an occupation that the program prepares students to enter; and

e. Provide to students, upon completion of the program and/or attainment of the credential, with the equivalent academic credit of such credential that may be applied to subsequent credit-bearing certificate or degree programs upon enrollment in such program at any eligible postsecondary institution defined in the Delaware Perkins State Plan (see section C.7) and at such two- and four-year degree institutions.

Any postsecondary institution may request an exemption to the minimum clock hour requirement for short-term credential programs, provided the program meets all other criteria and the institution has historical record of student achievement in attaining a valued postsecondary credential and documentation of past student placement into the workforce and/or higher levels of education. The exemption process is documented in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Long-term credential programs shall follow those guidelines for Pell eligibility as defined under the Higher Education Act. In addition, long-term credential programs must:

f. Provide not less than six hundred (600) clock hours of instructional time, and may:

1. include integrated education and training; and
2. measure the prior proficiency (e.g., through credit for prior learning (see here) or pre-assessment of skill/proficiency) of the student and award related clock hours to accelerate that student to complete the program.

g. Ensure training is aligned with those middle- and high-skill occupations or in-demand occupations in the State as determined by the Delaware Workforce Development Board, see here;

h. Provide to students, upon completion of the program, a recognized postsecondary credential that meets the hiring requirements of potential employers;

i. Provide to students, upon completion of the program, a recognized postsecondary credential that satisfies any applicable educational prerequisite requirement(s) for professional licensure or certification, so that students who complete the program and seek employment qualify to take any licensure and certification examination needed to practice or find employment in the State of Delaware or in an occupation that the program prepares students to enter; and

j. Provide to students, upon completion of the program and/or attainment of the credential, with the equivalent academic credit of such credential that may be applied to subsequent credit-

bearing certificate or degree programs upon enrollment in such program at any eligible postsecondary institution defined in the Delaware Perkins State Plan (see section C.7) and at such two- and four-year degree institutions.

State Registered Apprenticeship programs are required to follow the training requirements under Delaware administrative code (see 19 DE Admin. Code 1101). Two-year degree programs are approved by the Board of Trustees at the Delaware Technical Community College. Documentation of all postsecondary course catalogues, staffing models, instructional facilities, promotional activities, student recruitment materials, and other institutional policy that may be required under related WIOA programs is documented as part of the local needs assessment and local application under the Act.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(i), the Delaware Department of Education makes information available to the public on approved state- and local- CTE programs of study, work-based learning programs, early college opportunities, and student guidance/advisement. These resources are also made available to the public through secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions via websites, course catalogs, school counseling and advisement materials, credential and degree publications, and other community facing engagement tools.

Outreach is established at the secondary and postsecondary levels to engage employers to form CTE advisory councils which engage students, parents, educators, employers, and other interested parties to develop or improve programs under the Act. Information is also made available through various websites and online resources supported by community partners. This includes the state one-stop system, online directories, marketing materials, and public facing data tools. All documentation is made accessible to teachers, guidance counselors, advisory committee members, parents, students, and other interested parties in either online or in print format.

Targeted labor market information is provided for community stakeholders through websites and relevant publications. This includes in-demand occupations defined under WIOA and high-growth industries that are identified using a shared data model across the Departments of Education and Labor, and the Delaware Workforce Development Board. The labor market data model is based on occupational characteristics reported through the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Delaware Department of Labor and include the required level of education, on-the-job training, residency requirements, and years of experience for all reported occupations. These characteristics are vetted against an agreed upon taxonomy to classify low-, middle-, and high-skill occupations as well as other economic terminology such as high-wage and high-demand. Occupations and the related level of skill are then aggregated using the career clusters framework and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) with crosswalks to related standard occupation codes and CTE program of study course codes.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(ii), state- and local- CTE programs of study map to a given set of occupations or occupational groups and are required by the Eligible Agency to link across learning levels at related secondary and postsecondary institutions. This design creates opportunities for youth and adult learners to have multiple entry and exit points that facilitate entrance into the workforce and/or seek additional postsecondary education. Delaware will continue to expand the statewide career pathway system to align both CTE programs of study and other education and training programs within an aligned framework focused on in-demand occupational growth and student needs.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(iii), the Delaware Department of Education requires the use of labor market information to develop state- and local- CTE programs of study. This information is captured within the local application and as part of the local needs assessment. Labor market information is used for program implementation and evaluation as well as aligning CTE programs of study to current and emerging occupations that are middle- and high-skill, are high-wage, and are high-demand. Operational definitions of these terms and the associated processes are included in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures and in the process of being re-evaluated.

Further, the Delaware Department of Education partners with the Department of Labor to publish traditional labor market information via the Economic Development and Employer Planning System (EDEPS) website, see here, which provides labor market projections aligned to the state's instructional model for CTE programs of study. The website also includes supply and demand characteristics, pulling information from state and national data sources such as iPEDs, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, and the Occupational Handbook. These data help LEAs and postsecondary staff, youth and adult learners, and community stakeholders to understand Delaware's labor market and aspects of an occupation or the industry including preferred educational levels and skill expectations. Further, the Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware Workforce Development Board partner to publish a list of in-demand occupations under WIOA that align to key industry sectors for which the state is focused on economic development and growth.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(iv), equal access and services for special populations defined under the Act are monitored as part of the local needs assessment, the local application process, and through on-goingperformance routines conducted by the Delaware Department of Education. The local needs assessment and local application process ensure that students in special populations are provided with appropriate services to access CTE programs and that student outcomes in college and career readiness programs are equitable. Ongoing performance monitoring routines are conducted every three (3) to five (5) years based on a risk analysis of the LEA or postsecondary institution. The performance routine includes discussion of student access and equity to CTE programs and services under the Act. This includes a review of student access to and matriculation through CTE programs as well as student outcomes by indicator type and by defined subpopulations under the Act. Findings associated with the performance routine are documented for the LEA or postsecondary institution to address. Additional support is then made available through a tiered engagement model.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(v), the Eligible Agency coordinates with the Delaware Workforce Development Board to support and develop career pathways. Further, the Delaware Department of Education, through action of the Eligible Agency, publishes regulations as well as policy and procedures that guide the development of state- and local- career pathways and CTE programs of study. Coordination is also provided by the Eligible Agency and the Delaware Workforce Development Board to govern the statewide career pathway system and to map future programmatic growth, strategic direction, and alignment.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(vi), the Delaware Department of Education supports state- and locally developed CTE programs of study that are industry based and align with nationally recognized standards to provide an understanding of and experience in, all aspects of an industry. Work-based learning experiences are required components of state-approved CTE programs of study

and occur at various levels in program implementation and with a variety of educator and employer partners. Specifically, work-based learning programs and related activities are organized as part of a continuum of experiences for youth and adult learners, occurring in grades five (5) through postsecondary education (e.g., career awareness—exploration—and immersion). This learning progression mirrors educational growth, knowledge development, and skill acquisition as the learner progresses through the CTE program of study to create an aligned sequence of experiential learning opportunities that provide youth and adult learners with a full understanding of an industry. Operational definitions of these terms and related expectations are included in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures and Work-Based Learning Policies and Procedures.

Per section 122(d)(4)(C)(vii), the Delaware Department of Education supports secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions to promote youth and adult learner outcomes and the reduction of performance gaps for those defined sub-populations under the Act. Performance of secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions is monitored annually as part of the local funding application process through the eGrants platform and through on-going performance routines. The local application process ensures that all students are provided with appropriate services and targeted intervention to support their academic and technical skill development within a CTE program of study. On-going performance monitoring routines are conducted every three (3) to five (5) years based on a risk analysis. The performance routine includes discussion of student equity and student outcomes in the aggregate, by high school or postsecondary institution campus, and for CTE programs of study aggregated by career cluster. This includes a review of student academic and technical skill development by indicator type and by defined sub-populations under the Act. Findings associated with the performance routine are documented for the LEA or postsecondary institution to address. Additional support is then made available through a tiered engagement model.

Per section 122(d)(4)(D), the Delaware Department of Education requires all secondary programs under the Act to include early postsecondary opportunities as part of the CTE program of study. This information is approved as part of the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures. This can include articulated college credit, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, pre-apprenticeship, and/or early college high school programs. Opportunities for articulated college credit and dual enrollment are included across all state-model CTE programs of study and all approved local-CTE programs of study. Locally developed CTE programs of study may include an early postsecondary model as appropriate to the LEA and the partnering postsecondary institution and may be specific to an occupation or occupational grouping.

Competency based education models are also supported by the Delaware Department of Education where specific knowledge and skills are documented within a learning progression. The progression of knowledge and skill can occur inside or outside of the classroom and must carry value for the learner that the LEA or postsecondary institution awards, e.g., demonstration of credit for prior learning and the award of instructional clock hours or academic credit to support the educational progression of the learner.

Per section 122(d)(12), the Delaware Department of Education works with those stakeholders defined in the Act and through quarterly meetings with the Eligible Agency and with the Delaware Workforce Development Board to discuss development, implementation, and evaluation of CTE programs. Annual evaluation and reporting occur to both the Eligible Agency

and Delaware Workforce Development Board, through published materials, semi-annual progress reports, and a formal outcomes report. All materials, reports, and resources can be found here. Further, monthly meetings occur under the direction of the Eligible Agency and the Delaware Workforce Development Board to continuously improve the statewide career pathways system. These meetings involve a dedicated group of stakeholders, see here, focused on achieving the vision of the Delaware Perkins State Plan and related goals under the Act.

Per section 134(b) and section 134(c), the local needs assessment and local application template is provided here. Local education agencies (LEA) and postsecondary institutions submit the local needs assessment, the local application, and annual application for funds issued under the Act through the Delaware eGrants platform. The process to review the local needs assessment, approve the local application, and award funds under the Act is defined in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Any LEA or postsecondary institution desiring financial assistance under the Act will submit a local application to the Eligible Agency that is approved by the Delaware Department of Education. A copy of the completed local needs assessment is submitted as part of the local application. The local needs assessment is updated and resubmitted at least once every two (2) years. Per section 134(d), both the local application and needs assessment are completed in consultation with a diverse stakeholder body consisting, at a minimum, of those representatives defined under the Act. Per section 135(e), continued consultation is sought from those representatives defined under the Act. The continued consultation includes, but not be limited to, updating qualitative and quantitative data in the local needs assessment, to ensure the local system of CTE is responsive to the defined needs of students and the labor market and to ensure human and fiscal resources are applied to improve student outcomes, including work-based learning opportunities.

The overarching performance management routine, which includes the local needs assessment, the local application, and related local and state monitoring routines, is designed as a fluid process to meaningfully connect those documented system needs to the allocation of human and fiscal resources to improve youth and adult learner outcomes. As such, the local needs assessment is developed in consultation with eligible recipients and defined as a self-evaluation conducted by secondary and postsecondary institutions to improve student access, achievement, and equity in CTE programs, as well as the implementation of high-quality CTE programs of study and improvement of the local education and workforce system (to be completed once every two (2) years). The local application, also developed in consultation with eligible recipients, is defined as an operational plan developed by LEAs and postsecondary institutions to implement high-quality CTE programs of study, establish performance targets for those core indicators of performance defined under the Act, improve student outcomes, and expand innovative practices (to be completed once every four (4) years and updated as needed). The application for funds is defined as a financial request for resources made available under the Act, to reflect findings from the local needs assessment and be issued in alignment with the local application (to be completed annually). As such, the local needs assessment and the local application template are organized across five (5) core priority areas, which are:

1. Quality Improvement: addresses sections 134(b)(1) and 134(b)(2)(A) of the Act and connects the local needs assessment, local application, and local and state monitoring

routines to those identified strengths and opportunities that exist to improve the local system of CTE;

2. Program Quality: addresses sections 134(b)(2)(B), 134(b)(2)(C), 134(b)(5), 134(c)(2)(B), 134(c)(2)(C), and 134(c)(2)(E) of the Act and focuses on the evolution of the local system of CTE, as well as supports for all students to access and be successful in a CTE program of study that lead to in-demand industry sectors and occupations that provide a living wage through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for all learners;

3. Student Readiness and Equity: addresses sections 134(b)(4), 134(b)(7), 134(b)(9), and 134(c)(2)(A) of the Act and connects academic and technical skill preparation to early postsecondary credit opportunities, as well as the identification of what disparities or gaps exist across youth or adult performance indicators and how the LEA or postsecondary institution will address such disparities or gaps through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for all learners;

4. Talent Development: addresses sections 134(b)(8) and 134(c)(2)(D) to focus on the recruitment and initial licensure of diverse CTE educators and related faculty, the professional learning supports for secondary and postsecondary CTE educators, as well as the relationship between the Eligible Agency, Delaware Department of Education, LEAs, and postsecondary institutions to provide such support; and

5. Systems Alignment: addresses sections 134(b)(3), 134(b)(6), 134(d), and 134(e) of the Act and the connection between employer partners, community stakeholders, and local/state workforce partners to support career exploration and development, career and college advisement, and how these partners are engaged within the local system of CTE to scale work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults.

At the time of public comment, the local needs assessment and local plan are undergoing revision for clarity and alignment in consultation with eligible recipients. Final versions to be utilized with state fiscal year 2025 local applications is submitted with the completed state plan.

Per section 135(b), the Delaware Department of Education requires CTE programs of study to meet the criteria of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective and seek funding under the Act. Size is defined as providing sufficient opportunity for youth and adult learners to enter and matriculate through secondary and postsecondary CTE program levels. Scope is defined as including rigorous academic and technical standards, as well as employability skills, and by providing youth and adult learners with opportunities to earn industry recognized credentials, participate in work-based learning experiences, and connect secondary to postsecondary coursework. Quality is defined as providing sufficient opportunity to meet or exceed performance targets under the Act, provide support for special populations enrolled in the CTE program of study, and procedures that continuously improve all aspects of those programs offered under the Act. This policy is documented within the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Per section 121(d)(9)(A), the Delaware Department of Education coordinates services for student access and equity for those special populations under the Act across state agencies, community stakeholders, and eligible recipients and institutions that support special populations. This includes coordination of various workgroups across the Delaware Department of Education, including the CTE & STEM workgroup, the Higher Education workgroup, the

Exceptional Children workgroup, and the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development workgroup to:

1. Align supports and services for students with disabilities, English Learners (EL), foster and homeless youth, and other special populations under the Act;
2. Provide and coordinate professional learning opportunities for academic educators, CTE educators, special education staff, school counselors, and EL staff in secondary school programs;
3. Promote academic instruction and targeted interventions that reduce the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level; and
4. Develop process tools and data models to identify effective programs, coaching, and supports to serve special populations under the Act.

This also includes coordination of various state agencies, including the Delaware Department of Labor—Vocational Rehabilitation Division and the Employment and Training Division as well as the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services—Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division for the Visually Impaired to:

1. Align in-school youth programs under WIOA to college and career preparation programs, school counseling programs, and CTE programs of study at the secondary level;
2. Align out-of-school youth programs under WIOA to community-based supports, transition supports and services, and CTE programs of study at the postsecondary level;
3. Coordinate supports for youth with disabilities across federal and state programs to support preemployment transition services and supports into postsecondary education and employment; and
4. Coordinate employer engagement and outreach to align work-based learning programs, develop complementary on-boarding services, and discuss labor market research to target in-demand occupations and occupational groupings.

Implementation of these services is monitored as part of the local needs assessment and local application process through the eGrants platform and through on-going performance routines. The local needs assessment and local application process ensures that students in special populations are provided with access to CTE programs and appropriate services and supports. On-going performance monitoring routines are conducted every three (3) to five (5) years based on a risk analysis of LEAs and postsecondary institutions. The performance routine includes discussion of student equity and student access to CTE programs and services under the Act. This includes a review of student access to and matriculation through CTE programs as well as student outcomes by indicator type and by defined sub-populations under the Act. Findings associated with the performance routine are documented for the LEA or postsecondary institution to address. Additional support is then made available through a tiered engagement model.

Per section 121(d)(9)(B), Delaware prohibits discrimination against students, including students enrolled in career and technical education programs. All programs operate in

accordance with IDEA, the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and subsequent federal legislation. Further, the Delaware Department of Education requires all Delaware students to complete a career pathway as part of the high school graduation requirements. A career pathway is defined as three (3) credits, beyond those courses otherwise required for high school graduation, in a specific area of focus (see 14 DE Admin. Code 505). Any student may choose a CTE program of study at the secondary level to complete this requirement. Any student may also choose to attend a high school or LEA that offers a CTE program of study that is of interest to the student that is not within the student's traditional geographic school district. Further, schools and LEAs may choose to offer state-model or locally developed CTE programs of study at the secondary level, creating greater access for youth. Opportunities to offer a high-quality CTE program of study are available to any high school and LEA interested in offering such program and across postsecondary CTE institutions. All postsecondary CTE institutions are open admission institutions that provide programs and services under the Act to youth and adult learners.

Per section 121(d)(9)(C), the Delaware Department of Education requires secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions to coordinate program development and implementation with employer advisory committees. These committees serve as the foundation to establish state and local levels of performance by indicator and coordinate supports for youth from special populations. Engagement between employer groups and eligible recipients under the Act is monitored through the local application process and as part of the Delaware Department of Education performance routine.

Per section 121(d)(9)(D), the Delaware Department of Education requires all students to complete a student plan encompasses a minimum of six (6) years (grades 8 through 12 and one-year beyond high school) to success plan prior to high school graduation (see 14 DE Admin. Code 507). The student success provide all students with the opportunity to set education and career goals based on their academic and career interests. During the establishment and annual review of the student success plan, students engage their parents/guardians, school counselors, teachers, mentors, and other individuals in the process of developing an individual learning plan. The individualized learning plan includes student supports, accommodations, and other resources garnered on behalf of the student. To assist in the implementation of the student success plan, the State of Delaware has made career software available at no cost to LEAs. The software allows the plan to be completed online while providing career exploration tools to youth.

Individual student accommodations are coordinated across Perkins V, WIOA, and ESSA. Additionally, Delaware recognizes the need for quality education programs for youth and adult learners who have not been successful within the regular school program. Often, in an instructional setting, more appropriate to an individual's needs or based upon an individual's circumstance, the learner can be highly successful in education and training programs that directly connect to the labor market. This includes programs that support special populations defined under the Act, which include but are not limited to programs operating within a correctional institution, serving individuals with disabilities, or serving English Learners as well as those programs that provide specialized services in partnership with employers. Policies, programs, and best practices established under the Act are used to work with education and training providers that serve incarcerated youth and adults as well as institutions that serve individuals with disabilities, to more effectively promote academic instruction, technical skill

development, and employability skills. Further, alignment to in demand occupations and the acquisition of industry credentials that are valued by postsecondary institutions and employers are used as tools to assist the learner with transition into continuing education and employment.

Per section 122(d)(9)(E), the Delaware Department of Education requires secondary recipients and postsecondary institutions to include high quality work-based learning experiences as part of an approved state- or locally developed CTE program of study. Documentation of work-based learning experiences is included within the Delaware CTE Program of Study Application. Operational definitions of work-based learning activities and instructional outcomes are included in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities to participate in work-based learning opportunities that include integrated and competitive employment are defined within the individual learning plan for the student. For youth this includes the student success plan (see 14 DE Admin. Code 507) and/or an individual education plan (see 14 DE Admin. Code 922 to 929). For adult learners these opportunities are coordinated with those student support services available at the eligible postsecondary institutions.

Additional supports are coordinated between the Delaware Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health & Social Services to provide pre-employment and employment transition services under WIOA Title IV that maximize employment, independence, and integration into society. This includes specific programming for youth with disabilities enrolled in secondary CTE programs in coordination with WIOA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other federal programs. Secondary and postsecondary CTE coordination supports the pursuit of competitive integrated employment and emphasizes services to youth and adults with disabilities to receive education and training services and work-based learning supports.

Per section 122(d)(6), the Delaware Department of Education supports the recruitment and preparation of teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide high-quality instruction, college and career counseling services, and support to youth and adult learners. The Delaware Department of Education also supports shared leadership activities and skill development that is ongoing and reflective of the evolving needs of the state career pathways system.

Specific supports are provided to teacher candidates who seek licensure and certification through the Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification program, see here. Supports are also provided to institutions of higher education to engage with teacher candidates who enter the field of education having been previously employed in the workforce through Delaware administrative code for Skilled and Technical Sciences (see 14 DE Admin. Code 1559). State leadership activities and funds as well as staff time are applied to increase programs and opportunities for industry professionals to enter and become successful educators. Feedback from various stakeholders is collected and analyzed to refine programmatic investments, supportive programs, and to offer technical assistance.

On-going professional learning opportunities are provided to educators to develop academic and technical skills as well as practice the meaningful facilitation of instruction. Support for administrators and institutional leadership is provided throughout the academic year to

improve the operational efficiency of secondary and postsecondary institutions under the Act as well as developed shared educational policy and practices managed by the Delaware Department of Education.

C. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how—
    - a. Each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement;
    - b. Each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
    - c. Each eligible recipient will ensure the local needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)
- 2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed—
    - a. Among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace; and
    - b. Among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)
- 3. For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V)
- 4. For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.
- 5. Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V)
- 6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)—

    - a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and
    - b. Describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

- 7. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)—
    - a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and
    - b. Describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

- 8. Provide the State's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary's annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(D) of Perkins V)

Per section 122(d)(5), the Eligible Agency works with the Delaware Department of Education to award funds to eligible recipients under the Act. The process to review and award funds is defined in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures. Secondary LEAs and postsecondary institutions submit annual applications for funding through the Delaware eGrants platform. Required uses of funds include continuous program improvement, academic achievement of CTE students, and increased levels of technical skill proficiency, including the attainment of industry recognized credentials that are of value at the postsecondary level and to employers.

At the local level, the allocation of funds under the Act is tied to data captured during the local needs assessment and strategic planning process used to develop the local application. Both secondary LEAs and postsecondary institutions follow a similar process in terms of resource allocation to ensure human and fiscal resources reflect student and system needs, as well as strategic priorities. Both the local needs assessment and local application include the use of labor market information for program implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the local system of CTE. Labor market information is also used when developing or implementing CTE programs of study for current and emerging occupations that are middle- and high-skill, are high-wage, and are high-demand occupations. Operational

definitions of these terms are included in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Further, the Delaware Department of Education partners with the Department of Labor to establish the EDEPS website, see here, which provides labor market projections aligned to the state's instructional model for CTE programs of study. These data help secondary LEAs, postsecondary staff, and students to understand Delaware's labor market and the alignment of education and training programs to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Per section 122(d)(8), funds under the Act will be issued per the following distribution model:

1. 5% of the total grant amount will be retained by Delaware Department of Education for administrative purposes;

2. 10% of the total grant amount will be retained at Delaware Department of Education for leadership activities; and

3. Of the remaining 85%:

1. The Delaware Department of Education will retain no more than 15% for Reserve Funds to be utilized in accordance with the Act for statewide priorities, issued based upon criteria, competitively, and/or through a performance based financial model to eligible secondary and postsecondary recipients. Additional information can be found in CTE Fiscal and Accountability Policies and Procedures. These Reserve Funds will be divided between eligible recipients at the secondary level (10%) and postsecondary institutions (5%) to be used as follows:

1. Secondary LEAs will use these funds to: 1. Support the expansion of state-model CTE programs of study and middle school college and career readiness coursework; 2. Focus on student equity and achievement for college and careers; and to 3. Develop innovative student supports for college and careers, which can include work-based learning, social and emotional learning, as well as student advisement and counseling services; and

2. Postsecondary institutions will use these funds to: 1. Support student credential and degree attainment as well as matriculation into advanced education and training programs and the workforce; and to 2. Develop innovative practices that focus on student equity and achievement.

2. The remaining 70% of these funds will be divided between eligible recipients at the secondary level (80%) and postsecondary institutions (20%).

The distribution of funds is based on the current percentage of youth and adult learners served across the secondary and postsecondary system (e.g., if the current number of CTE participants equals 40,244 students or 30,296 students at the secondary level, i.e., 75% and 9,948 students at the postsecondary level, i.e., 25%) with an additional percentage of funds (5%) designated for student growth at the secondary level to support middle grade expansion. The distribution of funds to eligible secondary (80%) and postsecondary recipients (20%) was determined through meetings with those stakeholder groups defined in the Act and is a result of public comments that prioritized high-quality CTE opportunities for all youth and adult learners while developing the previous state plan.

Any secondary LEA or postsecondary institution receiving an allocation that is not sufficient to conduct a program under the Act is encouraged to form a consortium. Each consortia represents a new, separate LEA or postsecondary institution. The individual members of the consortium will contribute their separate allocations, which will then be pooled and reallocated based on the agreed upon criteria of the consortium. Funds allocated to a consortium shall be used for purposes and programs that are mutually beneficial to all members of the consortium and are an authorized use of funds under the Act.

Each consortium will have one fiscal agent and the fiscal agent will submit one application through the eGrants platform on behalf of all consortia members. Secondary LEAs or postsecondary institutions participating in a consortium will notify the Delaware Department of Education via email or letter indicating their intent to enter into a consortium during each fiscal year the consortium is in operation. The email or letter notification must include the names of all participating secondary LEAs or postsecondary institutions. Members of a consortium are required to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which includes the signatures of all LEAs or postsecondary institutions within the consortia and the amount of funds allocated to each eligible recipient within the consortia. The MOU is submitted when the consortia is formed, and the local application is submitted on behalf of the consortia. The local application must follow all grant submission requirements, procedures, and application review dates and timelines.

In total, $4,199,987 will be made available in FY25 to secondary eligible recipients under the Act. Of that, $3,659,182 will be made available through section 131 of the Act and $540,805 will be made available through the Reserve Fund or section 112(c) of the Act.

Local Educational Agency Name:	Estimated FY25
Caesar Rodney School District	$210,183
Capital School District	$257,589
Lake Forest School District	$108,275
Laurel School District	$80,753
Cape Henlopen School District	$138,354
Milford School District	$127,583
Seaford School District	$126,198
Smyrna School District	$122,641
School District	$190,640
Brandywine School District	$275,433
Red Clay School District	$448,433
Christina School District	$455,678
Colonial School District	$283,678

Local Educational Agency Name:	Estimated FY25
Woodbridge School District	$78,401
Indian River School District	$295,525
Delmar School District	$52,517
New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District	$126,806
POLYTECH School District	$22,664
Sussex Technical School District	$29,910
Las Americas Aspira Academy	$38,124
Campus Community Charter School	$16,294
Sussex Academy Charter School	$15,546
Delaware Military Academy	$8,733
Odyssey Charter School	$43,413
Providence Creek Academy	$12,951
MOT Charter School	$18,347
Newark Charter School	$43,643
Early College High School at Delaware State University	$15,131
First State Military Charter School	$8,676
Great Oaks Charter School	$7,063

Postsecondary Institution Name:	FY25 Perkins A
Delaware Technical Community College	$541,179
New Castle County Vocational Technical School District, Adult Education Division	$135,520
POLYTECH School District, Adult Education Division	$124,195
Sussex Technical School District, Adult Education Division	$113,899

Per section 131(a)(3), the Eligible Agency will work with the Delaware Department of Education to oversee the financial distribution of funds under the Act and to calculate adjustments for shifts in school district boundaries and for LEAs without geographic boundaries. This includes an estimation and redistribution of U.S. census population and poverty counts of the residential/geographical districts based on direct certification of youth and school enrollment patterns through school choice in traditional geographic, vocational, and charter school districts. Revised amounts follow students based on school choice patterns and the school district of enrollment. As a result, a secondary LEA's allocation under the Act may

increase or decrease from year to year due to reduced student enrollment, reduced census poverty, or both.

Delaware previously received a waiver for an alternate postsecondary formula that was approved under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) and a waiver for an updated alternate postsecondary formula under its initial four-year Perkins V state plan.

In total, $1,181,162 will be made available in FY25 to postsecondary eligible recipients under the Act. Of that, $914,795 will be made available through section 131 of the Act and $266,367 will be made available through the Reserve Fund or section 112(c) of the Act.

Per section 132(b), awarding funds to eligible institutions for the purpose of operating postsecondary and adult CTE programs based solely on the formula in section 132(a)(2) do not result in a distribution of funds to eligible institutions within Delaware that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals. The formula in section 132(a) of the Act excludes eligible area career and technical educational institutions providing postsecondary education and limits the types of postsecondary credential programs that are supported by institutions of higher education under the Act. Specifically, section 132(a) does not encompass short-term credential programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and institutions that provide CTE programs through adult education. A high percentage of postsecondary CTE participants in these institutions and programs are economically disadvantaged students that do not receive assistance from Pell Grants. Despite the fact that these students are eligible for such assistance, the delivery system for Pell does not represent service to the greatest number of students who are economically disadvantaged, nor does it support the pursuit of all types of high-quality postsecondary credentials.

Delaware will continue utilizing an alternative postsecondary formula that will result in a distribution of funds to those eligible institutions or consortia within the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals. At a minimum, those eligible postsecondary institutions under the Delaware Perkins State Plan include:

1. One (1) institution of higher education, Delaware Technical Community College, which offers short- and long-term credential programs as well as Pell Eligible credential and degree programs; and
2. Three (3) area career and technical educational institutions providing postsecondary education: 1. New Castle Vocational Technical School District, 2. POLYTECH School District, and 3. Sussex County Technical School District offer short- and long-term credential programs as well as registered apprenticeship programs.

These eligible institutions are open enrollment institutions of higher education that serve large percentages of economically disadvantaged students and support the instructional alignment of education and training programs across a statewide career pathways system. These institutions offer CTE programs of study that meaningfully intersect with LEAs and connect adult learners to high-quality education and training programs in demand-driven occupations leading to advanced education and training, as well as employment. Postsecondary CTE programs integrate academic and CTE coursework through coherent sequences of courses resulting in students who are prepared to enter the workforce and allow for the equitable participation of special populations in such programs consistent with the assurance and requirements of the

Act. Further, these institutions are of such size, scope, and quality as to be effective and meet the minimum grant amount issued under the Delaware Perkins State Plan; that is no institution or consortia within the State shall receive an allocation under this section in an amount that is less than $100,000.

The alternative funding formula issues funds to each eligible institution or consortia within the state in an amount that includes the minimum allocation under this section plus the sum of the amount that bears the same relationship to the portion of funds made available in the Delaware Perkins State Plan (see section C.2 and C.4) for postsecondary institutions in any fiscal year. The additional sum will be an amount that reflects the number of postsecondary concentrators who are designated as economically disadvantaged and who are enrolled in such programs, offered by such eligible institutions or consortia within the State, meeting the requirements of the Delaware Perkins State Plan (see section 2.B), in the preceding fiscal year to the sum of the number of such recipients enrolled in such programs within the State for such year. Individuals who are designated as economically disadvantaged will be the number of unique individuals who receive any of the following assistance or who reside in the designated communities:

1. Federal Pell Grant recipients;

2. Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients;

3. Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients;

4. Federal Medicaid recipients; and

5. Delaware Promise Communities residents.

Delaware's Promise Communities are those geographic areas, designed under federal WIOA Title I guidance, using www.factfinder.census.gov, that have high concentrations of low-income families and high poverty. Further, these communities have additional barriers, e.g., inadequate transportation, inter-generational poverty, lack of affordable housing, and limited local employment opportunities.

• City of Wilmington (zip codes 19801, 19802, and 19805);

• South Bridge and Route 9 Corridor, New Castle County (zip code 19720);

• Southwest Bear and Route 40, New Castle County (zip codes 19701 and 19702);

• City of Dover and Felton (zip codes 19901, 19904, 19977, 19934, 19943, and 19952);

• City of Seaford, Bridgeville, and Laurel (zip codes 19933, 19956, and 19973); and

• City of Georgetown (zip codes 19947 and 19966).

The Eligible Agency will work with the Delaware Department of Education to oversee the financial distribution of funds under the Act based on the proposed alternate funding formula. The Department of Education will calculate enrollments in such programs that are offered by such eligible institutions or consortia within the State to determine the number of recipients enrolled in such programs on an annual basis. Funds will be made available in an amount that bears the same relationship as the sum of the number of postsecondary concentrators who are designated as economically disadvantaged who are enrolled in such programs and offered by such eligible institutions or consortium of eligible institutions in the preceding fiscal year.

The on-going viability of postsecondary CTE programs will be measured annually based on concentrator performance in one or more of the designated indicators under the Act. Those postsecondary CTE programs that are not sufficiently supporting CTE concentrators to acquire recognized postsecondary credentials and/or degrees as well as placement may be deemed ineligible to receive future funds under the Act. As a result, the postsecondary allocation under the Act may increase or decrease from year to year due to shifts in eligible postsecondary programs and student enrollments. Additional information is included in the Career & Technical Education Policies and Procedures.

Per section 112(c), the eligible agency will exercise the Reserve Fund option under the Act. Reserve Funds will be utilized in accordance with the Act for statewide priorities, issued based upon criteria, competitively, and/or through a performance based financial model to eligible secondary and postsecondary recipients. Funds may be competitively and/or through a performance-based allocation model to support secondary LEAs and postsecondary recipients. Competitive funds will be issued to secondary LEAs and postsecondary recipients using a Request for Application (RFA) process and performance-based allocations will be issued pursuant to state law, regulations, and policies. The criteria for awarding Reserve Funds includes:

1. Up to 15% of the allocation under section 131 of the Act will be held in reserve to be issued to secondary LEAs (10%) and postsecondary institutions (5%);
2. To be eligible for funds through the Reserve Fund, LEAs and postsecondary institutions must meet one of the following criteria:

- Rural areas;
- Areas with high percentages of CTE concentrators or participants;
- Areas with high numbers of CTE concentrators or participants; and
- Areas with disparities or gaps in performance under the Act; and

3. The actual amount of Reserve Funds to be issued in a fiscal year may vary. If the total amount is not used in the anticipated fiscal year, the remaining amount will be returned to the Eligible Agency to be issued in future Reserve Fund allocations. Alternatively, if the total amount is not used in the anticipated fiscal year, the remaining amount may be returned to the Eligible Agency to be redistributed per section 133(b) of the Act.

Per section 211(b)(1)(D), Delaware will establish a new baseline for the purpose of the annual determination of maintenance of effort under the Act. In FY24, the actual amount in the aggregate of $79,040,667 was spent to support CTE activities in the State of Delaware. Delaware will exercise the 5% baseline reduction as permitted under section 211(b)(1)(D) of the Act, noting the new level of fiscal effort in FY25 will equal an anticipated amount of $81,287,675.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

- 1. Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—
    - a. The percentage of CTE concentrators (see Text Box 6 for the statutory definition of a CTE concentrator under section 3(12) of Perkins V) graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;
    - b. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating high school having attained postsecondary credits in relevant career and technical education programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement; and/or
    - c. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(I) of Perkins V)

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of "other" program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Provide the eligible agency's measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

- 2. Provide on the form in Section V.B, for each year covered by the State plan beginning in FY 2020, State determined performance levels or each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators, with the levels of performance being the same for all CTE concentrators in the State. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of Perkins V)

Text Box 6: Statutory Definition of CTE Concentrator

The term 'CTE concentrator' means—

- (A) At the secondary school level, a student served by an eligible recipient who has completed at least 2 courses* in a single career and technical education program or program of study; and
- (B) At the postsecondary level, a student enrolled in an eligible recipient who has—
    - (i) Earned at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; or
    - (ii) Completed such a program if the program encompasses fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent in total. (Section 3(12) of Perkins V)

* This means that once a student completes 2 courses in a single CTE program or program of study, they are counted as a CTE concentrator.

(Section 3(12) of Perkins V)

- 3. Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include—

- a. A description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance (see Text Box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on State determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V);
- b. An explanation for the State determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in Text Box 8; and
- c. A description of how the State determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals and objectives other Federal and State laws, (Section 122(d)(10) of Perkins V).

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

- 4. Provide a written response to the comments regarding State determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii) of Perkins V).

As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.

- 5. Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (Section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP),[2] the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

Text Box 7: Statutory Requirements for Consultation on State Determined Performance Levels

- (B) PUBLIC COMMENT.—
  - (i) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible agency shall develop the levels of performance under subparagraph (A) in consultation with the stakeholders identified in section 122(c)(1)(A).
  - (ii) WRITTEN COMMENTS.—Not less than 60 days prior to submission of the State plan, the eligible agency shall provide such stakeholders with the opportunity to provide written comments to the eligible agency, which shall be included in the State plan, regarding how the levels of performance described under subparagraph (A)—
    - (I) Meet the requirements of the law;

Text Box 7: Statutory Requirements for Consultation on State Determined Performance Levels

- (II) Support the improvement of performance of all CTE concentrators, including subgroups of students, as described in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and special populations, as described in section 3(48); and
- (III) Support the needs of the local education and business community.

- (iii) ELIGIBLE AGENCY RESPONSE.—Each eligible agency shall provide, in the State plan, a written response to the comments provided by stakeholders under clause (ii).

(Section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V)

[2] See page 11 of Committee Report at https://www.congress.gov/115/crpt/srpt434/CRPT-115srpt434.pdf.

Per section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv), the Eligible Agency, "Delaware" will include three (3) indicators of program quality in the secondary accountability model. Delaware will also include one (1) optional measure of program quality. The optional measure will be introduced in future academic years. The Eligible Agency's measurement definition is below, which includes a numerator and denominator for each of the three (3) quality indicators. A framework is provided for the one (1) optional measure.

Program Quality Metric 1 (5S1): Percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;

Numerator:

Number/percent of CTE concentrators who attained a recognized postsecondary credential as part of the ESSA school accountability model.

Denominator:

Number/percent of CTE concentrators who exited secondary education as part of the state's ESSA computation of four-year graduation rate.

Program Quality Metric 2 (5S2): Percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained postsecondary credits in the relevant CTE program of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment or another credit transfer agreement;

Numerator:

Number/percent of CTE concentrators who attained postsecondary credits in an academic or technical subject area as part of the ESSA school accountability model.

Denominator: Number/percent of CTE concentrators who exited secondary education as part of the state's ESSA computation of four-year graduation rate.

Program Quality Metric 3 (5S3): Percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having successfully participated in work-based learning;

Numerator: Number/percent of CTE concentrators who successfully completed a work-based learning course as part of the ESSA school accountability model.

Denominator: Number/percent of CTE concentrators who exited secondary education as part of the state's ESSA computation of four-year graduation rate.

Optional Program Quality Metric 4 (5S4): Percentage of middle school youth successfully participating in middle grades CTE coursework and student advisement programs;

Numerator and denominator definitions to be developed in the future state plan along with the state performance trajectory.

Delaware utilizes a clarified postsecondary definition developed in collaboration with eligible postsecondary recipients. As such, a postsecondary CTE concentrator is defined as a postsecondary participant who: (1) completes at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; (2) completes a short-term CTE credential program; (3) completes 144 clock hours of training in a long-term CTE credential program; or (4) completes the first related technical instruction sequence in a Registered Apprenticeship program. The CTE program, short- or long-term credential program, or Registered Apprenticeship program must be Perkins-eligible and terminate in an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or a degree.

Per section 113(b)(1), the Eligible Agency, with input from eligible recipients and those additional stakeholders defined in the Act, established state determined levels of performance consistent with those core indicators of performance defined in section 133(b)(2) of the Act. Per section 113(b)(3)(B), the Eligible Agency sought stakeholder input and formal public comments from eligible recipients and those additional stakeholders defined in the Act to determine these levels of performance. Specifically, the Career and Technical Education Office solicited stakeholder feedback through closed convenings (i.e., CTE Cadre) and public meetings (i.e., DWDB, SBE, P-20 Council, Delaware Advisory Council for Career and Technical Education). The Eligible Agency posted the Delaware Perkins State Plan for formal public comment from January 2024 to February 2024. All meetings conducted by the Eligible Agency were public meetings.

Per section 113(b)(2)(C), the core indicators of performance and levels of performance align to substantially similar information in both the Delaware ESSA State Plan, specifically measures within the school accountability model for school quality and student success, as well as the Delaware Combined WIOA State Plan, specifically those performance measures related to in-school youth and adult programs. Per section 122(d)(10), the state determined levels of performance were set by the Eligible Agency to align with the levels, goals, and objectives of the above state plans and related laws. Further, the state determined levels of performance were based on the past performance of LEAs and postsecondary institutions to establish a baseline for each core indicator of performance. Specifically, baseline measures for each core indicator of performance were established using a comparable student cohort or specific student cohort. A comparable student cohort (all high school students) was used to develop baseline measures for those academic readiness indicators (i.e., English language arts, mathematics, and science) and graduation rate as these measures apply to all high school youth. A specific student cohort (all CTE concentrators) was used to develop baseline measures for those program quality indicators (i.e., credential attainment, postsecondary credit attainment, and work-based learning) as well as postsecondary placement and non-traditional concentration as these measures apply only to

CTE youth and adult learners. Further, a growth methodology was applied to determine growth targets and annual performance goals under the Act. A similar methodology is associated with the ESSA state plan, which can be found here. The growth methodology is also described in Perkins V.

Per section 113(b)(3)(A)(i), the measurement of each core indicator of performance is captured in both percentage and numerical form to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable. The state expects to make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE students, including those designated subgroups of students. Adjustments may be made under the Act that will:

1. Take into account how the levels of performance involved compare with the state levels of performance established for other States;
2. Consider factors including the characteristics of actual CTE concentrators and the services or instruction to be provided;
3. Be higher than the average actual performance of the two (2) most recently completed program years, except in the case of unanticipated circumstances that require revisions in accordance with the Act; and
4. Take into account the extent to which the state determined levels of performance advance the Eligible Agency's goals as set forth in the Delaware Perkins State Plan.

Per section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii), an open public comment period was established occurring from January 4, 2024, to March 8, 2024, via action of the Eligible Agency. All public comments received and responses can be found here. Cross-state state-determined levels of performance comparison was conducted with technical assistance with Advance CTE.

Per section 122(d)(11), the Eligible Agency will address disparities or gaps in performance for those core achieved prior to the third program year, additional action will be taken to eliminate those disparities or gaps. Specifically, the Eligible Agency will work through the Delaware Department of Education to monitor performance for each core indicator under the Act and will work to address disparities through a performance management routine. The Delaware Department of Education will set benchmarks for student performance at each LEA and postsecondary institution through the local needs assessment and local application process to begin the performance routine. The local needs assessment and local application indicators under the Act in each of the plan years. If no meaningful progress has been process ensures that all students are provided with appropriate services and access to CTE programs.

Per section 123(b)(2), the Department of Education will review LEA and postsecondary institution performance annually. Those LEAs or postsecondary institutions that do not meet at least ninety percent (90%) of an agreed upon local level of performance for any core indicator of performance will be required to develop and implement an improvement plan. The improvement plan is required to be approved by the Delaware Department of Education as part of the annual application for funds under the Act before financial resources are allocated to that LEA or postsecondary institution in the given fiscal year. The improvement plan must include an analysis of performance disparities or gaps and those actions to be taken to address those disparities or gaps.

Per section 123(b)(3) and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), if no meaningful progress has been achieved by the LEA or postsecondary institution prior to the third program year, additional action will be taken by the Delaware Department of Education to eliminate those disparities or gaps. Specifically, the Department of Education will work with the LEA or postsecondary institution to provide or participate in technical assistance models to improve targeted outcomes. Technical assistance models may include support from the Delaware Department of Education to analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance as well as provide support to LEAs and postsecondary institutions to define, acquire, and use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support, or through on-going support to address and close such gaps.

Per section 123(b)(4), subsequent action taken by the Delaware Department of Education may result in the, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, required use of all or a portion of, the LEA or postsecondary institutions allotment under the Act to improve targeted outcomes. Additionally, subsequent action may result in the, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, withholding of all or a portion of, the LEA or postsecondary institutions allotment under the Act. Per section 123(b)(4)(B), the LEA or postsecondary institution may apply for a waiver for exceptional circumstances under the Act.

The Delaware Department of Education will also conduct on-going performance monitoring routines every three (3) to five (5) years based on a risk analysis of LEA and postsecondary institution performance. This performance routine builds from the local needs assessment, local application, and use of funds under the Act. Findings associated with this performance routine are documented for the LEA or postsecondary institution to address. Additional support will be made available through a tiered engagement model.

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).

The State of Delaware is designated as a single statewide workforce development area. The Division of Employment and Training operates four comprehensive American Job Centers (AJCs) located in Wilmington, Newark, Dover, and Georgetown. These centers provide the full range of workforce development services funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, including Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Work Opportunity Tax Credit determinations, and the State-funded Blue Collar Training Program. Partner programs available through the AJCs include the Division of Unemployment Insurance, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and the Department of Education.

Veterans and eligible persons receive Priority of Service in all Department of Labor-funded employment and training programs and services.

In-Person Service Delivery

Each comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) in Delaware has a full-time Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist assigned onsite to ensure timely access to individualized career services for eligible veterans and eligible persons.

As part of Delaware's standard intake process, American Job Center staff conduct the initial intake and eligibility screening for all customers entering the workforce system. During intake, individuals are asked whether they have served in the United States military. Individuals who indicate prior or current military service complete a Veterans Questionnaire designed to:

- Identify veteran or eligible person status;
- Screen for Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs);
- Identify eligibility under Secretary-authorized additional populations; and
- Determine whether the veteran or eligible person is interested in receiving individualized career services.

Based on responses provided through self-attestation and reviewed by trained AJC staff, veterans and eligible persons who have a Qualifying Employment Barrier (QEB) or belong to an authorized population and request individualized career services are referred to a DVOP specialist.

Veterans and eligible persons who do not meet these criteria continue to receive employment and training services from Wagner-Peyser or other AJC staff and maintain Priority of Service for all Department of Labor-funded programs.

Upon referral, the DVOP specialist provides individualized career services through a case management approach, including:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessment of skill levels and service needs;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining employment goals and planned services;
- Individual career counseling and career planning;
- Short-term pre-vocational services such as interviewing skills, workplace readiness, and professional conduct;
- Coordination of supportive services and workforce program referrals; and
- Ongoing case management and follow-up services to support employment retention.

DVOP specialists prioritize services to veterans and eligible persons with the most significant employment barriers, including disabled veterans and other populations identified in federal guidance.

DVOP specialists may also provide individualized career services to veterans participating in or transitioning from the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program when appropriate.

Employer Outreach and Job Development (LVER Role)

The Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) conducts employer outreach and business engagement activities on behalf of veterans.

LVER responsibilities include:

- Promoting the hiring of veterans to employers;
- Developing job opportunities and facilitating employment and training opportunities for veterans;
- Conducting employer advocacy and education regarding veteran hiring incentives and benefits;
- Coordinating with AJC Business Services teams to align veteran employment strategies with broader workforce initiatives; and
- Supporting job fairs, hiring events, and community partnerships that benefit veterans.

Consistent with federal guidance, LVER staff do not provide individualized career services or case management to veterans. Instead, they focus on employer outreach and advocacy to increase employment opportunities for veterans.

Virtual Service Delivery

Delaware ensures that JVSG services are accessible statewide through secure virtual service delivery, providing an alternative to in-person services at the American Job Centers.

Veterans and eligible persons accessing services virtually complete the same intake and eligibility screening process conducted by AJC staff. During the virtual intake process:

- Individuals are asked whether they have served in the United States military;
- Veterans complete the Veterans Questionnaire used to identify Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs) and determine interest in individualized career services.

Veterans and eligible persons who have a QEB or qualify under authorized populations and request individualized career services are referred to a DVOP specialist.

DVOP specialists deliver individualized career services virtually through secure video conferencing, telephone, and other virtual platforms. Services provided through virtual delivery mirror those provided in person and include:

- Comprehensive assessments of employment barriers and service needs;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP);
- Career counseling and job readiness assistance;
- Supportive service coordination;

- Ongoing case management; and
- Follow-up services to support employment retention.

Virtual workshops, job readiness seminars, and training sessions are also provided to increase accessibility and participation.

Delaware JobLink, the State's online job search and workforce platform, enables veterans and eligible persons to access employment opportunities and workforce services from any location via phone, tablet, or computer.

Integration within the Workforce System

DVOP specialists are fully integrated into the American Job Center service delivery system and collaborate with Wagner-Peyser staff, WIOA program staff, and partner agencies to coordinate services for veterans and eligible persons.

Through this coordinated service model:

- AJC staff conduct initial intake and eligibility screening;
- DVOP specialists provide individualized career services through case management to eligible veterans and eligible persons with Qualifying Employment Barriers or authorized populations; and
- LVER staff conduct employer outreach and business engagement to expand employment opportunities for veterans.

This integrated service delivery approach ensures that veterans and eligible persons throughout Delaware receive timely, individualized, and comprehensive employment services consistent with JVSG statutory requirements and current VETS guidance.

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.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), including Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 05-24, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide individualized career services (ICS) to eligible veterans and eligible persons who:

1. Have one or more Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs); or
2. Belong to populations authorized by the Secretary of Labor through annual appropriations.

DVOP services are delivered through a case management approach designed to assist veterans and eligible persons who require individualized career services to overcome barriers to employment and obtain meaningful employment.

Veterans and eligible persons must both meet the eligibility criteria and request or require individualized career services to be referred to a DVOP specialist.

Veterans and Eligible Persons with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs)

DVOP specialists provide individualized career services to veterans and eligible persons who meet the definition of a veteran or eligible person under 38 U.S.C. § 4211 and who have one or more Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs).

Qualifying Employment Barriers include:

1. Special Disabled or Disabled Veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(1) and (3):
    a. Veterans entitled to compensation (or who would be entitled but for receipt of military retired pay) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or
    b. Veterans discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
2. Veterans experiencing homelessness, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302).
3. Recently separated service members who are unemployed, consistent with Bureau of Labor Statistics definitions.
4. Justice-involved veterans, including those currently incarcerated or recently released from incarceration.
5. Veterans lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
6. Low-income veterans, as defined in Section 3(36) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
7. Veterans with disabilities as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
8. Veterans who are single parents or heads of household.
9. Veterans referred to the workforce system by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), including those participating in VA programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) or other VA case-managed services.

Eligible persons, as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(5), who meet one or more of the above Qualifying Employment Barriers are also eligible to receive DVOP individualized career services.

Additional Populations Authorized by the Secretary of Labor

Pursuant to annual appropriations acts for the Department of Labor, DVOP specialists are also authorized to provide individualized career services to certain additional populations.

These populations may receive DVOP services even if they do not meet a Qualifying Employment Barrier while the service member remains on active duty.

Authorized populations include:

1. Transitioning Service Members (TSMs) who have participated in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and have been identified as needing individualized career services.

2. Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units.
3. Spouses or family caregivers of wounded, ill, or injured service members.

Once a transitioning service member separates from the military and attains veteran status, eligibility for continued DVOP services must be based on the presence of a Qualifying Employment Barrier (QEB) or other authorized eligibility criteria.

Referral and Eligibility Determination Process

All individuals entering a Delaware American Job Center (AJC), whether accessing services in person or virtually, are asked during the initial intake process whether they have served in the United States military.

American Job Center staff conduct the initial intake and eligibility screening process. Individuals who indicate prior or current military service complete a Veterans Questionnaire, which is designed to:

- Identify veteran or eligible person status;
- Screen for Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs);
- Identify eligibility under Secretary-authorized additional populations; and
- Determine whether the veteran or eligible person is interested in receiving individualized career services.

Based on information collected through self-attestation and staff review, veterans and eligible persons who have a Qualifying Employment Barrier or belong to an authorized population and request individualized career services are referred to a DVOP specialist.

Upon referral, the DVOP specialist conducts a comprehensive assessment and provides individualized career services delivered through case management, including:

- Comprehensive assessment of skills and employment barriers;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP);
- Career counseling and job readiness assistance;
- Coordination of supportive services;
- Ongoing case management; and
- Follow-up services to support employment retention.

Veterans and eligible persons who do not meet DVOP eligibility criteria continue to receive employment and training services from Wagner-Peyser or other American Job Center staff and maintain Priority of Service for all Department of Labor-funded programs.

If a Qualifying Employment Barrier is identified at any point during service delivery, the individual may be referred to a DVOP specialist for individualized career services.

This structured intake and referral process ensures that veterans and eligible persons with Qualifying Employment Barriers or authorized eligibility status are appropriately identified and connected to DVOP specialists in accordance with JVSG statutory requirements and VETS guidance.

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.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), including Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 05-24, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide individualized career services (ICS) using a comprehensive case management approach to eligible veterans and eligible persons who:

- Have one or more Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs); or
- Belong to Secretary-authorized populations identified through annual appropriations.

DVOP specialists focus exclusively on delivering staff-assisted individualized career services through case management to eligible participants who request or require such services.

DVOP responsibilities include:

- Conducting comprehensive and specialized assessments of participants' skill levels, work history, employability, and barriers to employment;
- Developing and maintaining Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) that identify employment goals, planned services, and milestones;
- Providing ongoing case management, including progress monitoring and regular plan updates;
- Delivering individualized career counseling and career planning services;
- Providing job readiness and pre-vocational services such as resume preparation, interview preparation, and workplace readiness;
- Coordinating supportive services and referrals to workforce system and partner programs;
- Facilitating access to education, training, and credentialing opportunities;
- Providing follow-up services after employment placement to support retention; and
- Documenting services and outcomes within the state workforce case management system.

DVOP specialists also:

- Receive referrals from American Job Center staff following initial intake and eligibility screening for veteran status and Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs);
- Provide services to veterans participating in or referred by the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program, when appropriate;
- Coordinate with Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) when participants are job-ready and prepared for employer engagement.

Consistent with federal statute and VETS guidance, DVOP specialists do not conduct employer outreach or job development as a primary duty.

DVOP specialists prioritize services to special disabled veterans, disabled veterans, and other veterans with the most significant barriers to employment, consistent with priorities established by the Secretary of Labor.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4104(b), Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) conduct employer outreach and advocacy on behalf of veterans to promote employment and training opportunities.

LVER staff focus on business engagement and system-level advocacy activities that increase employment opportunities for veterans.

LVER responsibilities include:

- Conducting employer outreach and engagement to promote the hiring of veterans;
- Developing job opportunities and coordinating with American Job Center Business Services teams to align veteran employment strategies with broader workforce initiatives;
- Planning and participating in job fairs, hiring events, and employer workshops;
- Educating employers about veteran hiring incentives, including the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Program;
- Informing federal contractors of their responsibilities under federal law to recruit and hire qualified veterans;
- Promoting veteran participation in registered apprenticeship programs, unions, and training opportunities;
- Coordinating with chambers of commerce, business organizations, and economic development partners to expand employment opportunities for veterans;
- Participating in statewide and local business engagement initiatives supporting veteran employment; and
- Collaborating with DVOP specialists to connect job-ready veterans with employment opportunities.

Consistent with federal statute and VETS guidance, LVER staff do not provide individualized career services or case management to veterans.

Coordination Within the Workforce System

DVOP and LVER staff are fully integrated within Delaware's American Job Center (AJC) system and coordinate closely with Wagner-Peyser staff, WIOA program staff, and other workforce partners.

Through this coordinated service delivery model:

- American Job Center staff conduct initial intake and screening to identify veteran status and Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs);
- DVOP specialists provide individualized career services through case management to eligible veterans and eligible persons;
- LVER staff conduct employer outreach and business engagement to increase employment opportunities for veterans.

This coordinated approach ensures that veterans with the greatest employment barriers receive targeted individualized career services, while employer engagement activities expand employment opportunities for veterans throughout the state.

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.

Integration of DVOP and LVER Staff within the American Job Center System

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) are fully integrated into Delaware's American Job Center (AJC) service delivery system through co-location, shared supervision, participation in workforce system operations, cross-training, and coordinated service strategies.

Each comprehensive AJC houses at least one DVOP specialist. Delaware maintains two LVER staff positions serving New Castle County and the combined Kent and Sussex County regions. DVOP and LVER staff report directly to the AJC Area Operations Manager, ensuring alignment with overall workforce system operations and accountability within the One-Stop delivery system.

Delaware does not currently utilize consolidated DVOP/LVER positions. DVOP and LVER responsibilities remain distinct to ensure compliance with 38 U.S.C. §§ 4103A and 4104.

Integration with AJC Staff and Workforce Programs

DVOP and LVER staff are actively integrated into daily American Job Center operations through:

- Participation in regular AJC staff meetings and operational briefings;
- Engagement in workforce system planning and service delivery discussions;

- Collaboration with Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program staff;
- Coordination with partner programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance, and apprenticeship representatives.

American Job Center staff conduct initial intake and eligibility screening for all customers entering the workforce system. During this process, individuals are asked whether they have served in the United States military. Veterans and eligible persons are screened for Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs) and for eligibility under Secretary-authorized populations.

Veterans and eligible persons who have a QEB or belong to an authorized population and request or require individualized career services are referred to a DVOP specialist. DVOP specialists then provide individualized career services through a case management approach.

DVOP specialists are cross-trained in core workforce programs and partner services to ensure effective referrals, coordinated service strategies, and co-enrollment opportunities when appropriate. Likewise, Wagner-Peyser and other AJC staff receive training on veteran Priority of Service requirements, QEB identification, and referral procedures to ensure appropriate and timely referrals to DVOP specialists.

This coordinated process ensures that veterans with the greatest employment barriers receive individualized career services while other veterans continue to receive Priority of Service through Wagner-Peyser and other workforce programs.

Business Services and Employer Engagement Integration

LVER staff are fully integrated into the AJC Business Services Team and collaborate closely with Business Services Representatives to align veteran employment strategies with broader workforce initiatives.

Within the integrated business services model, LVER staff:

- Conduct targeted employer outreach and advocacy to promote the hiring of veterans;
- Coordinate outreach efforts with Business Services staff to engage federal contractors and subcontractors;
- Promote veteran participation in registered apprenticeship, credentialing, and licensing programs in coordination with the Apprenticeship and Training Unit;
- Support employer utilization of Delaware JobLink for posting job orders and recruiting qualified veteran candidates;
- Participate in job fairs, hiring events, and sector-based initiatives;
- Educate employers regarding veteran hiring incentives and benefits.

DVOP specialists coordinate with LVER staff when participants receiving individualized career services are job-ready, ensuring appropriate connections to employment opportunities developed through employer outreach.

Cross-Training and Continuous Collaboration

DVOP and LVER staff participate in ongoing cross-training opportunities with AJC staff to:

- Reinforce understanding of Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs) and referral procedures;
- Promote awareness of Priority of Service requirements for veterans and eligible persons;
- Share best practices related to case management, employer engagement, and veteran service strategies; and
- Ensure consistency in service delivery across all AJC locations.

Regular communication between DVOP specialists, LVER staff, and other AJC personnel ensures that:

- Veterans with employment barriers receive appropriate individualized career services;
- Job-ready veterans are connected to employment opportunities through coordinated employer outreach efforts; and
- Services are delivered in accordance with JVSG statutory requirements and current VETS guidance.

Through co-location, shared supervision, participation in staff meetings, coordinated employer engagement, and cross-training activities, Delaware ensures that JVSG staff are fully integrated into the state's workforce development system, supporting seamless service delivery for veterans and eligible persons throughout the American Job Center network.

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;

Delaware sets aside 1% of JVSG grant funding as an incentive, however established State of Delaware employee recognition policy does not allow for the issuance of this incentive.

2. THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER AND VALUE OF CASH AWARDS USING THE ONE PERCENT INCENTIVE AWARD ALLOCATION;

Delaware sets aside 1% of JVSG grant funding as an incentive, however established State of Delaware employee recognition policy does not allow for the issuance of this incentive.

3. THE GENERAL NATURE AND APPROXIMATE VALUE OF NON-CASH PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO BE CHARGED TO THE BASE ALLOCATION; AND

Delaware sets aside 1% of JVSG grant funding as an incentive, however established State of Delaware employee recognition policy does not allow for the issuance of this incentive.

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.

Delaware sets aside 1% of JVSG grant funding as an incentive, however established State of Delaware employee recognition policy does not allow for the issuance of this incentive. There is currently no plan to begin issuing this incentive.

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.

Performance targets:

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter	Employment Ra
45.0%	44.0%

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	79.3
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	76.3
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8000.0
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	72.7
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	76.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	10500.0
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0
Measurable Skill Gains	42.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	67.5
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	74.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	2900.0
Credential Attainment Rate	75.7
Measurable Skill Gains	63.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	61.5

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,150.0
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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 two years covered by the plan modification. 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 two years of the plan modification.

While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	51.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8,061.0
Credential Attainment Rate	50.0
Measurable Skill Gains	67.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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.

The submission of expected levels is the first step in the negotiations process. Once the expected levels of performance have been submitted, State VR programs may begin negotiations with RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division. 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 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 (ESE)

The ESE indicator has been defined in the ESE final rule and PY 2024 was the first year of data for the newly defined performance indicator. However, a minimum of at least two baseline years of data must be collected to support a statistical adjustment model that could produce sufficiently reliable estimates for the purposes of performance negotiations and state performance assessments. The Departments, in accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(c)(4) and 34 CFR §§ 361.190(c)(4) and 463.190(c)(4), will collect and monitor state ESE performance results for at least PY 2024 and PY 2025 to establish a credible baseline and provide technical assistance. After PY 2025 data are collected the Departments will develop a statistical adjustment model for ESE in accordance with section 116(b)(3)(A)(viii) of WIOA. Since the ESE indicator is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs when feasible. While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	48.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,630.0
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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.

The submission of expected levels is the first step in the negotiations process. Once the expected levels of performance have been submitted, State VR programs may begin negotiations with RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division. 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 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 (ESE)

The ESE indicator has been defined in the ESE final rule and PY 2024 was the first year of data for the newly defined performance indicator. However, a minimum of at least two baseline years of data must be collected to support a statistical adjustment model that could produce sufficiently reliable estimates for the purposes of performance negotiations and state

performance assessments. The Departments, in accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(c)(4) and 34 CFR §§ 361.190(c)(4) and 463.190(c)(4), will collect and monitor state ESE performance results for at least PY 2024 and PY 2025 to establish a credible baseline and provide technical assistance. After PY 2025 data are collected the Departments will develop a statistical adjustment model for ESE in accordance with section 116(b)(3)(A)(viii) of WIOA. Since the ESE indicator is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs when feasible. While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance) for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,630.00
Credential Attainment Rate	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]

1

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 2026 and 2027.

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.

Additional Indicators of Performance

Appendix A: 2023 Demand Occupation List

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
45-2091	Agricultural Equipment Op
45-2011	Agricultural Inspectors
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Ser
17-3011	Architectural and Civil Dra
53-6031	Automotive and Watercraf
49-3021	Automotive Body and Relat
49-3023	Automotive Service Techni
43-3011	Bill and Account Collectors
19-1021	Biochemists and Biophysic
19-4021	Biological Technicians
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, a
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmas
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics a
13-1199	Business Operations Specia
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologi
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concre
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks
17-2041	Chemical Engineers
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Opera
19-4031	Chemical Technicians
19-2031	Chemists
21-1021	Child, Family, and School S
39-9011	Childcare Workers
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technicia

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
17-2051	Civil Engineers
19-3031	Clinical, Counseling, and Sc
53-2012	Commercial Pilots
21-1099	Community and Social Serv
21-1094	Community Health Worker
15-1143	Computer Network Archite
15-1152	Computer Network Suppor
15-1251	Computer Programmers (li
15-1211	Computer Systems Analyst
15-1151	Computer User Support Sp
49-2011	Computer, Automated Telle
47-4011	Construction and Building
47-2061	Construction Laborers
43-4031	Court, Municipal, and Licen
13-2041	Credit Analysts
15-1141	Database Administrators (l
31-9091	Dental Assistants
29-2021	Dental Hygienists
47-2081	Drywall and Ceiling Tile Ins
25-1081	Education Teachers, Postse
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, Sch
49-2094	Electrical and Electronics R
17-2071	Electrical Engineers
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Insta
47-2111	Electricians
25-2021	Elementary School Teacher
29-2041	Emergency Medical Techni
25-1032	Engineering Teachers, Post

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
25-1123	English Language and Liter
19-4091	Environmental Science and 2041)
19-2041	Environmental Scientists a
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers
43-4071	File Clerks
13-2051	Financial Analysts (listed a
13-2061	Financial Examiners
13-2099	Financial Specialists, All Ot
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of C
45-1011	First-Line Supervisors of F
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of M
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of P
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, a
21-1091	Health Educators
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, a
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer
47-3011	Helpers--Brickmasons, Blo
47-3012	Helpers--Carpenters
31-1011	Home Health Aides (listed a
43-4161	Human Resources Assistan
13-1071	Human Resources Specialis
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mech
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tracto
15-1122	Information Security Analy

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters
49-9099	Installation, Maintenance, a
47-2132	Insulation Workers, Mecha
43-9041	Insurance Claims and Polic
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Exc
23-2099	Legal Support Workers, All
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Lice
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Ser
13-2072	Loan Officers
51-4041	Machinists
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair W
13-1111	Management Analysts
13-1161	Market Research Analysts a
21-1013	Marriage and Family Thera
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers
31-9092	Medical Assistants
31-9093	Medical Equipment Prepar
29-2071	Medical Records and Healt
43-6013	Medical Secretaries
21-1023	Mental Health and Substan
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Ex
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment M
15-1142	Network and Computer Sys
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners
31-1014	Nursing Assistants (Listed
29-9011	Occupational Health and Sa
29-1122	Occupational Therapists

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
47-2073	Operating Engineers and O
15-2031	Operations Research Analy
49-3053	Outdoor Power Equipment
47-2141	Painters, Construction and
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assist
47-2071	Paving, Surfacing, and Tam
39-9021	Personal Care Aides (listed
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisor
29-1051	Pharmacists
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
31-9097	Phlebotomists
29-1123	Physical Therapists
29-1071	Physician Assistants
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and S
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents
29-1141	Registered Nurses
21-1015	Rehabilitation Counselors
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
47-2181	Roofers
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers
33-9032	Security Guards
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers
15-1132	Software Developers, Appli
25-2052	Special Education Teachers
25-2054	Special Education Teachers

SOC(DEDOL)	Description
47-2221	Structural Iron and Steel W
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
25-9041	Teacher Assistants
49-2022	Telecommunications Equip
25-1194	Vocational Education Teacl
51-8031	Water and Wastewater Tre
15-1134	Web Developers (listed as
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers

Appendix B: ETPL Manual

Appendix C: Annual Report

Appendix D- Board Roster

Appendix D- Executive Order #36

Appendix F: Funding Guidelines

Funding Guidelines Policy

Purpose. The Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB) establishes funding guidelines to supplement and complement its strategic plan. The guidelines not only establish a baseline of the service delivery for Delaware's publicly funded workforce system, but also serve as an annual policy document. The Funding Guidelines prioritize workforce investment for a Program Year (July through June). This document prescribes the use of both State and Federal funds in relation to the publicly funded workforce system and can segregate funds for special projects. The DWDB and required partners will develop funding guidelines for approval by the Executive Committee in September or the full Board in October. Overall, these guidelines and procedures are put in place to ensure that public funds are effectively and strategically utilized to support workforce development efforts in Delaware, with a focus on programs that lead to employment or enhance employability.

General. The DWDB funds various types of programs throughout the year, including but not limited to; youth programs, adult programs, dislocated worker programs, occupational skills programs, and post-secondary education/training programs. All programming must ultimately lead to employment and/or increase the likelihood of employment. The DWDB does not fund enrichment programs or education programs that do not directly lead to employment. Training is primarily driven by the state's High Demand Occupation List which looks to align occupational expenditures with the state's economic development and high demand/high growth industries. Funds are allotted through a competitive contracting process and the Individual Training Account (ITA) process, in partnership with Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training (DOL-DET).

Priorities: DWDB establishes priorities annually to guide investments, and these recommendations are suggested for adoption by the workforce system.

Initial Allocation Recommendations: Funding allocation recommendations are provided to the DWDB Executive Committee by DOL-DET. The Executive Committee will review DOL-DET recommended initial funding allotments. The board can accept or reject, in whole or in part, the recommendations.

General Guidance and Funding Background. The DWDB has funding authority through two sources; federal (WIOA) and state funds (State Blue Collar and Learning for Careers).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds:

- Youth
    - US DOL states that WIOA youth dollars must, at a minimum, be split 25% for ISY and 75% for OSY
- Adult
- Dislocated Worker
- Wagner-Peyser

State Blue Collar Funds: All moneys collected through the Blue Collar Training Tax shall be deposited in the Special Administration Fund of the Department of Labor. This fund shall be dedicated to the establishment and implementation of programs to provide counseling, training, and placement of dislocated workers, to assist in school-to-work transition activities such as vocational guidance, training, placement, and job development, to provide for industrial training, to provide for career advancement training for state employees and to pay the administrative costs of such programs.

Breakdown of funds collected:

- 10% retained by Division of Unemployment Insurance for costs associated with the collection of the tax.

Remaining funds-

- 25% to the DIV of Small Business
- 75% to a special fund to be administered by the Workforce Development Board ("Board") to be awarded to appropriate subgrantees to provide for services to dislocated workers, to assist in school-to-work transition activities and to underwrite such other innovative training programs as the Board may approve, under regulations promulgated by the Board in coordination with the Department of Labor. No more than fifty percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be used to fund adult training program and to underwrite such other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.
- DWDB spend authority cap is $3.9 million per year.

Learning for Careers: Delaware appropriates $500,000 to the Department of Labor for the creation of the LFC program. The Program's funds shall be used by the Delaware Workforce Development Board (Board) to engage employer groups, chambers, and associations in creating paid work experiences for youth. The purpose of the Program is to expand employer participation in youth employment programs in addition to increasing the number of youth served through summer youth employment programs, secondary school work-based learning and co-operative education programs, and postsecondary work-based learning and clinical/experiential learning programs. The funds for the Program will be administered by DET in coordination with the Department of Education through a competitive process administered under the Board to award the Program funds to applicants. The Board shall also be authorized to accept private donations and federal funding to support the Program. The Board is authorized to grant awards or enter contracts with an employer association, employer chamber, employer group, or state agency acting on behalf of a group of employers. The Board, with the consent of the Secretary of Education or designee and the Secretary of Labor or designee, may adopt implementing rules or regulations. The application for the award of funds under this Program and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant to this Section shall be available on the Board's website. By the end of each fiscal year, the Board must report to the General Assembly summary data on the awards granted.

Target Populations:

Youth: The DWDB and DOL-DET deliver youth services primarily by soliciting proposals from providers for both In-School-Youth and Out-of-School-Youth. The selection process is competitive.

Adult/Dislocated Worker: The DWDB and DOL-DET offer services for adult and dislocated worker through the solicitation of proposals from providers and establishing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and providing Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers for eligible individuals.

Funding Mechanisms: Funding mechanisms help ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to support workforce development needs of targeted populations. The competitive nature of the process encourages providers to deliver high quality programs that align with the goals and priorities of the DWDB. DWDB utilizes two primary methods to fund programs.

- Competitive Requests for Proposals (RFP) via contracts. Providers submit proposals and contracts are awarded based on evaluation criteria.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITA) via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligible individuals receive ITAs that can be used to access training services from approved providers on the ETPL.

Request for Proposals: The DWDB issues the following guidance:

1. The DWDB manages and approves the RFP process. (See below for the overview of the RFP procedures).
2. DWDB delegates authority to the RFP panels to make recommendations for funding programs.

3. Panel leads will meet and establish a priority list for funding other programs should additional funds become available.

4. The Executive Director of the DWDB, the Director of the DOL-DET will reallocate returned funds to programs meeting or exceeding performance measures. Returned funds will not be reallocated to programs not meeting their measures. If other funds become available an additional RFP will be issued.

5. Panels have the discretion to fund proposals in whole, in part, or not at all. When funding programs, RFP panels will – to the greatest extent possible – fund programs in full and not divide limited funds between programs.

6. No more than fifty percent of the Blue-Collar Funds may be used for Youth Programs. The remaining Blue-Collar funds will be utilized to fund adult training programs and to underwrite other innovative training programs the board finds appropriate.

7. Year – to – Year RFP Process**.** The board directs the DWDB staff to annually update "The Steps to RFP Success" Letter of Instruction prior to the December, Executive Committee meeting.

Requests for Proposal (RFP) Procedures. An overview of the RFP process:

1. Develop the high demand occupation list.
2. Develop funding guidelines.
3. Establish resources.
4. DWDB and DOL-DET develop RFPs.
5. Submit RFP to OMB.
6. Proposal orientation.
7. Solicit participation for review panels.
8. Receive proposals.
9. Internal review of proposals.
10. Develop categories by industry.
11. Panel review of the written proposals.
12. Proposal clarification (if needed).
13. Consolidation meeting.
14. Notify the board of funding recommendations.
15. Feedback for proposals (if needed).
16. Contract development and execution.

Contract guidance. This section issues guidance for all contracts. The contract may be a mix of Federal WIOA funds, state Blue Collar Funds, and other funds which may become available through resource alignment activities. Even though the DWDB has issued RFPs in early January

for most of its contract services, the DWDB may issue other throughout the year as needed. It is the DWDB intent that partners and representatives of different agencies contribute and "braid" funds whenever possible as they prepare Requests for Proposal (RFP).

1. To the extent possible, definitions provided in the federal law and regulations are the definitions for all sources of funds, including Blue Collar, except the definition of eligibility.
2. The DWDB may, at its discretion, establish local performance measures for specific populations (e.g., Re-entry, underserved youth, and adults) when using state dollars. The DWDB will ensure local performance measures are established in an RFP document as appropriate.
3. Prior to executing a contract, proposers without current contracts, will provide a copy of their most recent tax return, or a copy of a prepared financial statement signed by a third-party financial professional to establish their fiscal soundness and eligibility.
4. All Providers will offer training which provides the client with the opportunity to earn a Diploma, or a GED, or Industry Recognized Certificate as defined in USDOL TEGL 10-16.
5. Basic language and numeric skills training, when appropriate, will be provided concurrently with skills training. As part of the RFP, proposers will be asked to describe their plan to meet this requirement.
6. The DWDB requires programs with a combination of activities; it prefers programs combining classroom training including internship, and/or clinical, and actual work experience. All work experience shall be paid.
7. Contractors will provide retention services, as necessary, including day and evening requirements to meet performance measures for 12 months following exit, except for Adult Blue Collar. Adult Blue-Collar exits will require 6 months of follow-up.
8. The proposal rating criteria will favor those proposals that demonstrate the ability to operate quality, cost effective training programs that result in high placement rates, long term job retention, and credential attainment. Criteria may be expanded from time-to-time to reflect board priorities.
9. DWDB will strive to provide training based on each county's needs and in reasonable proportion to the population. This is a goal, not a hard and fast rule; submissions by geographic area may not support this.
10. Program providers shall define their staff qualifications in the proposal for any position for which they are requesting funding.
11. Proposers will include clients use Delaware Job Link to find a job. This will include a current updated resume built in the Delaware Job Link system.
12. Blue Collar adult training contracts will be hybrid. The normal standard for the hybrid is to fund as, a 60% Cost Reimbursement and a 40% Performance Based contract.
13. DOL-DET and core partners will ensure all work experience requirements are paid.

Specific Youth Contract Guidance. This section provides general guidance on all youth contractors/proposers.

1. Youth programs will be contracted. Proposals will be solicited for Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth programs.
2. In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs may be funded with Blue Collar and/or WIOA funds.
3. Youth proposers will identify the credential obtained when a program is successfully completed.
4. The Youth Committee will provide oversight for contracted youth programs on behalf of the board.
5. A member of the Youth Committee will staff the youth RFP panels.
6. Contracted youth programs will:
    a. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, and developmental needs of such participant, for identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants.
    b. Develop service strategies for each participant directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators which identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including in appropriate circumstances, nontraditional employment), and appropriate services for the participant considering the assessment conducted.
    c. Preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.
    d. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education which leads to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.
    e. Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.
    f. Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.
    g. Effective connections to employers, including small employers, those in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.
    h. All providers are required to spend at least twenty – five percent (25%) of their allocation to provide paid work experience activities.
7. Preference will be given to training that align with DWDB growth and enabling sectors as identified in the Prioritize Sectors priority.
8. Funded youth providers are not required to directly provide all program elements. All funded providers are required to ensure youth have access to all program elements:
    a. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements

for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

b. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate. Paid and unpaid work experience that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include – (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities.

c. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

d. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.

e. Supportive services.

f. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

g. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.

h. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

i. Financial literacy education.

j. Entrepreneurial skills training.

k. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

l. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

m. Education offered concurrently with – and in the same context as – workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Contract Extensions: DWDB has the authority to extend contracts when necessary. Contract extensions involve prolonging the terms of an existing agreement for a period of time. The duration of the extension is specified in the extension agreement. This could vary depending on the circumstances and needs at hand.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) General Rules. This paragraph provides general policy guidance.

1. The DWDB-approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) process manual will govern the steps for initial eligibility and subsequent renewal of providers seeking inclusion or maintaining their status on the ETPL.
2. The DWDB Management Analyst will annually update the Manual in May for approval by the Executive Committee in June of each year.
3. Individuals can access an ITA through an American Job Center (AJC)
4. American Job Centers, when appropriate, will assess career service applicants in reading and math skills.
5. American Job Center staff will determine and document eligibility for individuals involved in a career/training service.
6. Any local American Job Center office providing federal services that fails to achieve 85% of its goal in any year may be required to have a correction action plan.
7. American Job Centers will promote the importance of digital literacy skills to individuals by utilizing the Library North Star Digital Literacy and Learning Express programs.
8. DWDB will only add programs to the ETPL that train for occupations on the high demand occupation list.

Performance Measures. The DWDB will only approve and/or renew ETPL programs and/or contracts which meet or exceed Delaware's federally mandated performance measures. ETPL credit programs at open enrollment degree granting institutions are exempt from the credential attainment requirement measure when applying for initial inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Credit programs at degree granting institution on the ETPL will meet all performance measures when applying for subsequent renewal. Even so, the DWDB recognizes that some priority populations may require special considerations. The DWDB may at its discretion—on a case-by-case basis—allow providers serving targeted population some latitude during initial eligibility determination and subsequent renewal.

Appendix G: Sample In-School Youth Request for Proposal

Appendix H: Sample Out-of School Youth Request for Proposal

Appendix I: Sample Adult Blue Collar Training Request for Proposal

Appendix J: Transition to Work Planning Check List

Appendix K: Delaware Annual Economic Report

Appendix L: Delaware 2030 Occupation & Industry Projection

Appendix M: WIOA MOU and Infrastructure Agreement 2021-2024

Appendix N: Delaware Workforce Development Greenhouse Lab Executive Summary