Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local Plan
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023

Local Area:

Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area

Counties within the Local Area:

Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties

Local Area Administrator and Contact Information:

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SC WORKS

BRINGING EMPLOYERS
AND JOB SEEKERS TOGETHER

2020 – 2023

Lower Savannah

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Local Plan

Attachment B: Local Plan Requirements

The local plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate local area service delivery strategies with those that support the state's strategic and operational goals. In partnership with the chief elected officials, each local board must develop and submit a local plan to identify and describe the policies, procedures, and activities that are carried out in the local area, consistent with the strategic vision and goals outlined in the State Plan and the respective regional plan. The following guiding principles should be considered priorities and included in responses throughout the document:

- Partnership and collaboration
- Increased access to resources and services through the use of technology
- The impact of COVID-19 on the local area's workforce and strategies to facilitate rapid reemployment
- Innovation and cost efficiencies

The local plan must include:

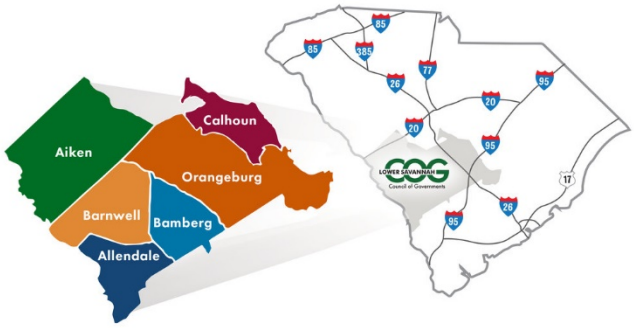
Section I:	Workforce and Economic Analysis
Section II:	Strategic Vision and Goals
Section III:	Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies
Section IV:	Program Design and Evaluation
Section V:	Operations and Compliance

Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

INTRODUCTION TO THE LOWER SAVANNAH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA (LSWDA)

The Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area (LSWDA) serves six counties in western mid section of South Carolina with Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale Counties bordering on the state of Georgia. The region contains 45 municipalities. It's economic success is centered on the access to I-20 that connects Aiken County with Columbia, SC, Augusta, GA and Atlanta, GA. Orangeburg County has the advantage of two major Interstates I-26 and I-95 intersecting, which together with the US Highway 301 create the Global Logistics Triangle. I-26 connects Charleston, SC through Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties with the Upstate all the way to Johnson City, TN. I-95 connects the Lower Savannah region with all the states on the east coast from Florida up to Maine. The Savannah River Site with its 310 square miles is located in Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale Counties.



AREA INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

SC Department of Employment and Workforce reported 6,006 employers in the LSWDA region for the second quarter of 2020. Small businesses make up 94.6% of the employers with a high percentage of employees at 39.2% close to medium business that employ 39.7% of the workforce population. Large businesses make up 0.2% of the employers but employ about 21,000 individuals.

Employers & Employees by Size of Establishment				
Business Description	**Employers**	**%**	**Employees**	**%**
Small Business (0-49)	5,679	94.6%	38,682	39.2%
Medium Business (50-499)	313	5.2%	39,177	39.7%
Large Business (500+)	14	0.2%	20,856	21.1%
Total Business	**6,006**		**98,715**	

Source: SC Department of Employment and Workforce - 2020 Q2

Based on the information provided in the most recently released SCDEW Community Profile for the Lower Savannah local workforce development area, Central Region's Sector Strategy Initiative and conversations with our economic development partners throughout our region, as well as various task force meetings, four of the highest projected growth sectors in the Lower Savannah area are:

- *Healthcare – 17.27% growth between 2016 & 2026*
- *Transportation & Warehousing – 22.8% growth between 2016 & 2026*
- *Administrative & Support & Waste Management – 16.58% growth between 2016 & 2026*
- *Construction – 12.49 % growth between 2016 & 2026*

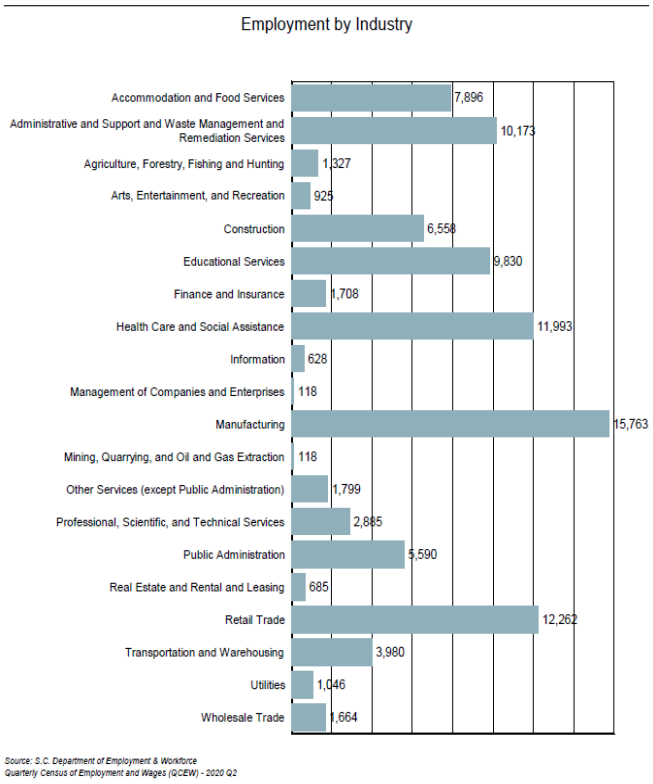
These are also the three of four identified career clusters by the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Board's Strategic Plan.
Healthcare is key to the regions employment with an estimated growth of 17.27% between 2016 and 2026. LSWDA is home to two major healthcare systems. Aiken Regional Medical Center (ARMC) has been serving Aiken and the surrounding counties since 1917. According the website ARMC employs 1,200 skilled healthcare/support professionals and a team of more than 200 physicians. It's financial impact for the area, reported in its 2018 Community Profile, is evident in the the payment of $73.3 million in salaries and benfits, $588,224 in capital investment and $8 million paid in local and state taxes. The Regional Medical Center (RMC) in Orangeburg has been established as a private hospital in 1919 and employs 1,200 healthcare/support professionals and 100 physicians. It is owned by Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties and strategically located between Charleston and Columbia. The new Bamberg/Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is part of the RMC and provides round the clock emergency care.

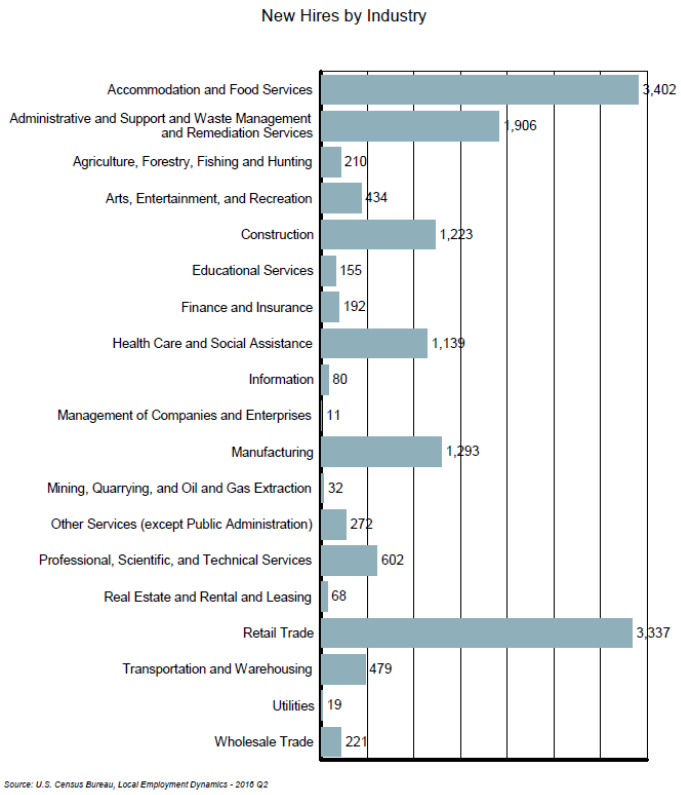
The Healthcare approved cluster includes occupations in medical care, ambulatory services, residential care, lab technicians, healthcare practitioners, healthcare technicians, psychiatric care, home health aides, veterinary technicians, pharmacy technicians, dental technicians, secretaries and administrative assistants.

Lower Savannah's top healthcare occupational training includes certificates/degrees in patient care technican, practical/registered nurse,, dental technicians and pharmacy technicians.

Transportation & Warehousing is estimated to have a significant 22.8% growth between 2016 and 2026 according the the SC DEW Community Profile. Transportation with is one of LSWDA's four training clusters. The Lower Savannah region has three major interstates that are interlinked and connect with major US Highways. Additionally, there are two major CSX railroad lines and one Norfork Couthern railroad line:
CSX - Running along US HWY 321 through Allendale, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties and
CSX - Running though Aiken (Savannah River Site), Allendale and Barnwell Counties
NS - Running partly through Aiken County and connects with other CSX railroad lines.
CVS operates a warehousing/distribution facility in North Augusta. Some of the ogistics employers in the area are: XPO Logistics, JAX Transportation, Southern Freight Lines.
The approved Transportaion, Distribution & Logistics cluster includes occupations in warehousing and storage; road, rail, water and air tranportation; scheduling, dispatching and distribution; installation, maintenance and repair for vehicles and facilities; secretaries and administrative support.
Administrative and Support and Waste Management has an estimated 16.58% growth. The jobs available in this sector are associated with a variety of employers. As an essential occupation in any business administrative and support jobs are sought after and afford the fourth highest employment numbers of 10,173 after Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Health

Care and Social Assistance jobs. Addionally this secotr also ;has the third highest new employment numbers by industry.
Administrative and Support industry are part of every approved cluster in the LSWDA region.





Construction remains an integral industry and is forecasted with a 12.49% growth. Low interest rates make new construction of residential and commercial buildings more achievable and cost effective. Population per the US Census Bureau of 2010 shows a significant increase increase of 12.3% in Aiken County with 17, 547 individuals moving into the area.

Construction occupations include construction of buildings or engineering projects such as highways and utility systems; installation, maintenance and repair of residential and commercial building equipment; office and administrative support.

The Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area (LSWDA) doesn't have a priority ranking for the identified clusters because of the size and differences among the region. All three are targeted areas of training.

See the SCDEW LMI County Profiles & Region Profile:

- Aiken
- Allendale

- Bamberg
- Barnwell
- Calhoun
- Orangeburg
- Lower Savannah

The SRSCRO Regional Workforce Study includes Aiken, Allendale and Barnwell Counties in South Carolina and also Columbia and Richmond Counties in Georgia conducted in April 2015 which contain five-year projections.

FIGURE 22. TOP 10 INDUSTRIES, BASED ON VARIOUS INDICATORS (CRO REGION)

Net change	FASTEST-GROWING, 2014-19 (#)	Earnings per Worker
+946	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals	$62,549
+915	Restaurants & Other Eating Places	$15,264
+834	Education & Hospitals (State Government)	$57,109
+798	Architectural, Engineering, & Related Services	$94,298
+748	Education & Hospitals (Local Government)	$51,906
+451	Offices of Physicians	$92,189
+357	Converted Paper Product Manufacturing	$77,766
+353	Rubber Product Manufacturing	$68,166
+331	Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, & Payroll Services	$59,690
+330	Other Amusement & Recreation Industries	$29,016

% change	FASTEST-GROWING, 2014-19 (%)	Earnings per Worker
+74%	Other Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	$89,866
+52%	Engine, Turbine, & Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing	$86,392
+46%	Cable & Other Subscription Programming	$42,858
+45%	Veneer, Plywood, & Engineered Wood Product Manufacturing	$72,224
+42%	Office Administrative Services	$25,920
+42%	Electrical Equipment Manufacturing	$94,104
+41%	Paint, Coating, & Adhesive Manufacturing	$106,984
+38%	Specialty (except Psychiatric & Substance Abuse) Hospitals	$45,270
+38%	Business Schools & Computer & Management Training	$68,158
+35%	Securities & Commodity Contracts Intermediation & Brokerage	$123,430

Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2013.4 Class of Worker.
Note: Excludes industries representing fewer than 50 jobs (CRO Region) or 100 jobs (Laborshed) in 2014.

FIGURE 23. TOP 10 OCCUPATIONS, BASED ON VARIOUS INDICATORS

Net change	FASTEST-GROWING, 2014-19 (New Jobs)	Median hourly earnings
+519	Registered Nurses	$30.98
+426	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	$8.63
+385	Customer Service Representatives	$11.80
+224	Personal Care Aides	$8.57
+212	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	$14.71
+178	Accountants & Auditors	$26.12
+174	Waiters & Waitresses	$8.76
+173	Civil Engineers	$41.80
+170	Cooks, Restaurant	$9.75
+160	Nursing Assistants	$10.94

Net change	IN-DEMAND, 2014-19 (# OPENINGS)	Median hourly earnings
+1,546	Cashiers	$8.58
+1,541	Retail Salespersons	$9.30
+1,534	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	$8.63
+1,155	Waiters and Waitresses	$8.76
+1,119	Registered Nurses	$30.98
+960	Customer Service Representatives	$11.80
+726	Office Clerks, General	$11.68
+699	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	$10.96
+522	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	$9.22
+453	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	$14.71

Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2013.4 Class of Worker.
Note: Excludes occupations representing fewer than 50 jobs (CRO Region) or 100 jobs (Laborshed) in Jobs.

See the SRSCRO Regional Workforce Study Information

According to Economic Development Partnership, which services the Aiken, Edgefield, McCormick and Saluda Counties in South Carolina, the targeted industries include Advanced Manufacturing, Chemicals, Cyber, Energy Research, Food Processing, Plastics and Research & Development.

Targeted Industries	***Aiken County companies***
Advanced Manufacturing	*AGY, Owens-Corning, Autoneum, B & S Machine Tools, Inc. Bridgestone Hubbell Power Systems, Kimberly-Clark, Carlstar Group and MTU*
Chemicals	*Green Energy Biofuel, Halocarbon, AmbioPharm, Inc., Allnex and Avara*
Cyber	*Medac*
Energy Research	*MTU and Applied Research Center (ARC)*
Food Processing	*none*
Plastics	*Zeus*
Research & Development	*AGY, Applied Research Center (ARC) and AmbioPharm, Inc.*

See the Economic Development Target Industries

See the LSCOG Economic Indicators Report/ CEDS Information (2017-2022) on LSCOG website

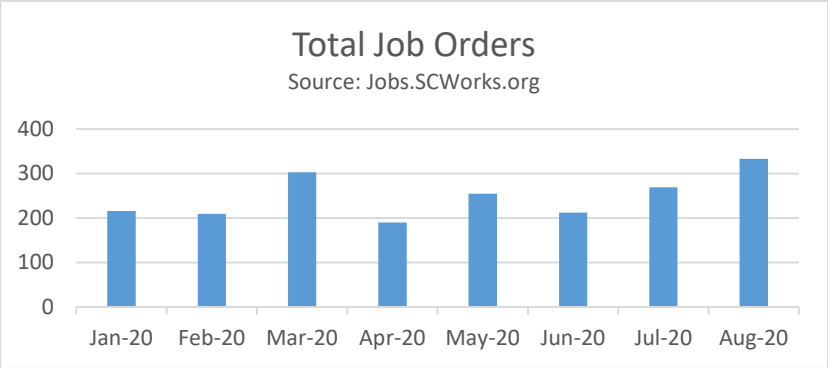
In-demand jobs are located on page 35 of the SRSCRO Regional Workforce Study Information The list includes 41 different occupations, but is dominated by positions in Healthcare, Construction, Manufacturing/Production and Transportation. This list coincides with the four clusters that comprise local area priorities for Workforce Development and Economic Development, respectively.

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

In our current analysis of the region's workforce, approximately 20% of the open positions require a bachelor's degree to obtain, yet 38% of the population has a bachelor's. This creates a mismatch and can contribute to underemployment for the citizens for the region. For example just 1/3 of all degrees awarded were for bachelor degree's within the region. These over qualified individuals are filling many of the jobs that require an associate degree or less. Lower Savannah recognizes and is trying to counter this unintended outcome by working closely with technical colleges and employers to accurately capture the technical skills needed for these positions. The full workforce analysis can be located on pages 27-39 of the SRSCRO Regional Workforce Study Information link above.

Educational Requirement by Job Orders in SCWOS

Job order placements in the SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) for the months of January 2020 through August 2020 show some variances in the job order market with the months of March and August spiking over 300 job orders and the month of April with the lowest job orders of 190. It is difficult to determine if the Pandemic had a significant impact on the job order data.



The education level required for the job orders revealed positions without education requirements at 15.4%, 48.4% require a high school diploma or equivalent, 4.1% require an Associate's degree and 30% require a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The top 20 positions occupational openings per the SC DEW Community Profile support the range of the above listed educational requirements by the employer:

Top 20 Occupational Openings

Lower Savannah
December-2020

Occupation Name (Soccode)	Job Openings
Registered Nurses (29-1141)	271
Retail Salespersons (41-2031)	162
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products (41-4012)	153
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (41-1011)	135
Managers, All Other (11-9199)	135
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive (43-6014)	120
Customer Service Representatives (43-4051)	115
Medical and Health Services Managers (11-9111)	105
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032)	91
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061)	86
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (37-2011)	81
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (49-9071)	79
Sales Managers (11-2022)	68
Production Workers, All Other (51-9199)	63
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (37-2012)	57
General and Operations Managers (11-1021)	56
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (53-7062)	51
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers (43-1011)	50
Food Service Managers (11-9051)	49
Speech-Language Pathologists (29-1127)	44

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce & The Conference Board's Help Wanted OnLine® data series

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

Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area Overview
Population

Lower Savannah's population has steadily increased per the US Census Bureau's data. In 2020 the region was home to 341,370 individuals. Projected population for 2030 is expected to reach 366,940.

Year	Lower Savannah
1970	214,501
1980	248,798
1990	267,470
2000	300,666
2010	314,120
2020	341,370
2030	366,940

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Demographics

Utilizing the 2010 US Census Data, the Lower Savannah region is comprised of 33% (105,590) young adults (24 years and younger). 52% (163,276) of the population are made up of adults ages 25 through 65, and the remaining 15% (47,936) are adults over 65 years of age.

The population by race is as follows: roughly 54% (171,538) is white, 41.3% is black/African American, 0.43% is American Indian/Alascan Native, 0.74% is Asian, 0.03% is Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 3.34% is two or more race and other.

Latinos make up 20.90% (66,212) of the population.

Labor Force: Employed & Unemployed

The total civilian labor force for the the Lower Savannah region in December 2020 was 129,023, of which 122,250 were employed and 6,773 were unemployed which calculates into an unemployment rate of 5.2%.

Area Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Data Table

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Aiken	72,073	69,323	2,750	3.8%
Allendale	2,582	2,360	222	8.6%
Bamberg	4,889	4,507	382	7.8%
Barnwell	7,938	7,410	528	6.7%
Calhoun	6,441	6,115	326	5.1%
Orangeburg	35,100	32,535	2,565	7.3%
Lower Savannah	129,023	122,250	6,773	5.2%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SC Dept of Employment & Workforce

Dec-20

Commuting Patterns

According to the US Census Bureau's 2010 data 74.8% or 96,514 individuals live and work in the area. Commuters who travel into the area to work make up 16.9% or 21,786. Out-commuters (defined as those living inside the area but travelling to work outside the region) make up 22.01% or 28,398.

Top destinations for out-commuters are Richmond County, GA (Augusta, GA), Richland County, SC (Columbia, SC) and Lexington County, SC. 10,388 individuals commute to Augusta, GA for work because of the proximity of Aiken and Barnwell Counties to Augusta, GA.

Commuting Patterns

Commuting To			Commuting From		
Ranking	**County**	**Workers**	**Ranking**	**County**	**Workers**
1	RICHMOND COUNTY, GA	10,388	1	RICHMOND COUNTY, GA	5,847
2	Richland County, SC	4,470	2	COLUMBIA COUNTY, GA	4,021
3	Lexington County, SC	3,698	3	Edgefield County, SC	3,377
4	COLUMBIA COUNTY, GA	1,664	4	Lexington County, SC	2,158
5	Edgefield County, SC	1,208	5	Richland County, SC	789
6	Charleston County, SC	1,042	6	Hampton County, SC	682
7	Dorchester County, SC	715	7	Clarendon County, SC	653
8	Berkeley County, SC	561	8	Dorchester County, SC	635
9	Hampton County, SC	529	9	Colleton County, SC	458
10	Saluda County, SC	430	10	Saluda County, SC	407
		24,705			**19,027**

As a local workforce Area, Lower Savannah has begun the process of creating sector strategies within the six county region and within the Central Region of South Carolina. The focus of this is to address the lack of credentialing among potential employees within the region. Employers have been invited to educate all workforce entities within the local area to the unique needs that are faced by organizations as they seek to keep pace with global economies. We in turn are creating (based on employer feedback) curriculum at the K-12 and Post-secondary levels to improve workplace efficiencies with the emerging cohorts of employees. Likewise, WIOA staff and SC Works partners are addressing the same issues with the transitional cohorts of employees.

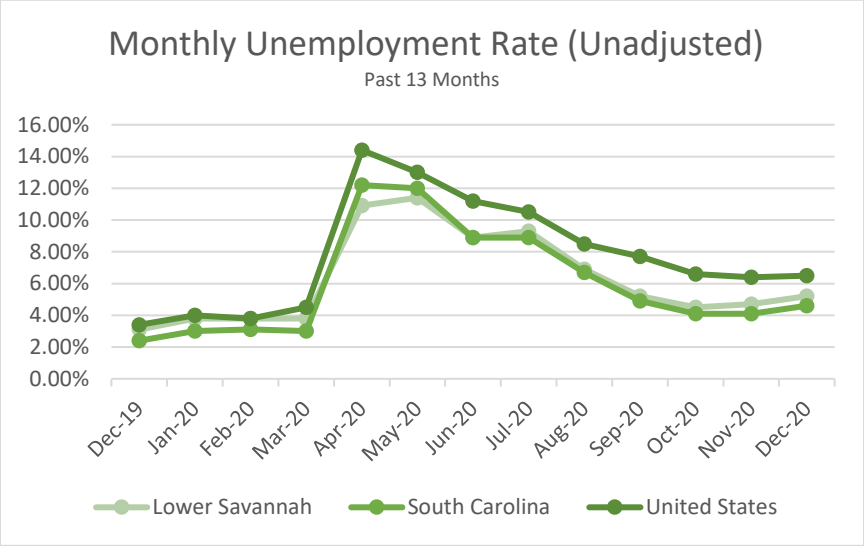
Recent Impacts for COVID-19 Pandemic

In the months leading up to the Pandemic, the Lower Savannah region experienced low unemployment. The table below show employment number presented to the workforce development board pre and during COVID-19.

December 2019 Pre COVID-19	*April 2020*	*August 2020*
County Unemp. %	*County Unemp. %*	*County Unemp. %*
Aiken (1.8%)	*Aiken (3.1%)*	*Aiken (7.0%)*
Allendale (3.8%)	*Allendale (6.5%)*	*Allendale (11.7%)*
Bamberg (4.3%)	*Bamberg (5.7%)*	*Bamberg (12.0%)*
Barnwell (3.0%)	*Barnwell (4.6%)*	*Barnwell (9.1%)*
Calhoun (2.5%)	*Calhoun (3.5%)*	*Calhoun (8.7%)*
Orangeburg (3.7%)	*Orangeburg (4.8%)*	*Orangeburg (12.1%)*

In the spring of 2020, Governor Henry McMaster declared a State of Emergency. As a result of the increasing COVID-19 positive numbers, the SC Works Centers were closed to the public to minimize the infection rate. Center and sub-recipient staff rotated between working from home and working in the centers. In mid-June 2020, the centers openend back up with a hightened focus on COVID-19 infection prevention. COVID-19 action plans were implemented to keep visitors and employees safe through the installation of protective shields, wearing of face masks, disinfecting wipes, and social distancing of 6 feet.

According to the SC Community Profile from December 2020, the Unemployment numbers spiked in April with companies laying off employees or shutting down altogether. Since April the unemployment numbers have started to rebound and leveled out in October about 2 to 3 percentage points higher than before the Pandemic.



Labor Market Trends

Estimated and Projected Employment (Growth/Decline by Industry)

Per the SC Community Profile, the Lower Savannah region shows the largest estimated employment in the following industries:

1. *Manufacturing (17,142)*
2. *Retail Trade (13,654)*
3. *Health Care and Social Assistnce (11,427)*
4. *Administrative and Supportand Waste Management (10,792)*
5. *Educational Services (10,619)*

Note: these numbers reflect pre-Pandemic employment conditions.

Lower Savannah Industry	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Change	Percent Change	Annual Percent
Total All Industries	123,582	132,224	8,642	6.99	0.68
Health Care and Social Assistance	11,427	13,401	1,974	17.27	1.61
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation	10,792	12,581	1,789	16.58	1.55
Accommodation and Food Services	9,291	10,656	1,365	14.69	1.38
Educational Services	10,619	11,579	960	9.04	0.87
Transportation and Warehousing	3,403	4,179	776	22.8	2.08
Construction	6,067	6,825	758	12.49	1.18
Retail Trade	13,654	14,156	502	3.68	0.36
Finance and Insurance	2,959	3,269	310	10.48	1
Wholesale Trade	2,247	2,401	154	6.85	0.67
Other Services (except Government)	5,575	5,700	125	2.24	0.22
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	568	648	80	14.08	1.33
Information	727	763	36	4.95	0.48
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,252	1,284	32	2.56	0.25
Utilities	817	823	6	0.73	0.07
Manufacturing	17,142	17,141	-1	-0.01	0
Mining	131	129	-2	-1.53	-0.15
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,362	5,447	-915	-14.38	-1.54

The industry projected to increase in employment are Healthcare and Social Assistance with 17.27%, followed by Administrative and Support and Waste Management with 16.58%, Accommodation and Food Services at 14.69%, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing at 14.08%. Construction is projected to increase by 12.49% and Finance and Insurance by 10.48% while Manufacturing is projected to stay at the same level. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting may experience a decline in growth by 14.38%.

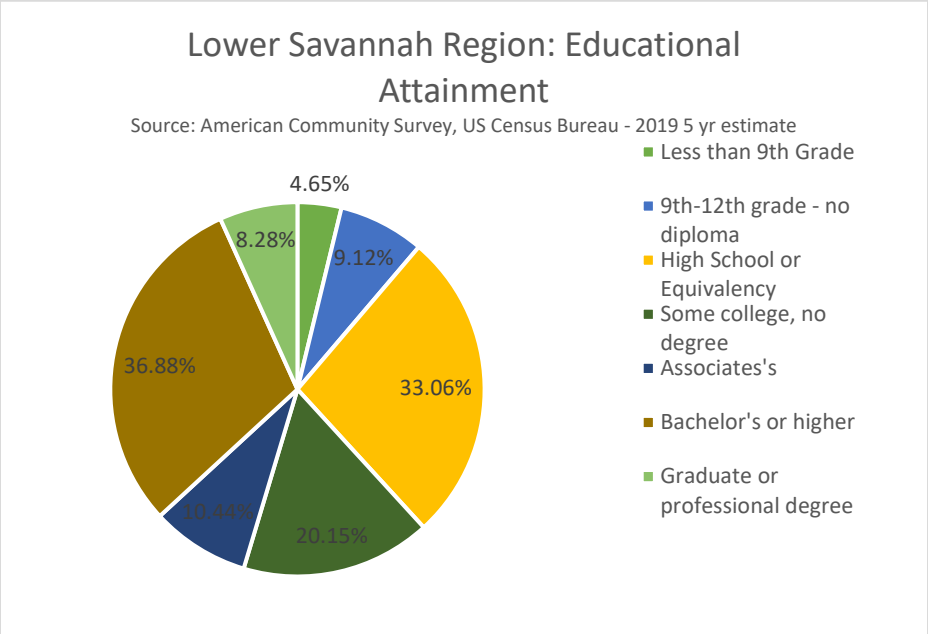
Occupation Growth/Decline

Those occupations with highest percentage change for growth are in the healthcare sector with Nurser Practitioners (42%), Physician Assistants (39%), Physical Therapists (33%) and Medical Sectretaries (27%).

In decline are occupations for Loggind Equipment Operators (-20%), Data Entry Keyers (-18%), Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery and Greenhouse (-16%), First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing and Forestry (-13%). There are also several manufacturing occupations forecasted to decline by 2026 such as Machine Operators from -3% to -6%.

Educational Skills and Knowledge

According to the 2019-5 year American Community Survey estimate, the educational attainment for individuals 25 years and older show the following results for the Lower Savannah region: out of the total labor force market of 218,269 individuals, 33.06% (72,156) have a High School Diploma or equivalent, 30.59% (66,761) have some collge or an Associate's degree. 36.88% (80,500) have a Bachelor's degree or higher.



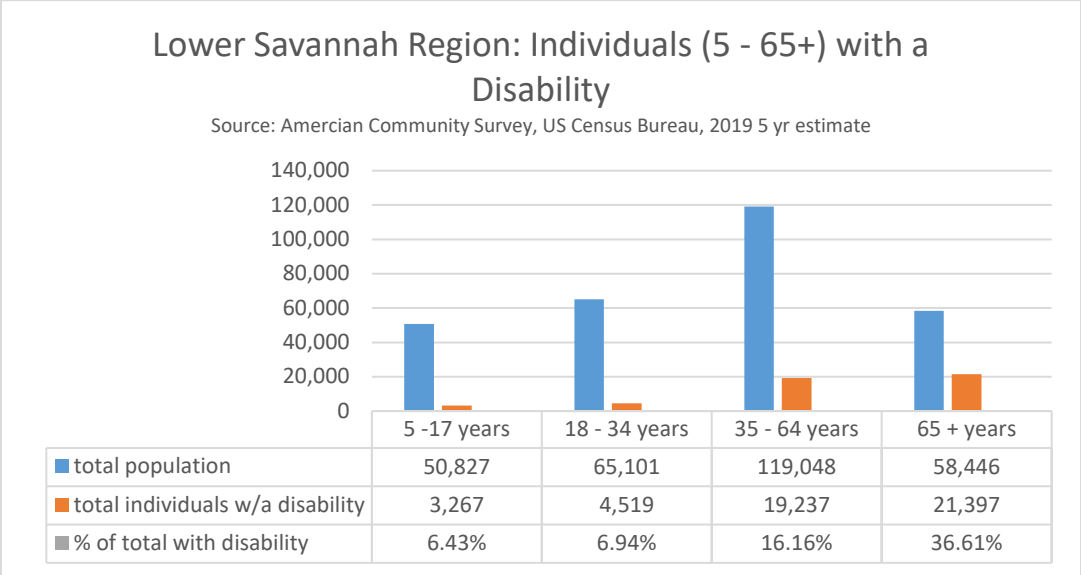
Barriers to Employment

1. *Individuals with a Disability*

In addressing barriers to employment the LSWDB has identified those barriers that have had the greatest negative impact on workfrorce development outcomes, primarily diminished soft skills/workplace behaviors and a lack of technical knowledge. The LSWDB intends, through MOU creation, to lessen the impact of these barriers on the citizens of the LSWDA and the Central Region of South Carolina. This has always been a point of focus by the LSWDB and will continue to be so moving forward.

Referring to the American Community Survey's 2019 5-year estimate, the total population of individuals 48,420 (16.50%) have been identified with a disability in the Lower Savannah

region. Disability categories from this survey include hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living disabilites.



	5 -17 years	18 - 34 years	35 - 64 years	65 + years
total population	50,827	65,101	119,048	58,446
total individuals w/a disability	3,267	4,519	19,237	21,397
% of total with disability	6.43%	6.94%	16.16%	36.61%

Youth with a Disability

There are 50,827 individuals between the ages of 5 and 17 living in the Lower Savannah region. Of those youth, 3,267 (6.43%) have been diagnosed with a disability.

2. *Veterans*

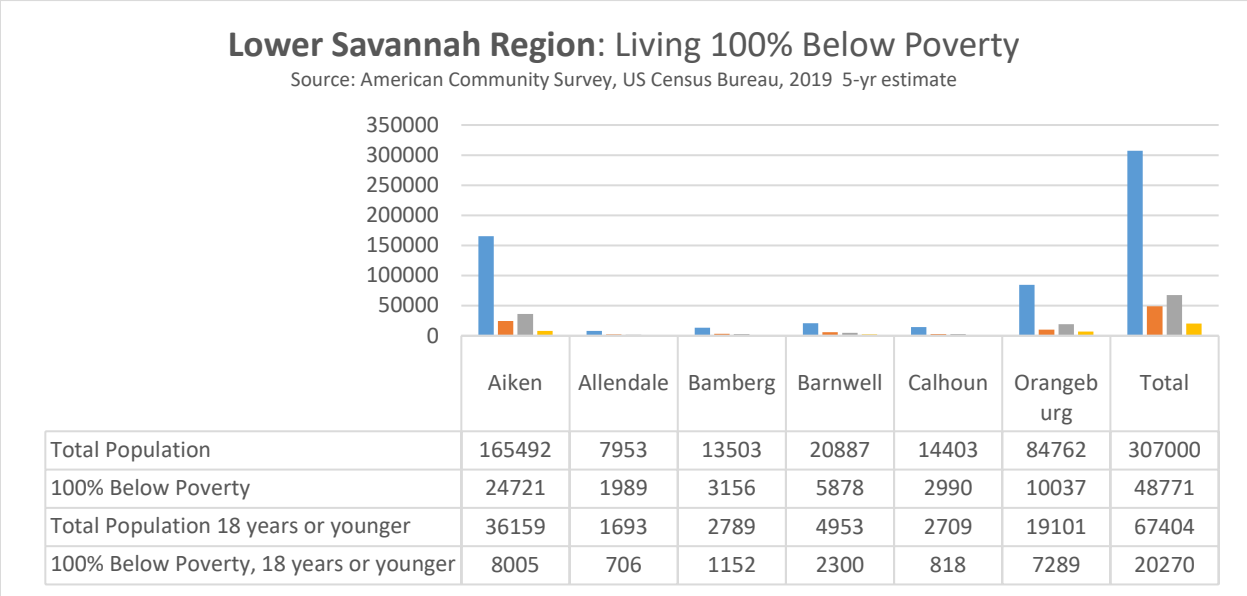
While region-wide numbers were unavailable, there are veterans who are registered in SCWOS for 2020. This information is listed below.

Registered Veterans in SCWOS	*Age 22-32*	*Age 33-44*	*Age 45-55*	*Age 55-64*
2/7/2020 -2/5/2021	*2*	*8*	*3*	*4*

These veterans have first priority services in the SC Works Centers whether it is help with finding employment, training or referrals to partner agencies.

3. *Living in Poverty*

There are about 15.9% or 48,771 individuals of the total population in the Lower Savannah region who live in poverty. This affects youth 18 years and younger at 30%. Poverty has resulting effects on stable housing, transportation, internet connections. Indiviudals may find it more difficult to get or maintain a job. Poverty will also make it more difficult for those individuals to reach their education goals.



	Aiken	Allendale	Bamberg	Barnwell	Calhoun	Orangeburg	Total
Total Population	165492	7953	13503	20887	14403	84762	307000
100% Below Poverty	24721	1989	3156	5878	2990	10037	48771
Total Population 18 years or younger	36159	1693	2789	4953	2709	19101	67404
100% Below Poverty, 18 years or younger	8005	706	1152	2300	818	7289	20270

4. *Youth with Barriers*

Poverty/Low Income

Lower Savannah has a total youth population ages 18 or younger of 67,404. As stated in the chart above about 30% or 20,270 of the total youth population ages 18 and younger live in poverty. This means that roughly 1 in 3 youths in that age group are affected by poverty. This has significant impact on their ability for reliable transportation, stable housing, phone or internet connectivity which in turn may also impact their ability to find and keep employment and or occupational skills training.

- *Drop-outs*

School Dropouts 2016, 2017, 2018	DROPOUTS FOR GRADES 9-12			ENROLLMENT FOR GRADES 9-12			PERCENTAGE FOR GRADES 9-12		
DISTRICT	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Aiken	103	122	136	6972	6843	6808	1.5%	1.8%	2.0%
Allendale	21	19	14	348	298	279	6.0%	6.4%	5.0%
Bamberg 01	10	12	8	415	384	379	2.4%	3.1%	2.1%
Bamberg 02	2	0	3	167	170	163	1.2%	0.0%	1.8%
Barnwell 19	2	2	2	192	174	177	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Barnwell 29	6	8	8	266	242	236	2.3%	3.3%	3.4%

Barnwell 45	9	7	15	649	622	599	1.4%	1.1%	2.5%
Calhoun	2	0	3	446	422	427	0.4%	0.0%	0.7%
Fairfield	5	1	3	774	727	735	0.6%	0.1%	0.4%
Orangeburg 03	34	18		728	715		4.7%	2.5%	
Orangeburg 04	16	24		1016	979		1.6%	2.5%	
Orangeburg 05	45	37		1759	1704		2.6%	2.2%	
Orangeburg 09			96			3333			2.9%
Region	255	250	288	13732	13280	13136	25.7%	24.1%	21.9%

- *Crime*

  According to the Department of Juvenile Justice there have been 892 juvenile cases of which 233 have been detained. While the number of juvenile cases have declined from the previous year the number of detained juveniles has increased.

Juvenile Cases FY 2016-2017								
County	Juveniles detained	% change from previous yr	# of Juvenile Cases	% change from previous yr	Juvenile Cases - Violent/ Serious	% change from previous yr	Juvenile Cases - Status Offense	% change from previous yr
Aiken	118	12.4%	409	8%	65	195.5%	13	160%
Allendale	21	-22.2%	26	-10%	2	-71.4%	4	400%
Bamberg	11	-31.5%	31	-14%	8	14.3%	0	-100%
Barnwell	6	-62.5%	90	-23%	5	-50.0%	3	-89%
Calhoun	19	111.1%	42	8%	7	75.0%	8	700%
Orangeburg	58	16.0%	294	12%	35	40.0%	61	42%
Total Region	233	23.3%	892	-20%	122	203.3%	89	1113%
State	3,320	1.80%	13,591	-12%	1,397	11.1%	1,259	-15%

Challenges these youth face are safe housing, lack of education, substance abuse, mental health problems and reconnecting with families which all can lead to barriers to training and employment.

- *Teen parent*

  Per FactForward which tracks teen pregnancies the following data was released 2019:

Teen Pregnancies in 2019							
County	Rank	Ages 15-19		Ages 15-17		Ages 18-19	
		#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
Barnwell	7	26	38.20%	9	22.10%	17	62.30%
Orangeburg	23	79	26.40%	21	11.70%	58	48.50%
Aiken	33	107	21.10%	25	8.20%	82	40.30%
Allendale	41	4	17.20%	0	N/A	4	43.00%
Calhoun	44	6	15.30%	1	4.30%	5	31.80%
Bamberg	46	6	11.20%	1	3.10%	5	23.50%
Lower Savannah Region		228	21.60%	57	8.23%	171	41.57%

Potential challenges for these teens can involve poverty, homelessnes, complications with pregnacies, malnutrition, lack of childcare, lack of housing, lack of family support and lack education.

- *Foster Care*

Per the SC Department of Social Services, 229 youth were served in foster care in 2's 2018-2019. This is 5.8% of the State total.

SC Foster Care	**Ages**			**Total**
County	**0 - 6**	**7 - 12**	**13 - 17**	
Aiken	46	33	41	120
Allendale	0	0	0	0
Bamberg	1	1	3	5
Barnwell	3	1	3	7
Calhoun	3	2	8	13
Orangeburg	26	28	30	84
LSWDA	79	65	85	229
State	1549	1119	1300	3968
% of State Total	5.1%	5.8%	6.5%	5.8%

Individuals in Foster Care can face the following challenges: stable housing, problems with physical and behavioral health, lack of adequate elementary and secondary education, lack of social interaction with peers,and justice system involvement and others.

- *Ex-Offenders*

  In 2020 there were 521 individuals released form the Department of Corrections in the Lower Savannah region, approximately 7% of the State's total of 7,445. These individuals face challenges to get integrated into society and employment. Traditinonally, these individuals have been difficult to place into employment. With extended periods out of the workforce, these individuals need help with creating a resume, interviewing and soft skills.

- *Homeless*

  Per the 2019 SC State Homelessness Report there are about 96 individuals homeless in the Lower Savannah region. This is 2.6% of the State's total. Homeless individuals are challenged with finding and keeping a job/training as they may not have reliable transportation to get to the job/training site. They obviously lack a permanent address which makes them difficult to employ.

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

Workforce Development within the LSWDA uses the customer driven approach. More than just merely offering Occupational Skills Training through the local technical college, workforce professionals within the region attempt to address the whole client regardless of expected workforce development outcomes. There exists classroom environment soft skills training to increase overall knowledge of workplace standards, as well as one-on-one case management for additionally needed support of the individual. From a system standpoint, transportation is our largest challenge. We are a region of six mostly rural counties without a significant transportation system connecting these six counties to each other and no transportation system connecting this region to the rest of the state. This has a direct impact on individuals getting to both the job-site and the training site. From an employer standpoint it limits access to the pool of high quality employee prospects located in some of our most rural areas. In our efforts to mitigate this obstacle we are utilizing available transportation systems on an as-needed basis and will continue to seek out alternatives (additional funding opportunities, regional collaborations, WIOA Supportive Services, etc) until a more permanent solution is obtained. With the SC Works Lower Savannah Mobile Unit individuals can receive SC Works Center services who lack access to their own or public transporation to the nearest SC Works Center. These services include but are not limited to:

- *SC Works Online Registration Assistance*
- *Job Search Assistance*
- *Labor Market Information*
- *Resume & Cover Letter Preparation Assistance*
- *Computer & Internet Access*
- *Job Fairs/Hiring Events*
- *Basic Unemployment Insurance Assistance*
- *Workshop Information*
- *Training & Education Programs*
- *Career Assessment & Guidance*
- *Referrals*

While attempts are underway to address softskills limitations in the region, this still remains a weakness as identfied by both business/industry, as well as, workforce professionals within the region. In an effort to counter the lack of adequate soft skills, the LSWDA is looking at Softskills models, for example Cornerstone On Demand or GoSkills that may be purchased and collaboratively employed by workforce development organizations, technical colleges and industries who would be interested in setting up a "Softskills Academy" as a function of their hiring or onboarding process. In a separate attempt to lessen the effects of Softskills, the LSWDA has entered into a program where rising seniors in our local high schools are placed on a summer employment program for roughly 9 weeks at a site choosen by the school. All sites must conform to our local policy regarding work experience (OSHA safety standards, superviser onsite at all times, treatment equal to any other employee on the site, etc.). Softskills are not simply being taught through pre-placement workshops and interviews but including the work experience aspect serves to reinforce the softskills tutorials with real world compensation and experience.

Our strengths are numerous. We have a 8 major colleges and universities within our local workforce area with whom we have an established relationship. Particularly 3 of our technical colleges (Aiken Technical College, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, and Denmark Technical College) who provide the majority of the Occupational Skills Training that we fund under WIOA. We have outstanding partner relationships which is evident by the cooperative spirit demonstrated in the co-located partners within the SC Works Centers (through prepratory morning meetings by partner staff, robust particpaction in our 2 Business services teams and particpation of partnering agencies the Workforce Development Board and sub-committees within the LSWDA). Another very promising strength is related to the Aoerospace and automotive corridor that runs through the Eastern sections of the LSWDA. Companies like GKN Aerospace, Volvo and Boeing provide an exciting opportunity for job seekers and entreprenurial business/employer growth within the LSWDA, though the effects of COVID-19 on the region are unknown, we are optinmistic that the negative impact will be limited.

Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

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

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and
- A description of how the local board will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above.

Vision Statement:
BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY

Mission Statement:
PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THAT WILL INCREASE AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE SIX COUNTY REGION

The LSWDB's overall goal is to have a coordinated, proactive system that aligns talent development assets with current and future business recruitment and retention needs and enhances attraction efforts to improve the economic competitiveness of the local workforce area to include the entirety of the Central Region of South Carolina. Through a unified workforce development network, rather than segmented individual programs or entities; the LSWDB will continuously improve the area's Workforce Development system. This will be done by using relevant and current data to make predictions on trends in the region's economy; then adjusting talent accordingly; and aligning the system's resources with the needs of the business and industry to ensure the availability of a quality labor pool. A stronger workforce system is the LSWDB's primary objective.

Elements of our continued progress toward this ideal include:

- *A workforce Innovation and Opportunity system that operates as a "talent pipeline" utilizing the full array of education and training needed to be globally competitive;*
- *The creation of sector strategies links employers, educators, and the workforce system to support career pathways for in-demand occupations;*
- *Emphasis placed on lifelong learning opportunities for existing workers who will suffer economic hardships, if they don't acquire new skills;*
- *A system that creates a well informed populace in the Lower Savannah region of the emerging opportunities for high-skill, high-wage employment;*

- *Resource and Fund Development: serves as the regional convener providing information on existing and emerging resources for workforce development;*

- *Collaboration and Partnering: working in partnership with economic development and education to attract new and retain existing employers, and*

- *SC Works Center Oversight and Operation: overseeing the operations of centers with knowledge on provided services and programs.*

Additonally, to accomplish these goals, we will be working more intensively with economic development and the business communities to better align resources; increase business engagement and penetration; provide more Work-based Learning (WBL opportunities (such as Incumbent Worker Training, On-The-Job Training, Work-Experience, Apprenticeships, etc). The LSWDB seeks to increase services to specific target populations, i.e., veterans, displaced homemakers, justice-involved individuals and of Out School Youth; enhance the seamless provision of community resources for economic and workforce development purposes; enhance the leveraging of resources, as they continue to become more scarce; and continue efforts for continuous improvement of overall program performance and accountability.

Under provision of the new workforce law, the LSWDB has taken the opportunity to strengthen our commitment to our required workforce system partners. This is being done through the creation of more specific MOUs. Historically, MOUs have been filled with platitudes of cooperation conveying a sense of collaboration but not much else. We have, for the last few years, set about changing the tone and expectations associated with MOU creation with our workforce partners. Additionally, we are seeking to create a level of accountability for ourselves and to services we provide to the Lower Savannah citizenry. Some of these changes are as follows:

- *Specific quarterly client referral numbers from and to workforce partners*
- *Specified contractual grievance/sanction procedures if stated expectations are not being met*
- *Quarterly Workforce partner meetings to align expectations and outcomes*
- *Providing Workforce Department partners access to SCWOS (State database system) as a partnering agency*
- *Leveraging of resources to ensure maximum support of Workforce programs/clients.*

Section III: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

1. A description of the planning process undertaken to produce the local plan. The description must include how the chief elected officials, local board, and core and required partners were involved in the development of the plan.

Upon receipt of State Instruction Number 15-16, Change 1, LSWDB staff convened meetings between all SC Works required partners, co-located workforce partners and all Workforce Development partners from across the region. An email was sent to the LSWDA Chief Elected Officials (County Council Chairpersons) and all 6 county councils seeking input and instructions on creation and updating of the Local and Regional Plans. There were a total of 6 meetings in all to include the Workforce Development Board meeting where this plan was the primary topic on the agenda. At these meetings, partners were asked to join us in the creation of a Local Plan that would be very inclusive of workforce programs and services being conducted across the Lower Savannah region.

2. A description of the workforce development system in the local area, including:
    - Identification of the programs that are included in the system; and
    - How the Local Board will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development program in the local area.

The Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area (LSWDA) is comprised of many partner and community service agencies and programs that make up the workforce development system in the six county region. Various agency and program staff are co-located in the six (6) SC Works Centers throughout the region while we have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)/Infrastructure Sharing Agreements (IFA) with others and plan to develop MOUs region wide among our partner programs. Programs and agencies included in the LSWDA workforce system are:

- *SC Department of Employment and Workforce (Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Services, TAA Program and Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services)***
- *Lower Savannah Council of Governments (WIOA Program)***
- *Eckerd Connects (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Operator Service Provider)***
- *The three technical colleges in the region (Aiken, Denmark and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical Colleges).**
- *SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department***
- *Adult Education /Literacy (Aiken, Barnwell/Bamberg, Allendale and Orangeburg/Calhoun)***
- *SC Department of Social Services***
- *Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)***
- *Job Corp**
- *Telamon Corporation**
- *SC Commission for the Blind*
- *SC Department of Juvenile Justice*
- *SC Department of Corrections*
- *City of North Challenge Center*

**MOU/IFA*
***Co-located in the SC Works Centers*

The LSWDA is committed to supporting service alignment in sustenance of the strategies outlined in the State Plan which will carry out not just core programs and other workforce programs but additional agencies and program partnerships. Continuing and increasing the partnerships and collaboration in the region among workforce partners to more effectively serve job seekers with education and training activities and engage employers to recognize their requirements will aid in successfully meeting the needs of both customers and support the State as a whole.

We meet and work collaboratively with secondary and post secondary education and economic development entities throughout the region on a regular basis. We have an established partnership with neighboring local areas and with the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). The CSRA consists of 7 counties in South Carolina (Aiken, Edgfield, Barnwell, Saluda, Bamberg, McCormick, and Allendale) and 14 counties in neighboring Georgia (Burke, Richmond, Columbia, McDuffie, Washington, Jefferson, Screven, Wilkes, Jenkins, Lincoln, Warren, Hancock, Taliaferro, and Glascock). Being so close to Georgia means that while we provide services with in-state partners, we must collaborate with our Georgia counterparts on Rapid Responses, Hiring Events, OST, etc. on both sides of the border as well as the provision of services to individuals who live in the LSWDA but work in Georgia. Particularly with Augusta, GA having been named the Cyber Security Headquarters of the US with the following locations:

- *Cyber Center of Excellence at Fort Gordon*
- *Georgia Cyber Center*
- *Cyber Institute at Augusta University*

Workforce Development staff has made presentations at a number of meetings and events, i.e., presenting on our innovative JUMP START program at the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA), Society of Human Resource Managers meetings, County Council meetings, Chambers of Commerce meetings, various city and county Leadership Training sessions, and career development classes at USC-Aiken, Aiken Technical College, and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College . These presentations serve a dual purpose of educating the public to the workforce activities being conducted within the region and as a recruiment tool for the SC Works centers.

We have held County Input Sessions in all six counties to share and gather information relative to specific needs in each county. LSCOG Workforce Development and Economic Development staff jointly conduct annual city and county needs assessments to strenthen understanding and service delivery goals across the region. We have an established SC Works Committe that meets three (3) times a year to assess and improve service delivery

of the SC Works Centers. This committee reports directly to the Workforce Development Board with recommendations for SC Work Center improvements.

In an effort to ensure services are available and timely, WIOA and SCDEW staff have been certified to proctor WIN for individuals coming into the SC Work Center seeking workforce/employment services. To facilitate the proctoring of WIN, all SC Work Centers in the region were designated through ACT as WIN testing sites. Though, at this moment, only the SC Works Centers in Aiken and Orangeburg Counties conduct WIN testing on an on-going basis. Testing is conducted at all technical colleges and Adult Education sites within the region.

In addition to proctoring of needed assesments for the public, we have instituted a practice of providing designated areas within the SC Works centers for employers to proctor their own cirricula if proctoring leads to job interviews for individuals that meet the minimum passing requirement of the assessment.

In the LSWDA, the LSWDB members and staff serve as a resource for their respective County Councils and community partners to provide workforce development information and updates beneficial to the counties' unemployed and/or underemployed. Additionally, LSWDB Orientations for new members are provided as well as tours of the SC Works Centers. Success stories of services received by businesses and job seekers are highlighted in both Board/Committee meetings, our quarterly newsletters, and on a "Wall of Fame" board located within the SC Work Centers to motivate and inspire future job-seekers as well as the public.

3. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local are to:
    - Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment;

Expanding access is achieved through:

- *Exploration of marketing avenues such as TV advertisements, broadcasting digitally, advertising in Chamber of Commerce facilities, the Department of Motor Vehicles and radio. Through these avenues we highlight our services including services to individuals with barriers to employment.*
- *Postings of job fairs, hiring events, job availabilities in SCWOS and SC Work Centers workshop schedules on social media platforms.*
- *Expanding federal/state and WIOA funds by utilizing supportive services funds for active SCWOS participants*
    - *Transportation*
    - *Child Care*
    - *Legal Aid for Expungements*

- *Needs-based services*
- *Medical Assistance*
- *Education Support*
- *Work Clothing*
- *Other such as car repairs, rental payments, insurance payments etc.*

- *Coordination with and referral to partner agencies in the SC Works Centers for additional supportive services and other needs.*
- *Pandemic related new innovative drive thru job fairs held in three locations to serve the Lower Savannah region during the Pandemic with needed job availability information.*
- *Development of a new virtual/remote certification process to reach individuals during the SC Works Center closure. This virtual WIOA enrollment process can also be used during non-COVID times to expand our services to those individuals who cannot visit the local SC Works Center.*
- *Ongoing expansion of ETPL providers and training programs for approval by the board. Training providers and programs are approved for customer choice of private and public training opportunities in the Lower Savannah region.*

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

  While what is being described above is happening on a region–wide level, the same process is occurring locally. Local workforce entities have been meeting on a quarterly basis and focusing their efforts to expand service delivery based on the in-demand positions that exist within the Lower Savannah region. Some of the efforts have been centered on increasing traffic to the SC Works Center through our two Regional Business Teams and subrecipient efforts, improved business engagements, collaborating with the technical colleges in the region to increase credentials, etc. We are engaging with economic development, technical colleges and the employer community to see how career pathways can be enhanced and to help define what steady and meaningful progression in an occupation looks like from an employer/industry perspective. The goal is to take advantage of increased knowledge/opportunities and help willing participants and employers be the most successful that they can be. This will not only expand successful opportunities in our larger counties but also improve economic and employment conditions across the entirety of the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area.

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

The Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area (LSWDA) has hosted and embarked on a strong SC Works outreach/marketing campaign to inform and engage employers from small to in-demand industry sectors and occupation employers. The outreach endeavors include:

- *Digital Marketing*
- *Digital Marketing through Chamber of Commerce*
- *Employer post cards*
- *DMV advertisements in five counties*
- *Broadcast marketing (5 Commercials over 9 months)*
- *Weekly "Hot Jobs Reports" and Hiring Events posted to Facebook*
- *Business Services Representative Team's employer engagement and outreach increasing the Work Experience Program, On-the-Job-Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) contracts*
- *Regional Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours and Rotary Club attendance*
- *SC Works Center Signage advertising daily/weekly Hiring Events and Center Services*
- *Drive Through and virutal Job Fairs*
- *Business/Employer Surveys used to evaluate satisfaction of services received/rendered.*
- *SC WORKS Mobile Unit (SC Works Lower Savannah)*

- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;

  We are supporting the needs of the local business in the area though incorporating employer surveys into the employer events in the centers, assessing experiences and allowing for feedback. This information is used to evaluate service delivery and improve employer services. Additionally through the provision of Incumbent Worker Training services to increase technical skills of organizations and providing access to OJT support to lessen the costs of employee turn-over.

- Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development; and

  We are engaging with economic development, technical colleges and the employer community to see how career pathways can be enhanced and to help define what steady and meaningful progression in an occupation looks like from an employer/industry perspective. We have begun to invite Economic Development professionals to our Business Services Team meeting in hopes to increase engagement between Workforce Developmen and Economic Development which to this point could be improved. It is the LSWDA's intention to be a greater resource

to Lower Savannah Economic Development through enhance access to Workforce development data/processes (i.e. Labor Market Information, use of SC Work Centers, expanded opportunities for Workforce Development and Economic Development collaboration). Additionally, the LSWDA has 2 Regional Economic Developers on the Workforce Board providing a greater understanding on how to improve the collaboration between the Workforce Development and Economic Development.

- Strengthen linkages between the SC Works delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

  Through a referral process, implemented by the SC DEW VOS greeter at the front desk of the Aiken, Barnwell, and Orangeburg centers, any customer communicating a "recent layoff" on their first visit is contacted and provided information on the Center's Overview (a weekly scheduled presentation on the SC Works Center Services). Additionally, SC Works Center staff and sub-recipient staff reach out to COVID-19 impacted individuals who have UI claim issues. All customers in the LSWDA that establish an Initial UI Claim and register in SCWOS are contacted via email and sent information about the LSWDA SC Works Centers, informational handouts on center services, hours of operation, contact information and workforce programs. LSWDA staff, in cooperation with Eckerd Connects staff, have created a virtual/remote enrollment process that incorporates the SC Works Center Overview. Interested individuals can view via a video conferencing platform.

4. A description of how the strategies discussed in Question 3 above will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the State Plan; specifically:
   - Increasing participation in work-based (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs;

     Work-based learning, such as on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs, offer skills-based learning experiences that benefit both trainees and businesses. Individuals can accelerate their earning potential by minimizing delay into the workforce while affording businesses the flexibility to train workers specific to their skill requirements.

     SRNS has a registered apprenticeship in conjunction with Apprenticeship Carolina. Enrolling Eight apprentices with subcontractors that were certified and are taking classes for Production Operator at Aiken Technical College. There is a potential of 110 apprentices with SRNS/SRR private sub-contractors. The LSWDA OJT program is one of the most successful OJT programs in the state. Our continued focus on businesses has resulted in multiple years of significant OJT contracting. The state

and local plans are aligned in this endeavour to reach new businesses to engage them in OJTs and Registered Apprenticeships for the present and future.

- Increasing the formal assessment and provision of soft-skills training;

  Employers have been vocal about the need for job seekers to have adequate soft skills in addition to technical skills on the job. There is a need for equal importance to be placed on the assessment and training of soft skills as is placed on hard skills to ensure employers have candidates that not only meet the technical skills for the field, but will retain employment through soft-skills such as effective communication, time management, and conflict resolution.

  SC Job Ready University (SCJRU) soft skills training curriculum is web based soft skills training. Available at no cost to business and organizations that do not have access to other soft skills instructions. The curriculum covers communication, time management, and problem-solving skills as well as core academic skills.

  Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy is utilized as a workshop for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth participants to develop their skills in time management, financial responsibility, resume writing, communication, and other soft skills. Another online soft skills program utilized is Career Smart which has eight modules and is self-paced.

  As part of the WIOA enrollment process, individuals have to mini-workshop and utilize their soft-skills in order to participate. They are required to navigate through the registration in SCWOS, create a resume, collect documents needed for the WIOA application and contact the case manager with questions and complete the WIN/WorkKeys/TABE assessments. This process demonstrates the individuals' communication skills, computer skills, basic skills, motivation to stay focused for WIOA services, etc. Case managers can quickly discern which individuals need additional support with soft-skills through counselling sessions. Those individuals have the chance to engage in Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy or the SCWOS supported Alison soft-skills programs that are offered free of charge. There is also the opportunity to engage in a scheduled SC Work Center workshop such as Basic Computer, Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills and Job Searching. The Pandemic and individual's reluctance in visiting the SC Works Centers gave way to a creative cooperation between the South Carolina centers in offering state-wide created overarching workshops via a virtual platform.

- Facilitating the development of career pathways and increasing co-enrollment across partner programs, as appropriate;

Increasing co-enrollment of job seekers across partner programs can create a less taxing process for both the job seekers and the case managers through streamlining intake systems and referral processes. A referral to partner programs and community partners is made once initial assessment is complete. Co-location of community and partner programs in the LSWDA SC Works Centers aids staff and customers in the centers. (p. 10).

While our focus is employment, more often than not WIOA participants are focused to participate in occupational skills training. Case managers encourage the participant to research their career pathways by providing guidance to training provider and program information. Often participants already have a general idea or know which new career pathway they would like to pursue. Others are guided through a comprehensive assessment to a potential career enhancement training. The eligible training provider list (PATh) is just one of the many resources that participants can explore in addition to the technical college websites and private training provider websites.

The Business Services Team holds regular team meetings including representatives from the SC Works Center partners. These meetings serve as an on-going platform to share and discuss employers' needs in the region where potential skill gaps for the region may be identified.

- Implement cross-program staff training to enhance service delivery to businesses and job seekers;

  SC Works Frontline Staff Training is an on-going initiative developed among partners to ensure that all staff in the centers have a strong foundation in the components of the public workforce system, including the purpose of the system and partner roles within the system. Extending frontline staff training by targeting efforts to specific SC Works staff positions, such as case management or business service consultants, will allow for more specialized staff development. To support effectiveness of co-enrollment front-line staff have been trained on best practices in serving individuals with barriers to employment.

  Additionally, there are monthly meetings scheduled in the SC Works comprehensive centers as well as the SC Works Barnwell Center with core partners to discuss SC Works Center operations, training, or issues. Core partners have the opportunity to give presentations on their services. SC Works Frontline staff as well as business services staff received and completed the SC Works 101 training that was facilitated by Midlands Technical College.

- Streamline intake and referral processes;

All new customers entering the LSWDA SC Works Centers are provided an Initial Intake/Assessment which provides information regarding the services most needed by the customer and initiates the referral process to partner programs and services. The Initial Intake and Assessment survey questions are listed below:

1. *Do you want information from Adult Education about obtaining your high-school diploma or GED?*
2. *Do you have difficulty with seeing, hearing, talking, using your hands, getting around (mobility), interacting with others, learning, or thinking that makes it difficult for you to get or keep a job and want more information about employment services and assistance with Vocational Rehabilitation?*
3. *Are you a SNAP recipient and want information about the SNAP Back to Work program?*
4. *Are you at least 18 years old, need help buying food for your household and want more information about applying for SNAP benefits?*
5. *Are you 16-24 years old, not attending K-12 school or college, and need assistance with furthering your education or getting a job?*
6. *Are you unemployed or underemployed and want information about the WIOA program?*
7. *Were you recently laid-off?*
8. *Are you a Veteran/Veteran-Spouse?*

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have started a virtual enrollment process in conjunction with the sub recipient management staff to stream-line enrollment during the pandemic. This innovative enrollment process can be used after the pandemic to aid people with transportation and other barriers that do not allow them to travel to the SC Works Center. Zoom and WebEx interviews are being utilized to cover essential services.

- Developing strategies that increase access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and access to identification and vital records;

  The barrier of reliable transportation, affordable housing, and access to identification and vital records impact job seekers across partner programs.

  LSCOG coordinates with the following regional public transportation systems:
  - *Aiken - Best Friend Express, Dial-A-Ride, Pony Express*
  - *Allendale - Scooter;*
  - *Bamberg - Handy Ride;*
  - *Barnwell – Local Motion (operated by Generations Unlimited)*
  - *Calhoun – Cross County Connection (once per week)*
  - *Orangeburg – Cross County Connection*

Transportation routes will take participants to DHEC and other community buildings to ensure they have the ability to obtain records and have access to vital records.

Adults, DWs and Youth as WIOA participants have access to supportive services which includes travel reimbursements for mileage ensuring the ability to attend and complete training successfully.

The Mobile Unit will also serve in reaching those individuals who lack their own transportation or have no connection to public transportation to the nearest SC Works Center location.

Access to vital records is provided at the SC Works Centers through resource room computers with internet connection to government agencies such as DHEC for birth certificates, the Social Security Administration, Department of Social Services, Unites States Military sites for DD 214, and selective service registration. Case managers explain the importance of access to vital records and supply links to these vital records websites for participants to obtain records.

The Lower Savannah COG has access to needed housing through the HUD program and works with regional housing authorities.

- Supporting industry-led, sector partnerships; and

  LSWDA, in conjunction with Central Midlands and Catawba Regional Workforce Areas, is actively involved in the Central Region Sector Strategy Initiative. We are supporting Sector Strategies by participating as the lead agency through hosting of both employer and local partner meetings. Additionally, we continue to recruit employers to the local employer team to increase the chances of success of the Central Regions Sector Strategy Team. Lastly, the Central Regions' LWDA's are exploring ways to have our sub-committees meet in a regional forum to discuss was to enhance SC Works Center Management and Disability Services across the central region not just in our separate workforce areas.

- Sharing best practices across partner programs in order to increase awareness of partner services, promote a workforce environment of growth and continuous improvement, and support a system viewpoint.

  Sharing best practices across partner programs serves as a locally championed form of staff development and engagement. Promoting best practices in outreach, innovative partnerships, braiding of resources and effective case management to all partners, instead of limiting acknowledgement within agencies or programs,

will advance the system as a whole. LSWDA business services meetings allow all partners to gain knowledge on job outlook within the region and share best practices. Through constant communication, best practices are shared and improved upon through all facets of Lower Savannah's WD programs (intake, contracting, follow-up, etc.). Additionally, SC Works Center monthly meetings to promote awareness of various services offered by all partners. With the customized referral intake forms and the introduction of the VOS Greeter, the combined referral process allows for new and repeat customers needs to be accessed and directed to all agencies that can offer needed assistance.

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

   There is one economic development partner on the LSWD board, and one serves on the SC Works Standing Committee. We host yearly training with our board and committee members to discuss strategies to be implemented and to be improved upon. Economic development agencies, serving our local region, are vital partners with knowledge of the workforce and job development needs and gaps that the LSWDA can help bridge. Partners have pre-morning morning meetings where updates are provided in an effort to ensure complete knowledge is had by all within the SC Works centers. We serve as a convener for the region engaging local partners through weekly, quarterly and annual meetings; with the expressed purpose of providing training, local engagement and improved cost-sharing across the multitude of Workforce Development, Community Development, and Economic Development organizations

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

   Soft-skills starts with the "mini-workshop" of the individual's personal data entry into the WIOA registration process which also includes filling out online forms which requires basic computer knowledge. It also includes the development of a resume. The case manager's job is the determine through the Comprehensive Objective Assessment Summary the strengths and weaknesses of a participant's academic skills and occupational skills. Through ongoing counseling, a determination may be made to refer the participant to an online workshop such as Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy, Alison, or an SC Works Center workshop. This information is also captured in the IEP/ISS and updated as a living document.

   Other Assessment tools with measurable results are:

   - TABE – pretest and posttests where a measurable gain allows the youth participant to enter occupational skills training

- WIN/WorkKeys - academic and employability skills testing. In order to be determined not basic skills deficient, the participant has to score at a level of 4 in all assessments
- SC Works Center Workshops – Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, Job Searching, Basic Computer Skills
- Alison – SCWOS supported program with reports

Youth typically enter WIOA with little to no soft-skills experience. Case managers are therefore charged with the determine the strengths and weaknesses of the following: attendance, punctuality, appearance, quality of work, teamwork skills, communication skills, problem solving and critical thinking. As part of a new and innovative soft-skills program and a youth element requirement was the development of the financial and entrepreneurial workshop that includes 10 modules. Additionally, youth are undergoing s*oft skills training though Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy, Career Smart which consists of twelve units teaching work-place skills as a self-paced online program and SC Works workshops.*

7. A description of the strategies and services for employers that may include the implementation of initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs, On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers and support the local board's strategic vision and goals.

   WIOA Business Services Representatives (BSR) under the guidance of the Workforce Development Administrator provide marketing of business services in the region and coordinates activities of other Business Services Representatives as a part of the regions two (2) Business Services Teams. There is one team operating on the Eastern side of the region and one team operating on the Western side of the region. Each team is made up of approximately 15 members from various SC Works required and optional partners. These teams meet at a minimum of six times a year, more if necessary. The primary BSR function is to market the full array of Business Services throughout the region. These services include (Incumbent Worker Training – two rounds per year, On-the-Job Training, Work Experience, Customized training, SC Works direct placement, Apprenticeship training opportunities et. al.). In the Lower Savannah Region, the BSR is the Business "Yes" person. Not only are they marketing services to incorporate the employer into a more integrated workforce development partner/system but they are also providing invaluable technical assistance to the employer community as a whole. Additionally, BSR assists in the development and operation of job fairs,/hiring events assists in WIN information, assessments, and provides TA to staff, Board members, and providers' staff regarding business services, and serves as LMI Coordinator. As the LSWDA region becomes more proficient in the Business Services realm, their roles will expand to include greater

intergration into Sector Strategies for the Central Region, economic development, and statewide business services activities.

8. A description of how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional and economic development activities that are carried out in the local area, including how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

   The LSWDB has economic developers on its board or affiliated through its SC Works Standing Committee and works with the other economic development agencies throughout the region. Because of these relationships, the Lower Savannah WIOA program is informed in real-time as to the state of economic development conditions on the ground. In most cases, this information is provided with significant advanced notice so that the workforce system can take full advantage of dynamic changes as they occur.

   The LSWDA is using the longstanding relationship that exists between Workforce Development and the Technical College system to supplement learning opportunities and training among our SC Works visitors and WIOA participants. Currently, there is a 6-module training being offered (supported by WIOA) on an on-going basis with Aiken Technical College addressing both financial literacy and entrepreneurship. We are in talks to implement similar classes at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College in the upcoming fall semester.

   As a Business Services function, the LSWDA has prioritize enhanced business services to employers who exists outside the traditional classifications of small, medium and large businesses. Recognizing that a significant number of employees are employed at micro-enterprises, it is our desire that Incumbent Worker Grants, On-the-Job Training grants, as well as, the full slate of Business Services/WIOA services be targeted toward these smaller employers. This is and will continue to be done through the LSCOG memberships in local Chambers of Commerce and through the various marketing methodologies of WIOA Services through the employer/business community.

Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

1. A description of the SC Works delivery system in the local area, including:
   - How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers;
   - How the local board will target rural communities, including facilitating increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system through the use of technology and other means;

- How entities within the SC Works delivery system, including center operators and partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and
- Identification of the roles and resource contributions of the SC Works partners.

Oversight of the WIOA program is carried out by the LSWDB through various methodologies. They are as follows;

- *LSCOG Workforce Division staff review Ad Hoc reports twice a month (usually on the 1st and 15th). If deficiencies are found, the specific Ad Hoc reports are then sent to the respective service providers seeking correction and/or justification. The Ad Hoc follow-up response is due back to LSCOG staff 10 days after it was sent (so the 10th and 25th respectively). If the response lacks the clarity/correction necessary, a follow-up contact is made to gain that clarity.*
- *LSCOG staff conduct monthly financial reviews of all expenditures by subrecipients and requests (in writing) immediate corrections where unintended or incorrect financial transactions have occurred.*
- *The LSWDA conducts annual local monitoring of all sub-recipient programs. The monitoring includes; SC Works site visits, staff interviews, undisclosed participant hard file reviews, financial monitoring, immediate, as well as, documented corrective actions. A report is generated detailing findings and/or obligations and a monitoring report response timeline is provided. This monitoring occurs once per sub-recipient contract period , but has been and will be done more as circumstances dictate.*
- *Sub-recipients are required to report out to the Workforce Development Board and the Lower Savannah Youth Committee. Currently, the SC Works Operator reports out to the LSWDB, Lower Savannah SC Works Committee and the Lower Savannah Disabilities Committee.*
- *Increased marketing initiatives throughout the region to include: a new website www.lowersavannahwda.org, employer and job seeker television commercials, radio and Facebook/Twitter advertisements, and billboards*
- *Modifications made to operational hours of SC Works centers to allocate time for staff development training each month.*
- *Added desk guides to the workspaces of all center staff. Desk guides include: center manual, core partner cheat sheets, safety material, and any guidance staff may need to reference.*

The LSWDA is comprised of six (6) counties including Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg. A SC Works Center is located in each of the six counties staffed

with both Lower Savannah COG WIOA staff and partner staff (See Attachment A). All centers are complete with computers and internet access. Additional access to printers, scanners and fax machines is available. Staff in each center are available and assist with employment services, trainings services, TAA services as needed, Veterans services, WIOA program services and partner program access and referrals. In addition, numerous hiring events are held in the centers with assistance and support provided to employers. The LSWDA also provides on-line services via an established web-site (www.LowerSavannahWDA.org) and social media outreach available via Facebook/Twitter. These resources allow outreach to promote and inform all individuals about various events and the services available through the SC Works Centers. Additionally, staff also provide WIOA/SC Works Center Overviews, Certification, Assessment and Case Management services within each county for easy and convenient access to services for all individuals in the region. At the beginning of COVID-19 when the decision was made to close the SC Works Centers to protect the public and SC Works Center staff from potential infections, LSWDA staff and sub-recipient staff developed a virtual/remote WIOA enrollment procedure that includes WIOA/SC Works Center Overview, Certification, Assessments and Case Management. This process will also be used beyond this Pandemic to provide customers/participants a greater degree of customer options as it relates to service delivery.

All SC Works Centers are required to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable and the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding both physical and programmatic accessibility of services, as required. All SC Works Centers in the LSWDA post and provide "Discrimination Is against the Law" notices which highlights information on how and with whom to file a complaint. Further, individuals enrolled in the WIOA program are provided this information for their documentation, in writing, with signatures. The LSWDA SC Works Centers are monitored at both the state and local levels to ensure access to services in accordance with WIOA section 188 and the ADA. In accordance with federal regulations, the LSWDA has an appointed Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO) who works in coordination with the State EEO to train staff and monitor centers utilizing the "ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities" and the "Assistive Technology Checklist." Additionally, the LSWDA has utilized Walton Options and ABLE SC to evaluate access and partner with to provide outreach and information workshops on a wide range of topics such as, "Disability Benefits & Employment: Make it Work for You," "Independent Living for All," and additional topics and events are being planned. We also have a LSWDB standing Disabilities Committee, the Chair of the committee is the Area Supervisor for the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department and works on behalf of the LSWDB to assure services are provided to individuals seeking services in the LSWDA.

During the COVID-19 related closure of the SC Works Centers, SC Works Center and LSWDA staff quickly accustomed to new processes in the centers and focused much of their efforts to help answer phones to help Unemployment Insurance claimants. Additionally, LSWDA

staff focused on reaching out to newly registered individuals in SCWOS to provide them with information about WIOA.

Since the re-opening of the SC Works Centers, operations run with the added focus on keeping staff as well as customers/participants safe through the implementation of

- *Sneeze guards*
- *Wearing of face masks*
- *Adhering to the 6' social distancing*
- *Disinfecting material such as wipes and gels*
- *"Open" 16' feather signs*
- *COVID-19 Center Update signs*

In the attached documents, there is a projected budgetary breakdown of all center costs, as well as, a listing of the services that the centers are providing and which partner will be provided said service.
The SC Works delivery system brings together a series of partner programs responsible for workforce development, education, employment, and training programs across the LSWDA region. It allows a customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to partner programs.

The LSWDA's Shared Operating Budget outlines infrastructure and shared services costs in our 2 comprehensive centers, Aiken and Orangeburg, and our Barnwell SC Works Centers. These expenditures are then cost shared among the partners that are co-located in these centers based on a Full-time Equivalency (FTE) model.

In the Aiken SC Works Center, LSWDA's co-located partners are WP, UI, MSFW, Vet, DSS TANF, DSS SNAP, VR, Adult Education and WIOA. There are a total of 22.1 FTEs sharing in the overall center operating budget of $167,825.

In the Barnwell SC Works Center, LSWDA's co-located partners are WP, TAA and WIOA. There are a total of 4.9 FTEs sharing in the overall center operating budget of $32,204.

In the Orangeburg SC Works Center, LSWDA's co-located partners are WP, UI, TAA, Vet, DSS TANF, DSS SNAP, VR, and WIOA. There are a total of 23.1 FTEs sharing in the overall center operating budget of $203,886.

Every quarter, each partner is billed their proportionate share for infrastructure and shared services costs in 3 SC Works Centers housed in the LSWDA region.

See attached SC Works Centers Contact/Location information

2. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

The LSWDA provides Career Adult and Dislocated Worker Basic and Individual program services targeting participants who have or are experiencing problems with job readiness and training, acquiring occupational certifications, skills upgrading, and job placement. The program will be conducted over three phases: WIOA) – Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy Online; Phase 2) – Occupational Training; and 3) Employment/Re-employment and Follow-Up Services. To accomplish these tasks, we will offer culturally relevant services that will address low self-esteem, low literacy levels, provide supportive services to address transportation, childcare, housing instability and little or no work experience barriers; and provide a means for participants to engage in receiving individualized case management services, career counseling services, mentoring, leadership skills, upgrading skills, introduce post-secondary education and military career options; provide occupational training, certifications, and job placement for entry into long-term high wage careers utilizing the following platforms:

- *One-on-One/virtual Case Management*
- *Helping WIOA participants secure Industry Recognized Credentials*
- *High Quality Job Placements*
- *Follow-up Services*

This workforce development initiative will address the needs of Adult and Dislocated Workers with one or more barriers (i.e. offender, lack of work of experience and outdated skills), ages 18 and older, with a recognized high school diploma or GED that are WIOA eligible to help them succeed in the workplace as certified, prepared, and effective citizens. The LSWDA's occupational skills program design includes initiatives that foster strong community partnerships by utilizing local community colleges for post-secondary education recruitment, Faith Based Community Organizations (FBCO) to access social services (i.e. SNAP, TANF, housing programs, childcare); career explorations utilizing O'Net, My Skills My Future, My Next Move and other customized career counseling services. Career Specialist will offer both paid and unpaid work experiences including internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing; provide job placement services along with follow-up support. For those participants not advancing to post-secondary education or advanced training, they will receive comprehensive employment services by the LSWDA career development team; which includes Business Service placements as needed and available. The project will provide (occupational) skills training and prepare participants for higher-wage in-demand industries. WIOA facilitates placement in high-growth/high-wage in-demand careers in distinct industries such as allied healthcare, construction logistics, technology professional occupations and manufacturing over a two year or shorter timeline depending on the occupational training program selected in both traditional and non-traditional classroom/clinical settings.

The LSDWA offers Basic, Individualized and Training services, as well as Follow-up services. Basic services (fomerly known as core services) are available to any person who enters a SC Works location seeking re-employment services. Some of the basic services offered are computer classes, re-employment workshops (resume creation, mock interviewing, teamwork, etc.) computer and fax machine access. Individualized Services are provided to any person enrolled in the WIOA program living within the 6 county region of Lower Savannah. Individualized Services include but are not limited to, One-on-One Case Management Counseling, internships, etc. Training Services are available for those indivdiuals who are unable to find employment, or are in need of skills upgrading for employment. The list of Training services include On-the Job Training, Work Experience, Customized Training through an employer, Occupational Skills training, Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship programs

The Lower Savannah Workforce Development Board (LSWDB) has approved training in the following four areas:

- *Healthcare with the inclusion of Information Technology*
- *Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics (TDL) with the inclusion of Information Technology*
- *Construction with the inclusion of Information Technology*
- *Manufacturing with the inclusion of Information Technology*

3. A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

   Local WIOA staff partners with State level business services staff to provide effective rapid response services focused primarily on promptly delivering comprehensive solutions to businesses and workers in transition. Rapid Response IWT is routinely used as a layoff aversion strategy to provide current employees with the skills needed to avert a layoff. In situations where a layoff or closure cannot be averted, basic career services are delivered to dislocated workers enabling them to transition quickly into new employment. Eligible dislocated workers may also receive training and/or education through WIOA or TAA. Additionally, the SC Works Lower Savannah Mobile Unit was procured to expand out local Rapid Response program into a hands-on and immediate tool to support individuals and employers experiencing a layoff.

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

   The LSWDA provides WIOA youth services for individuals between the ages of 16-24 years old in the six counties of the Lower Savannah region. Youth Services providers are co-located in the SC Works Centers providing recruitment, certification, career services to

include training and follow-up services. Provider staff work closely with Adult Education and High Schools within the region. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) have been developed with all Adult Education providers to strengthen the coordination of services, the referral process, and to have Adult Education staff co-located in the centers or have space available at Adult Education sites for WIOA staff. This has worked very effectively in streamlining cohesive services. MOUs have been developed throughout the region with Bamberg Job Corps, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The MOU with Vocational Rehabilitation provides referrals to enroll and serve youth with disabilities. SCVRD staff are co-located in the SC Works Centers in the LSWDA. Regular partner meetings, partner presentations and tours are held to increase youth outreach and referrals within the region. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is the assessment tool for WIOA youth participants and is administered by Adult Education, Christ Central and LSWDA staff. TABE measures the participant's proficiencies in literacy and numeracy at program entry and continuously throughout the program to determine measureable skills gain. TABE accommodates youth with special needs.

At present there are two programs in use within the LSWDA;. Transition Services Counselor (TSC) and Pre-employment Transition Services (Guideposts for Success) . These services would be deployed by way of referral to Vocational Rehabilitation for those youth participants who are deemed to need greater level of service than the WIOA case manager is trained to provide. Vocational Rehabilitation provides individualized services across the state through a network of area offices, job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse treatment centers and staff that serve clients at various itinerant sites such as SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. People with disabilities who exit Vocational Rehabilitation programs with a successful employment outcome enhance the quality of their lives and their families' lives by earning paychecks, lessening their reliance on government assistance, and stimulating the state's economy by paying taxes, making purchases, and ultimately contributing to the state's return on its investment in their services.

We work with Vocational Rehabilitation to address any barriers that a participant may have to work or training. We have a referral process in place with VR to address and assist with the individual's special needs also if it is a learning disability and we partner with Adult Education to assist with special accommodations for testing.

5. A description of how the fourteen youth program elements are integrated in program design, including a description of partnerships or formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program.

In the LSWDA, Eckerd Connects is our current Youth provider. Program design is currently moving forward and follows the 14 Youth Elements proscribed in WIOA law along with collaboration and leveraging through community-based organizations and partnerships as listed below.

Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention activities that lead to completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent

- *We provide referrals for remediation through Adult Education as well as provide one on one tutoring sessions with our participants who need a little refresher. Our Career Coaches would like to incorporate Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy TABE 11-12 to enhance the ability of those individuals that have a High School diploma or GED and are still BSD obtain their MSG and hopefully no longer be BSD. Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy is an online tutorial that gives the participant's an assessment to see where they need to remediate then it builds out a customized curriculum according to their needs. This is monitored by staff in each of the centers. We know where they are in their curriculum and if they need assistance, we would be able to provide them assistance. It allows the team and the participant to work together to enhance their outcome and obtain a gain with TABE 11/12.*

Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school

- *We work closely with Adult Education to identify and counsel students who are seeking to earn their GED or HS Diploma. We have a strong partnership and referral process with each Adult Education in the region.*

Paid and Unpaid Work Experience is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development

- *We have a strong community base of employers with whom we work to place individuals on WEX and OJT's. Our vision is to match the participant up with an employment opportunity that is cohesive to their career path and/or occupational skills training. For example; we partner with a nursing home facility who allows our potential PCT students to participate in a work experience opportunity in their health care facility which has led to several of our participants obtaining full time employment once they have obtained their PCT training. This allows a participant to determine if they really want to go into health care. Some participants who need immediate employment and/or have criminal backgrounds are matched with employers with the primary focus of building a strong work ethic and references for future employment.*
- *Summer Youth Jumpstart Program is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development for ISY that are rising high school seniors. LSWDA has partnered with local school districts and businesses to provide ISY with Work Experience (WEX) for the summer.*

Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field

- *Career Coaches assist participants in researching occupations prior to determining occupational skills training via job searching and Labor Market information. Participants are encouraged to participate in WEX opportunities in their field of interest. We outline their goals and objectives of how they will be able to accomplish their training goals and successfully obtain their credential. We utilize Palmetto Academic Training hub (PATh) and the training clusters to assist our participants in developing their Individual Service Strategy (ISS).*

Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation is an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills

- *We have had several participants in the Apprenticeship program that address the education and workforce component. We work with Apprenticeship Carolina and the school district as well as the funding source to give these opportunities to our participants.*

Leadership Development Opportunities encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors

- *We utilize Motivational Interviewing techniques to encourage our participants in making the right choices and figure out how they can overcome obstacles and gain positive social behaviors. We utilize the ISS and Life Skills assessments along with coaching and counseling our participants. We also offer them the ability to help in their community by partnering with Habitat for Humanity. 233 youth have participated in Leadership Development Opportunities in the last two years.*

Supportive Services enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities

- *Supportive services are available in emergency situations that would hinder a participant from completing their training or obtaining employment such as transportation, childcare, lodging, etc. Participants understand that funds are limited, and supportive services can only be utilized after other resources have been exhausted. Lodging can be funded if the training is more than 50 miles from their residence and they do not have adequate transportation to get back and forth to training.*

Adult Mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor with structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement

- *We have had several individuals that have worked with our participant's and built a connection with them that have maintained contact to mentor them in the past, however we do not have anything set to address this. We are actively seeking to strengthen this youth element.*

Follow-up Services are provided following program exit to help ensure youth succeed in employment or education

- *Follow up services are provided to participants who have exited the program. We continue to monitor their post-secondary school and/or employment progress. We continue to provide employment services for those who have not secured employment or lose employment during the one year follow up period. We assist in job searches, resume assistance, job applications and invitations to SC Works hiring events and community job fairs.*

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling

- *We utilize Motivational Interviewing techniques to encourage our participants in making the right choices and figure out how they can overcome obstacles and gain positive social behaviors. We utilize MI to assist the participant in realizing the stages of change and help them to set the goals and move toward the change. We also utilize Learning Express Century Twenty-One Academy curriculum and workshops to help the participant learn about goal setting and making the right choices. We cover drugs and alcohol abuse in the workplace and how it can harm their future. We partner with Mental Health and other agencies and make referrals for those individuals that may have an emotional or dependency issue*.

Financial Literacy Education provides youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability

- *We introduce Financial Literacy concepts through our Career Smart Curriculum. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation offers through their online resources, financial literacy for multiple demographic segments of the population. Youth participants will be directed to Money Smart for Young People. A certificate of completion will be filed for record of participation for each module completed by the youth participant.*

Entrepreneurial Skills Training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business and develops entrepreneurial skills

- *WIOA Career Coaches has identified and uses multiple resources to teach entrepreneurial skills training coursework and certification. Youth that identify as interested in being a business owner will be provided the "My Own Business Entrepreneurial Quiz". My Own Business Institute is a free online education for upcoming entrepreneurs.*

Services that Provide Labor Market Information offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations

- *We provide LMI on careers that the participant is interested in by utilizing Occupational outlook and SC WORKS as well as work readiness competencies.*

Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities help youth prepare for and transition to Postsecondary education and training

- *We assist participants with applying for financial aid and postsecondary education. We also aid with training to the technical colleges or other training providers in the region. We obtain approval for training based on the cost, length, and successful outcome of the training which leads to employment.*

Service Strategy	Element	Incorporation	Measurable Outcomes
Academic Learning	Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Alternative Secondary School Offerings, Education, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Transition Activities	TABE will identify academic levels. Classroom instruction for basic literacy/numeracy skills. Referral to Alternative school options as needed. College tours and Educational guest speakers will discuss options with youth. Financial Literacy utilizing Career Pathways curriculum and banking institutions. Small business leaders will provide workshops toward entrepreneurial skills with tours of businesses. Instruction with competencies appropriate to securing employment and conducting labor market research. GED training and testing/referral. Utilizing the IEP, TABE, Life skills assessments.	Pre/Post assessment to show basic skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurial skill improvement along with coordination with educational institutions.
Connecting & Leading	Leadership Development	Training curriculum and connecting youth with meaningful community service activities for personal and social growth, peer-to-peer groups, group work and structured activities. Utilizing the IEP, Life skills assessments.	Completion of community service projects and participation in various events, such as college/employer tours.

Service Strategy	Element	Incorporation	Measurable Outcomes
Occupational Skills Advancement	Occupational Skills Training	Enrollment in technical schools, colleges, educational providers for occupation/trade specific credential training. Participants will apply for all applicable grants and loans. Utilizing the IEP.	Development of primary occupational skills to perform tasks & technical functions required by specific occupational fields leading to a credential.
Work Experience Internship Pre-Apprenticeships On-the-Job Training (OJT)	Paid and unpaid work experience, Summer Employment Opportunities and Pre-Apprenticeships	Opportunity for work experience, OJT, registration in a pre-apprenticeship program, paid/unpaid internships with partner employers. Active participation in activities centered on career planning and completion of work readiness competencies. Utilizing the IEP, Life skills assessments.	Successful completion of subsidized Work Experience.
Program Support Intervention	Follow-up	Follow-up services provided for additional assistance/encouragement such as job club and data tracking. Utilizing the IEP.	Program engagement and retention toward goal attainment.

6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5) (B), what is the LWDAs policy that further defines how to determine if a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. If your area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency, a local policy is not required.

   Lower Savannah continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency; however, if a youth enters the program with a WIN assessment and is not basic skills deficient he/she may enter occupational skills training; however, if a youth is basic skills deficient he/she must take the TABE assessment and show an EFL gain before entering into occupational skills training. BSD youth will receive remediation services through tutoring. ESL Adults, DWs & Youth are referred to Adult Education for specific training related programs addressing their need to read, write, or speak English.

A specific local instruction will be developed.

7. A description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

   WIOA local staff are currently in the process of creating MOUs with the nine school districts within the local area. The Districts are seeking to avail themselves of any and all services available to assist their students with the transition from being a classroom participant to becoming a meaningful member of the local workforce. This is something the LSWDB wholeheartedly supports. The Districts seek to facilitate this transformation by introducing the student bodies as well as the school districts' staff with the resources that are available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding as well as the resources of workforce partners throughout the LSWDA region.

   LSWDB seeks to partner with all the districts so as to provide a level of early introduction into the world of work for students and to be a workforce resource to the K-12 public school community. By taking this step it is the desire of the LSWDA to demonstrate that quality employment and training opportunities are accessible to all youth within the LSWDA not just Out-of School Youth. This will be done while adhering to the 75% Out-of School Youth funding expenditure requirement of WIOA.

   Once a secondary credential has been awarded LSWDA staff will seek to provide direct placent onto a job site, enrollment into active apprenticeship or On the Job Training (OJT) site, or placement into occupational skills training with the training providers located on the local area approved Palmetto Academic Training hub (PATh) providers list. The LSWDA currently and will continue to fund occupational skills training that are listed in our clusters. At present those trainings are as follows;
   - *Advanced Manufacturing*
   - *Construction*
   - *Transportation, Distibution, & Logistics*
   - *Healthcare*

   Other training may be entered into and supported if a waiver is signed off by the Workforce Development Administrator. If trainings are not availble in our area the LSWDA has included on its list, technical colleges outside of the Lower Savannah region. This was done to ensure that if a participant is seeking occupational skills training within our cluster and it is not currently offered in the region they can still access this training at one of the many technical colleges around the state. Any WIOA participant that is receiving WIOA funded training will have a training committee to evaluate the need for training, will have to submit progress reports and grades to their case managers and must maintain a grade point average above academic probation.

Please see attached copy of LSWDA Training Clusters

8. A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation, childcare, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.
   The ability to make a supportive services payment on behalf of any WIOA participant is based on the availability of WIOA funds. All supportive services payments issued on behalf of WIOA Participants in the LSWDA will be issued based on an established and documented need, identified as follows:

   - *one that was identified during the initial and/or comprehensive assessment and placed on the Individual Employment Plan (IEP); or*
   - *one that is identified due to an emergency occurring after the individual became a WIOA Participant and is actively participating in an occupational skills training program*

   In addition to the requirements contained in subparagraph (A) of the Act, a dislocated worker who has ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation may be eligible to receive needs-related payments, under this paragraph, only if such worker was enrolled in the training services by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff, that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility for employment, and training activities for dislocated workers under this subtitle. Need-based payments may be authorized after Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits have been exhausted.

   Supportive services are available to assist in situations that would hinder a participant from completing their training or obtaining employment such as transportation, child care, lodging, etc. Participants understand that funds are limited, and supportive services can only be utilized after other resources have been exhausted. Lodging can be funded if the training is more than 50 miles from their residence and they do not have adequate transportation to get back and forth to training.

   Please see most recent Statement of Work

9. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the SC Works delivery system.

   Wagner-Peyser customers are to be initially assessed by Wagner-Peyser staff and then routed appropriately. Customers in the comprehensive center will receive an initial assessment by DEW staff. This assessment provides a preliminary indication of this

particular clients need or needs. The assessment will review Basic Career and, Individualized career service desires of the customer as well as Occupational goals, barriers to employment, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and abilities. This assessment uses baseline information from the initial provision of staff assisted services upon the client entering a comprehensive SC Work Center. Once completed, the client is then referred to the most appropriate SC Works Center partner or partners, ensuring that all services needed within the SC Works Center are received. SC Works center staff seek more oportunitinities to cross train center staff on workforce topics during monthly meetings. This will reinforce institutional knowledge of those staff who work in the SC works centers and provide a level of continuity for job seekers and employers as they avail themselves of workforce services.

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

The LSWDB has partnered with Adult Education so that TABE and WIN assessments can be offered to WIOA Participants within their home county on a regularly scheduled basis. This collaboration aids in expediting the enrollment process, increasing service numbers and providing a consistent schedule for provision of progress testing. Adult Education staff has been trained to properly assess individuals with the TABE instrument, to score the test, and provide appropriate remedial instruction. A strong partnership and seamless process results in higher co-enrollments and an increase in services to local individuals.
Adult Education provides:

- *Administration of the TABE assessment in Reading, Applied Math and Math Computation for all WIOA youth referrals on a regular scheduled day(s) and time(s) each week. It is allowable to use pre-tests that are administered up to six months prior to the date of first WIOA youth service if such pre-test scores are available.*
- *Provide the LSWDA with TABE schedules annually or when revisions are made by emailing them to appropriate personnel within the region.*
- *Participants enrolled in full GED services will also receive WIN assessment in Applied Math, Reading for Information, and Locating Information.*
- *Provides Basic Skills Upgrade and WIN assessments in Applied Math, Reading for Information, and Locating Information to WIOA youth.*
- *Qualified staff to proctor GED and remediation services to WIOA youth participants referred for such services on a regularly scheduled basis to be coordinated between Adult Education and the local SC Works Manager and Case Management Staff.*
- *Have qualified staff to score the TABE assessments and compile the scores.*

- *Adult Education staff will be responsible for transmitting TABE scores to the WIOA SC Works Supervisor/Intensive Service Case Manager (based on referral) within 3 business days of the date the test was taken.*
- *Send monthly progress updates to the WIOA Case Manager.*
- *Conduct post-remediation assessments and score transmittal as appropriate for each WIOA customer.*
- *Time and attendance records for referred WIOA participants, and notification to appropriate WIOA staff (based on referral) when participants cease to meet the attendance requirements.*
- *Adult Education will refer at least 5 participants per quarter to be co-enrolled into the WIOA program.*

LSWDA Intensive Service Providers provide:

- *Written customer referrals to a designated Adult Education representative, stipulated by the Adult Education Director, notifying them about potential WIOA customers who need TABE progress/post testing.*
- *Referral information which includes all information deemed necessary by Adult Education to schedule customers for testing and all information needed to transmit scores and make appropriate referrals when needed. Participants who have dropped out of the public school system will need to provide a high school transcript with scores, the latest school transcript with scores, the latest high school disciplinary report, a release letter from the school district (if applicable), and a copy of the Individual Employment Plan (if applicable).*
- *As with all partner agencies, we offer them the opportunity to have access to the South Carolina Works Online Systems (SCWOS) user accounts. If partner staff have SCWOS accounts, it is up to the partner agency to inform the Lower Savannah SCWOS Coordinator if staff is no longer employed so that the account can be deactivated in accordance with state regulations.*
- *Written appointment information to scheduled test takers to ensure maximum attendance.*
- *Refer all WIOA youth not participating in GED services for Basic Skills Upgrade to include WIN assessments in Applied Math, Reading for Information, and Locating Information prior to the completion of the first semester of training services.*

Currently, LSWDB members review Adult Education Applications for congruence with the LSWDA Local Plan and approval of LSWDA operations. This review and approval process ensures Workforce Development and Adult Education priorities are locally aligned.

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

Partner programs co-location in the LSWDA SC Works Centers adds an opportunity to increase varied customers across all groups protected by the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188. The SC DSS, SCDVR, Adult Education and SCSEP are just some of the partner programs co-located in centers throughout the region. Additionally, staff regularly seek out and give presentations throughout the region which include churches, community gatherings, private non-profits, city, and local government meetings. All efforts combine to further outreach to all community members. These efforts are as follows:

- *Having our SC Works Centers evaluated by ABLE SC for accessibility constraints*
- *Having SC Vocational Rehabilitation regularly provide in-services to SC Works Partner staff and clients on the definition of disability/services available within in the SC Works centers*
- *Use of gender non-conforming and differently-abled portrayals in SC Works marketing for the LSWDA (Roadside billboards and commercials with WJBF)*
- *The LSWDA is in the process of purchasing marketing literature (brochures and flyers) directed toward those participants with limited English proficiency*
- *The LSWDA is in the process of purchasing pocket translation devices for SC Works Center partner staff to facilitate communication with customers in over 52 languages.*

WIOA participants and center visitors get an initial assessment. Referrals, based on that assessment, will be made on their behalf to partner agencies.

We strive to be inclusive to all individuals living in the Lower Savannah region with all of our outreach material. We make regular revisions per any newly released State guidelines. All outreach material includes the required EO and ADA statements and tag lines.

Lower Savannah region also employs an EO Opportunity and ADA Compliance Officer who manages all complaints and EO related issues. The EO officer reports regularly on the demographics of the population served on the WIOA caseloads in the region.

Maintenance of an accommodations log in the centers ensures tracking of and addressing any accommodation needs or request by center visitors/customers.

Section V: Operations and Compliance

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

   Beside the Sub-recipient contracts and MOUs we currently have active in the region, there are no executed cooperative agreements active at this time. Cross training of SC Works Center staff and partners occurs monthly. All staff attend trainings with featured agenda items including presentations by SC Works partners and community agencies.

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

   The Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG) is the WIOA administrative entity for the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area (LSWDA) in the southwestern part of South Carolina. LSCOG is a regional organization which coordinates cooperative development of the region as a whole among local governments. The Lower Savannah Region consists of six counties - Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg - comprising a total area of 3,981 square miles and containing a population of 316,802 in 2016. There are 45 municipalities within the region.

   It is the mission of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments to work with and on behalf of local governments to develop, implement, and administer plans, programs and projects in cooperation with local, state and national stakeholders, to improve the quality of life for residents in the Lower Savannah Region.

3. A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

   The majority of all contracts will be procured through a Requests for Proposal (RFP) process. All RFPs are publically advertised and posted on the LSWDA web-site and major local and state papers, as well as, South Carolina Business Opportunity (SCBO). All advertisements include a release date for the RFP. A Bidder's List is maintained and all Bidders are notified of the RFP release. Key Events and Dates are detailed in the RFP, which outlines the proposal requirements and process. The events are as follows:

   - *Request for Proposal publication date*
   - *Deadline for Receipt of Letter of Intent to Bid*
   - *Deadline for Receipt of Questions*

- *Bidders Conference (This has become a non-mandatory practice)*
- *Extended Question Period & Replies posted*
- *Deadline for Receipt of Proposal*
- *Preliminary Review for Responsiveness*
- *Notification of Non-Responsiveness*
- *Corrections due for Final Review for Responsiveness*
- *Final Review for Responsiveness*
- *WDB Executive Committee Training and Distribution of Proposals for review*
- *WDB Executive Committee will Review, Rate and Decide Recommendations for Funding of Successful Proposals*
- *Recommendation for Funding of Proposals and LSWDB approval*
- *Contract Negotiations*
- *Program Activities begin*

The RFP process and actions taken in each event noted above are documented. The Internal Procurement Policy also details processes and procedures that govern all competitive procurements performed by the LSWDB and staff.

4. Agreed upon local performance goals after negotiations are finalized.

Lower Savannah PY 2020 WIOA State Performance Goals

Performance Measure	Negotiated State Goals
Adult Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	**77.3%**
Adult Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	**76.5%**
Adult Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	**$5,300**
Adult Credential Attainment Within 4 Quarters After Exit	**60.0%**
Adult Measurable Skill Gains	**49.5%**
DW Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	**80.6%**
DW Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	**76.5%**
DW Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	**$7,300**

DW Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit	**60.0%**
DW Measurable Skill Gains	**48.0%**
Youth Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	**77.1%**
Youth Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	**69.5%**
Youth Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	**$3,250**
Youth Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit	**68.6%**
Youth Measurable Skill Gains	**48.0%**

5. A description of actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce area, including:
    - The effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement to assess their one-stop centers;
    - A description of fiscal and program performance goals beyond the federal measures and how progress will be tracked and made publicly available;
    - A description of the methodology used by the local board to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds; and
    - A description of the roles and contributions of SC Works partners, including cost allocation.

Monthly Reports are documented using a Daily Usage Report and are utilized to track each Center's services provided and reported to the LSWDB. Trends are evaluated to determine customer flow and compare center usage based on center activities and events. Workforce Development Consortium, Lower Savannah Council of Government and LSWDB members are presented with the "Big Picture Report" on a quarterly and annual basis that highlight the local area's workforce service delivery outcomes in real-time. The areas that are covered in this report are as follows:

- *SC Works Center Operations*
- *LSWDA Performance and Program Oversight*
- *SC Works Certification Staff Recruitment*
- *Business/Employer Services*
- *LWDA Highlights (Quarterly or Annually)*

In addition, customer surveys are used to evaluate customer service satisfaction and evaluate feedback from individuals using center services. Outcomes from all reports are

shared with all staff and partners to target areas of weakness and continuous improvement goals. Tours, visits, and usage of the Centers are encouraged and provided to the LSWDB regularly.

The methodolgy of determining cost is based on several factors. The primary calculation of center and SC partner cost is directly related to the Full-Time Equvalent (FTE) hours being worked by both WIOA staff and co-located SC Works Center partners. This number/percentage is directly related to our infrastructure funding agreements (IFA) that the LSWDB has with all SC Works partners and contributes to overall cost of centers in the region. It is our intention moving forward to adhere to the local infrastructure plan for madated SC Works partners both co-located and not.

Performance measures Programmatic:
The LSWDA has instituted evryday performance measure in an effort to increase outcomes that are not quite as tangible and direct as USDOL performance but due speak to local Workforce area efficiencies and deliverables.

- *Currently the local area produces a "Big Picture Report". This is a quarterly/Annual report that breakdowns where the local area is as it relates to SC Work Center traffic trends, Business Services outputs (OJTs, Apprenticeships, etc), On going marketing campaigns, Participants placed on new jobs etc. This is one of the primary ways information is shared with the LSWDB and our public partners.*
- *Sub-recipients are sent (on a bi-weekly basis) Ad hoc reports so that they are made aware and can correct any mistakes contained within*
- *The LSWDA is tracking customer usage of the centers through the VOS greeter system to identify traffic trends and to see where best to apply our outreach and marketing efforts*
- *Sub-recipients are require to meet the 90% of locally negotiated performance to ensure the local area meets or exceeds performance overall*
- *The local area is required to serve Basic Skills Deficient and/or Low Income Adults to at least a 70% level of its newly enrolled adult participants*

Performance measures Fiscal:
As it relates to fiscal perfomance measures;

- *Youth contracts are front loaded with 22.5% of Youth funding for work-based learning in an effort to ensure the the local area meets the WIOA 20% work-based learning requirement for local areas*
- *The local area tracks Participant Cost Rates to insure we are meeting the 30% cost rate objective set by state instruction*
- *The LSWDA tracks timely submission of invoices to ensure financial records and totals are accurate*

One of the decsions we have made in our region, primariliy due to the rural nature of this region, is to place SC Works Center as close to these rural populations as possible. To that end we have budgeted to have an SC Works "Comprehensive" or "Satellite" location in each one of our six counties. This has helped to mitigate the transportion issue to a degree. In the MOU attachment to this document all WIOA required Services performed in the centers within the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Area are listed.

6. A description of how adult and dislocated worker training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including:
    - If contracts for training services will be used;
    - How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs; and
    - How the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

All Adults and Dislocated Workers seeking occupational skills training must apply for financial aid. Training Services Committee must approve all training for those individuals enrolled in WIOA seeking training regardless of funding source. The Training Services Committee will only approve training for those individuals who have applied for PELL, SC Lottery, or FAFSA assistance. If an individual is seeking occupational skills training that is not part of the approved training cluster, the service provider must request a Waiver from the Workforce Development Administrator prior to the training committee meeting. The individual seeking training services will have an Individual Training Account (ITA) as the LSWDB has not approved training services contracts at this time.

As required by WIOA sec. 122, state and local partners are working together to develop Palmetto Academic and Training Hub (PATh), a more robust ETPL that will align with critical industries identified at the state and local levels, enable job seekers to make a more informed choice about education and training programs, and help to improve the consistency of service delivery. PATh was implemented in 2016. Training providers are required to submit program data and meet certain requirements to be eligible to receive WIOA Training Funds. This will help ensure that participants receive high-quality training in high-demand/high-wage occupations.

Within the chosen sectors for the LSWDA, case managers will address the realities of the trainings that job seekers are desiring. When necessary or as an option, work-experiences participants will see firsthand the rigors associated with the professions they are seeking to enter. In addition to the hands-on approach, Case managers will utilize labor market information (LMI) data to help illuminate the training landscapes so that participants are fully aware of the pros and cons of each training decision that they make. Information

relevant to working conditions, salaries and growth potential will be key parts of the overall discussion between job-seekers and case managers

7. A description of the process used by the local board to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of the businesses, labor organizations, and education.

   As local partners, public officials and local employers were introduced and afforded the opportunity/encouraged to contribute to the Local/Regional plans prior to it's public comment period. This was done primarily through e-mail and through in-person meetings conducted at the time. All reviewing documents were placed in SCBO with a link to LSCOG Workforce Development's WEB Page (www.lowersavannahwda.org) for public review. These same documents and any attachments were announced (as well as the review timeframe and criteria) in a local newspaper with the same link to the webpage. Copies were also be directly emailed to LSWDB members, County Council Chairpersons as well as community and SC Works Center partners seeking input and comment. Due to Covid-19, the LSCOG Building was and remains closed to the public until further notice.

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

   The local workforce area scans all WIOA participant documents and files. The LSWDB has secured the services of a IT hosting company to fulfill the requirements of computer assisted technology with the SC Works Centers. There are a total of 109 public access computers across the six centers that are state of the art, internet connected machines for the purpose of assisting SC Works customers with finding employment or reemployment opportunities. In addition to computers, the SC Work centers are equipped with fax machines so that those citizens who lack this technology will have the ability to fax resumes to would be employers.

   Both comprehensive centers as well as the SC Works Barnwell Satellite Center use the VOS greeter function in SCWOS, using technology to capture customer traffic and visit reasons.

   We have added wireless internet to our three busiest centers (Aiken, Barnwell and Orangeburg), to allow staff, partners and employers to utilize technology throughout the facilities, allowing service delivery to occur from any location in the center.

9. A description of how the local board ensures compliance with the adult priority of service requirements under WIOA Title I.

The LSWDB has established a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated with the local workforce area for adult employment and training activities. SC Works Center staff responsible for the allocation of services associated with these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services. This policy is a deviation from prior priority of service mandates as the priority is not optional nor controlled at the local level but a continuous mandate/instruction regardless of Adult formula funding levels. To ensure compliance with the 70% adult rate, WIOA staff pulls ADHOC reports on a weekly basis and forwards the information to the sub-recipient staff to stay at or above 70%.

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

Veterans received the highest priority within the LSWDA. Signage is posted in each SC Works Center to inform the veteran and general population that this priority exist. The expectation is Veterans will always be at the front of the line as far as service delivery is concerned. The LSWDB has instituted, through our SC Works Disabilities Committee, a vigorous referral process for those clients with disabilities. Eckerd Connects, the LSWDA youth provider has installed a plan to reach and grow participation among OSY for our six county region. We, as a region, have created or are in the midst of creating substantial linkages and referral mechanisms for both our justice involved adult populations and offender youth population through the Department of Corrections, County Public Defender offices and Department of Juvenile Justice. Currently and moving forward;

- *The LSWDA make referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation for those individuals who would be better served by more knowledgeable disabilities staff. Due primarily to co-location these individuals/Organizations are located in the SC Works Centers*
- *Youth justice involved populations are referred by Aiken, Barnwell, and Bamberg 2nd Circuit Court to the WIOA Youth program, where they are provided soft-skills workshops and placed into universal work-experience as one of their first services.*
- *The LSWDA currently provides an assessment (WIN) to all Adults who are enrolled to help determine their level of Basic Skills Deficiency. If they are determine by assessment/local policy to be BSD, then they are given priority of service under WIOA*
- *The LSWDA currently evaluates the income levels of individuals seeking WIOA enrollment. If an individual is determined to be low-income, Adult low-income priority is applied to these participants as they move through the WIOA system*
- *Lastly, in an effort to address the Dislocated Worker population, the local area partners with all local, state and inter-state entities on Rapid Responses with the intention of providing a greater level of service to the DW community.*
- *Updated ADA stations in centers, with staff training on assistive technology*

- *Partnered with Able SC for review of centers, with disability training scheduled for staff through the agency*
- *Partnered with SC Legal to offer workshops on expungements in both comprehensive centers*
- *All SC Works Center staff including WD and sub-recipient staff completed the SC Works Center 101 workshop facilitated by Midlands Technical College*
- *The current sub-recipient Adult, DW and Youth contracts incorporate serving justice-involved individuals within the Lower Savannah region.*

11. A description of the local area's fiscal and programmatic monitoring process.

Financial monitoring of the WIOA program includes a desk-top review to include the following: oversight management, internal controls, payroll, property control records and indirect cost rate. A Financial Monitoring Guide is sent to the sub-recipient for them to complete. A General Ledger is requested, and a random sampling of expenditures are reviewed. Reported costs are compared to booked costs by examining supporting documentation and comparing it to the general ledger. An analysis of salaries and fringes are reviewed against automated timesheets to ensure staff time was recorded as outlined in the contractual agreement. Documented costs on the general ledger are compared to supporting documentation provided by the sub-recipient to test systems in place. Participant training costs are reviewed in SCWOS to ensure vouchers and payments were posted in the state's database system. A formal report is written to show any findings or observations noted during the monitoring process.

Programmatic monitoring is ongoing through desktop monitoring of the following: WIOA application, participation, eligibility, program, activity codes, IEP/ISS, case notes document uploads and follow-up. On-site programmatic monitoring is scheduled twice per year. Spring monitoring is completed before the program year ends and incorporates the comprehensive centers only. The fall monitoring involves all SC Works Centers. A random sampling of Adults, Dislocated Worker and Youth files are selected from SCWOS and checked for compliance with federal, state and local instructions, Statement of Work (SOW) and TEGLs. Sub-recipient staff are interviewed regarding their knowledge of and compliance with federal, state and local instructions, SOW and TEGLs. After completion of the on-site monitoring, a formal monitoring report is written that lists any findings and observations and is combined with the fiscal monitoring report to be sent to the sub-recipient's CEO.

12. Copies of current local board policies and definitions, including:
    - Supportive Services policy
    - OJT reimbursement policy;
    - IWT policy, when using local funds;
    - Youth incentives policy;

- Local training cap policy;
- Youth BSD policy (if applicable);
- Local definition for youth who "require additional assistance"; and
- Adult and dislocated worker self-sufficiency definition(s) for training.

13. Copies of current local workforce area documents, including:
    - Memorandum(s) of Understanding, including signature sheets;
    - Resources Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets;
    - All service provider grants, including statements of work and budgets;
    - Statements of work for in-house operational staff (where applicable);
    - Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s)/Request(s) for Proposals;
    - LWDB By-Laws
    - LWDB and Committee meeting schedules;
    - LWDB budgets; and
    - Local monitoring schedules (at the bottom right of the webpage)

Highlighted items above are available on the www.lowersavannahwda.org webpage.