

STATE OF FLORIDA

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
UNIFIED PLAN

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURE INDEX

ACRONYM GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

I. WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT STATE PLAN TYPE

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- (a) Economic, Workforce and Workforce Development Activities Analysis
- (b) State Strategic Vision and Goals
- (c) State Strategy

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

- (a) State Strategy Implementation
- (b) State Operating Systems and Policies

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

V. COMMON ASSURANCES

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS – *ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES*

- (a) General Requirements
- (b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements
- (c) Youth Program Requirements
- (d) Single-area State Requirements
- (e) Waiver Requests (optional)

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS – *WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM*

- (a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development
- (b) Assistance in Unemployment Compensation Claims Through Career Centers
- (c) Assistance to Unemployment Insurance Claimants and Other Unemployed Individuals
- (d) Wagner-Peyser Funds to Support UI Claimants
- (e) Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)

VIII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS– *ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS*

- (a) Aligning of Content Standards
- (b) Local Activities
- (c) Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals
- (d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program
- (e) State Leadership
- (f) Assessing Quality

IX. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS– *VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION*

- (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council
- (b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness
- (c) Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce System
- (d) Coordination with Education Officials
- (e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations
- (f) Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services
- (g) Coordination with Employers
- (h) Interagency Cooperation

- (i) **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**
- (j) **Statewide Assessment**
- (k) **Annual Estimates**
- (l) **State Goals and Priorities**
- (m) **Order of Selection**
- (n) **Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**
- (o) **State's Strategies**
- (p) **Evaluation and Reports of Progress**
- (q) **Quality, Scope and Extent of Supported Employment Services**

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS & ASSURANCES
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**

**X. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS—
FLORIDA DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES**

- (a) **Input of State Rehabilitation Council**
- (b) **Request for Waiver of Statewideness**
- (c) **Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce System**
- (d) **Coordination with Education Officials**
- (e) **Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**
- (f) **Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**
- (g) **Coordination with Employers**
- (h) **Interagency Cooperation**
- (i) **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**
- (j) **Statewide Assessment**
- (k) **Annual Estimates**
- (l) **State Goals and Priorities**
- (m) **Order of Selection**
- (n) **Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**
- (o) **State's Strategies**
- (p) **Evaluation and Reports of Progress**
- (q) **Quality, Scope and Extent of Supported Employment Services**

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS & ASSURANCES
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**

APPENDIX 1 - PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

FIGURE INDEX

Section II

Figure 2.01 Nonagricultural Employment in Florida, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.02 Florida Construction Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.03 Florida Manufacturing Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.04 Florida Trade, Transportation and Utilities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.05 Florida Information Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.06 Florida Financial Activities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.07 Florida Professional and Business Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.08 Florida Education and Health Services Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Figure 2.09 Florida Leisure and Hospitality Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Figure 2.10 Florida Other Services Employment Seasonally Adjusted

Figure 2.11 Florida Government Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Figure 2.12 Top Emerging Industries

Figure 2.13 Percent Distribution of Employment by Major Occupational Group Florida 2019

Figure 2.14 Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group Local Workforce Development Areas 1-7

Figure 2.15 Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group Local Workforce Development Areas 8-16

Figure 2.16 Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group Local Workforce Development Areas 17-24

Figure 2.17 Top 15 Existing Demand Occupations

Figure 2.18 Top 20 Emerging Occupations

Figure 2.19 Emerging Occupations Top Knowledge Scores

Figure 2.20 Emerging Occupations Top Skills Scores

Figure 2.21 Emerging Occupations Top Abilities Scores

Figure 2.22 Occupations Gaining the Most New Jobs in Florida

Figure 2.23 Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Knowledge Scores

Figure 2.24 Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Skills Scores

Figure 2.25 Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Abilities Scores

Figure 2.26 Fastest Growing Occupations in Florida

Figure 2.27 Rapid Growth Occupations Top Knowledge Scores

Figure 2.28 Rapid Growth Occupations Top Skills Scores

Figure 2.29 Rapid Growth Occupations Top Abilities Scores

Figure 2.30 Declining or Slow-Growth Occupations in Florida

Figure 2.31 Florida Educational Attainment, Age 25 or Older (2017)

Figure 2.32 Florida Certificate and License Holders, 2016-18

Figure 2.33 Florida's Labor Force and Employment

Figure 2.34 Employment Status - U.S. Versus Florida November 2019

Figure 2.35 Florida Unemployment Rate

Section III

Figure 3.01 CareerSource Florida Board Governance

Figure 3.02 Policy Development Framework

Figure 3.03 Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Organizational Chart

Figure 3.04 Florida's Workforce System Organization

Figure 3.05 Florida Department of Education Organizational Chart

Figure 3.06 Division of Career and Adult Education Organizational Chart

Figure 3.07 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Organizational Chart

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 3.08 Division of Blind Services Organizational Chart

Figure 3.09 2018-2019 WIOA Participants/Exiters

Figure 3.10 2017-2018 WIOA Participants/Exiters

Figure 3.11 State WIOA Statewide Primary Indicators of Performance Program Year 2018-2019

Figure 3.12 Local Workforce Development Board WIOA Performance Program Year 2018-2019

Figure 3.13 Florida Primary Indicators of Performance Goals Program Year 2019-2020

Figure 3.14 Customer Satisfaction of the Employ Florida System

Figure 3.15 Florida Vocational Rehabilitation Federal Performance Indicators and Targets

Figure 3.16 Florida Adult Education State Targets Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education

Figure 3.17 Florida Adult Education State Targets English for Speakers of Other Languages

Figure 3.18 Distribution of Dislocated Worker Funding Percentages

Section VI

Figure 6.01 CareerSource Florida Network Map

Section VII

Figure 7.01 Florida's Top Major Labor-Intensive Crop Activity

Figure 7.02 MSFW Significant/Bilingual Office Locations

Section VIII

Figure 8.01 Adult General Education Programs and Courses

Section IX

Figure 9.01 VR Personnel and Projected Staffing Needs

Figure 9.02 Program Data for Institutions of Higher Education

Figure 9.03 Projected Number of Eligible Individuals to Receive VR Services

Figure 9.04 Projected Outcome and Service Goals and Time Frames for Federal Fiscal Year 2020-21

Figure 9.05 Federal Standards and Indicators

Figure 9.06 WIOA Performance Indicators

Section X

Figure 10.01 Personnel Employed by FDBS

Figure 10.02 Counselor to Client Ratio

Figure 10.03 Personnel Serving Vocational Rehabilitation Clients:Vacancy Information

Figure 10.04 State Fiscal Year 2018-2019

Figure 10.05 FDBS Personnel Eligible for CRC SFY 2018-2019

Figure 10.06 Support Employment Spending Patterns SFY 2018

Figure 10.07 Individuals Served by Supported Employment Programs

Figure 10.08 Clients Served by Service Category

Figure 10.09 Change in Number of Clients Served in Minority Groups

Figure 10.10 FDBS Performance Standards and Indicators

Figure 10.11 Outcomes in Business Enterprise Program

Figure 10.12 FDBS Training Offered in 2019

Figure 10.13 Performance Standards and Indicators

Figure 10.14 Additional standards outlined in the Division's Long-Range Program Plan

Figure 10.15 FRCB Meeting Expenses

ACRONYM GUIDE

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AEPIP	Adult Education Program Improvement Plan
AOP	Agricultural Outreach Plan
APD	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
ASE	Adult Secondary Education
AWARE	Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting
BBE	Bureau of Business Enterprise
BEES	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
CBTAC	Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant
CCRS	College & Career Readiness Standards
CEU	Continuing Education Units
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRC	Certified Rehabilitation Counselors
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Provider
CSNA	Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
CSPD	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
DCAE	Division of Career and Adult Education
DEO	Department of Economic Opportunity
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DPN	Disability Program Navigator
DROP	Deferred Retirement Option Program
DVOP	Disabled Veteran Outreach Program
EN	Employment Networks
EPS	Employment Placement Specialist
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FAAST	Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FDBS	Florida Division of Blind Services
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
FETPIP	Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
FICAPS	Florida's Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System
FILC	Florida Independent Living Council

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

FRC	Florida Rehabilitation Council
FRCB	Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
ITA	Individual Training Accounts
IWT	Incumbent Worker Training
JVA	Jobs for Veterans Act
JVSG	Jobs for Veterans State Grant
KSAs	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities
LEA	Local Education Agency
LMS	Learning Management System
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
MDES	Mississippi Department of Employment Security
MIS	Management Information System
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
MSFW	Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers
NCSRC	National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils
NEG	National Emergency Grant
NFJP	National Farmworker Jobs Program
NRS	National Reporting System
O*Net	Occupational Information Network
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
OCTAE	Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education (USD OE)
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OOS	Order of Selection
PFM	Performance Funding Model
PY	Program Year
QRT	Quick Response Training
RA	Reemployment Assistance
REACT	Reemployment and Emergency Assistance Coordination Team
RESEA	Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
RFA	Request for Application
RFP	Request for Proposal
RIMS	Rehabilitation Information Management System
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration (USD OE)
SBE	Significant Barriers to Employment

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

SE	Supported Employment
SFY	State Fiscal Year
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
SSA	Social Security Administration
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TAACCT	Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TAP	Talent Acquisition Portal
TPCA	Third Party Cooperative Arrangements
TRADE	Transforming Resources for Accelerated Degrees and Employment
UCX	Ex-Service Members
UI	Unemployment Insurance
USDOE	United States Department of Education
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VETS	Veterans Employment and Training Service
VR	Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WIPA	Work Incentives Planning and Assistance
WP	Wagner-Peyser
WPRS	Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services
WRIS	Wage Record Information System

INTRODUCTION

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides direction and guidance for the workforce system in every state. The law prioritizes a market-driven approach to talent development that prepares people seeking employment for the jobs of today and of the future. Added emphasis is placed on the need for access to workforce services for all. Under WIOA, regional alignment of markets and resources are facilitated and encouraged.

Since the adoption of WIOA, Florida continues to seek opportunities to improve outcomes, grow partnerships and enhance customer service. Florida's workforce investment system built on momentum gained through expanded business engagement and improved alignment with regional economies and stakeholders. Florida's strong focus on performance was sharpened by increasing the emphasis on achievement of results for job seekers, workers looking to grow in their careers and businesses looking to hire and enhance competitiveness.

Following the submission of Florida's first Unified State Plan in 2016, and its Two-Year Modification in 2018, regular interagency meetings of the WIOA Core Partner programs address aspects of plan implementation and successful strategies for continuous improvement. These meetings include leadership and subject matter experts from the Florida Department of Education's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services; the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity; and CareerSource Florida. A stakeholders' workgroup including core and other partners meets regularly to share information and provide input for the unified plan.

As of December 2019, with a record-low unemployment rate of 3.0 percent, Florida enjoys a healthy labor market and a strong workforce system well-positioned to continue its integrated approach to providing exceptional services to businesses and job seekers.

States and local workforce development boards are required to regularly revisit state plan strategies and recalibrate those strategies to respond to the changing economic conditions and workforce needs of the state (20 CFR, Unified and Combined Plans Under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, §676.135). The State of Florida WIOA Unified Plan is consistent with the requirements of federal and state law with an emphasis on:

- **Streamlining services** – Florida's employment and training programs must be coordinated and consolidated at locally managed one-stop delivery system centers.
- **Empowering individuals** – Eligible participants will make informed decisions, choosing the qualified training program that best meets their needs.
- **Universal access** – Through a one-stop delivery system, every Floridian will have access to employment services.
- **Increased accountability** – The state, localities and training providers will be held accountable for their performance.

I. WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT STATE PLAN TYPE

Florida submits its Unified State Plan which includes the following required programs:

- Adult Program
- Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program, including Blind Services Program

This Unified Plan submitted under WIOA includes required core partners: CareerSource Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity and the Department of Education's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services.

Florida continues to build on collaboration with core partners and smaller workgroups by including other programs such as the Florida College System and organizations as needed in workforce system updates and by identifying opportunities for partnerships. This allows Florida to be deliberate and thorough in its strategic planning efforts across programs.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

(a) Economic, Workforce and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

(1) Economic and Workforce Analysis

(A) Economic Analysis

This section discusses Florida's industry and organizational profile and other economic indicators. Industry is the type of activity at a person's place of work, while occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living. Occupations cut across industries. For example, maids and housekeeping cleaners are found in accommodation and food service industries, healthcare and social assistance, and administrative and support services.

(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Existing Demand Industry Sectors

An industry super sector is an aggregated grouping of employers that produce and provide similar goods and services- a collection of similar industries. An industry group is a group of employers that produces similar goods or provides similar types of services.

Nonagricultural Employment by Industry

As of September 2019, super sector industries with the most demand were all services-producing industries, with Trade, Transportation and Utilities generating the most demand (1,810,800 jobs), followed by Professional and Business Services (1,422,500 jobs), Education and Health services (1,372,900 jobs) and Leisure and Hospitality (1,265,400 jobs). Financial Activities (+3.3 percent) and Construction (+2.9 percent) were the fastest growing major industries over the year.

As of October 2019, the national annual growth rates (seasonally adjusted) in Construction (+2.0 percent), Manufacturing (+0.4 percent), Trade, Transportation and Utilities (+0.5 percent), Information (-0.4 percent), Financial Activities (+1.3 percent), Professional and Business Services (+1.9 percent), Other Services (+1.3 percent) and Government (+0.7 percent) were less than the expansion rates for Florida.

In September 2019, Florida (+2.5 percent) had the strongest over-the-year growth rate in total nonagricultural employment among the 10 most populous states, ahead of Texas (+2.4 percent). Among all states, Florida ranked fourth in over-the-year growth rate behind Nevada (+3.2 percent), Idaho (+3.1%) and Washington (+2.7% percent).

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 2.01
Nonagricultural Employment in Florida, Seasonally Adjusted

Industry Title	September 2019	August 2019	September 2018	Over the Month Change Level	Over the Month Change %	Over the Year Change Level	Over the Year Change %
Total Nonagricultural Employment	9,052,700	9,041,600	8,828,000	11,100		224,700	2.5
Total Private	7,925,600	7,916,900	7,710,600	8,700	0.1	215,000	2.8
Goods Producing	954,900	955,800	926,300	-900	-0.1	28,600	3.1
Service Producing	8,097,800	8,085,800	7,901,700	12,000	0.1	196,100	2.5
Private Service Providing	6,970,700	6,961,100	6,784,300	9,600	0.1	186,400	2.7
Mining, Logging, and Construction	573,600	572,300	552,700	1,300	0.2	20,900	3.8
Construction	567,700	566,200	551,500	1,500	0.3	16,200	2.9
Manufacturing	381,300	383,500	373,600	-2,200	-0.6	7,700	2.1
Durable Goods	258,900	260,000	255,200	-1,100	-0.4	3,700	1.4
Nondurable Goods	122,400	123,500	118,400	-1,100	-0.9	4,000	3.4
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,810,800	1,808,400	1,790,400	2,400	0.1	20,400	1.1
Wholesale Trade	354,100	353,600	347,800	500	0.1	6,300	1.8
Retail Trade	1,141,300	1,139,800	1,135,400	1,500	0.1	5,900	0.5
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	315,400	315,000	307,200	400	0.1	8,200	2.7
Information	137,000	135,900	139,100	1,100	0.8	-2,100	-1.5
Financial Activities	596,800	595,600	577,700	1,200	0.2	19,100	3.3
Finance and Insurance	393,600	393,900	387,900	-300	-0.1	5,700	1.5
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	203,200	201,700	189,800	1,500	0.7	13,400	7.1
Professional and Business Services	1,422,500	1,421,900	1,373,300	600	*	49,200	3.6
Professional and Technical Services	605,500	604,700	575,400	800	0.1	30,100	5.2
Management of Companies and Enterprises	110,300	110,200	108,800	100	0.1	1,500	1.4
Administrative and Waste Services	706,700	707,000	689,100	-300	*	17,600	2.6
Education and Health Services	1,372,900	1,372,300	1,313,300	600	*	59,600	4.5
Educational Services	179,300	179,200	169,400	100	0.1	9,900	5.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,193,600	1,193,100	1,143,900	500	*	49,700	4.3
Leisure and Hospitality	1,265,400	1,264,100	1,235,100	1,300	0.1	30,300	2.5
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	244,300	244,500	235,200	-200	-0.1	9,100	3.9
Accommodation and Food Services	1,021,100	1,019,600	999,900	1,500	0.1	21,200	2.1
Other Services	365,300	362,900	355,400	2,400	0.7	9,900	2.8
Total Government	1,127,100	1,124,700	1,117,400	2,400	0.2	9,700	0.9
Federal Government	144,300	144,300	139,600	0	0.0	4,700	3.4
State Government	258,200	257,500	259,100	700	0.3	-900	-0.3
Local Government	724,600	722,900	718,700	1,700	0.2	5,900	0.8

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, October 2019.

Industry Detail

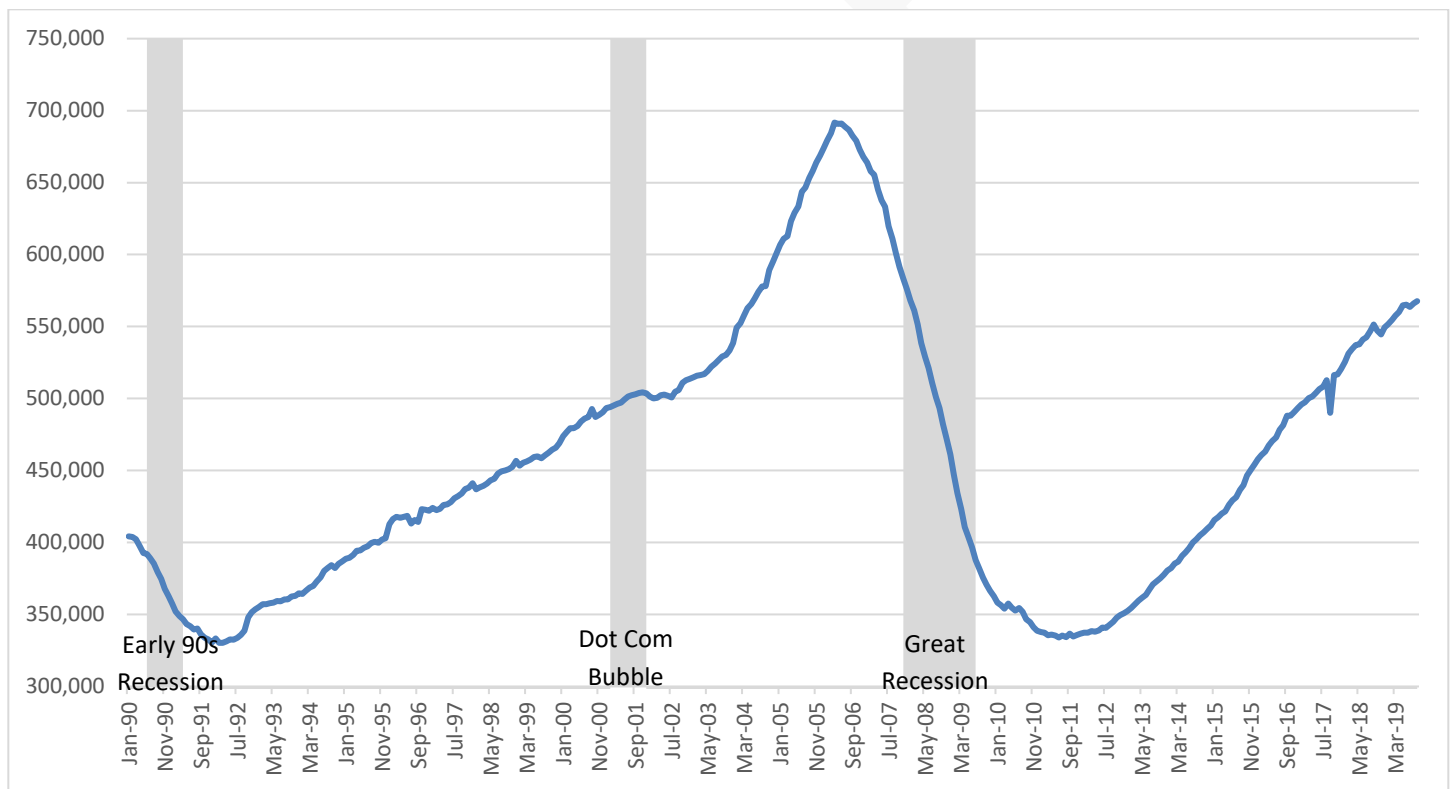
The Industry Detail section shows employment in the industry super sectors over time. The analyses show impacts of recessions over each industry and current trends. Recessions are indicated by gray bars in the graphs below. The calculations in this section are all seasonally adjusted.

Construction

Florida experienced large declines in Construction employment from 2006 to 2011 due to the bursting of the housing bubble. Construction employment peaked in April 2006 at 691,700 jobs and is currently at 567,700 jobs (a decrease of 124,200 jobs). At the low point during this decline, Construction employment was 334,000 (June 2011). Since June 2011, 233,700 jobs in the industry have been recovered.

As noted, Construction employment in September 2019 was 567,700. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+16,200 jobs, +2.9 percent from 2018) was 45,300 less when compared to the over-the-year change in September 2018 (+61,500 jobs, +12.6 percent from 2017). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.02
Florida Construction Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



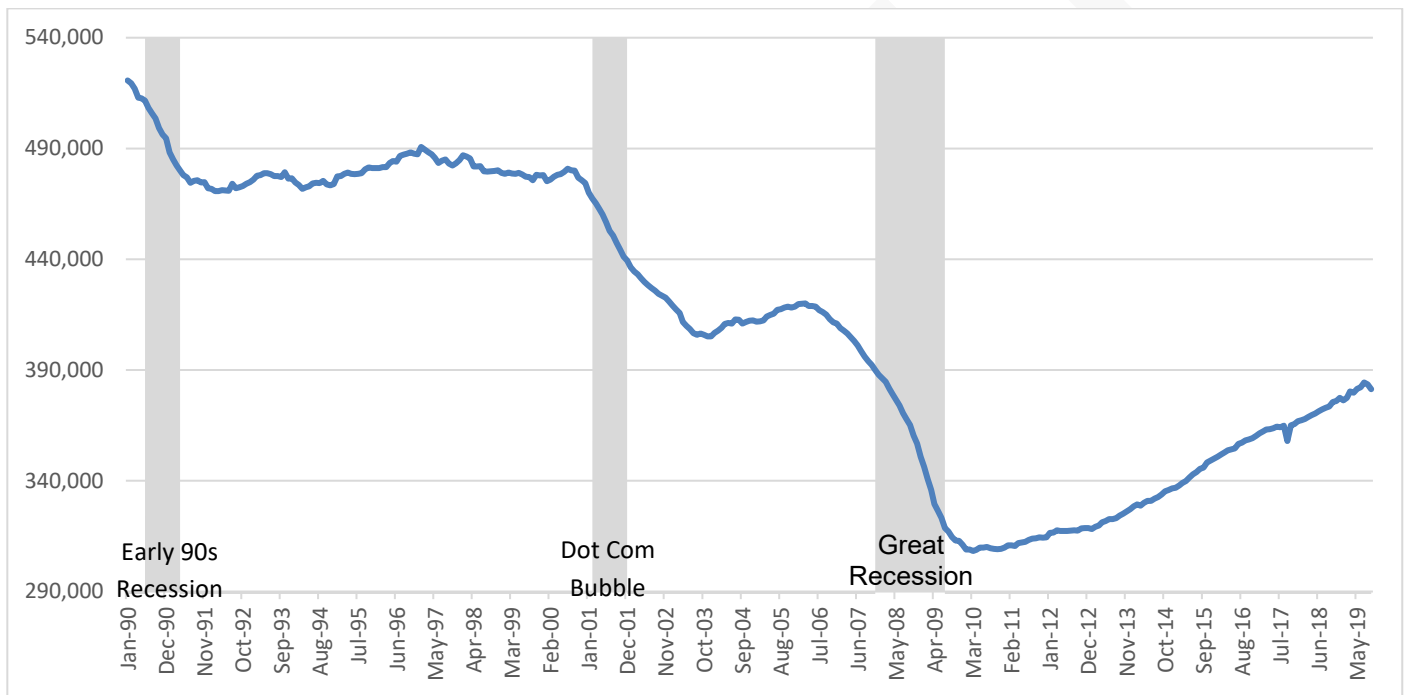
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing in Florida is heavily dependent on construction and several subsectors of the industry lost jobs due to the decline in housing activity. From 2003 to 2006, Manufacturing employment began to ramp up until the housing bubble burst. During the recession, there was a rapid decrease in Manufacturing employment until 2010. Since the low in March 2010 (308,000 employed), 73,000 jobs in the industry have been recovered.

In September 2019, the employment was 381,300. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+7,700 jobs, +2.1 percent) was 7,900 lower when compared to September 2018 (+15,600, +4.4 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.03
Florida Manufacturing Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



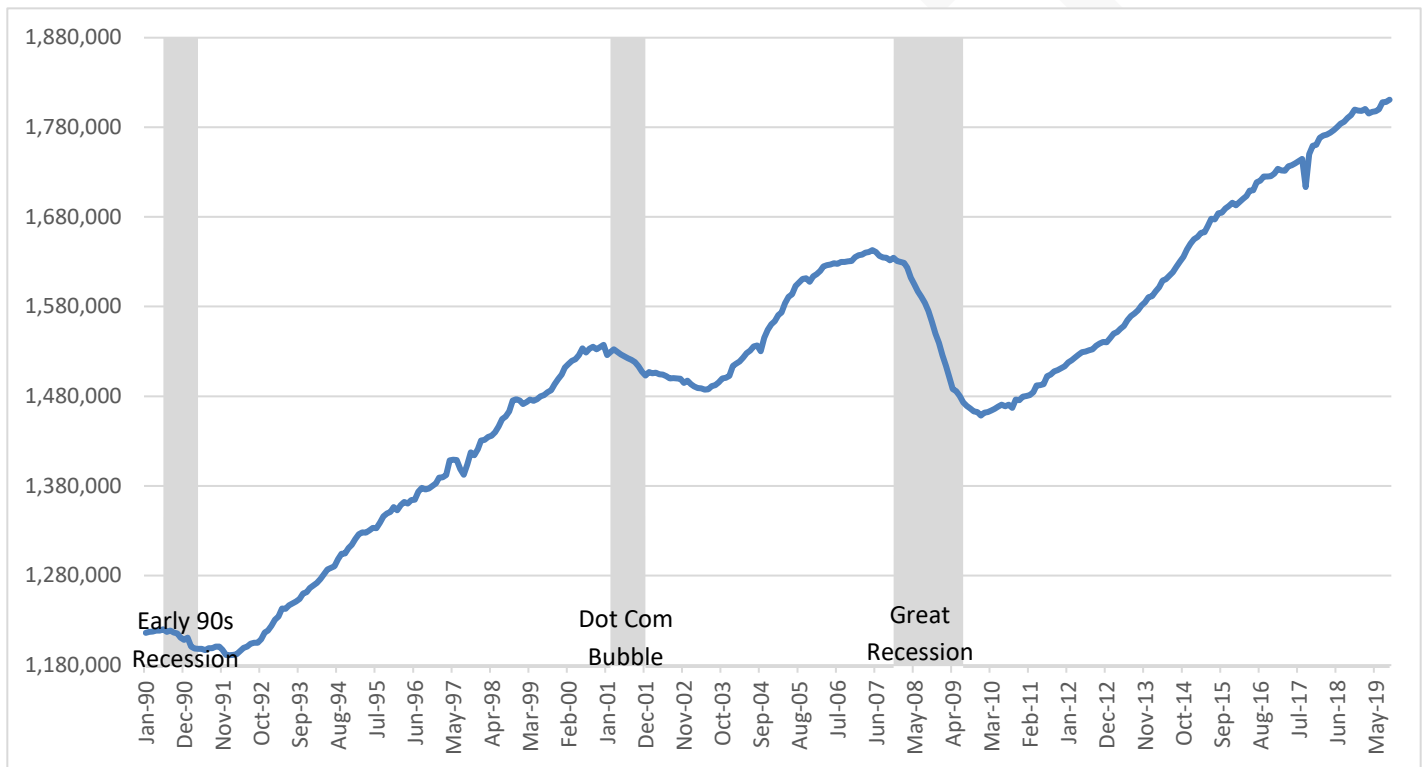
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Trade, Transportation and Utilities

This industry is heavily dependent on tourism and the general economic vitality of the state's economy. The industry is currently above its previous peak in employment.

In September 2019, employment was 1,810,800. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+20,400 jobs, +1.1 percent) was 56,500 less when compared to September 2018 (+76,900, +4.5 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.04
Florida Trade, Transportation and Utilities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



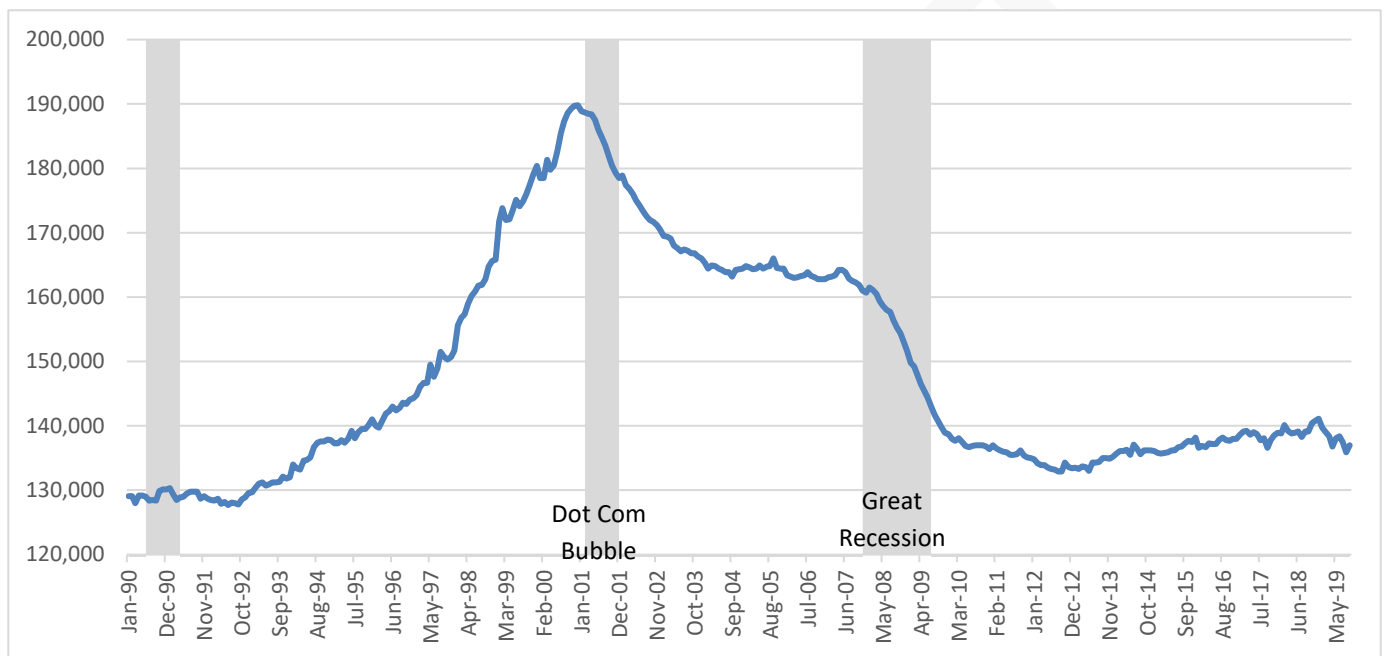
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Information

Florida experienced large declines in information employment from 2001 to 2004 due to the bursting of the tech bubble and from 2007 to 2010 due to the bursting of the housing bubble. Industry employment has remained steady since the trough of the Great Recession and is currently 4,100 jobs greater than the August 2012 low of 132,900.

In September 2019, employment was 137,000. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (-2,100 jobs, -1.5 percent) was 4,600 lower when compared to September 2018 (+2,500, 1.8 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has remained constant over the past five years.

Figure 2.05
Florida Information Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



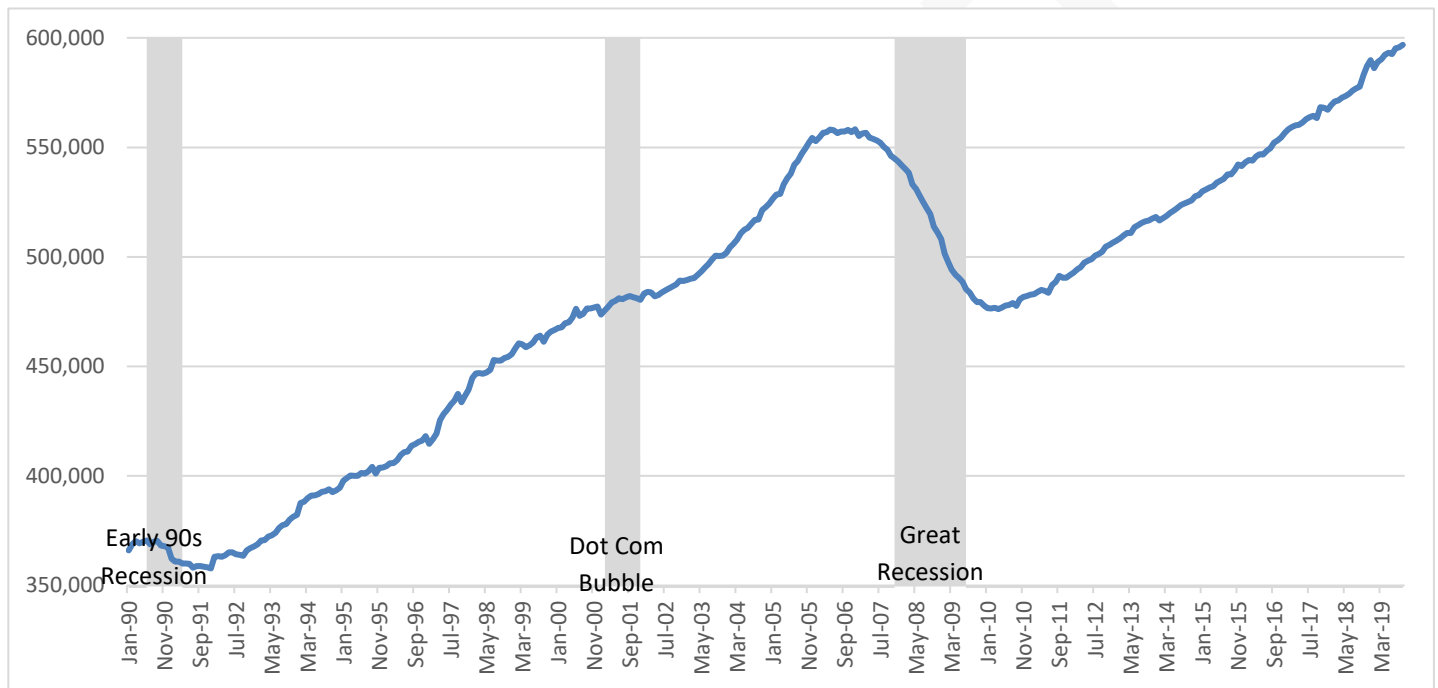
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Financial Activities

Financial activities employment in Florida previously peaked at 558,000 jobs in May 2006 and experienced a rapid decline until reaching 476,000 employed in April 2010. Since the low, 129,300 jobs in the industry have been recovered and it is currently above its previous peak in employment.

In September 2019, employment was 596,800. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+19,100 jobs, +3.3 percent) was 4,700 more when compared to September 2018 (+14,400, +2.6 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.06
Florida Financial Activities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



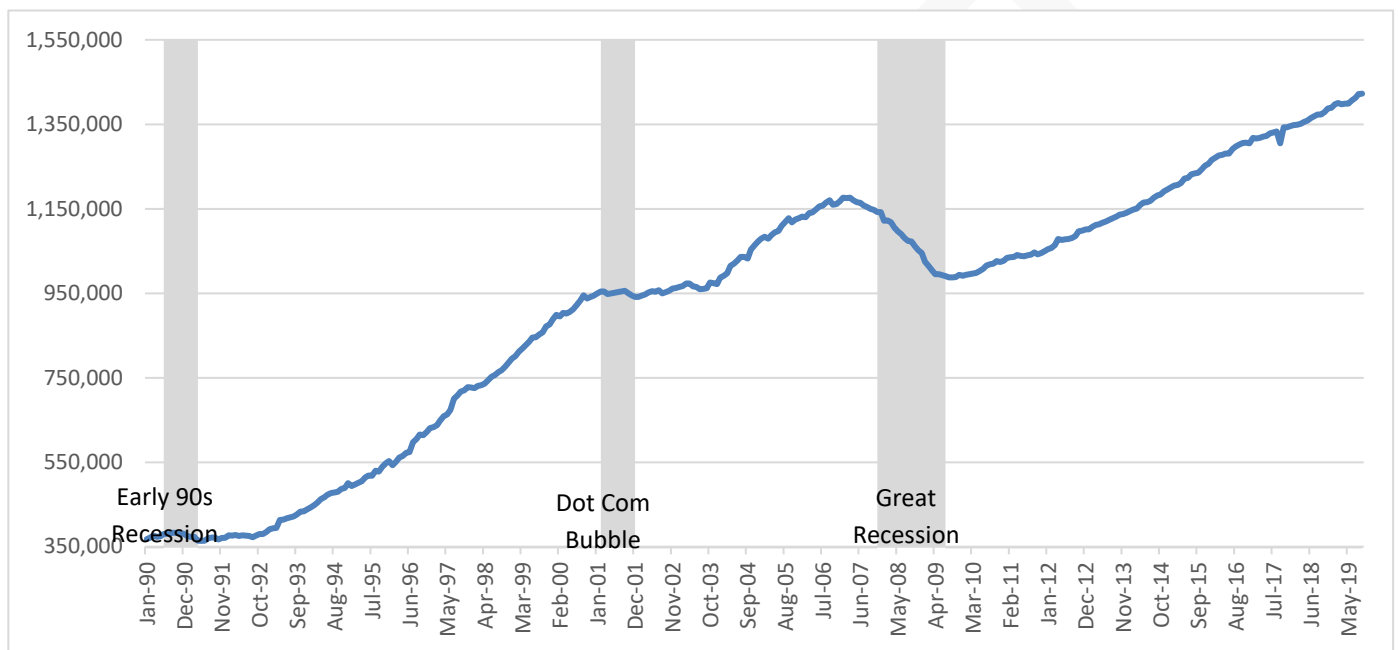
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Professional and Business Services

Employment in Florida's professional and business services industry experienced a rapid decline during the Great Recession, bottoming out at 987,400 jobs in August 2009. Currently, industry employment is above its previous peak.

In September 2019, the employment was 1,422,500. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+49,200 jobs, +3.6 percent) was 18,900 less when compared to September 2018 (+68,100, +5.2 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.07
Florida Professional and Business Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



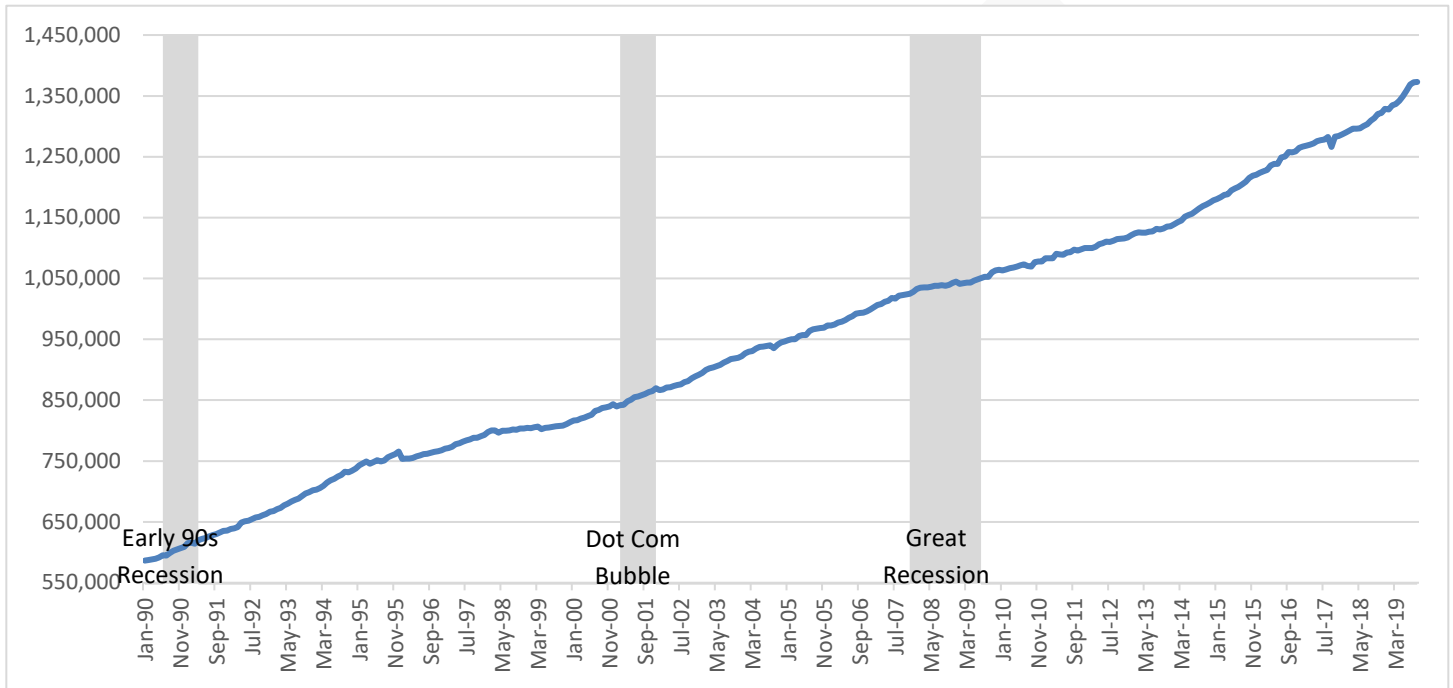
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Education and Health Services

Florida did not experience a decline in Education and Health Services employment during the recent recession. However, the rate of job growth did slow down during the recession.

In September 2019, employment was 1,372,900. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+59,600 jobs, +4.5 percent) was 12,500 more when compared to September 2018 (+47,100, +3.7 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward for over two decades.

Figure 2.08
Florida Education and Health Services Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)



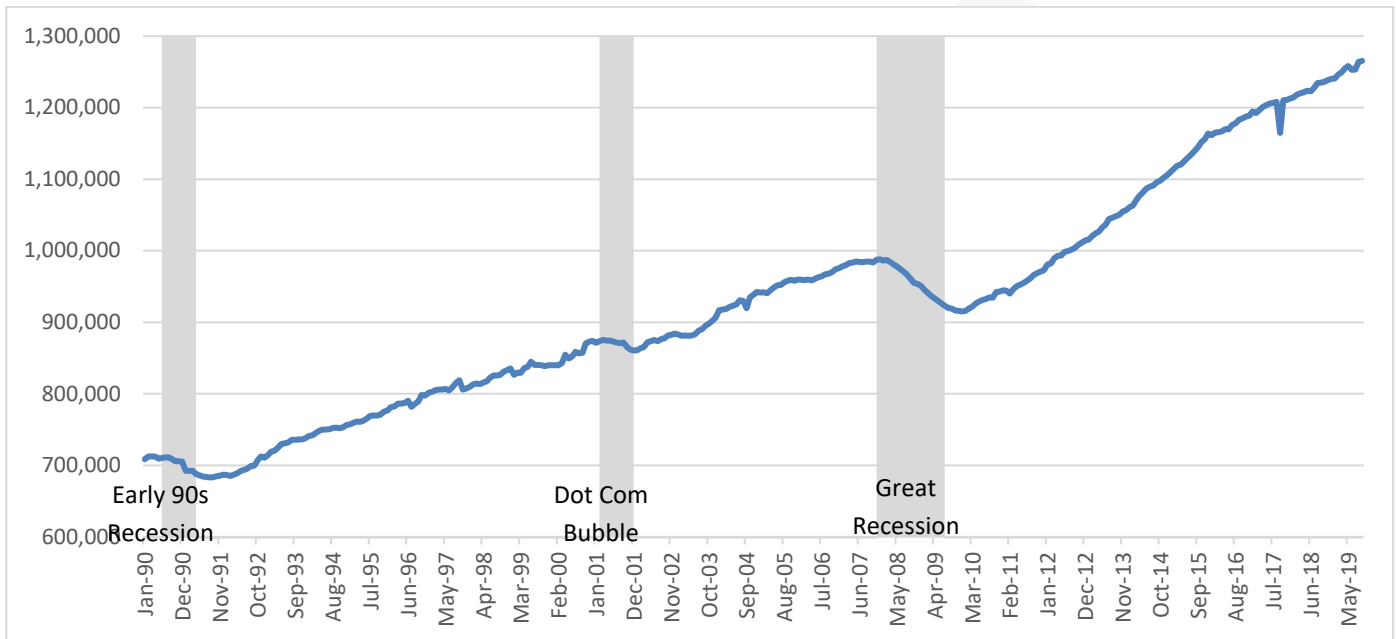
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Leisure and Hospitality

Leisure and hospitality employment in Florida experienced a large decrease during the Great Recession, reaching 915,100 employed in December 2009. Currently, industry employment is above its previous peak.

In September 2019, the employment was 1,265,400. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+30,300 jobs, +2.5 percent) was 40,300 less when compared to September 2018 (+70,600, +6.1 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.09
Florida Leisure and Hospitality Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)



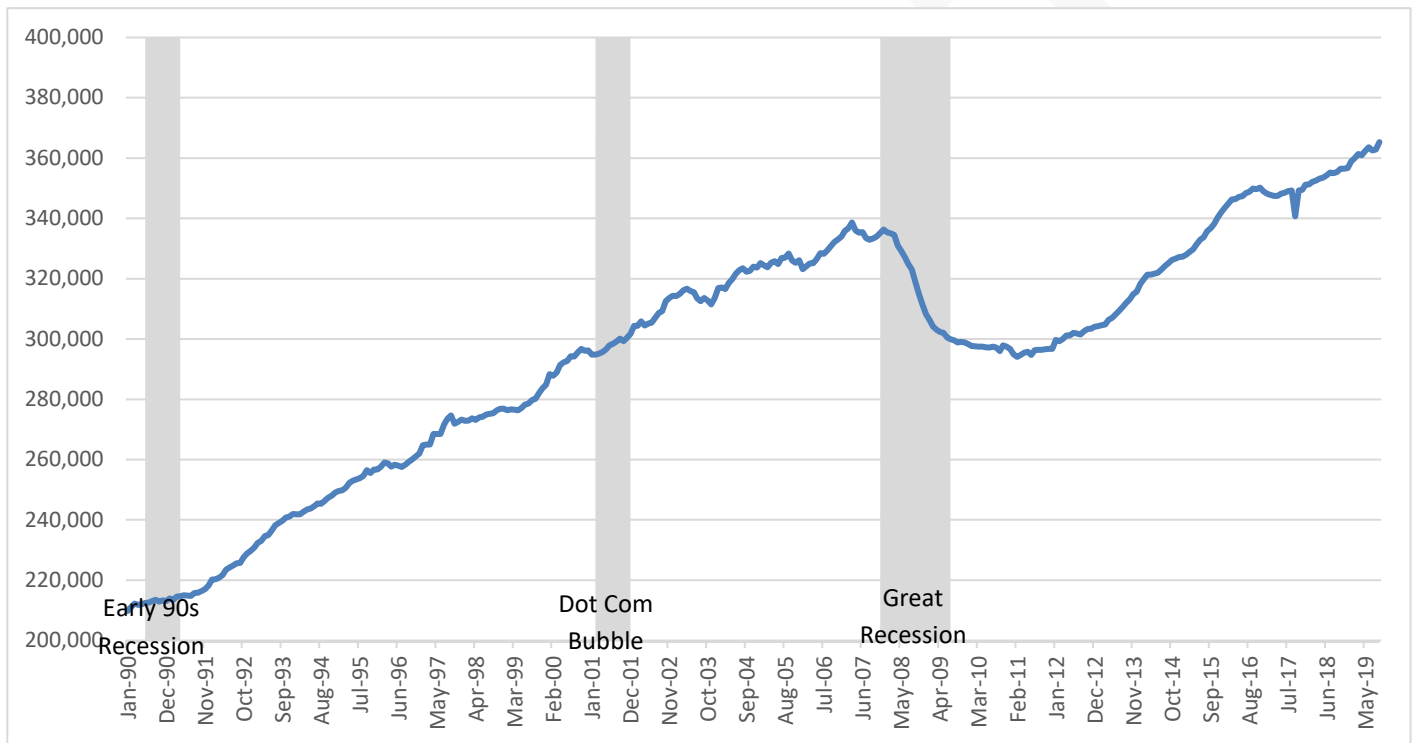
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Other Services

The Other Services sector comprises establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the industry classification system. Examples range from automotive repair and maintenance to environment, conservation and wildlife organizations. Other services employment in Florida experienced large declines from 2007 to around 2009. Industry employment is currently above its previous peak.

In September 2019, employment was 365,300. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+9,900 jobs, +2.8 percent) was 4,800 less when compared to September 2018 (+14,700, +4.3 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past seven years.

Figure 2.10
Florida Other Services Employment Seasonally Adjusted

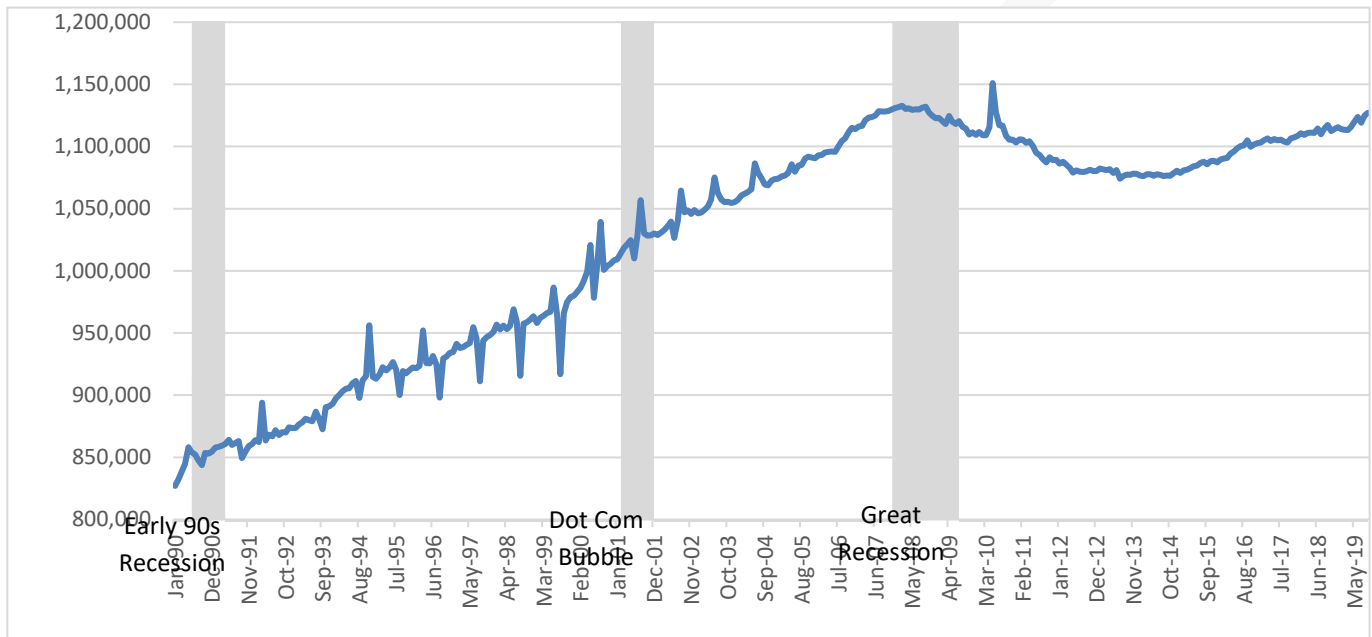


Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Government

Florida experienced declines in government employment from 2008 to 2012. In September 2019, employment was 1,127,100. The over-the-year change in September 2019 (+9,700 jobs, +0.9 percent) was 4,600 less when compared to September 2018 (+14,300, +1.3 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has increased over the past three years.

Figure 2.11
Florida Government Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program, September 2019.

Florida's recovery from the Great Recession is strong. Most of the major industry sectors have returned to growth patterns in evidence before the recession and many of these have higher rates of growth compared to the previous major expansion. While construction has not returned to the previous peak number of jobs, current growth rates (September 2019, + 2.9 percent from 2018) are healthy. There are no indicators of overbuilding or bubbles in the current housing market. Higher-paying industry sectors are experiencing healthy and sustainable expansion: manufacturing (+2.1 percent); professional and business services (+3.6 percent); and financial activities (+3.3 percent).

Emerging Demand Industries

The emerging industry groups were chosen from among the four-digit North American Industry Classification System industries with the fastest projected growth rates over the next eight years for industries with less than the average employment level. Notably, healthcare and social service industries occupied four of the five top positions on the lists of emerging industries and occupied eight of the top 20.

Figure 2.12
Top Emerging Industries

Code	Title	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Total Change	2019-27 Percent
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,914	18,996	3,082	19.37%
4539	Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	29,337	34,454	5,117	17.44%
5239	Other Financial Investment Activities	20,220	23,682	3,462	17.12%
6117	Educational Support Services	7,462	8,730	1,268	16.99%
5112	Software Publishers	17,365	20,311	2,946	16.97%
5417	Scientific Research and Development Services	19,277	22,442	3,165	16.42%
6116	Other Schools and Instruction	21,596	25,045	3,449	15.97%
4881	Support Activities for Air Transport	27,508	31,835	4,327	15.73%
6223	Other Hospitals	15,762	18,216	2,454	15.57%
7113	Performing Arts and Sports Promoters	10,488	11,987	1,499	14.29%
5174	Satellite Telecommunications	693	791	98	14.14%
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	24,406	27,828	3,422	14.02%
6242	Emergency and Other Relief Services	8,196	9,329	1,133	13.82%
6112	Junior Colleges	5,517	6,229	712	12.91%
3254	Pharmaceutical & Medicine Manufacturing	6,893	7,724	831	12.06%
5223	Activities Related to Credit Intermediation	25,193	28,050	2,857	11.34%
4922	Local Messengers and Local Delivery	7,017	7,811	794	11.32%
4851	Urban Transit Systems	2,499	2,780	281	11.24%
3313	Alumina and Aluminum Production	1,220	1,353	133	10.90%
5152	Cable and Other Subscription Programming	2,186	2,422	236	10.80%

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

(i) Occupations

Occupational Groups

Occupational groups are the most aggregated level of occupations according to the Standard Occupational Classification and Coding Structure.

The three largest occupational groups in Florida are Office and Administrative Support occupations, with 1,600,310 jobs (16.6 percent of total jobs), sales and related (1,201,019 jobs, 12.4 percent) and food preparation and serving (969,949 jobs, 10.1 percent) occupations. The last two groups are important to Florida tourism. There are two major groups where job requirements do not require more than a high school education: building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations and construction and extraction occupations. Some jobs within the protective service occupations, food preparation and serving-related occupations and production occupations may require a post-secondary non-degree.

Figure 2.13
Percent Distribution of Employment by Major Occupational Group
Florida 2019

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida Employment	Percent
110000	Management	423,843	4.39%
130000	Business and Financial Operations	524,491	5.43%
150000	Computer and Mathematical	225,967	2.34%
170000	Architecture and Engineering	118,862	1.23%
190000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	44,042	0.46%
210000	Community and Social Services	114,867	1.19%
230000	Legal	101,239	1.05%
250000	Education, Training, and Library	460,230	4.77%
270000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	153,266	1.59%
290000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	584,926	6.06%
310000	Healthcare Support	265,487	2.75%
330000	Protective Service	251,780	2.61%
350000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	969,949	10.05%
370000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	408,051	4.23%
390000	Personal Care and Service	315,567	3.27%
410000	Sales and Related	1,201,019	12.44%
430000	Office and Administrative Support	1,600,310	16.57%
450000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	50,527	0.52%
470000	Construction and Extraction	519,679	5.38%
490000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	406,022	4.21%
510000	Production	339,300	3.51%
530000	Transportation and Material Moving	575,821	5.96%

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

Occupational Groups by Local Workforce Development Area

Local area employment by major occupational group is displayed in the following tables. Occupational variation results from the diversity of economic focus and industry mix of Florida's geographic areas. For example, LWDA 2 (Okaloosa and Walton Counties) has the highest share of Food Preparation and Serving-Related occupations (14.2%). LWDA 3 (Holmes, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun and Liberty Counties) has the highest share of any local area for community and social services (3%), legal occupations (7.5%), Arts, Design, Entertainment and Sports (5.80%), Healthcare Support (7.0%), Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (9.3%), Personal Care and Service occupations (11.6%), and Installation and Maintenance occupations (6.8%). LWDA 5 (Gadsden, Leon and Wakulla Counties) has the largest share of business and financial operations occupations of any local area (10.5%). LWDA 6 (Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee and Lafayette Counties) has the largest share of Production (9.6%) and Management occupations (11.2%). LWDA 7 (Columbia, Gilchrist, Union and Dixie Counties) has the largest share of Protective Services (7.9%) of any other local area.

The following tables show the percent distribution of employment by major occupational group for all workforce local areas in Florida grouped by geography.

[For a graphic depicting each LWDA, please refer to section VI\(a\)\(1\)\(A\).](#)

Figure 2.14
Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group
Local Workforce Development Areas 1-7

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida	LWDA 1	LWDA 2	LWDA 3	LWDA 4	LWDA 5	LWDA 6	LWDA 7
110000	Management	4.4%	3.9%	4.6%	9.4%	3.6%	4.6%	11.2%	7.1%
130000	Business and Financial Operations	5.4%	4.4%	6.4%	2.8%	4.7%	10.5%	2.1%	2.7%
150000	Computer and Mathematical	2.3%	1.7%	3.3%	0.7%	1.4%	3.6%	0.4%	0.6%
170000	Architecture and Engineering	1.2%	1.1%	3.0%	1.7%	2.9%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%
190000	Life, Physical	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%
210000	Community and Social Service	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	3.0%	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%	1.5%
230000	Legal	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	7.5%	0.5%	2.1%	0.3%	0.5%
250000	Education, Training, and Library	4.8%	6.8%	4.6%	0.6%	5.5%	8.9%	6.1%	6.3%
270000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%	5.8%	1.0%	2.5%	0.6%	0.5%
290000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6.1%	7.1%	5.1%	3.2%	5.5%	5.6%	3.6%	7.6%
310000	Healthcare Support	2.7%	3.0%	1.8%	7.0%	2.2%	2.8%	2.6%	3.4%
330000	Protective Service	2.6%	2.7%	2.0%	2.7%	3.3%	2.5%	7.7%	7.9%
350000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10.0%	11.0%	14.2%	3.7%	12.0%	8.6%	6.9%	8.4%
370000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4.2%	3.9%	4.2%	9.3%	4.0%	3.4%	3.9%	3.9%
390000	Personal Care and Service	3.3%	2.9%	3.0%	11.6%	2.1%	2.6%	1.8%	1.3%
410000	Sales and Related	12.4%	11.2%	13.5%	1.7%	12.2%	9.4%	8.8%	10.8%
430000	Office and Administrative Support	16.6%	18.4%	13.9%	5.8%	16.1%	14.9%	12.2%	13.8%
450000	Farming, Fishing	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	3.9%	0.3%	0.7%	4.3%	2.0%
470000	Construction and Extraction	5.4%	5.3%	4.9%	4.0%	6.8%	3.9%	3.4%	3.8%
490000	Installation, Maintenance	4.2%	4.4%	5.5%	6.8%	5.1%	3.6%	4.5%	3.9%
510000	Production	3.5%	3.5%	2.3%	9.4%	3.5%	2.1%	9.6%	5.3%
530000	Transportation and Material Moving	6.0%	4.5%	4.3%	2.8%	5.0%	3.8%	7.1%	7.3%

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

LWDA 9 (Alachua and Bradford Counties) has the highest share of Education, Training and Library (12.7%) and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (10.5%) occupations. LWDA 11 (Flagler and Volusia Counties) has the highest share of Sales and Related occupations (14.6%) of all local areas. LWDA 13 (Brevard County) has the greatest share of Computer and Mathematical (4.7%) and Architecture and Engineering (4.4%) occupations. LWDA 15 (Hillsborough County) has the greatest share of office and administrative support occupations (19.1%) of any other local area.

Figure 2.15
Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group
Local Workforce Development Areas 8-16

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida	LWDA 8	LWDA 9	LWDA 10	LWDA 11	LWDA 12	LWDA 13	LWDA 14	LWDA 15	LWDA 16
110000	Management	4.4%	4.1%	4.2%	5.5%	3.6%	4.5%	4.0%	4.4%	4.5%	3.9%
130000	Business and Financial Operations	5.4%	6.4%	5.3%	2.9%	3.5%	5.7%	5.1%	6.4%	7.0%	3.9%
150000	Computer and Mathematical	2.3%	2.6%	2.6%	0.6%	1.2%	2.7%	4.7%	3.1%	3.7%	1.4%
170000	Architecture and Engineering	1.2%	1.4%	1.1%	0.9%	1.0%	1.3%	4.4%	1.3%	1.4%	0.8%
190000	Life, Physical	0.5%	0.4%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
210000	Community and Social Service	1.2%	1.2%	1.9%	1.2%	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%	1.7%
230000	Legal	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.5%	1.0%	1.3%	0.7%
250000	Education, Training, and Library	4.8%	4.4%	12.7%	5.3%	5.4%	4.4%	4.1%	3.7%	4.6%	6.3%
270000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports	1.6%	1.5%	1.6%	0.9%	1.0%	2.2%	1.2%	1.6%	1.5%	0.9%
290000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6.1%	6.2%	10.5%	6.8%	6.6%	4.9%	6.5%	7.0%	5.9%	7.5%
310000	Healthcare Support	2.7%	2.6%	3.1%	3.1%	3.5%	2.1%	3.3%	3.5%	2.4%	3.6%
330000	Protective Service	2.6%	2.4%	2.2%	2.6%	1.9%	2.4%	2.2%	2.2%	2.5%	2.1%
350000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10.0%	9.0%	8.8%	9.6%	12.3%	11.6%	10.2%	9.9%	8.3%	11.8%
370000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4.2%	3.5%	4.3%	4.2%	5.2%	5.2%	3.7%	3.2%	2.9%	3.8%
390000	Personal Care and Service	3.3%	3.2%	2.5%	3.8%	3.2%	4.0%	3.1%	3.4%	3.0%	3.7%
410000	Sales and Related	12.4%	11.3%	9.3%	12.8%	14.6%	12.9%	10.9%	11.5%	11.8%	12.7%

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida	LWDA 8	LWDA 9	LWDA 10	LWDA 11	LWDA 12	LWDA 13	LWDA 14	LWDA 15	LWDA 16
430000	Office and Administrative Support	16.6%	17.5%	13.1%	15.2%	15.1%	15.7%	15.4%	17.9%	19.1%	15.3%
450000	Farming, Fishing	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%	1.0%	0.7%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%
470000	Construction and Extraction	5.4%	5.4%	3.9%	6.7%	6.1%	5.3%	5.5%	4.4%	4.8%	6.2%
490000	Installation, Maintenance	4.2%	4.5%	3.4%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	4.4%	4.1%	4.0%	4.3%
510000	Production	3.5%	3.7%	2.7%	5.5%	4.6%	2.9%	4.6%	5.1%	3.4%	3.2%
530000	Transportation and Material Moving	6.0%	7.6%	4.4%	5.9%	4.0%	5.9%	4.5%	4.2%	5.6%	5.4%

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

LWDA 17 (Polk County) has a greater share of Transportation and Material Moving occupations than other local areas (9.9). LWDA 19 (Hardee, Highlands and DeSoto Counties) had the highest share of Farming and Fishing (6.3%) occupations when compared to other local areas. LWDA 24 (Collier, Lee, Hendry, Charlotte and Glades Counties) had the highest share of Construction and Extraction occupations (9.5%) of any local areas.

Figure 2.16
Percent Distribution by Major Occupational Group
Local Workforce Development Areas 17-24

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida	LWDA 17	LWDA 18	LWDA 19	LWDA 20	LWDA 21	LWDA 22	LWDA 23	LWDA 24
110000	Management	4.4%	4.2%	4.1%	7.9%	3.8%	4.5%	4.3%	4.4%	4.0%
130000	Business and Financial Operations	5.4%	4.1%	4.2%	2.3%	3.5%	5.5%	5.6%	5.5%	3.5%
150000	Computer and Mathematical	2.3%	1.6%	1.2%	0.5%	0.8%	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%	1.0%
170000	Architecture and Engineering	1.2%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%
190000	Life, Physical	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
210000	Community and Social Service	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%
230000	Legal	1.0%	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%	0.7%	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	0.7%
250000	Education, Training, and Library	4.8%	5.0%	3.8%	5.7%	4.7%	4.4%	4.4%	4.6%	3.9%
270000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports	1.6%	1.0%	1.5%	0.8%	1.2%	1.6%	1.4%	1.8%	1.3%
290000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6.1%	5.4%	6.3%	5.8%	7.0%	5.8%	6.3%	5.9%	6.0%
310000	Healthcare Support	2.7%	2.5%	4.0%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%	2.5%	2.5%	3.0%
330000	Protective Service	2.6%	1.9%	1.8%	3.7%	1.8%	3.0%	2.7%	3.4%	2.1%
350000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10.0%	8.4%	11.1%	9.7%	11.1%	10.5%	8.8%	9.1%	12.1%
370000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4.2%	3.9%	4.7%	3.9%	6.6%	5.3%	3.7%	3.7%	6.1%
390000	Personal Care and Service	3.3%	2.5%	3.6%	3.1%	3.6%	3.2%	3.3%	3.0%	3.6%
410000	Sales and Related	12.4%	13.0%	13.4%	10.7%	12.6%	12.5%	13.6%	12.7%	13.6%

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Occupational Group Code	Occupational Group Name	Florida	LWDA 17	LWDA 18	LWDA 19	LWDA 20	LWDA 21	LWDA 22	LWDA 23	LWDA 24
430000	Office and Administrative Support	16.6%	16.2%	15.5%	14.9%	14.6%	16.1%	18.1%	17.6%	14.3%
450000	Farming, Fishing	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%	6.3%	0.8%	0.8%	0.1%	0.5%	1.1%
470000	Construction and Extraction	5.4%	5.6%	7.2%	5.2%	6.9%	5.3%	5.0%	4.1%	9.5%
490000	Installation, Maintenance	4.2%	5.0%	4.5%	3.8%	4.7%	4.3%	4.6%	3.9%	4.5%
510000	Production	3.5%	6.1%	4.2%	2.8%	3.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.4%	2.8%
530000	Transportation and Material Moving	6.0%	9.9%	4.5%	6.3%	5.5%	4.9%	6.0%	8.1%	5.0%

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

Detailed Occupations

This section discusses trends of detailed occupations based on the Standard Occupational Classification and Coding Structure.

Existing Demand Occupations

Existing demand occupations are occupations that have the highest number of projected total job openings. Starting with the release of the 2017-2025 projections, job openings will be calculated using the new Separations Method. Total job openings reflect (1) job openings resulting from employment growth, (2) job openings resulting from workers permanently exiting an occupation and (3) job openings resulting from workers transferring to other occupations. In most occupations, replacement needs provide many more job openings than employment growth does.

Existing demand occupations tend to be occupations that serve the most basic societal needs. The most common existing demand occupations in the U.S. labor market are low-skill, hourly wage occupations with high turnover. Florida follows the national pattern, with common existing demand occupations in the state, including Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Retail Salespersons, Waiters and Waitresses, and Cashiers.

The top five existing demand occupations for Florida statewide are related to customer service and hospitality. Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food is the top existing demand occupation, with 431,996 projected total job openings between 2019 and 2027. Some healthcare occupations, such as Registered Nurses and Nursing Assistants, have a relatively high turnover rate and will experience employment growth because of the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population growth and aging, expanding insurance coverage and technological change. Registered Nurses are the only top existing demand occupations that requires a degree beyond high school, based on criteria from the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics.

The following table displays the top 15 existing demand occupations (based on 2019-2027 total job openings) for Florida statewide.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 2.17
Top 15 Existing Demand Occupations

Rank	Code	Occupation	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Level change	2019-27 Percent Change	Total Job Openings	2018 Median Hourly Wage	2018 Entry Wage	2018 Experienced Wage
1	35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	244,484	289,520	45,036	18.4	431,996	9.42	9.07	14.79
2	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	348,956	369,725	20,769	6.0	430,906	11.02	8.89	10.78
3	35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	231,995	257,738	25,743	11.1	392,905	9.43	8.86	14.41
4	41-2011	Cashiers	246,664	250,565	3,901	1.6	372,884	9.94	8.94	11.3
5	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	252,558	271,320	18,762	7.4	283,090	15.03	11.29	18.68
6	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	142,780	156,492	13,712	9.6	175,367	12.64	10.2	18.64
7	43-9061	Office Clerks, General	181,526	185,769	4,243	2.3	174,462	14.41	10.07	16.14
8	43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	202,065	198,807	-3,258	-1.6	167,145	16.13	11.48	19.56
9	37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	135,713	152,601	16,888	12.4	164,516	11.12	9.33	13.69
10	43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	141,279	151,824	10,545	7.5	158,082	11.80	9.93	14.32
11	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	108,481	124,741	16,260	15.0	145,549	12.96	10.49	14.76
12	37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	116,409	131,886	15,477	13.3	132,802	12.43	10.25	14.79
13	37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	102,308	114,017	11,709	11.4	124,154	10.69	9.26	12.17
14	29-1141	Registered Nurses	198,145	225,537	27,392	13.8	112,755	30.96	24.34	35.58
15	43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	90,960	100,896	9,936	10.9	108,588	13.58	14.07	26.2

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupations consist of (1) new occupations in the workforce and (2) traditional occupations with requisite knowledge, skills and abilities that are currently evolving in response to altered market conditions, new technology and societal changes. Some of the factors that cause occupations to emerge are changing technology, laws, demographics and business practices. In Florida, the fastest growing among the emerging occupations are solar photovoltaic installers, physician assistants, and statisticians.

The most common industry sectors for emerging occupations are healthcare and professional services, due to ongoing advances in medical technology; life, physical and environmental sciences; engineering, mathematics and computer sciences; and psychology and the social sciences. The growth in healthcare sector emerging occupations reflects an increasing demand for medical services due to population aging, expanding medical insurance coverage and technological innovation.

According to education levels required for each job from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, five of the top 20 emerging occupations require an associate degree (Physical Therapist Assistants, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, Respiratory Therapists, and Veterinary Technologists and Technicians), four require a bachelor's degree (Information Security Analysts, Operations Research Analysts, Actuaries, and Athletic Trainers), five require a master's degree (Physician Assistants, Statisticians, Nurse Practitioners, Mathematicians, and Genetic Counselors), and two require a doctoral degree (Health Specialties Teachers and Nursing Instructors and Teachers).

The following table shows the top 20 emerging occupations for Florida statewide. This list is based on 2019-2027 projections of percent job growth for occupations with less than the average employment level.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 2.18
Top 20 Emerging Occupations

Rank	Code	Occupation	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Level change	2019-27 Percent Change	Main Industry Sector Linkage (NAICS Level 3)	2018 Median Hourly Wage	2018 Entry Wage	2018 Experienced Wage
1	47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	1,135	1,823	688	60.6	Construction	17.27	14.14	20.81
2	29-1071	Physician Assistants	5,842	7,879	2,037	34.9	Education and Health Services	50.20	33.31	59.74
3	15-2041	Statisticians	996	1,334	338	33.9	Professional and Business Services	38.76	23.96	47.13
4	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	9,842	12,885	3,043	30.9	Education and Health Services	46.76	35.26	55.28
5	15-1122	Information Security Analysts	5,311	6,738	1,427	26.9	Professional and Business Services	42.86	22.61	33.15
6	25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	11,384	14,208	2,824	24.8	Education and Health Services	61,085.00	27.96	52.33
7	31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	5,692	7,045	1,353	23.8	Education and Health Services	29.55	16.18	31.38
8	25-1072	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	2,994	3,684	690	23.0	Education and Health Services	-	22.67	32.9
9	15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	6,905	8,489	1,584	22.9	Government	32.33	22.73	41.79
10	15-2021	Mathematicians	127	156	29	22.8	Government	44.38	10.84	14.16
11	31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	2,297	2,799	502	21.9	Education and Health Services	29.75	24.44	35.25
12	29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	6,019	7,320	1,301	21.6	Education and Health Services	31.52	14.68	29.21
13	47-4061	Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators	292	355	63	21.6	Construction	22.34	16.49	30.54
14	29-9092	Genetic Counselors	121	147	26	21.5	Education and Health Services	18.48	24.49	47.49
15	31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	2,778	3,374	596	21.5	Education and Health	12.87	26.48	45.55

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

							Services			
16	15-2011	Actuaries	579	702	123	21.2	Financial Activities	48.29	9.72	14.93
17	29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	9,727	11,793	2,066	21.2	Education and Health Services	27.72	11.75	18.12
18	31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	5,690	6,847	1,157	20.3	Professional and Business Services	12.33	22.76	30.42
19	29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	9,946	11,966	2,020	20.3	Professional and Business Services	15.49	52.55	101.65
20	29-9091	Athletic Trainers	1,363	1,635	272	20.0	Education and Health Services	44,612.00	13.35	19.82

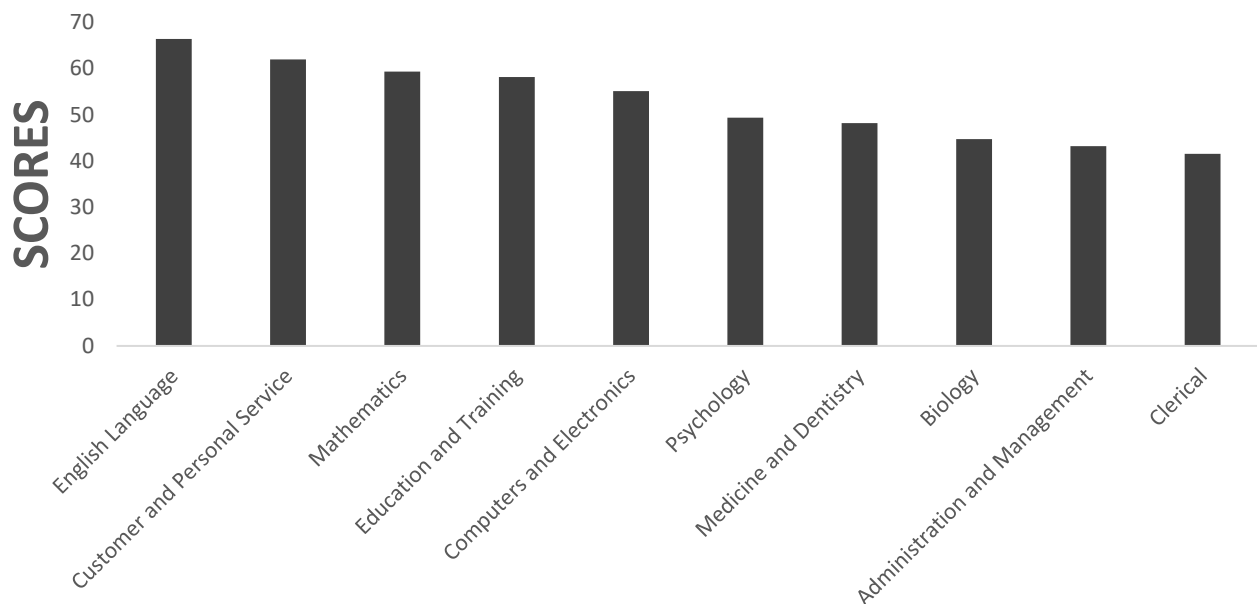
Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

The needs of employers with respect to knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are provided for each occupation in the labor market by the O*NET system (see <https://www.onetonline.org/>).

By using the content in the O*NET database, it is possible to analyze the knowledge, skills and abilities for individual occupations, occupational groups, or targeted occupations. The following is an analysis of occupations that are emerging, have rapid growth and have numerous job openings. O*NET level and importance scores for the various KSAs were matched to the relevant occupational groups. The level and importance score were added together and standardized to a 100-point scale.

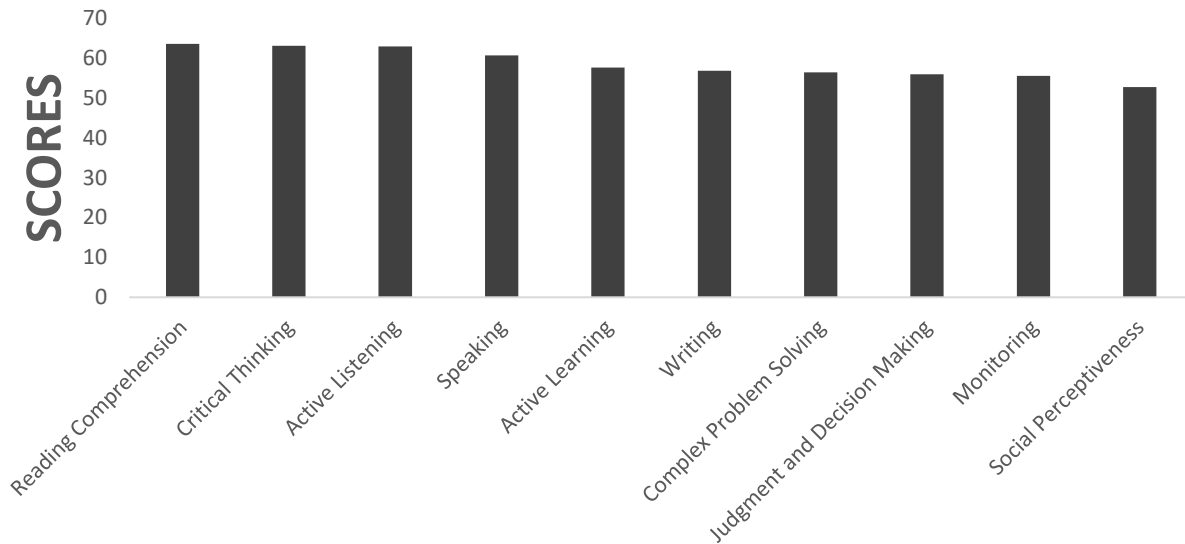
The highest KSAs for emerging occupations are knowledge of English Language, Customer & Personal Service, Reading Comprehension, Critical Thinking, Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression.

Figure 2.19
Emerging Occupations Top Knowledge Scores



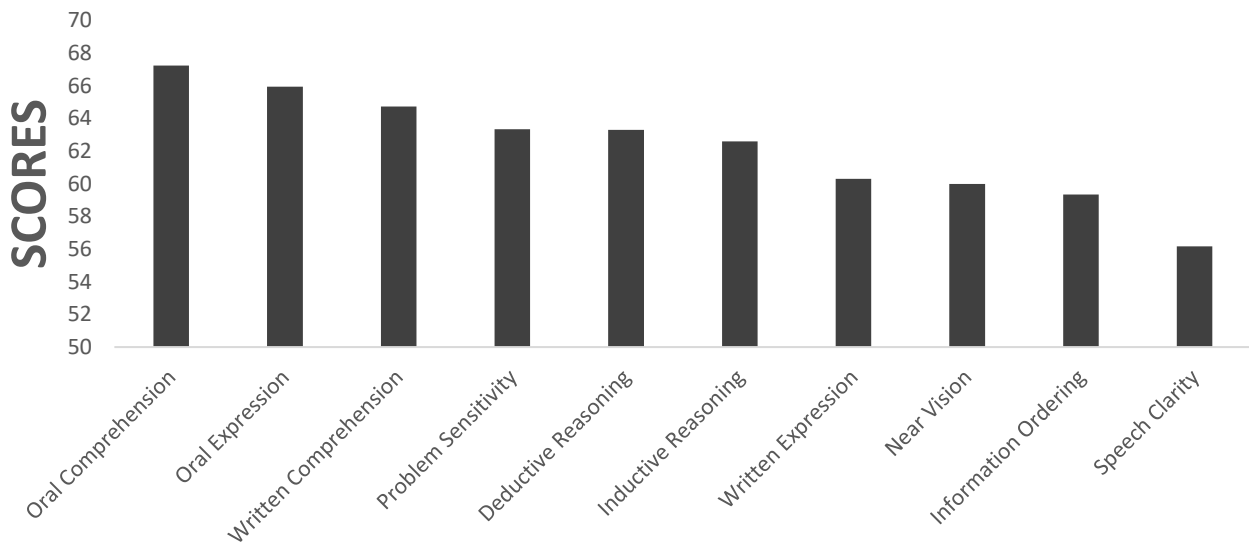
Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Figure 2.20
Emerging Occupations
Top Skills Scores



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Figure 2.21
Emerging Occupations
Top Abilities Scores



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Occupational employment projections tables for all Florida geographic areas can be found on the Labor Market Statistics Website at <http://floridajobs.org/labor-market-information>. Tables for occupations adding the most new jobs, occupations with the fastest growth rates and declining occupations are available.

Growing Occupations

The top occupations in the state's labor market can be represented in different ways. Below are two representations, the first showing the level of change (2019 – 2027) and the second showing percent change over the timeframe of the latest occupational projections (2019 – 2027). A compilation of knowledge, skills, and abilities across these rankings are also provided.

Occupations Gaining the Most New Jobs

The occupations gaining the most new jobs represent a mix of occupations needed by tourism-related industries, healthcare, and business administration. Combined Food Workers (45,036 new jobs), Waiters and Waitresses (25,743 new jobs) and Restaurant Cooks (16,260 new jobs) are employed in tourism-related industries. Registered Nurses (27,392 new jobs), Medical Assistants (14,369 new jobs), and Nursing Assistants (10,446 new jobs) are Healthcare occupations. Many of the top occupations with the most new jobs are used by many different industries. These include Janitors and Cleaners (16,888 new jobs), Accountants and Auditors (10,775 new jobs), and Receptionists and Information Clerks (9,936 new jobs).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, five of the top 20 occupations that will gain the most new jobs from 2019 to 2027 require employees to have a bachelor's degree or higher: Registered Nurses, Accountants and Auditors, Software Developers, General and Operations Managers, and Management Analysts.

Figure 2.22
Occupations Gaining the Most New Jobs in Florida

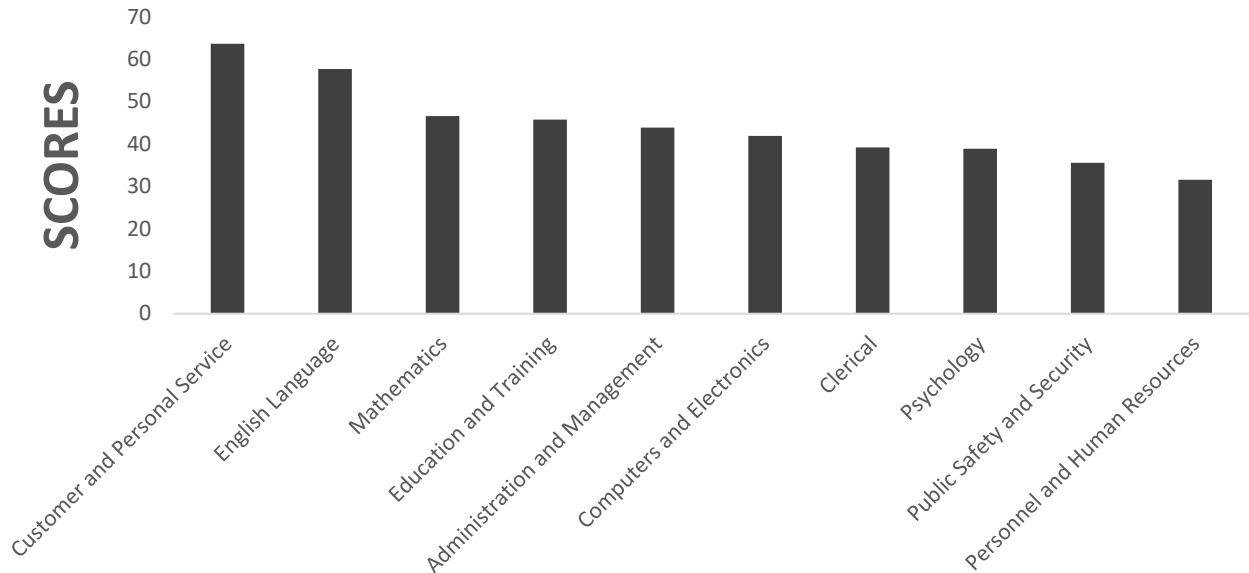
Rank	Code	Occupation	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Level Change	2019-27 Percent Growth	Total Job Openings
1	35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	244,484	289,520	45,036	18.4	431,996
2	29-1141	Registered Nurses	198,145	225,537	27,392	13.8	112,755
3	35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	231,995	257,738	25,743	11.1	392,905
4	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	348,956	369,725	20,769	6.0	430,906
5	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	252,558	271,320	18,762	7.4	283,090
6	37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	135,713	152,601	16,888	12.4	164,516
7	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	108,481	124,741	16,260	15.0	145,549
8	37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	116,409	131,886	15,477	13.3	132,802
9	31-9092	Medical Assistants	56,389	70,758	14,369	25.5	67,928
10	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	142,780	156,492	13,712	9.6	175,367
11	37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	102,308	114,017	11,709	11.4	124,154
12	13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	91,055	101,830	10,775	11.8	77,945
13	43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	141,279	151,824	10,545	7.5	158,082
14	31-1014	Nursing Assistants	98,029	108,475	10,446	10.7	102,373
15	15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	39,205	49,627	10,422	26.6	32,726
16	47-2061	Construction Laborers	91,481	101,458	9,977	10.9	87,770
17	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	87,368	97,317	9,949	11.4	69,329
18	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	97,613	107,550	9,937	10.2	89,006
19	43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	90,960	100,896	9,936	10.9	108,588
20	13-1111	Management Analysts	59,366	68,745	9,379	15.8	52,322

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

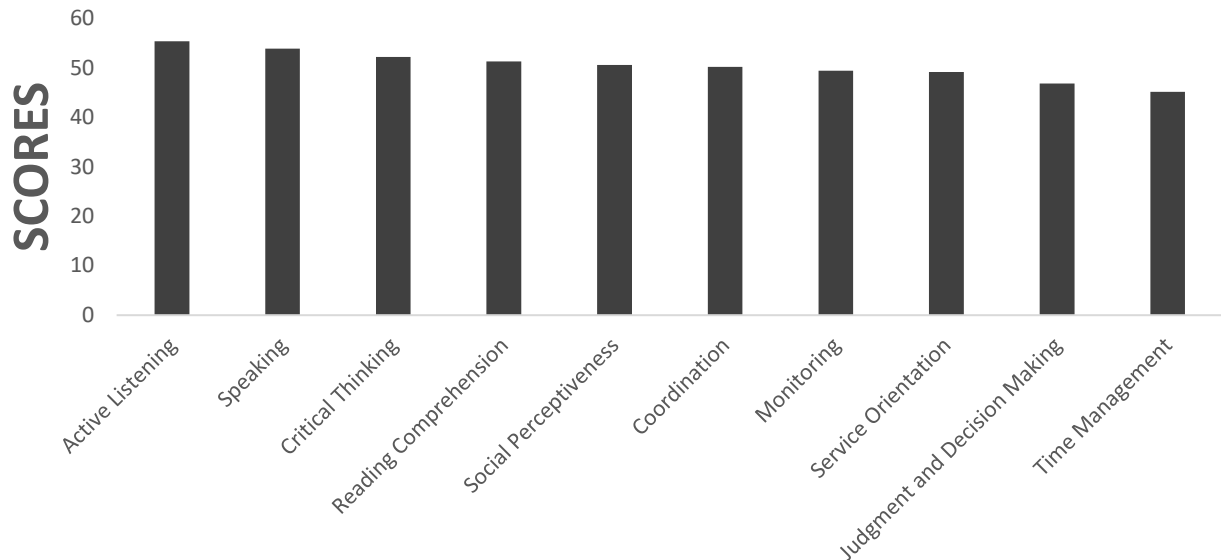
The highest KSAs for occupations projected to have the most new job openings in 2027 are Customer & Personal Service, English Language, Active Listening, Speaking, Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression.

Figure 2.23
Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Knowledge Scores

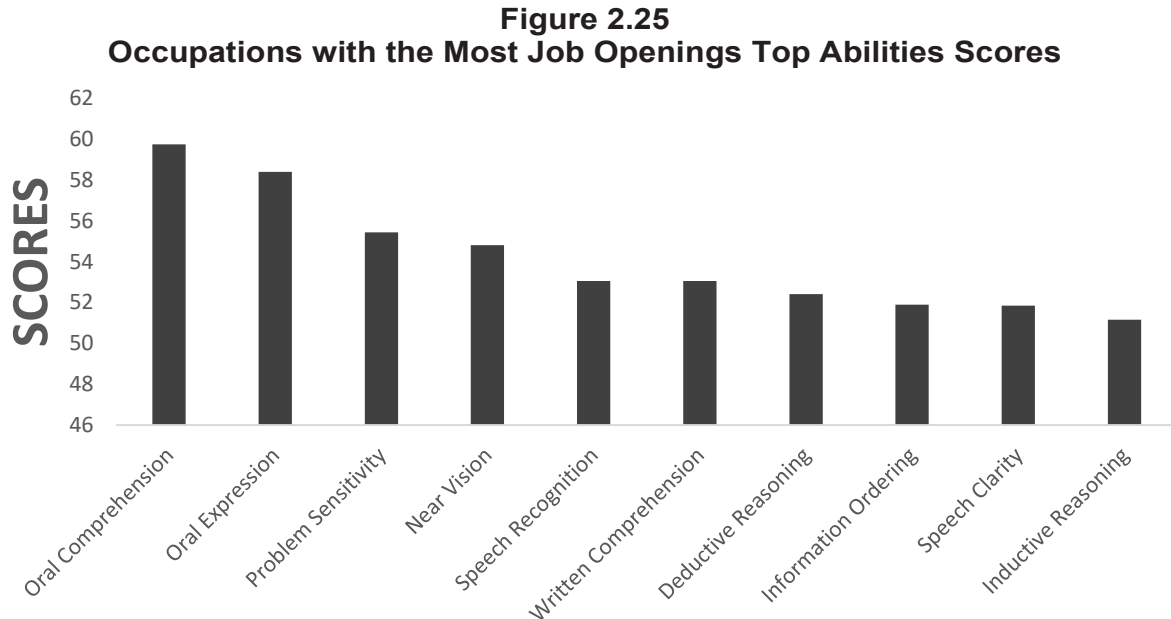


Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Figure 2.24
Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Skills Scores



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Fastest-Growing Occupations

Only occupations with a minimum of 4,000 jobs or more in 2019 are included in the analysis below.

Twelve of the top 20 occupations ranked by percent change are in the health practitioner or healthcare support major occupational groups, while the rest have occupations in professional, scientific, and technical service industries. The fastest-growing occupation is Physician Assistant (5,842 jobs in 2019, +35 percent growth). The Medical Assistants occupation is the largest on the top 20 list with 56,389 jobs in 2019. Some occupations that fall under professional, scientific, and technical services include software developers (39,205 jobs in 2019, +26.6 percent growth), Informational Security Analysts (5,311 jobs in 2019, +26.9 percent growth), and Market Research Analysts (31,738 jobs in 2019, +22.6 percent growth).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, five of the fastest growing occupations require bachelor's degrees (Information Security Analysts, Software Developers, Operation Research Analysts, Marketing Research Analysts, and Financial Managers), two require master's degrees (physicians assistants and nurse practitioners), while three require doctoral degrees (health specialties teachers, postsecondary, physical therapists and veterinarians).

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

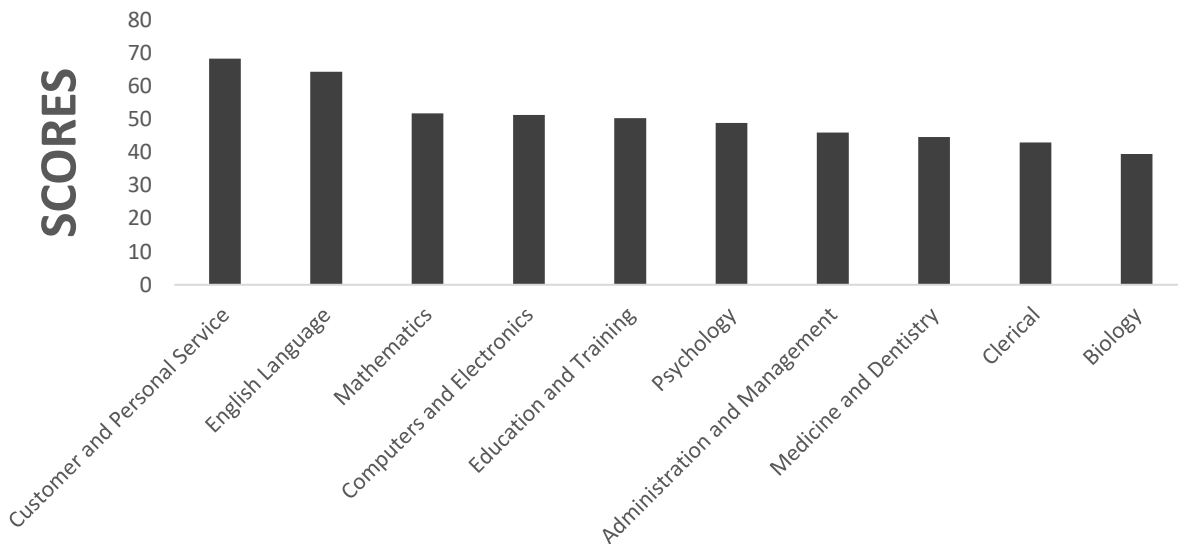
Figure 2.26
Fastest Growing Occupations in Florida

Rank	Code	Occupation	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Level Change	2019-27 Percent Growth	Total Job Openings
1	29-1071	Physician Assistants	5,842	7,879	2,037	34.9	4,936
2	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	9,842	12,885	3,043	30.9	7,411
3	15-1122	Information Security Analysts	5,311	6,738	1,427	26.9	4,628
4	15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	39,205	49,627	10,422	26.6	32,726
5	31-1011	Home Health Aides	28,801	36,216	7,415	25.7	36,358
6	31-9092	Medical Assistants	56,389	70,758	14,369	25.5	67,928
7	25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	11,384	14,208	2,824	24.8	10,477
8	31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	5,692	7,045	1,353	23.8	7,341
9	39-9021	Personal Care Aides	28,262	34,827	6,565	23.2	41,878
10	15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	6,905	8,489	1,584	22.9	5,166
11	13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	31,738	38,906	7,168	22.6	34,061
12	29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	6,019	7,320	1,301	21.6	4,011
13	31-9011	Massage Therapists	14,494	17,574	3,080	21.3	16,068
14	29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	9,727	11,793	2,066	21.2	6,043
15	31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	5,690	6,847	1,157	20.3	8,742
16	29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	9,946	11,966	2,020	20.3	8,751
17	29-1123	Physical Therapists	14,834	17,833	2,999	20.2	8,235
18	39-2021	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	15,892	18,975	3,083	19.4	23,853
19	11-3031	Financial Managers	23,354	27,879	4,525	19.4	19,378
20	29-1131	Veterinarians	4,822	5,749	927	19.2	2,409

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

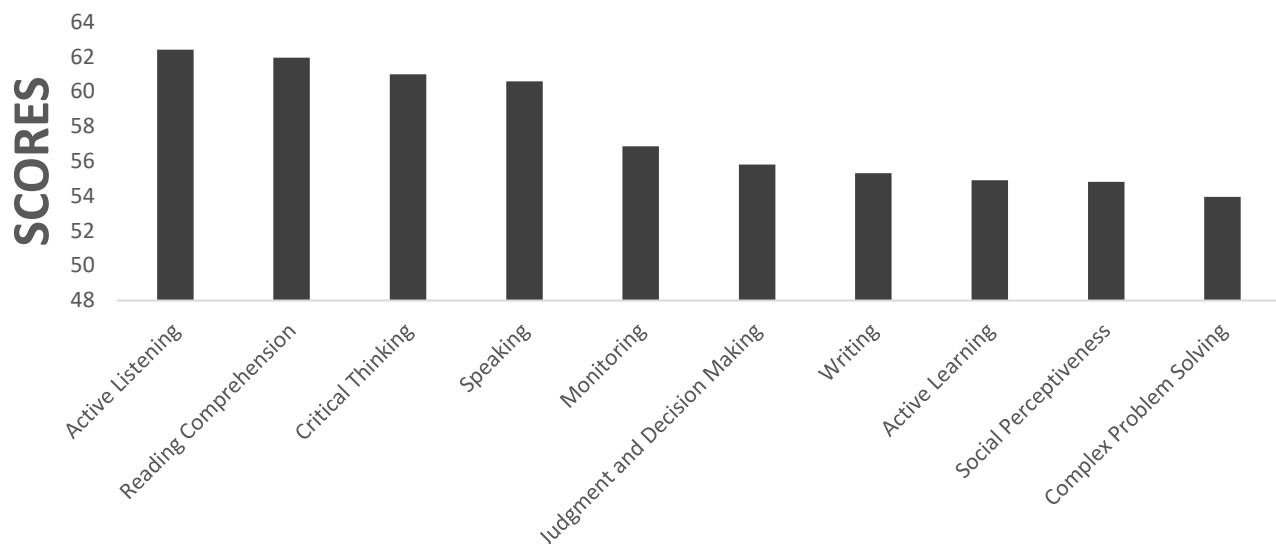
The highest KSAs for occupations with the projected fastest-growing occupations by 2027 are Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression.

Figure 2.27
Rapid Growth Occupations Top Knowledge Scores



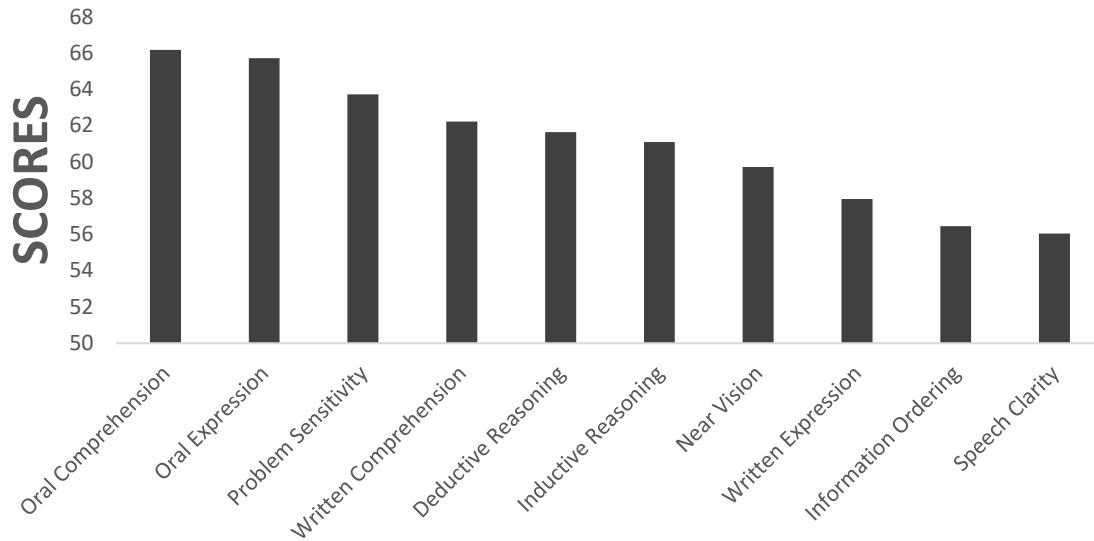
Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Figure 2.28
Rapid Growth Occupations Top Skills Scores



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Figure 2.29
Rapid Growth Occupations Top Abilities Scores



Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, December 2019.

Declining or Slow-Growth Occupations

Many declining or slow-growth occupations are being replaced by technological advancement. For example, the list includes clerical and general computer occupations as well as postal and printing occupations. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, out of the top 20 declining or slow-growth occupations, Respiratory Therapy Technicians and Desktop Publishers require an associate degree, Prepress Technicians and Workers require a postsecondary degree, and the remaining occupations require a high school diploma or less.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 2.30
Declining or Slow-Growth Occupations in Florida

Rank	Code	Occupation	2019 Employment	2027 Employment	2019-27 Level Change	2019-27 Percent Growth	Total Job Openings
1	29-2054	Respiratory Therapy Technicians	535	309	-226	-42.2	34
2	43-9022	Word Processors and Typists	3,173	2,430	-743	-23.4	1,757
3	51-9151	Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators	2,163	1,796	-367	-17.0	2,081
4	43-2021	Telephone Operators	472	400	-72	-15.3	403
5	43-9021	Data Entry Keyers	18,549	15,810	-2,739	-14.8	13,197
6	43-9011	Computer Operators	2,401	2,050	-351	-14.6	1,444
7	43-2011	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	6,421	5,501	-920	-14.3	5,259
8	49-2096	Electronic Equipment Installers and Repairers, Motor Vehicles	392	337	-55	-14.0	224
9	51-4035	Milling and Planing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	203	178	-25	-12.3	136
10	51-2022	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	10,522	9,268	-1,254	-11.9	7,931
11	43-6012	Legal Secretaries	10,787	9,523	-1,264	-11.7	7,369
12	43-9031	Desktop Publishers	426	379	-47	-11.0	298
13	43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	43,987	39,178	-4,809	-10.9	30,542
14	11-9131	Postmasters and Mail Superintendents	359	320	-39	-10.9	148
15	51-2021	Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	425	379	-46	-10.8	327
16	43-9071	Office Machine Operators, Except Computer	3,268	2,919	-349	-10.7	2,371
17	51-5111	Prepress Technicians and Workers	1,177	1,063	-114	-9.7	934
18	51-2023	Electromechanical Equipment	1,358	1,233	-125	-9.2	1,077

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

		Assemblers					
19	45-2041	Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products	2,817	2,572	-245	-8.7	2,638
20	51-4032	Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	202	185	-17	-8.4	147

Skills Gap and Job Vacancy Survey

The Florida Skills Gap and Job Vacancy Survey was designed to provide a statistically valid analysis of the skills gaps statewide and in Florida's local labor markets. The existence of skills gaps has been a matter of much discussion among employer groups, industry associations, labor economists, and others throughout the workforce system. To research skills gaps, CareerSource Florida, in coordination with CareerSource Broward, funded a pilot project survey conducted in 2016 by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER). The success of the Broward pilot project showed that skills gap data could be collected and enabled CareerSource Florida and DEO to proceed with a full survey of all 24 Local Workforce Development Areas in Florida in 2017. Building on deep knowledge and experience in conducting local job vacancy surveys, WSER designed a survey instrument that collected skills gaps and job vacancies, along with the attributes of vacancies.

The survey questionnaire was provided by DEO to the survey vender and loaded into a computer assisted telephone inquiry (CATI) software system. The survey sample was drawn from a file of employers covered by Florida's Reemployment Assistance law using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) methods and software. The sample was stratified by size and industry sector. Within the size/industry strata, establishments were selected at random except for large employers (250+), of which all were selected. Only private-sector establishments were included in the sampling frame. The final sample had almost 54,000 establishments. Based on random probability sampling, these employers represented all employers in the industry sampling frame. Data collection extended from April 2017 until mid-November 2017. The survey had a final response rate of 72.9 percent. All industry super sectors exceeded the required 70 percent response rate. The survey files were submitted to WSER as they were completed, and the entire survey was finished in December 2017. The raw survey data were then converted to estimates representing all employment in the sampling frame using BLS methodology. Publishable and valid results were produced for all of Florida's 24 Local Workforce Development Areas.

The final survey results measured 247,399 job vacancies. The largest number of vacancies by industry were found in Education and Health Services, which had an estimated 60,843 vacancies, followed by Leisure and Hospitality with 51,772 vacancies. The largest number of vacancies by occupational group were found in Food Preparation and Serving Occupations (39,302). Sales and Related Occupations ranked second in the number of vacancies (35,394).

Skills gaps were estimated for job vacancies using the weights assigned to the establishment in the random sample selection process, along with adjustments for survey nonresponse. Skills gaps measures are presented as either total gaps reported or gaps per vacancy. Individual occupations could have several gaps for both soft and hard skills. The highest number of skills gaps were reported in the soft skills of Communication. The next highest soft skills gaps were reported in Reliability/Time Management. The number of hard skills gaps reported were much lower than those

for soft skills. Information Technology/Research skills ranked first among hard skills gaps followed by Workplace skills, such as Tool Use and Selection and Safety skills.

The Mining and Construction industry had the largest number of soft and hard skills gaps per vacancy of all of the industry groups statewide. The Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance major occupation group reported the most soft skills gaps per vacancy. The Farming, Fishing, and Forestry major occupation group reported the most hard skills gaps per vacancy. Employers without gaps were asked how they avoided skills gaps in hiring, recruitment, training, and retention. Around one-third of the skills gap mitigation responses indicated that applicants were screened carefully before hiring. The next most used gap mitigation technique was to retain highly skilled/productive staff. Less than 3 percent of respondents outsourced hiring. The Education and Healthcare industry reported the highest use of gap mitigation followed by Leisure and Hospitality.

Out of a total of 247,399 estimated vacancies reported by the nearly 54,000 Florida private-sector employers surveyed, 62,941 vacancies were reported to have skills gaps. This represented about one-third of the total employers that experienced skills gaps with job seekers, current and former employees. According to these employers, skills gaps are found across all occupations and education levels in Florida's labor market. As such, the survey results provide one of the clearest signals from private-sector employers to the workforce, education, and economic development partnerships about employers' skills needs.

Skills are a key to growing an economy and a viable labor market for employees, students, and job seekers. Upgraded skills will help Florida's workers be more competitive in the production of the goods and services demanded by state, national, and international economies. The results of enhanced skills to Florida's workers will include better wages, increased wage gains, higher rates of job retention, broader opportunities for career advancement, and more stable and rewarding career pathways. For workforce and education partnerships, enhancements made to wraparound services, training, and curriculum developed from skills gap survey results could make the workforce and education systems more effective in meeting the skills needs of private-sector employers. The skills gap survey results contain enough actionable data to inform both individual workers and the industries (and employers) who need higher-skilled workers. The results can be used to develop tools and strategies based on gap mitigation findings to promote gap mitigation and retention among employers struggling with retention issues. The results also can be used to help better align workforce and educational training program outcomes and design to better fit employer-reported needs.

The final report can be viewed on the CareerSource Florida website, careersourceflorida.com, at the link: <https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Skills-Gap-Report.pdf>

(ii) Other Economic Indicators

Other positive economic indicators are:

- Tourism looks healthy as reflected in the increased number of visitors from last year (+5.1% year-over-year growth from 2018, Q2).
- Florida building permits for one-unit structures were up 4,955 (+43.7 percent) compared to the same month a year ago in September 2018.
- 2018 sales tax collections (latest data available) were up 12.8 percent compared to a year ago. Sales tax collections have been above the previous peak (2006) since 2015.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- An estimated 126.1 million visitors came to Florida in 2018, an increase of 6.2 percent over 2017. This marks the eighth consecutive record year for the state.
- The Florida Consumer Sentiment Index level was 97.3 in September 2019, down 0.8 points from September 2018.
- The Florida job growth rate in August of 2018 (latest data available) is up 2.51% from the prior year's rate.
- Florida's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 (latest data available) was up 5.8 percent from 2017.

(B) Workforce Analysis

(i) Education and Training

Education

Many occupations have an educational requirement for employment. In 2017, 87.6 percent of Floridians age 25 or older had a high school diploma or an equivalent, while 28.5 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 2.31
Florida Educational Attainment, Age 25 or Older (2017)

Less Than High School Graduate (in thousands)	High School Graduate and Equivalency (in thousands)	Some College or Associate Degree (in thousands)	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (in thousands)
1,787	4,170	4,342	4,096
12.4%	29.0%	30.2%	28.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Prepared by Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, November 2019.

Training

Certifications are issued by a non-governmental certification body and convey that an individual has the knowledge or skill to perform a specific job. A license is awarded by a government agency and conveys a legal authority to work in an occupation.

Figure 2.32
Florida Certificate and License Holders, 2016-18

	Number of Employed People (in thousands)	% With a Certificate or License	Median Weekly Earnings for Full-time Wage & Salary Workers	
			Without a Certificate or License	With a Certificate or License
Total Employed	9,662	26.0	\$715	\$963
Age				
16 - 24	1,060	10.8	\$485	\$614
25 – 54	6,204	27.9	\$734	\$943
55 +	2,398	27.8	\$808	\$1128
Sex				
Male	5,071	23.4	\$774	\$1086
Female	4,591	28.9	\$653	\$877
Education				
< High School	556	9.1	\$495	\$655
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,419	15.7	\$635	\$734
Some College or Associate Degree	2,468	28.6	\$727	\$809
Bachelor's and Beyond	3,160	40.0	\$1111	\$1240
Race				
White	7,628	26.2	\$745	\$1010
Black or African American	1,554	24.5	\$606	\$748
Asian	306	30.1	\$810	\$1164
Ethnicity*: Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	2,600	20.8	\$624	\$881

* Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Source: The Labor Market Information (LMI) Institute

Prepared by Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, November 2019.

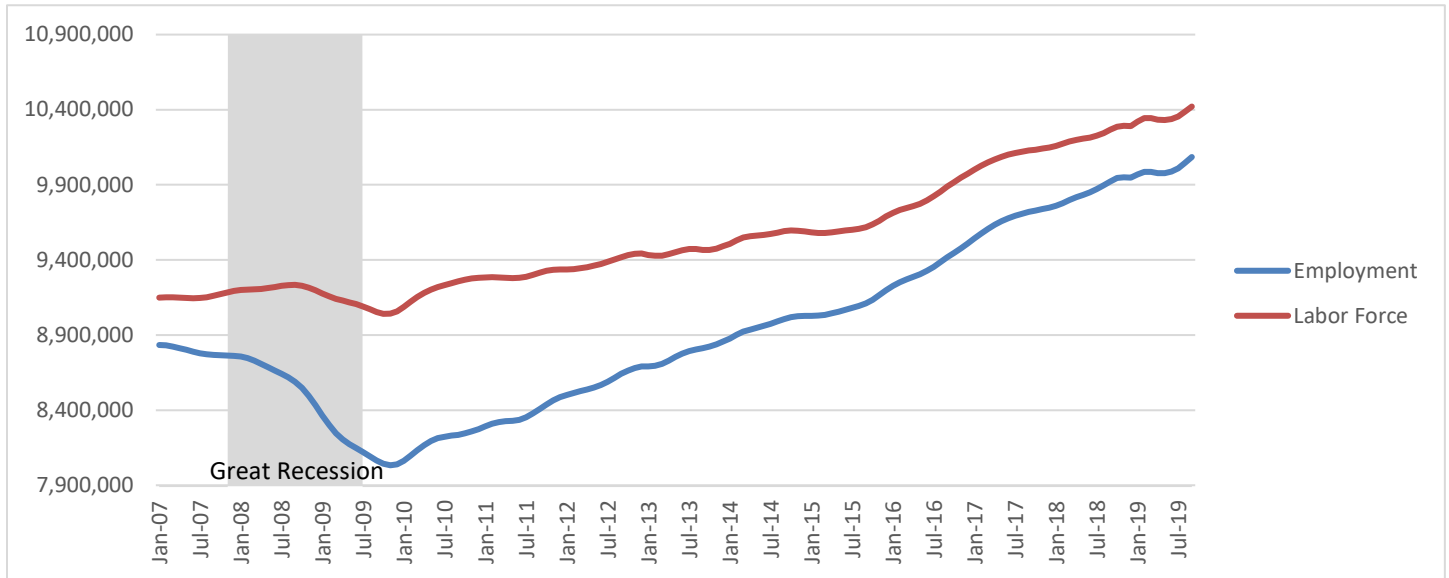
(ii) Employment and Unemployment

Labor Force and Unemployment

Labor force counts the number of citizens who are available to work. Labor force participation rate measures the number of people who are available to work as a percentage of the total population. Not all of those who are counted in the labor force are employed. The unemployment rate is the share of the labor force that is jobless, expressed as a percentage.

Florida's labor force increased steadily after reaching its low point in November 2009 (8,033,000), declining slightly upon reaching a peak in March of 2019 (10,335,000), but has been increasing since. There were 10,421,000 in the labor force in September 2019, with 10,085,000 employed people in the labor force.

Figure 2.33
Florida's Labor Force and Employment
(Seasonally Adjusted)



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, November 2019.

Florida's unemployment rate has declined since the January 2010 peak of 11.3 percent reached in the Great Recession. The number of unemployed persons peaked at 1,024,000 in January 2010 and has since dropped by 688,000 as of September 2019. The labor force has increased by 2,052,000 as of September 2019, from the low point reached in November 2009 (8,033,000).

Below are national and Florida statistics on full-term and part-time status of the employed.

Figure 2.34
Employment Status - U.S. Versus Florida November 2019

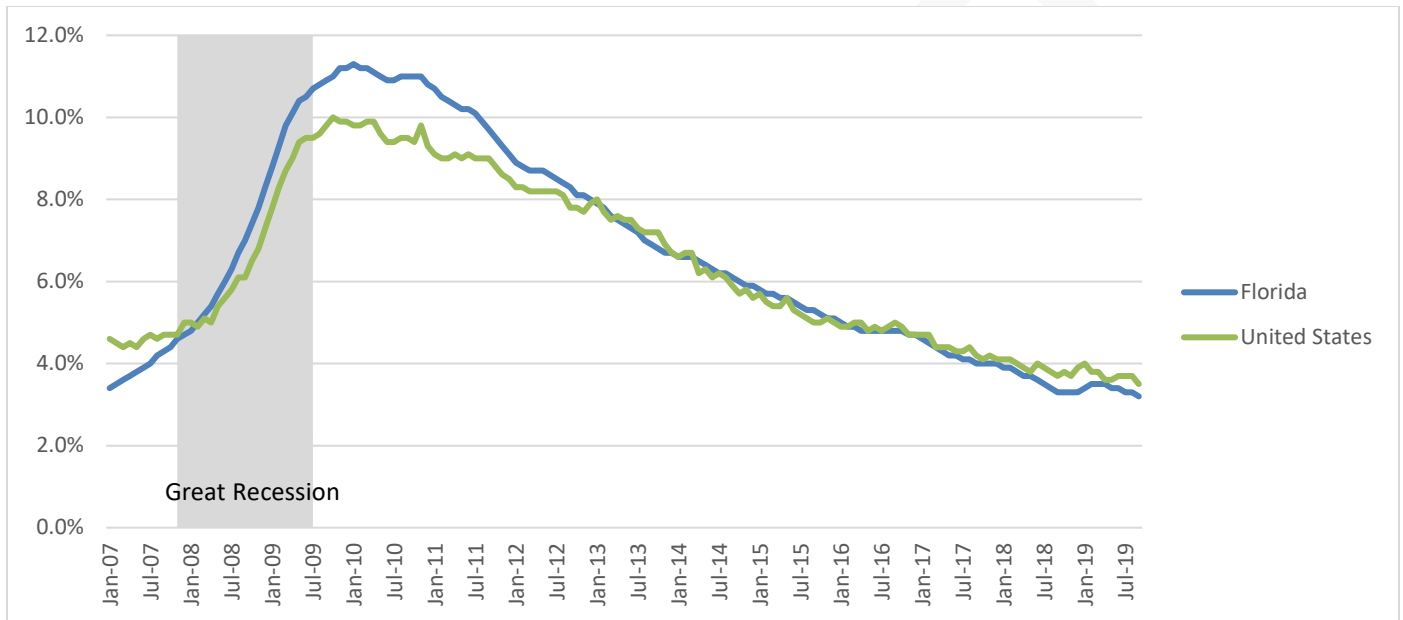
Employment	National September 2019 (monthly)	National Over-the-Year Change (monthly)	Florida September 2019 (12-month moving average)	Florida Over-the-Year Change (12-month moving average)
Full-time	82.8%	0.2%	84.6%	1.2%
Voluntary part-time	13.6%	-0.1%	12.2%	-0.8%
Part-time for economic reasons	2.7%	-0.2%	2.5%	-0.3%
Part-time but not at work	0.8%	0.2%	0.7%	-0.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, November 2019.

The unemployment rate for the state of Florida declined by 0.03 percentage points over the year to 3.2 percent in September 2019.

The lower unemployment rates as of September 2019 have been in counties with large government employment sectors or stable tourism sectors: Monroe County at 2.0 percent, Okaloosa County at 2.3 percent, St. Johns County at 2.4 percent, Walton County at 2.5 percent, and Wakulla and Seminole Counties at 2.6 percent each. Higher unemployment rates are found in counties with large agricultural sectors: Hendry County at 7.1 percent, Hardee County at 5.6 percent, and Citrus County at 4.3 percent. County unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 2.35
Florida Unemployment Rate
(Seasonally Adjusted)



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, November 2019.

Florida's unemployment rate was lower than the national rate from January 2007 to January 2008, but Florida's rate began to exceed the national rate as the recession continued to develop. By January 2010, Florida's rate was 11.3 compared to 9.8 for the nation. The unemployment rates for Florida and the nation have been close in the current stage of the recovery, although Florida has been less than the national rate since April 2017.

Individuals with Barriers to Employment

Persons with Disabilities

Many persons with disabilities who reside in Florida are not in the labor force (727,902 not in labor force; 455,679 in labor force). The Florida unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was 16 percent in 2017 compared to 7.2 percent for all labor force participants. The unemployment rate in this population increased 0.9 percentage points from 2016 to 2017 while the overall unemployment decreased 0.2 percentage points during that period.

The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for 2017 indicate approximately 13.4 percent (2.7 million) of Florida's total population (20 million) has a disability. Of those individuals, it is estimated that almost 1.2 million are of working age (ages 21 to 64) with the employment rate of

people with disabilities at 34.2 percent.

Other Barriers

Additional barriers to employment may include age, a criminal history, homelessness, long-term welfare dependence, childcare needs, background of poverty, transition from military to civilian workforce, poor work history, drug and alcohol addiction, no reliable transportation, mental illness, and employer bias to any of the above conditions.

(2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

(A) The State's Workforce Development Activities

An analysis of Florida's workforce development activities demonstrates a broad range of services offered to Florida residents. The state's WIOA core partners of **CareerSource Florida; the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO); and the Florida Department of Education's Divisions of Blind Services (FDBS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Career and Adult Education (DCAE)** provide services that assist the state in delivering workforce, education and training activities in a cohesive manner.

Career Centers

Within the CareerSource Florida network, Florida's career centers are designed to deliver and provide access to services for employers seeking qualified workers as well as training for new and existing employees and all job seekers.

Florida's comprehensive career centers provide expanded services and access to core and required partner programs either through colocation of partners or linkages to partner services. Florida's career centers provide access to all, including veterans, TANF recipients, SNAP recipients and persons with disabilities.

Services are available to Florida's citizens and businesses through satellite and/or affiliate sites in areas strategically located within other community partners' facilities such as local chambers, libraries and community-based organizations. All of Florida's career centers are easily identified using the CareerSource Florida network brand and the "A proud partner of the American Job Center network."

In addition to services offered through comprehensive career centers and affiliate sites, several local workforce development boards deploy mobile centers to provide services to Florida's businesses and workers to support special events and in areas where access to services may be challenging. Major emphasis is placed on providing services directly at employer sites and direct service delivery in rural communities. Mobile centers are a cost-effective and customer-friendly service solution. Mobile centers play an integral role in providing services and assistance after hurricanes and other disaster events.

WIOA emphasizes the importance of serving the business customer. The CareerSource Florida network is a key resource for businesses seeking qualified workers and grants for customized training for new or existing employees. All 24 LWDBs have established dedicated business services teams who partner closely with Florida's VR business relations teams. In several cases, designated career centers are in business districts to help local employers recruit, train and retain workers.

Communications Tools

Digital communication and social media are replacing traditional outreach tools and media as effective and efficient methods of educating and informing current and potential customers and partners. While still employing tactics such as print and radio communications and outreach, CareerSource Florida's strategic use of digital outreach to raise awareness and use of business and career services among targeted audiences has grown significantly, in alignment with increasing use of digital resources among all customer

populations.

The CareerSource Florida website serves as an important communications tool for accessing information about statewide initiatives, the latest workforce development and economic news, policy updates and board actions, state board meetings and workforce system accomplishments.

CareerSource Florida also employs integrated communications tactics including social, paid and earned media to inform Florida's job seekers, workers and businesses as well as board members, state and local partners and various stakeholders. CareerSource Florida also leverages social media, digital placements and traditional placements to support partners' outreach, including to specific populations such as military veterans and people with disabilities served by partner organizations. CareerSource Florida's social media presence on platforms including Facebook and Twitter to elevate awareness and use of available services has been recognized by local area offices of the USDOL Employment & Training Administration as a best practice.

Additional CareerSource Florida communications tools include timely and relevant updates on workforce system issues and news, frequent electronic messages from the President and CEO of CareerSource Florida to the CareerSource Florida Board, DEO and LWDBs; regularly scheduled and special legislative updates; and news releases and special alerts as necessary.

CareerSource Florida developed and implemented a statewide Cooperative Outreach Program as an investment in brand-compliant, strategic outreach tools and tactics that could be leveraged by local workforce development boards to augment existing local outreach strategies. The initiative supports local boards' efforts to reach job-seeking customers, reconnect with previously served customers and connect with new business.

CareerSource Florida's statewide Cooperative Outreach Program has had strong results since its inception. All 24 local workforce development boards participate annually. In Fiscal Year 2018-19, nearly 18 million overall advertising impressions (the total number of people reached, multiplied by how frequently they may see the ad placement) were reported based on local campaigns launched within the statewide program, including more than 16.6 million digital impressions. Of note is the number of new leads generated by the additional outreach efforts – more than 3,900 new employers and job-seeking customers were engaged through these campaigns, a nearly 70 percent increase over results in 2016-2017.

The 2019-2020 statewide communications and outreach plan aligns with CareerSource Florida's three corporate goals: communicate the CareerSource Florida network vision to enhance thought leadership, strategies and policies that strengthen excellence to Florida businesses, job seekers and workers; leverage strategic partnerships to cultivate local, regional and state capacity building that increases economic opportunity; and emphasize data-driven decisions to keep Florida's workforce system accountable by encouraging performance achievement and boosting talent pipeline alignment.

CareerSource Florida's strategic, integrated outreach, including the Cooperative Outreach Program with local workforce development boards, has contributed to significant increases in employer awareness of the state workforce system. According to market surveys conducted in the spring of 2017, the most recent year for which data is available, more than half of those surveyed report being aware and knowledgeable of their local workforce development board or career center, nearly double the 26 percent who reported awareness and knowledge in 2013.

Employ Florida: Online Workforce Services and Virtual Career Center

Today's job seekers and businesses expect and need access to workforce services 24 hours a day, seven

days a week. The Employ Florida website at employflorida.com is Florida's virtual job-matching tool, providing access at *no charge* to employment opportunities, resume-building resources and other services. Employ Florida helps connect employers, job seekers and Floridians looking to grow in their careers.

Employ Florida is the state's most comprehensive source for current Florida job openings. Launched in 2005, Employ Florida provides businesses access to thousands of current resumes, recruiting and hiring resources, valuable information on training options and links to labor market information at both the state and local levels. Florida's job seekers can search for employment opportunities from numerous job and corporate websites as well as those placed directly on Employ Florida by businesses or through LWDBs and/or career centers. Employers and job seekers can locate Florida's workforce services and resources anywhere in the state via Employ Florida or by calling the toll-free Employ Florida Helpdesk, staffed by DEO.

Employ Florida is consistently upgraded to maintain relevancy and incorporate improved technology. The use of micro-portals, powered by Employ Florida, provide specialized and targeted job matching to add value for both employers and job seekers with specific interests and needs. CareerSource Florida and DEO, in collaboration with LWDBs and other partners, maintain dedicated entry points with customized job search information and resources. These resources have included portals for Florida veterans, job seekers age 50 or older, those interested in green jobs, people with disabilities, recent college graduates and people and businesses impacted by specific events such as hurricanes.

The Florida Abilities Work portal at abilitieswork.employflorida.com is a tool for employers and job seekers with disabilities. The micro-portal is housed on the Employ Florida website with a logo button for ease of access. The portal was specifically designed to provide resources to people with disabilities and to assist employers who are interested in hiring. A help desk and hotline are staffed by Vocational Rehabilitation. The portal was developed in response to the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities collaboratively with input from several partners including the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, VR and Division of Blind Services (FDBS) and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council as well as customers and family members.

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Workforce Development Activities

Activities for youth and students are designed to assist in developing a concept of work, navigating the community and obtaining work experience during high school. Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities or potentially eligible students include career exploration counseling, work readiness and self-advocacy training and experiential activities such as community-based work experience and on-the-job training. Support services available to eligible students with disabilities or youth with disabilities include assistive technology and services, transportation and uniforms. Intensive services are designed for those who need additional support with appropriate work behavior, require repetition to acquire skills, or need to build endurance to work and identify the right fit or environment for work. These services include Discovery, Youth Peer Mentoring, Project SEARCH, services provided under Work-Based Learning Experiences with school districts and tuition, and books and supplies for postsecondary education programs.

VR offers services for adults (and youth, if needed to achieve job goals) that include vocational and other assessments to help job seekers best define their job goals. If needed to meet their goal, medical and psychological services are obtained. VR helps job seekers obtain educational or job readiness training to prepare for their career. Job search, placement, coaching, supported employment and self-employment services are available, as well as interpretive, assistive and rehabilitation technology services. VR maintains a vast network of contracted employment service providers throughout the state and has initiatives in place to increase the variety and quantity of services offered.

VR has formalized a Business Relations Program, with the vision to build and sustain partnerships with business and industry through effective services that are driven by the needs of employers. These partnerships lead to competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR customers. Efforts are under way to further develop and customize services to employers, create strategic partnerships to support workforce needs and establish an employment-focused culture within the rehabilitation process.

Florida Division of Blind Services (FDBS) Workforce Development Activities

The programs under the FDBS are designed to provide training in foundational skills, independent living skills, and career development to assist individuals with visual impairments in becoming self-sufficient in their homes and communities while progressing toward their individual goals. Activities for adults served under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program help individuals who are blind or visually impaired to gain, maintain, advance in, or retain employment. A plan is developed for each individual to provide the education, training, equipment and skills needed for success. Services are provided by DBS vocational rehabilitation counselors, local community rehabilitation programs, the DBS Rehabilitation Center and through sponsorship of training at vocational schools and colleges. In FFY 2018, the FDBS served 12,763 consumers. Of this number, 5,031 were served under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and were assisted in obtaining competitive integrated employment.

Beginning at the age of 14, the Division offers Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for services. At the same age, eligible students or youth with disabilities can receive transition services. These services consist of a coordinated set of activities for students that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, or independent living. Students and youth are given the tools necessary to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with their unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

The FDBS conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the needs of employers in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with blindness or visual impairments. Based on these needs, the FDBS – with continual collaboration among core partners – will conduct the following activities to expand, integrate, and improve services to individuals with visual disabilities within the workforce system.

- Secure opportunities for students/youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills. This includes increasing participation of young adults (ages 18-34) in the Business Enterprise Program.
- Increase utilization of online job systems/portals to expose employers to job-ready consumers.
- Increase consumer participation in industry certifications and apprenticeships and develop improved mechanisms for tracking.
- Develop and implement an Employment Skills Training Program at the Rehabilitation Center.
- Increase awareness of and the provision of accessibility tools.
- Develop and strengthen employer relationships by providing employer training, support, education,

and resources.

- Increase successful employment outcomes including self-employment for transition-age youth, adults, and seniors.
- Strengthen statewide collaboration with core partners.
- Develop mechanisms to maximize job placement effectiveness of the Employment Placement Specialists and contracted service providers.
- Increase opportunities for data sharing and improve data validity and integrity.

Education and Training Activities for Adult Education

Florida's adult education system provides academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent. Adult education programs served 173,901 in 2015-16; 169,308 in 2016-17; 153,246 in 2017-18; and 145,932 in 2018-19. The state of Florida has aligned content standards for adult education with state-adopted academic standards.

Training activities are provided statewide through face-to-face and online workshops, webinars and conferences. Needs assessments are conducted to assist in determining state professional development priorities. Current initiatives determine training topics such as college and career readiness standards, integrated education and training models, essential components of reading instruction, career pathways, mathematics instruction and GED® preparation.

Adult education programs will collaborate with LWDBs to determine local high-wage, high-demand careers when developing career pathways.

One-stop career center partners and adult education programs work collaboratively within their local areas and assessment and instructional services are often provided onsite. Local CareerSource Florida network staff can participate in Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) trainings are made available throughout the year. Many career centers provide representatives directly to the adult education facility to provide counseling, advising and other services related to awareness of workforce resources. The sharing of cross-referral outcomes is a priority of DCAE to support the goals of WIOA and increase student access and achievement.

(B) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

As is outlined in section 2(A) above, Florida's workforce network partners are successful in reaching and serving customers to put Floridians to work. These partnerships are leveraged at the state and local levels to enhance any areas where improvements are needed. The strength of Florida's workforce network is demonstrated through its existing relationships and the ongoing effort to identify additional opportunities for coordinated service delivery as required under WIOA. Currently, Florida's WIOA partners have ample statewide coverage for all programs, with skilled and experienced professional team members. The state workforce investment board, LWDBs, VR and FDBS all have established business relationship teams working together to serve employers.

Additional improvements are taking place in Florida's workforce network, including a Residential Center training program within the FDBS. The Pre-Employment Program began in 2016 with the goal to increase the employment rates for youth and adults. Classes are conducted at the Rehabilitation Center each

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

quarter. The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) provided various trainings on the Career Plus Index and WIOA requirements. Employer biases and misconceptions about hiring individuals who are blind continues to exist. Improvement in this area will involve employer education and training to dispel myths and stereotypes to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities of all types.

Continuous improvement of how Florida's workforce network serves customers will require continued collaboration, coordination and reassessment. The identification of both strengths and weaknesses is an ongoing process for the core programs working to implement WIOA. Working groups discussed in section III(b)(7) are addressing data integration issues as a potential challenge for WIOA implementation. Reviewing WIOA program services, programs and policies to identify duplicative efforts and potential solutions to better align agency resources and efforts is ongoing.

Florida will work to address accessibility of job network computer systems, outreach and community visibility for programs that serve job seekers with disabilities and transportation for job seekers with disabilities.

(C) State Workforce Development Capacity

Florida is well-positioned to continue delivering exceptional workforce development services with the knowledge and experience of Florida's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core program partners. Continued communication and enhanced collaboration among the WIOA State Leadership Team and working groups remain a primary focus as the partners collectively build the capacity of the state's workforce system.

Capacity also depends on the continued success of Florida's 24 local workforce development boards. Local boards and their WIOA partners constantly strive to develop innovative methods for delivery of services to job seekers and employers in their local areas. A heightened focus on customer service and business engagement is helping increase Florida's workforce network capacity.

Florida's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) currently has 96 unit offices throughout Florida; approximately 20 percent of those are private contracted offices, opened to increase its service capacity and ensure continuity of services. Factors such as staff turnover and Order of Selection (OOS) waitlists affect customer service capacity and VR's leadership uses data projection models to monitor trends and guide decision-making regarding fiscal, caseload and waitlist performance.

VR partners with employment service providers and maintains memorandums of agreement with multiple agencies and entities around the state to ensure comprehensive and coordinated services are provided for job seekers with disabilities. VR implements pilot programs and Innovation and Expansion projects to further increase its service capacity. VR places emphasis on increasing provider capacity for specialized services such as Discovery and Customized Employment.

VR's services are provided statewide with the exception of pilot programs, Innovation and Expansion project activities and transition services delivered under Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE). VR currently holds WBLE with 31 school districts and, as required, has a waiver of statewideness in place for these arrangements. More details on WBLE and other factors that affect VR's service capacity can be found in the VR services portion of this plan.

The FDBS has aligned and dedicated vocational rehabilitation staff to coordinate, implement and track workforce development activities across multiple programs. The FDBS has long-established relationships with statewide Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) who provide direct vocational rehabilitation, transition, supported employment and rehabilitation engineering services to clients statewide. Through

existing staff and community rehabilitation program partners, FDBS is implementing the identified workforce development activities.

The FDBS conducts ongoing training needs assessment to ensure compliance of federal and state mandates and examines individual personnel training requirements related to current job performance, future job requirements and promotional or career advancement needs.

Adult education programs in Florida are provided by school districts, colleges and community-based organizations. While some counties may not offer adult education programs, colleges in those service areas were awarded federal grants to provide adult education programs in those areas. There are 202 locations offering adult education services. This includes main sites and satellite programs located throughout the community. Transportation is a barrier for many adults so local programs plan locations that are accessible for potential adult students.

(b) State Strategic Vision and Goals

(1) Vision

Through the implementation of WIOA, Florida has a business-led, market-responsive, results-oriented and integrated workforce development system. The enhanced system fosters customer service excellence, seeks continuous improvement and demonstrates value by enhancing employment opportunities for all individuals. Focused and deliberate collaboration between education, workforce and economic development networks maximizes the competitiveness of businesses and the productivity of the state's workforce. This increases opportunities and economic prosperity.

(2) Goals

Florida's strategic vision for WIOA implementation will be realized by accomplishing these three goals:

- Enhance alignment and market responsiveness of workforce, education and economic development systems through improved service integration that provides businesses with skilled, productive and competitive talent and Floridians with employment, education, training and support services that reduce welfare dependence and increase opportunities for self-sufficiency, high-skill and high-wage careers and lifelong learning.
- Promote accountable, transparent and data-driven workforce investment through performance measures, monitoring and evaluation that inform strategies, drive operational excellence, lead to the identification and replication of best practices and empower an effective and efficient workforce delivery system.
- Improve career exploration, educational attainment and skills training for in-demand industries and occupations for Florida youth that lead to enhanced employment, career development, credentialing and postsecondary education opportunities.

(3) Performance Goals

Core WIOA program partners continue efforts to refine a process for collecting data and reporting performance. Core programs will assist state and local workforce development boards to negotiate levels of performance based on the statistical adjustment model. This model takes into consideration state and local economic factors including unemployment rates, industry sectors and characteristics of participants

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

entering the program (e.g., work history, work experience, educational/occupational skills attainment, literacy levels, disability status, etc.). The core measures include:

1. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit
2. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit
3. Median earnings of participants during second quarter after exit
4. Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma within one year after exit
5. Achievement of measurable skill gains toward credential or employment
6. Effectiveness in serving employers

Negotiated levels of performance are reviewed and approved by the core program senior leadership, the state workforce investment board and ultimately the Governor. Data are housed in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) system for quarterly and annual reporting by WIOA core program partners. Tables with updated performance and negotiated performance goals are in section III of this plan.

(4) Assessment

To accurately assess effectiveness of the workforce system, all core partners provide quarterly performance data to the state workforce investment board. Performance is assessed in relation to state and local targets. Gaps in performance are addressed at the local levels. State-level teams provide technical assistance to local boards on complex performance issues. Core program partners share performance reports and special analyses of performance are conducted and shared across programs.

(c) State Strategy

(1) Implementation of State Strategies

Redefining Customer Service Standards for Business Talent Support

Continuous improvement is a key value of the CareerSource Florida network. CareerSource Florida evaluates and defines standards and measures (and removes any deemed unnecessary) in customer service. This enables Florida business, especially those in key sectors aligned to state and regional economic development priorities, to fully benefit from CareerSource Florida's training grant programs and helps facilitate seamless access to tools and services across partner/organization programs.

Independent third-party surveys of businesses receiving training grant awards revealed excellent return on investment statistics: businesses were able to retain and add new jobs and employees benefiting from the skills upgrade training experienced an increase in wages one year after training completion. CareerSource Florida continues building on its Salesforce-based Customer Relationship Management platform to improve business services.

Creating a Total Talent Delivery System

The umbrella of business support and training services available throughout the CareerSource Florida network better positions Florida to respond to short- and long-term talent needs of existing companies and those that are new to Florida. The goal is to facilitate a seamless, externally focused talent solution strategy for Florida business.

Using the market segmentation framework and planning tools in the CareerSource Florida Professional Business Development Tool Kit, developed in part through the USDOL Expanding Business Engagement grant received in 2012, helps ensure businesses of all sizes in all sectors are identified for proactive talent support strategies. CareerSource Florida's Business and Workforce Development Unit leads network-wide webinars highlighting innovative tools and best practice methods for business services representatives/account managers who interface with business on talent needs as well as the state's economic development organizations. The umbrellas of services have also been shared in national and state conferences to communicate the value of the CareerSource Florida network.

Since 2015, CareerSource Florida has generated a monthly dashboard to better track business services. Elements include number of businesses served, number of high-value services provided to businesses and number of projected trainees through state-level training grants. Under-utilized talents and skills of job seekers with barriers to employment are consistently marketed to Florida businesses.

Implementing Sector Strategies

WIOA requires sector partnerships as a strategy under federal statute. The law defines both state-level and local-level responsibilities. FL Statutes 445.004(10) requires state workforce development strategy to include efforts that enlist business, education and community support for students to achieve long-term career goals. CareerSource Florida and its network collaborate with education partners to help ensure young people have the academic and occupational skills required to succeed in the workplace. The state workforce development strategy assists employers in upgrading or updating the skills of their employees and helps workers acquire the education or training needed to secure a better job with better wages. This strategy assists the state's efforts to attract and expand job-creating businesses offering high-paying, high-demand occupations. Development of sector strategies and career pathways is a component of Florida's WIOA Unified Plan and state workforce development strategy.

Sector strategies are regional, industry-focused approaches to building a skilled workforce and are an effective way to align public and private resources to address the talent needs of employers. Evidence from states employing this approach shows that sector strategies can simultaneously improve employment opportunities for job seekers and enhance the competitiveness of industries. Effective sector strategies rely on strong sector partnerships, sometimes referred to as industry partnerships, workforce collaboratives or regional skills alliances.

These partnerships are led by businesses within a critical industry cluster collaborating with workforce development, education and training, economic development, labor and community-based organizations. Effective sector strategies are based on the following strategic framework:

- Built Around Great Data
- Founded on a Shared, Regional Vision
- Guided by Industry
- Lead to Strategic Alignment
- Transform How Services (job seekers/worker and employer) are Delivered
- Measured, Improved and Sustained

Building on the momentum of the unanimously passed Sector Strategy Strategic Policy by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, CareerSource Florida developed and implemented a Sector Strategies Toolkit to assist local workforce development boards with a range of activities, like the development of industry-driven workforce goals, action plans and policies and the enhancement of business and job seeker services.

The Sector Strategy policy can be viewed at <http://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/18.02.14.A.2-Sector-Partnerships-Strategy-Policy-FINAL.pdf>

The Sector Strategy Toolkit can be viewed online at <https://careersourceflorida.com/sector-strategies/>.

CareerSource Florida has focused on building sector strategies and sector partnerships for the past several years as a proven method of strengthening talent pipelines to support regional economies. Initially, each of CareerSource Florida's Business and Workforce Development unit's four territory directors worked directly with local workforce development boards within one of four geographic areas of the state, holding in-person and web-based sector strategy meetings. Meetings brought together business services teams and sector strategy specialists from six local workforce development boards, and topics included sector strategy policies, data tools, targeted initiatives, state-level funding, career pathways, apprenticeships and other work-based learning strategies. The local workforce development boards shared their sector strategy efforts including best practices, barriers and lessons learned.

As the network's sector strategy efforts have become more operationalized, CareerSource Florida's Business and Workforce Development unit's territory directors now align with Florida's targeted industry sectors, specializing in supporting the following: Trade & Logistics, Corporate Headquarters and Professional/Financial Services; Advanced Manufacturing; Aviation/Aerospace; Information Technology; and Healthcare/Life Sciences. This structure helps the CareerSource Florida network deepen its knowledge of specific industries and better align efforts with state and local economic development and other partners focused on key industry sectors with opportunities for high-wage jobs and economic diversification.

Career Pathways

Career pathways enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and advance over time to successively higher levels of education or employment in that sector. It is important for education, training and support services to be connected regionally to help individuals of all skill levels and abilities to grow in a career. Career pathways also help businesses within key industries have access to qualified workers and a qualified talent pipeline.

In support of career pathways, CareerSource Florida directed the development of career pathways-focused resources and tools. Downloadable tools are used by the CareerSource Florida network and their partners in the development and expansion of career pathways for their local and regional areas. These tools include PowerPoint templates, guides, webinars and informational maps. The objectives of the tools are to: describe the process to create career pathways and showcase examples of successful demand-driven models; illustrate how pre-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship and other work-based learning modalities may be incorporated into career pathways efforts; and identify existing and emerging career pathways efforts and explore opportunities to align and integrate regional pathways plans, activities and resource investments. With the continuing expansion of career pathways, especially in key target sectors identified in each local workforce development board's two-year plan, Florida's workers will have the skills needed to obtain good jobs and employers will have the workers they need to remain competitive and to prosper.

Advanced Manufacturing Business Intelligence Research and Sector Strategy Approach Services

This initiative began in 2014 and resulted in the promotion of business growth through better connectivity of Florida's advanced manufacturers to existing public and private resources essential for increased competitiveness and profitability, leveraging the workforce and talent development assets within the state. The Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council (AMWLC) under the direction of FloridaMakes, Florida's Manufacturing Extension partnership, staffs and coordinates efforts through Florida's 13 Regional Manufacturing Associations (RMAs). The AMWLC, composed of RMAs and Florida manufacturers, serves as Florida's manufacturing voice concerning workforce development and talent

delivery systems, ensuring Florida's workforce network has a deeper understanding of and is responsive to the talent needs of the state in this sector.

The AMWLC's web page can be accessed at <https://www.floridamakes.com/what-we-do/workforce-training-development.stml>

Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities

With ever-increasing momentum statewide, Florida continues to support apprenticeship expansion through progressive policies and funding investments for optimal impact. To expand career pathways linked to apprenticeships and work-based training opportunities, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors unanimously approved the first statewide Apprenticeship Strategic Policy for Florida's workforce system. This policy defines the state's strategic vision for apprenticeships while providing local workforce development boards with the guidance they need to boost systemic change at the local level. A work-based training administrative policy was also developed this year to further support local workforce development boards as they offer training activities that are sector focused and industry led. Together, these strategic tools are driving deliberate innovation that benefits employers and career seekers.

CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2019.02.13.A.1 defines CareerSource Florida's vision for apprenticeship and presents opportunities for innovation of this time-tested and trusted method of skills development for Florida's targeted industries. This policy directs local workforce development boards to identify opportunities for new or expanded apprenticeships in targeted sectors, engage underrepresented populations in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and support apprenticeships with WIOA or other program funds through Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training wage reimbursement, customized training, incumbent worker training, pre-apprenticeships, and supportive services. This policy can be viewed online at <http://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Apprenticeship-Policy-2019.02.13.A.1.pdf>

The CareerSource Florida administrative policy operationalizing Work-Based Training provides guidance to local workforce development boards on requirements for implementing work-based training programs, including apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships. In the next two years, the state workforce system will work with its state and local partners to develop apprenticeship programs for targeted industries that can be used across the state. The CareerSource Florida administrative policy operationalizing work-based training can be viewed online at http://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/lwdb-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers/2019-guidance-papers/adminpol100_work-basedtrng.pdf?sfvrsn=93de7fb0_2

Guidance including answers to frequently asked questions about registered apprenticeships and Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs can be viewed online at <http://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FAQs-Registered-Apprenticeships-and-IRAP-020119.pdf>

In March 2019, Governor DeSantis formally announced \$1.75 million in grants allocated by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors to help career seekers acquire the skills needed for in-demand occupations through new and expanded pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. At least 20 local workforce development boards around the state are now actively working to establish or expand apprenticeships with business and education partners. In May, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a 2019-2020 fiscal year budget that includes an additional \$1.75 million investment in apprenticeship expansion.

The Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7071, which included a \$10 million appropriation for the newly created Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program. These grants will enable high schools, career centers and postsecondary institutions to partner with businesses and industries, as well as offer high-quality pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities.

CareerSource Florida also launched Apprentice Florida, in partnership with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the Florida Department of Education. This statewide outreach initiative is aimed at making Floridians aware of the benefits of registered apprenticeships, encouraging businesses to build apprenticeship programs of their own and ensuring those programs have the resources needed to be successful.

An increasing number of Florida businesses are turning to apprenticeships to build a quality workforce with the exact skills they need to be competitive. According to USDOL, businesses that offer apprenticeship programs see significant benefits to their bottom line: 97 percent of employers recommend apprenticeships as a training model; for every dollar spent on apprenticeships, employers receive an average return on investment of \$1.50; and 91 percent of apprentices who complete an apprenticeship program are still employed nine months later. CareerSource Florida is focused on helping expand apprenticeship opportunities in six key industry sectors: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, hospitality, trade and logistics and construction.

The Florida Department of Education's goal is that 7 percent of persons with disabilities participate in apprenticeship workforces. To aid the Department in achieving this goal, the FDBS is working with the Division of Career and Adult Education to review and select appropriate apprenticeship models – with a goal of increasing participation of the Division's consumers by 10 percent. The FDBS will collaborate with businesses and employers to encourage sponsorship of registered apprenticeship programs and develop an outreach plan to market programs and increase awareness of all services.

By continuing to invest in businesses and career seekers through apprenticeship opportunities, in collaboration with statewide partners, Florida is strengthening its current and future workforce.

Enhancing Performance Measurement

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors prioritizes transparency and accountability as Florida continues to enhance performance in serving businesses and job seekers, with a focus on targeted industries, training and opportunity populations. In 2019, the state board authorized the development and implementation of the Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative, which can be accessed at <https://performance.careersourceflorida.com/CIP>.

Authorized by Florida law (Section 445.004(6)(b), Florida Statutes), the Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative represents the evolution of how CareerSource Florida measures, tracks and improves performance at the state and local levels. The Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative aligns with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Primary Indicators of Performance, and includes additional measures specifically aligned with goals and strategies of the state of Florida. The launch of the Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative website represents a major milestone as Florida moves forward in how performance is tracked and improved at both state and local levels.

The Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative was designed and developed based on input from local workforce development board leaders during strategy planning and feedback sessions. Team members from CareerSource Florida and the Department of Economic Opportunity conducted best practices research, historical data analyses and evaluation of past systems. A statewide Performance Advisory Council, consisting of local workforce development board representatives, was established to provide feedback and recommendations for continuous improvement. WIOA core leaders and the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors received frequent updates throughout the design and implementation phases.

The initiative includes three key metrics with additional credit for serving individuals with barriers to employment and for providing staff-assisted, high-value services to business establishments in up to five board-selected industry sectors:

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- **Employment Rate 1st Quarter After Exit:** The percentage of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser participants who exited the system and had certified wages the first quarter after exit.
- **Participant Training Rate:** The percentage of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act participants who received training services.
- **Business Penetration:** The number of business establishments provided a staff-assisted, high-value service by a local workforce development board.

To help local boards develop strategies that lead to strong performance on the Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative as well as enhanced service to their customers, CareerSource Florida and DEO offer ongoing technical assistance through webinars, one-on-one telephone consultations and in-person presentations, including trainings at the annual Florida Workforce Professional Development Summit.

Providing Quality Services to People with Disabilities

Recognizing the unique challenges Floridians with disabilities may face in finding a job, the CareerSource Florida network continues leading, investing and participating in initiatives to connect people with disabilities to employers. The Abilities Work web portal at abilitieswork.employflorida.com helps link employers and job seekers with disabilities. The Abilities Work help desk is administered by Vocational Rehabilitation and is a resource to support the linkage between employers and qualified job seekers with disabilities. More discussion on this portal can be found in section II(a)(2)(A) of this plan.

Other key employment initiatives to assist Floridians with disabilities include:

Employment First Florida

Seven of Florida's state agencies and nonprofit organizations, including CareerSource Florida, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Education (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, VR and FDBS), the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, RESPECT of Florida and the Department of Children and Families (Mental Health and Substance Abuse) came together through an interagency cooperative agreement. This collaboration improves coordination of services that help people with disabilities obtain employment and achieve self-sufficiency.

The Employment First collaborative developed a comprehensive and coordinated statewide communications plan to improve outreach, describing services available to support employment and training for people with disabilities. This initiative responds directly to a key recommendation of the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities. Information about Employment First can be obtained on the website for the Florida Development Disabilities Council at employmentfirstfl.org/.

The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program

The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program recognizes businesses that are committed to providing career and financial opportunities to individuals with unique abilities and to assisting organizations that support them. Participating businesses demonstrate their dedication to strengthening communities and the economy by helping these Floridians with untapped talents become more independent and by partnering with other businesses, organizations and state resources in this endeavor.

Information about the Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program can be obtained on the Department of Economic Opportunity's website at <http://www.floridajobs.org/unique-abilities-partner-program>.

Family Café

The Family Café is an expo-style annual event held over several days each summer in Orlando that connects Floridians with disabilities and their families with information, training and networking opportunities. For several years, VR, FDBS and other WIOA partners have been involved in planning the Family Café and presenting useful information. CareerSource Florida is a primary sponsor of the Family Café and helps connect job seekers with disabilities and their families with employment resources and employers at the event each year. These efforts provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of employment and training resources available through the CareerSource Florida network and core partners.

The June 2019 Family Café drew more than 12,800 participants. CareerSource Florida, DEO and several local workforce development boards provided onsite employment assistance and resources.

Ticket to Work

Nineteen Florida LWDBs are designated as Employment Networks by the Social Security Administration, enabling their participation in the federally funded Ticket to Work program. Through Ticket to Work, recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income receive priority assistance such as job search, career planning and skill building through participating CareerSource Florida network career centers.

These services enhance efforts of job seekers to find and retain a job and to work toward self-sufficiency. Participating LWDBs receive funding from the Social Security Administration for workforce services provided to “ticketholders.”

The Gig Economy and Florida’s Workforce System

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors established a priority initiative to explore the impact of the gig economy on Florida’s workforce system. A six-month study was launched in January 2019 with the purpose of furthering CareerSource Florida’s understanding of the gig economy and the potential workforce, education, and economic development implications in Florida. The study, with technical assistance provided by Cambridge Systematics, synthesized national research, gathered Florida-specific data and trends, and engaged workforce partners in discussions about the future of work.

CareerSource Florida is one of the first workforce development organizations nationally to explore the implications of gig work and entrepreneurship in a comprehensive, research-driven manner. This initial undertaking reveals significant potential areas of opportunities for local workforce development boards and other partners to meet the future independent workforce needs of gig economy businesses and workers. CareerSource Florida will continue working with WIOA core partners and members of a multidisciplinary workgroup to address areas of opportunity and implement policies and programs as directed by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors.

The Study on the Gig Economy and Florida’s Workforce System can be obtained online at: <https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/reports-and-publication/>

(2) Strategies to Align Core Programs

Additional strategies to coordinate with state plan programs and align core programs are addressed in section IV.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

(a) State Strategy Implementation

(1) State Board Functions

State Board

Florida's workforce system is led by the CareerSource Florida State Board of business and government leaders charged with guiding workforce development for the state of Florida. The state board, required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, is supported directly by CareerSource Florida Inc., a nonprofit organization and professional team that works at the direction of its Board of Directors and with partners across the state to meet its mission. That unified mission is to connect employers with qualified, skilled talent and Floridians with employment and career development opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Collectively, CareerSource Florida provides oversight and policy direction for talent development programs administered by DEO, the executive state agency responsible for workforce policy implementation and administrative and fiscal affairs and implemented by Florida's 24 local workforce development boards. DEO partners with CareerSource Florida and the local workforce development boards to strengthen Florida's business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed and advance in their careers.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors includes the Governor and, currently, 25 members appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders. The board includes leaders in business and industry, government, labor, economic development, education and youth and community-based organizations whose contributions influence the development of strategies and policies, ensuring Florida has a robust, globally competitive workforce. The work of this board and the entire state workforce system is vital to achieving the Governor's priorities for helping Floridians obtain employment and establishing Florida as a top job-creating state. Governor DeSantis also has set a goal for Florida to be No. 1 in the nation in workforce education by 2030. The state board plays a critical role in strengthening Florida's business climate by helping to ensure Florida's workforce and education programs are aligned to the needs of business through its policy setting and oversight role.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors ensures compliance with federal and state laws, provides clear expectations regarding ethical conduct, transparency, quality customer service. The state board provides oversight into the governance of local workforce development boards. For example, the State Board approved the strategic policy Board Governance and Leadership, requiring local workforce development boards to employ sound management practices and controls for the proper expenditure of funds and verification of program performance outcomes. The Board also approved the strategic policy Ethics and Transparency, to sustain integrity, accountability and transparency in decisions and actions that earn and protect the public trust. State and local workforce development boards must conduct business in an open manner and provide electronic or simplified access to information including but not limited to state and local plans, governance and organizational decisions, financial decisions and selection of local one-stop operators. Strategic policies are located on the CareerSource Florida website: <https://careersourceflorida.com/careersourceflorida-policies/>.

The CareerSource Florida network assisted 136,328 job seekers who were reported in the last fiscal last year to have gained employment. The network is committed to expanding business engagement at both the state and local levels. Across the network, nearly 56,000 businesses were served last year through assistance with recruiting, hiring and training.

Governance Structure

The governance structure, through which the state board conducts its work, consists of the board of directors, two councils – the Strategic Policy and Performance Council and the Finance Council – and an Executive Committee composed of council chairmen and board leaders appointed by the state board chairman.

Strategic Policy and Performance Council

Florida law gives CareerSource Florida the authority to create state employment, education and training policies that ensure programs prepare workers in response to present and future business and industry needs and complement the initiatives of Enterprise Florida, Inc., the state's economic development organization (Section 445.004(6)(a), Florida Statutes). Consistent with CareerSource Florida's strategic goals, priority is given to addressing workforce needs for businesses in the state's target and infrastructure industries.

The CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy and Performance Council includes board members who possess relevant experience or expertise in the subject area of the council.

The Strategic Policy and Performance Council uses a formal Policy Development Framework process to review existing policies and develop new strategies and policies designed to foster a performance-driven talent delivery system with the ability to serve individuals at all levels and businesses of all sizes to meet the demands of Florida's growing and diversifying economy. The Strategic Policy and Performance Council analyzes, discusses and finalizes strategic policies and performance incentives for the CareerSource Florida network as directed by the chairman of the board.

Recommendations of the Strategic Policy and Performance Council are considered for approval by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. Ten board members currently serve on this council.

Finance Council

CareerSource Florida's Finance Council includes board members who possess relevant experience or expertise in the subject area of the Council. The Finance Council's primary goal is to ensure the workforce system is in good financial health, its assets are protected, and the state's resources are used appropriately and accounted for sufficiently. Through this effort, the Council assists the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors in ensuring the resources available to the state for workforce training programs and support services are used effectively and efficiently with utmost accountability and transparency to maintain public confidence and trust.

The Finance Council is responsible for directing the statewide allocation of workforce system funding and safeguarding the workforce system's resources and assets.

The Finance Council meets in conjunction with the regular quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors if there is business that needs to go before the Council. Additional meetings, whether held in person or by telephone, may be conducted at the request of the board chairman or the council chairman.

Recommendations of the Finance Council are considered for approval by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. Seven board members currently serve on this council.

Executive Committee

Chapter 445, Florida Statutes, states that the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors may establish an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair of the Board and at least six additional board members selected by the chairman, one of whom must be a representative of organized labor. The members of the Executive Committee determine strategic priorities, provide board-level guidance and advice and monitor

progress and continued relevancy of strategic priorities. The Executive Committee:

- Performs duties as delegated by the chairman and/or directed by the board;
- Addresses time-critical matters in cases where the entire board cannot be convened in a timely manner;
- Reviews recommendations of the Finance Council prior to board consideration; and
- Reviews policy and performance recommendations prior to board consideration.

The Executive Committee meets at the request of the Chairman. Eight board members currently serve on this committee.

The following graphic outlines CareerSource Florida Board Governance.

Figure 3.01
CareerSource Florida Board Governance

Figure 3.01 can be viewed online at https://careersourceflorida.com/CSF_Board_Governance.png.



The state board is committed to leveraging its resources and those of its primary workforce system partners and its strategic partners in business, economic development and education to address talent needs at every skill level and foster a globally competitive workforce. To ensure the workforce strategies and policies developed by the state board are consistent with approved state and local plans, the board collaborates with DEO, LWDBs and other partners vital to workforce services delivery. LWDB partners hold meetings in conjunction with the state board's quarterly meetings. This provides opportunities to

showcase best practices and to identify and address challenges to enhance collaboration and improve performance outcomes. Regular meetings between the CareerSource Florida professional team and the leadership of LWDBs provide a forum to discuss strategic issues and to identify policy objectives and best practices for service delivery.

(2) Implementation of State Strategy

(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

The **CareerSource Florida** Board of Directors includes representation of WIOA's core programs within the Florida Department of Education Divisions of **Career and Adult Education (DCAE)**, **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**, and **Blind Services (FDBS)**. WIOA core program teams are focused on strategic policy development and implementation and performance accountability reporting as discussed in section II(c)(2). WIOA core program partners continue their focus on areas for improvement and strategy execution. Core program partners report on WIOA primary indicators of performance and other performance information used to ensure continuous improvement.

All core programs work to:

- (A) Fully implement a coordinated business relations program across core programs that includes leveraging community partnerships that engage and support Florida's employers and increases access to employment and educational services.
- (B) Design and implement enhancements to the Service Provider Choice Directory to assist customers in making informed choices about employment services providers.
- (C) Share cross-referral outcomes.
- (D) Educate potential employees who do not have a high school diploma (or equivalent) and whose English-speaking skills need improvement. By obtaining required education and skills for today's workplace, welfare dependence will decrease, and opportunities will increase for high-skill and high-wage careers.
- (E) Continue efforts to ensure partners recognize and support VR's role as the primary employment agency for all individuals with disabilities, including those with most significant disabilities. VR works closely as a member of the Statewide Employment First Interagency Committee, including the Department of Economic Opportunity, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Division of Blind Services, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Service, Department of Children and Families – Mental Health, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Florida Developmental Disability Council, ARC of Florida, Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and CareerSource Florida. This promotes the coordination and collaboration of services on a statewide basis.
- (F) Review pilot and innovative employment practices and assess the feasibility of replicating successful programs. Participate in developing a consortium of supported employment providers that identify, share and promote innovative employment practices.

The Division of Blind Services will work:

- (G) To utilize the quality assurance team to review case records on a monthly basis. Any errors or anomalies will be addressed with the appropriate staff and/or community partner.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- (H) To support and encourage participation in the SSA's Community Work Incentives Coordinator training to provide consumers with accurate information to help them make an informed decision regarding benefits and to make a successful transition to employment.
- (I) To educate staff, partners, and consumers on Workers' Compensation for consumers participating in work-based learning experiences to ensure they understand the process for reporting injuries.
- (J) To increase access to and utilization of accessibility tools by obtaining unlimited licenses for assistive technology such as JAWS (computer screen reader) and Zoom Text (screen magnifier and voice over). Core partners will be able to access this technology by way of the FDBS. The FDBS will also provide licenses to other agencies as requested.
- (K) With core partners to plan and establish a Hub for common intake. This will allow potential clients to complete one intake form, which will divert to the appropriate organization based on the applicant's service needs.
- (L) With core partners to increase participation in apprenticeship programs. The Division will collaborate with the Division of Career and Adult Education to select appropriate apprenticeship models and reach out to employers to encourage sponsorship of registered programs.
- (M) To automate the process of uploading AWARE data on job-ready consumers to the DVR Ability Works Job Portal – enabling upload into TAP and Employ Florida.

(B) Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

Enhancing Partner Collaboration

A unified plan approach was selected for the first plan and two-year modification submitted under WIOA. These plans included required core partners: CareerSource Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services and Career and Adult Education. Florida has built on the collaboration established through the WIOA Task Force, the WIOA Core Leader Team and smaller workgroups by involving other programs such as the Florida College System and organizations as needed in workforce system updates and by identifying opportunities for partnerships.

This allowed Florida to be deliberate and thorough in its strategic planning efforts across programs while creating the foundation for a combined plan approach.

VR collaborates in the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities in DJJ residential facilities.

Partnering with State Colleges

The Florida College System (FCS) supports, strengthens and expands efforts by its post-secondary institutions to deepen the region's talent pool in targeted sectors. Over the next two years, these special efforts will include post-secondary credential attainment through the Last Mile College Completion, a program included in the Governor's 2020 budget. This scholarship program, which is currently supported by all FCS institutions, will allow Florida residents who meet certain criteria and are within 12 credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree to complete their programs and be eligible for in-state tuition. Other programs to deepen the talent pipeline include an expansion of the current tuition waivers for spouses and dependents of deceased law enforcement, correctional officers and firefighters to include spouses and dependents of deceased first responders and members of the Florida National Guard and U.S. Armed Forces. Florida currently has this program for veterans and active duty military.

Partnering with Florida Universities and Others

VR supports participants attending Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) for individuals with unique abilities. VR has dedicated IPSE Liaisons located throughout the state to participate in IPSE student selection committees and program development.

A common theme throughout Florida's WIOA implementation strategy is the continued alignment with potential combined planning partners and optional one-stop career center partners. Through the WIOA established interagency teams, increased coordination with these organizations and agencies is sought.

FDBS maintains cooperative agreements with Community Rehabilitation Providers and other entities not carrying out activities under the Workforce Investment System. FDBS has a long-standing contractual relationship with its statewide CRPs and values the services they provide to clients. For FDBS, CRPs are private, non-profit programs that provide specialized rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Specialized services include education, independent life skills, job training and job placement services to clients and their families who are participating in the vocational rehabilitation program.

(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Between 2016-2017, WIOA Strategy Implementation and Data Integration workgroups met to improve and align services provided by the unified state plan programs. Statewide policies and practices were reviewed by this team to ensure needs were considered and potential impacts understood. Continuous improvement of service to individuals is paramount to the success of Florida's workforce system. Core partners work to ensure career centers are available to serve all job seekers regardless of obstacles to employment, level of need, or degree of career development.

Florida emphasizes integrated service delivery in improving services to individuals. Core program partners are dedicated to developing strong strategic alliances linking employers and job seekers to quality services including employment, training, education, human resource assistance to employers and career and business development which improve the economic growth of Florida counties. VR has active representation on 23 of the 24 LWDBs and is represented by FDBS on the remaining board. VR is physically collocated in 15 geographic locations and seeks to expand collocations.

The FDBS is committed to providing high-quality services to people with bilateral visual disabilities and supporting individuals in making employment choices consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests. The FDBS demands an accountable and exemplary division workforce that ensures high-quality services. Employees receive annual training on division policies/procedures, new federal/state regulations, and the responsibilities of their positions. All employees attend New Employee Orientation where they are introduced to Client Services and the VR Program. On September 20, 2017, the FDBS renewed its Intensive Technical Assistance Agreement with WINTAC for five years. WINTAC provides training on specific topics, such as Pre-Employment Transition, VR, Supported Employment, Career Pathways, etc. The FDBS seeks to employ and develop Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRCs) for services delivery; there are currently 15 CRCs on staff.

The vocational rehabilitation counselors assist individuals in pursuing their goals as detailed in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by using supported employment resources selected to produce the best results for the individual. Job seekers are referred to online tools such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), Employ Florida, and Ability Works to assist in finding and applying for jobs. The Abilities Work Help desk connects employers to a qualified workforce by sending notifications to the FDBS, VR, CareerSource Florida, etc., when companies have job openings and are looking to fill positions with a qualified person with a disability. The FDBS supervisors, counselors and Employment Placement Specialist staff complete the Employment Outcomes Professionals II training. This training provides staff with marketing and sales skills directly relating to real job development. The EPS and counselors meet weekly

to discuss labor market information, work experience opportunities, internships, and the hiring needs of employers.

The vocational rehabilitation counselors will actively involve clients and families as appropriate in assessment, planning and decision-making throughout the service delivery process. FDBS continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its job placement services and makes needed improvements. An Employment Outcomes Report is completed and reviewed monthly to track individuals who are ready to work. The report measures how many individuals have found gainful employment and how long it takes to assist individuals in obtaining employment.

The Division provides ongoing training for its staff and will review and revise policies and processes to ensure efficient services. Onsite reviews of community providers are conducted with an emphasis on adherence to state policies, compliance of federal regulations, case documentation, IPE signatures, timeliness of eligibility determination, activities tied to the IPE, and authorization approvals. The quality assurance team maintains knowledge of all current federal/state regulations affecting the vocational rehabilitation program. This team reviews case review forms for trend analysis and to identify areas in need of improvement. The Division plans to develop strategies that streamline internal processes to provide quality-efficient services to consumers.

(D) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

The CareerSource Florida network, including the Business and Workforce Development team at CareerSource Florida and its LWDB partners, offers businesses in Florida or businesses relocating to Florida a completely integrated talent support solution consisting of the state's employee recruitment, retention and training services. As a component of its ongoing focus on continuous improvement, CareerSource Florida works to enhance employer satisfaction and measure effectiveness of employer outreach programs.

CareerSource Florida collaborates with industry associations, economic development partners, local board sector-focused business services managers and other partners targeting Florida's Targeted Sectors of Focus. This sector strategy approach helps businesses meet their recruiting, hiring and training needs, while placing a priority on those targeted industries that matter most to Florida's economy. Florida leverages the Salesforce software platform as a customer relationship management tool, allowing best-in-class management of interactions with stakeholders. This common system enables Florida's LWDBs to work together to enhance customer and business services. Core program partners participate in conversations about using Salesforce in their business outreach activities.

Vocational Rehabilitation formalized a Business Relations Program focused on building and sustaining partnerships with business and industry through effective services driven by employer needs. These partnerships will lead to competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR customers.

The Florida Division of Blind Services is expanding business relationships with employers at the local level to identify and maximize competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for adults and students. Each district holds membership with one or more chambers of commerce. Employment Placement Specialists work with employers on their hiring needs and setting up work experiences. This gives job seekers opportunities for work-based learning experiences, training and obtaining employability skills.

The Florida Division of Blind Services will provide training to employment staff; increase utilization of the Talent Acquisition Portal by job seekers and employers; increase use of the Abilities Work Web Portal at abilitieswork.employflorida.com and its help desk; develop new vocational training programs at the residential rehabilitation center; continue sponsorship of self-employment opportunities; sponsor

technology training; sponsor academic and vocational training; encourage careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to qualified individuals; and provide consultation and technical assistance to community partners and employers to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

The Florida Division of Blind Services works in partnership with chambers of commerce across the state to support the ongoing development of disability-owned business. The Employment Placement Specialists participate in EOP II training to improve marketing skills when communicating with employers. The Employment Placement Specialists build long-term relationships with businesses via outreach and rapid engagement with employers to meet their needs.

Florida seeks to increase collaboration between employer services to leverage expertise and prevent and eliminate duplication. Florida will work to coordinate employers' services across all WIOA program partners.

(E) Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Florida Talent Development Council

In 2019, the Florida Legislature replaced the Higher Education Coordinating Council with the Florida Talent Development Council (FTDC). The new council, composed of legislative, business, workforce development and postsecondary education leaders, was tasked with developing a coordinated, data-driven, statewide approach to meeting Florida's needs for a 21st century workforce. More specifically, the FTDC was given the statutory responsibility to develop a state strategic plan for talent development that positions Florida to achieve its 2030 educational attainment goal. The "Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning" goal is for 60 percent of working-age Floridians to hold a high-value postsecondary credential by 2030. This "SAIL to 60" goal is a priority for Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature. It also is a key initiative in support of the Governor's goal, outlined in Executive Order 19-31, to make Florida No. 1 in the nation for workforce education by 2030.

The FTDC, which is administratively supported by DEO, is made up of the following members:

- One member, appointed by the Governor, to serve as the chair
- One member of the Florida Senate
- One member of the Florida House of Representatives
- The President and CEO of CareerSource Florida, Inc.
- The President of Enterprise Florida, Inc.
- The Executive Director of the DEO
- The Commissioner of Education
- The President of the Florida Council of 100
- The President of the Florida Chamber of Commerce
- One member of the State Board of Education
- One member of the Board of Governors

Additionally, other state education leaders serve in an ex officio, nonvoting capacity. They are:

- The Chancellor of the State University System
- The Chancellor of the Florida College System
- The Chancellor of Career and Adult Education
- The President of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida

- The President of the Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges

The FTDC began meeting in October 2019 to develop a strategic plan framework that addressed the following areas required for inclusion in the new state plan for talent development:

- Identify Florida's fastest-growing industry sectors and the postsecondary credentials required for employment in those industries.
- Assess whether postsecondary degrees, certificates, and other credentials awarded by Florida's postsecondary institutions align with high-demand employment needs and job placement rates.
- Identify strategies to deepen and expand cross-sector collaboration to align higher education programs with targeted industry needs.
- Establish targeted strategies to increase certifications and degrees for all populations with attention to closing equity gaps for underserved populations and incumbent workers requiring an upgrade of skill.
- Assess the role of apprenticeship programs in meeting targeted workforce needs and identify any barriers to program expansion.
- Identify common metrics and benchmarks to demonstrate progress toward the 60 percent goal and how the SAIL to 60 Initiative can provide coordinated cross-sector support for the strategic plan.
- Recommend improvements to the consistency of workforce education data collected and reported by Florida College System institutions and school districts, including the establishment of common elements and definitions for any data that is used for state and federal funding and program accountability.
- Establish a timeline for regularly updating the strategic plan and the established goals.

The Council chose to approach its work by creating five workgroups to develop proposed goals and strategies in the following areas: Policy and System Alignment, Workforce Readiness, Cross-Sector Collaboration and Engagement, Data and Accountability, and Equity and Access. Ultimately, those groups produced a series of recommendations that were deliberated on, enhanced and approved by the Council. The FTDC also adopted the following vision for this work: "Create and foster cross-sector collaboration between educational institutions, economic development and workforce needs; thereby, creating an accountable talent pipeline toward workforce readiness that fuels economic growth and evolving career pathways for all Floridians. Utilize strategic planning, data accumulation and enhanced government communication to achieve alignment between employer needs and valued and accountable education programs — beginning at elementary school through high school — and continuing to postsecondary and a credential-based education system."

In December 2019, the Council delivered [the first plan](#) with 20 goals to the Governor and Florida Legislature, while acknowledging that it is a living plan that will serve as a foundation for the critical work ahead to align programs and credentials with the needs of employers and increase education and training attainment. The plan will be continuously refined as needed. In 2020 and beyond, the FTDC will continue meeting to implement the plan's goals and strategies, as it continues to provide statewide leadership to assist in Florida's progress toward the attainment goal.

Blending Academics with Career and Technical Education

The VR coordinates with state and local education agencies and officials to collaboratively offer youth with disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for careers in the 21st century. Collaborations such as High School High Tech, Project SEARCH, Work-Based Learning Experiences, and Postsecondary Education programs engage youth in both classroom and practical instruction that blends

acquisition of certificates and work skills that align with occupations available through Career and Technical Education. Hands-on career exploration and preparation activities where learned skills, attitudes and behaviors can be applied in practical or real-world situations help youth to become and stay engaged.

The Division of Blind Services plans to establish an Information Technology Credentials Program at the Rehabilitation Center. The Division will collaborate with Career and Technical Education to identify course outline and establish credentials.

Collaborating with Florida's Universities and Colleges

The Division of Blind Services works with state universities that provide master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Activities include attending board meetings and presenting to college classes upon request to share pertinent information related to the Division and recruitment efforts. Vocational rehabilitation staff utilize the "Find My College Major" website to assist students who are unsure of their career/education goals. This website serves as a single point of reference for individuals seeking information on Florida's colleges and courses/degrees. The FDBS will work with colleges and universities to develop a process to implement the Last Mile Initiative, spearheaded by Governor Ron DeSantis. This initiative is designed to help individuals who started college but did not complete enough credit hours to earn a degree. These individuals must be Florida residents and must have attended the college or university within the past 8 years.

The Adult Education staff within the Division for Career and Adult Education will provide professional development on career pathways to FDBS staff.

Facilitating Postsecondary Education

VR has an interagency agreement coordinating transition services with state education officials (FDBS, BEESS). This state-level agreement includes agencies responsible for providing transition services to students leaving high school and going into postsecondary education/training, support services and/or employment. These agencies meet regularly to share information, ideas and initiatives; to collaborate on training and special projects; to cooperate in planning and budgeting; and to support mutually beneficial areas of work.

The VR has a representative on the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee. The representative works closely with the regional representatives of Project 10: The Transition Education Network, which is funded through a grant from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services within the Florida Department of Education to the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. Project 10 helps Florida school districts and stakeholders increase their ability to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities and improve student academic success and postsecondary outcomes. Project 10 helps educators, parents, students, agency representatives and other stakeholders by providing capacity building support to implement secondary transition services, interagency collaboration, transition legislation and policy and student development and outcomes. VR counselors serving transition students participate in each area's local interagency councils. Interagency councils are a collaborative effort between VR and Department of Education partners, public high schools, adult service agencies, workforce programs, parents, students, advocates and employers cooperating to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

The FDBS has a formal interagency agreement with other divisions within the Florida Department of Education that provide transition services to high school students progressing to postsecondary education/training, support services, and/or competitive integrated employment. These agencies agree to meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives; collaborate on training and special projects; cooperate in planning and budgeting; and support areas of work that are mutually beneficial. This agreement functions as a transition services model for improved collaboration, communication, coordination, and cooperation among the parties included in the agreement.

(F) Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

Partnerships with School Districts

VR partners to provide Work-Based Learning Experiences with some local school districts. VR Transition Youth services align with the Pre-Employment Transition Services required under WIOA. VR is seeking an expansion of capacity by encouraging school districts to become Pre-ETS providers

Leveraging Partnerships for Exceptional Education and Student Services

The FDBS and VR entered into an MOU with the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS). This state-level interagency agreement requires partners to provide transition services to students progressing from high school to postsecondary education/training, support services and/or employment. Parties under this agreement meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives; collaborate on training and special projects; cooperate in planning and budgeting; and support mutually beneficial areas of work.

Florida's Eligible Training Provider List

CareerSource Florida uses DEO statewide data and LWDB data to produce and transmit critical labor market intelligence to the CareerSource Florida network, educators and training providers and to economic development partners. This information can be used in partnership with eligible training providers to ensure the training needs of Florida employers are met.

(G) Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

The Governor's vision for increasing access to training and opportunities for individuals is anchored in state statute which requires 50 percent of the formula funds for adults and dislocated workers to be allocated to Individual Training Accounts (ITA). This requirement affirms the Governor's vision that most funds are allocated for direct training-related costs. Costs that qualify under the 50 percent rule include all customer service costs associated with the ITA program such as tuition, fees and books and other training services. Florida allows LWDBs to establish ITA limits and durations.

If necessary, local boards may obtain a waiver from the State ITA reserve requirement by applying to DEO. For consideration of a waiver from the State ITA reserve requirement and to guide the review process by DEO and CareerSource Florida, the requesting LWDB must submit a waiver application identifying the requested reduction from the statutorily required State ITA reserve, specifying the percentage (between 0 and 50 percent) of Title I funds for Adults and Dislocated Workers that the local area proposes to reserve for the required training services. This request must include supporting data describing how the reserved training funds will be spent for State ITAs and each of the other authorized training services, and how the diverted training funds will be spent for other services.

Documentation must substantiate the lack of demand for each authorized training service; the substantially greater demand for career services and business services, relative to training services; the qualitative and quantitative financial impact that the statutorily required State ITA reserve requirement has on the provision of services for clients seeking or receiving training services; or the exceptional circumstances that warrant granting a waiver.

Factors DEO and CareerSource Florida may consider in deciding to grant an ITA waiver may include whether the local area is contractually obligated or is seeking participation in a training program funded by a partner, for which the local workforce development board will provide career services; whether the local area is contractually obligated or is seeking participation in a major economic development initiative of regional impact that will result in significant job creation, to the extent the initiative does not interfere with the priority of services to other clients as required by federal law; or whether the local area is entirely contained within a statutorily designated Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC).

LWDBs requesting a waiver from the State ITA requirement must submit a budget (or proposed budget) showing program components and major breakouts for each program including one-stop services, training providers, supportive services, administrative costs, etc.; a description of how the current and long-term unemployment rate for the local area will be impacted by a waiver, should it be approved; documents identifying the local area's efforts to increase demand from individuals to meet market needs (to address the talent gap); documentation that the local workforce development board and the chief elected official approved the waiver request; and an agreement that, if the conditions warranting the waiver change, the local area commits to comply with the State ITA reserve requirement and will notify CareerSource Florida of such compliance.

LWDBs are responsible for their respective Targeted Occupations List (TOL) or using the state TOL. Private postsecondary institutions must be licensed with the Commission for Independent Education. All training institutions must report student data to the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) maintained by the Florida Department of Education.

The FDBS will allocate 15 percent of its federal allotment to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for all students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for these services. Pre-ETS are accessible at the age of 14. Pre-ETS are provided through the age of 21, provided that the student is receiving special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or when the individual has a disability, for purposes of Section 504 of the Act.

Individuals meeting the definition for Pre-Employment Transition Services at the time services are initiated will continue to qualify for such services through age 21, provided that he person is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or when the individual has a disability, for purposes of Section 504 of the Act.

(H) Improving Access to Post-secondary Credentials

Florida Career and Professional Education Act

CareerSource Florida collaborates with the Department of Economic Opportunity, DOE's Division of Career and Adult Education and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to provide certification opportunities to secondary students. Created by the Florida Legislature in 2007, the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act provides students with cutting-edge training and earned industry certifications required for high-skill, high-wage jobs in Florida's target and infrastructure industries. Through collaborative partnerships between education, industry, workforce and economic development entities, CAPE offers new and meaningful opportunities for students. CAPE supports local and regional economic development and helps attract and retain high-value industries to develop a diverse, knowledge-based economy.

Data reveal that students earning industry certifications have more positive student performance with higher average GPAs, lower rates of chronic absenteeism and disciplinary actions and a lower dropout rate. Students who earned a certification were more likely to take Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses than students who did not earn a certification. The earning of industry certifications correlates with higher student performance among high school students. Academy students who graduate with an industry certification outperform the academy students who graduate without an industry certification, with a higher placement rate in employment or post-secondary education. Public school districts are awarded additional funding for students earning industry certifications.

In academic year 2018-19, the 11th year of implementation of the Florida Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act, school districts registered 1,757 high school and 301 middle school career and professional academies, representing 52 of Florida's school districts as well as Florida State University

School (FSUS). In addition, the CAPE Act was amended in 2012-13 to include career-themed courses. School districts registered 1,233 unique career-themed courses, representing all of Florida's 67 school districts, as well as the Florida Virtual School, FSUS, and Florida A&M University Laboratory School.

CareerSource Florida, the Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education and the Department of Economic Opportunity continue to collaborate to enhance the process for submitting certifications for review and recommendation. A new submission application was launched and detailed information was provided to school districts, local workforce development boards and stakeholders by email, posted on the CareerSource Florida website, and provided in an online tutorial, a webinar and an in-person presentation at the Florida Association for Career and Technical Education (FACTE) Conference.

The Division will develop career pathways for occupations in high demand, including occupations with industry recognized certificates. Under DOE's Pathways to Career Opportunities grant, the Division intends to expand participation in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. Students, parents, and the community will receive notification of apprenticeship opportunities. The Division will work with businesses and employers to increase work-based learning experiences.

The list of industry certifications is updated annually, and final funding determinations are made by the Florida Department of Education. More information is available on CareerSource Florida's website at careersourceflorida.com/cape and on the Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education's website at fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu.

Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Youth Program

The VR Transition Youth program collaborates with education officials and partners to offer youth with disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for successful employment. Collaborations such as Work-Based Learning Experiences, High School High Tech, Project SEARCH and Postsecondary Education programs engage youth in experiences that blend academics with career and technical education and provide hands-on career exploration and preparation activities where learned skills, attitudes and behaviors can be applied. These evidence-based applications of learning, which includes internships and other work experiences, often lead to successful employment. For some students, these programs include earning post-secondary credentials which allow them to explore professional jobs that may lead to higher-wage careers. VR involvement in these collaborations provides funding for participants to receive needed services and other supports. This shared support helps partner programs to serve more youth. VR partnerships deliver career development and employment options through direct services to youth who would not otherwise have access to these opportunities. In addition, VR has delivered Pre-ETS under WIOA through a variety of initiatives throughout the year.

Adult Education Integrated Education and Training Program

The Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE) promotes the planning, development and implementation of an integrated education and training (IET) service approach that provides concurrent and contextualized adult education and literacy activities in combination with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. This program is afforded to all levels of adult education students. Professional development is provided to support the success of IET programs.

The IET service approach provides all levels of adult education students the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to:

- Transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs;
- Obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency; and
- Exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

All IET programs must include the following three components:

- Adult education and literacy activities (§463.30);
- Workforce preparation activities (§463.34); and
- Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupation cluster which can be any one of the training services defined in section 134(c)(3)(D), of WIOA.

In order to meet the “integrated” requirement of IET, all services must include the following:

- Adult education and literacy activities run concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement;
- Activities are of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available, particularly with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals;
- Occur simultaneously; and
- Use occupational relevant instructional materials.

The integrated education and training program must have a single set of learning objectives that identifies specific adult education content, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training competencies, and the program activities function cooperatively.

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Florida’s WIOA partners worked with economic development stakeholders to develop a common strategic vision for Florida’s workforce and economic development systems. Talent Supply and Education is one of the Six Pillars of Florida’s future economy, as defined by the Florida Chamber Foundation following years of collaboration and research with business and education stakeholders including: The Century Commission for a Sustainable Future; Florida Council of 100; Enterprise Florida, Inc., the state’s principal economic development organization; the State University System; and CareerSource Florida’s predecessor, Workforce Florida, Inc. Workforce development activities carried out by WIOA core programs directly support achievement of strategies under this pillar. Leaders from CareerSource Florida, Enterprise Florida, Inc., and DEO work closely to maintain a unified approach to job creation and retention. Leveraging resources of Florida’s workforce and economic development systems and fostering collaboration improves overall alignment with industry and education.

CareerSource Florida and many of its local workforce partners are actively engaged in the work of the Florida Economic Development Council, the professional association of economic, workforce and community developers. The council’s membership has cited the training programs and other business and talent recruitment services of the CareerSource Florida network as leading contributors to their efforts to retain and expand jobs in their communities.

State and local labor market information informs strategic policy development and decisions made by WIOA core programs and local workforce boards. Through the work of the Florida WIOA Task Force and resulting recommendations, the vice chairman of Enterprise Florida, Inc., has become a member of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. The chairman of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors has historically served on the Enterprise Florida, Inc., Board of Directors. Locally, all LWDBs coordinate with economic development partners, playing a role in retention, recruitment and economic growth.

Through leadership by the Florida Chamber Foundation, a two-year research effort, which the CareerSource Florida network was actively involved in among numerous state and local stakeholders, resulted in the “Florida 2030: A Blueprint to Secure Florida’s Future” report. The report includes 2030 key

targets and strategies, most of which have a workforce talent component, to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve Florida's talent pipeline for a better workforce
- Create good jobs by diversifying Florida's economy
- Prepare Florida's infrastructure for smart growth and development
- Build a perfect climate for business
- Make government and civics more efficient and effective
- Champion Florida's quality of life

By 2030, six million more residents will call Florida home and two million net new jobs will need to be created. To prepare for this continued growth and ensure Florida remains successful, the Foundation led the research and writing of the report for Florida's future to promote dialogue and action on collaborative efforts to develop high-wage jobs, diversify the economy, ensure global competitiveness and create vibrant and sustainable communities. This report reflects research to stimulate strategic thinking about Florida's future and engage business and community leaders in each of Florida's 67 counties in identifying key trends and the factors that can drive their regional economy.

CareerSource Florida's President and CEO serves as a member of the Foundation Board of Trustees and as a member of the Florida 2030 Executive Steering Committee. The CareerSource Florida network continues to be an instrumental partner and leader in working collaboratively to ensure Florida builds and maintains a globally competitive workforce.

CareerSource Florida also continues as a leader in another Florida Chamber Foundation priority. The Prosperity Initiative is elevating dialogue, planning and action among Florida's business community and leading entities in education, workforce development and philanthropy as well as economic and community development to combat poverty in Florida through better aligned goals.

Currently, Florida has more than 3.1 million people living in poverty. The significant number of Floridians living in poverty not only affects families and communities but businesses, the state's economy and competitiveness.

A good job provides Floridians living in poverty with an opportunity to apply their talents and skills to create a better life for themselves and their families and to become economically self-sufficient on a path to increased prosperity. By investing directly in opportunities for Floridians in need of employment to enter, remain and advance in the workforce, the CareerSource Florida network continues its mission-focused work to support this increased statewide focus on helping low-income Floridians participate in Florida's growing economy through meaningful employment that can lead to greater prosperity.

(b) State Operating Systems and Policies

(1) State Operating Systems

(A) State Operating Systems that Support Coordinated Implementation of State Strategies

Florida's workforce system data infrastructure comprises a strong federated model (interconnected) for data collection, management and reporting systems. The first system is responsible for collection, management and reporting of unemployment compensation data; the second system is the central hub for data collection management and reporting for Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), WIOA and state workforce/employment initiatives; and the third system collects data on SNAP and TANF individuals required to participate in employment and training. While all three systems operate under

different business rules, according to their programs, all systems communicate with each other on both transactional and data-warehouse technology levels.

(B) Data-collection and Reporting Processes

Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP)

One of Florida's most successful innovations in evaluation and performance tracking is the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program established in FDOE. This program helps evaluate the effectiveness of postsecondary education and training programs, particularly vocational education and similar career preparation programs. The scope of groups to be tracked rapidly expanded to cover most job training and placement programs including WIOA, Wagner-Peyser (WP), Adult Education, Job Corps, Veterans, Welfare Transition (WT)/TANF, SNAP, Apprenticeship, Reemployment Assistance (RA) claimants and ex-offenders. Nearly 600 groups or sub-cohorts are being tracked.

FETPIP follow-up data are electronically derived from Reemployment Assistance quarterly wage records, federal military and civilian personnel records, public assistance, incarceration/parole records and continued education rosters. This data informs Core Partner programs in completing quarterly and annual reports at the federal and state levels. Reports include extensive detail and longitudinal capabilities. Each group is tracked for at least two years. Many groups including high school graduates and dropouts, certificate programs and all levels of higher education are tracked over much longer periods. Quarterly reports detailing employment and public assistance status and outcomes are run and analyzed. For detailed information on FETPIP, including examples of annual outcome reports, please visit:

<http://fldoe.org/accountability/fl-edu-training-placement-info-program/>.

FETPIP data are provided to LWDBs, enabling them to evaluate the strength of training programs offered throughout the state.

(2) State Policies

Policy Development Framework

Policy development and implementation is a critical aspect of managing organizational performance. Systematic identification of the need for policy, a structured policy development process, an effective policy evaluation and approval process and consistent approaches for effective outreach, communications and training are essential components of a comprehensive policy framework. Organizations with sound approaches for the development and deployment of strategic and administrative policies are better positioned for successfully executing strategy and conducting effective and efficient day-to-day operations.

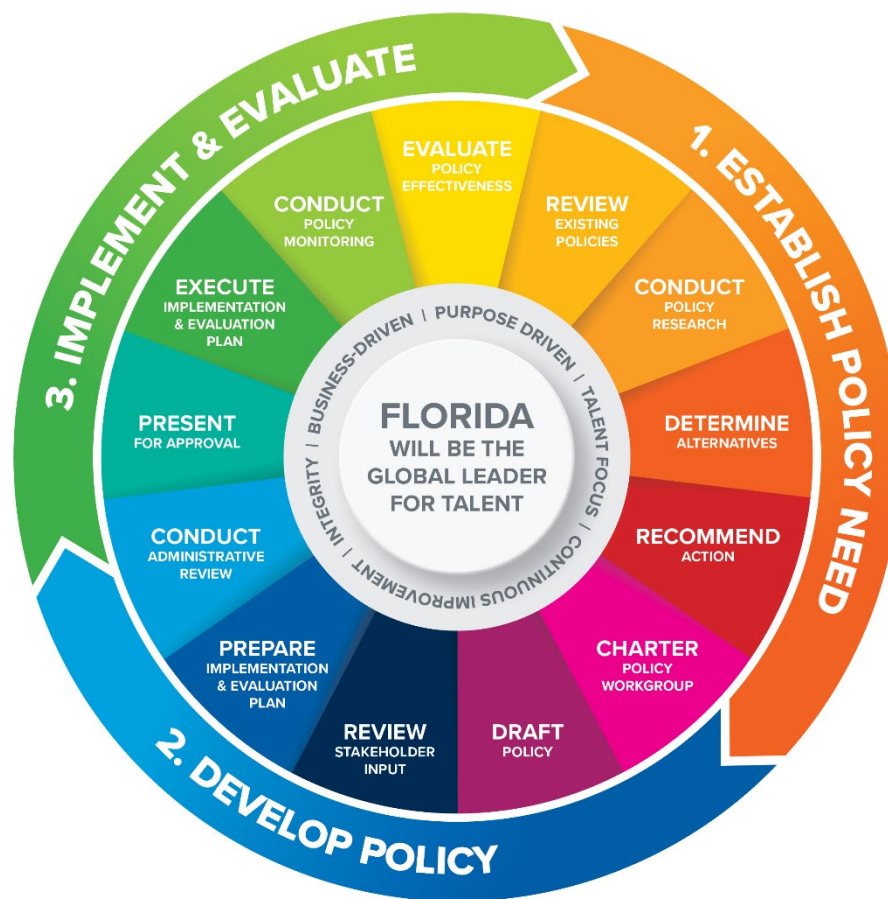
CareerSource Florida's Board of Directors made a distinction between strategic and administrative policies. Strategic policies are high-level principles or directional statements that inform or clarify legislative policy or workforce system strategies. These strategic policies direct decision-making at the program level and may result in the development of administrative policies.

In 2019, a Policy Development Workgroup was created consisting of staff from CareerSource Florida's Strategic Policy and Performance Team and the Department of Economic Opportunity's Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support. This Policy Development Workgroup created a comprehensive policy development framework designed to support the vision, mission, values, strategies and operations of the CareerSource Florida network and its statewide policy and investment board while strengthening the state workforce development system. This Workgroup meets regularly to determine the strategic and administrative policy and guidance needs of the workforce system. Subject-matter experts and stakeholders are included in this workgroup as necessary.

The Policy Development Framework is applied at the state level and is recommended as a guide for the development of local operating procedures and policies. The framework is made available to any state workforce system partner in policy development and implementation. In August 2019, CareerSource Florida demonstrated the Policy Development Framework at an in-person presentation attended by local workforce development board policy developers.

Figure 3.02
Policy Development Framework

Figure 3.02 can be viewed online at http://careersourceflorida.com/Policy_Development_Framework.png.



The Policy Development Framework consists of three major components:

1. Establish Policy Need;
2. Develop Policy; and
3. Implement and Evaluate.

Federal and state program guidance is communicated to local workforce partners through participation in state-level policy development activities. Strategic and administrative policy documents are shared with state and local partners who provide consultation to the Policy Development Workgroup prior to strategic or

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

administrative policy being issued. Once feedback from local boards, core partners and stakeholders has been reviewed and incorporated, if necessary, strategic and administrative policies are distributed throughout the workforce investment system by the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Information about the Policy Development Framework and features of CareerSource Florida strategic and administrative policy are available on CareerSource Florida's website at <https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/>.

The FDBS has a policy team to continually examine policies and procedures. Select policies are reviewed on a quarterly basis. The policy team uses data derived from the quality assurance reviews to determine which policies require immediate review. In 2019, the team reviewed and updated policies related to the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. Policies on maintenance, timeliness of services, reporting unsafe drivers, individualized plan for employment, and payment for services were some of the policies revised last year.

Links to updated policy resources are below:

- CareerSource Florida Strategic Policies <https://careersourceflorida.com/careersourceflorida-policies/>
- Department of Economic Opportunity Administrative Policies <http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers>
- Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Manual <http://www.rehabworks.org/policy.shtml>
- DBS Client Services Policies <http://dbs.myflorida.com/Leadership/Policies/index.html>
- Adult Education Assessment Technical Assistance Paper <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/adult-edu/technical-assistance-papers.shtml>
- Adult High School Technical Assistance Guide <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/adult-edu/technical-assistance-papers.shtml>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

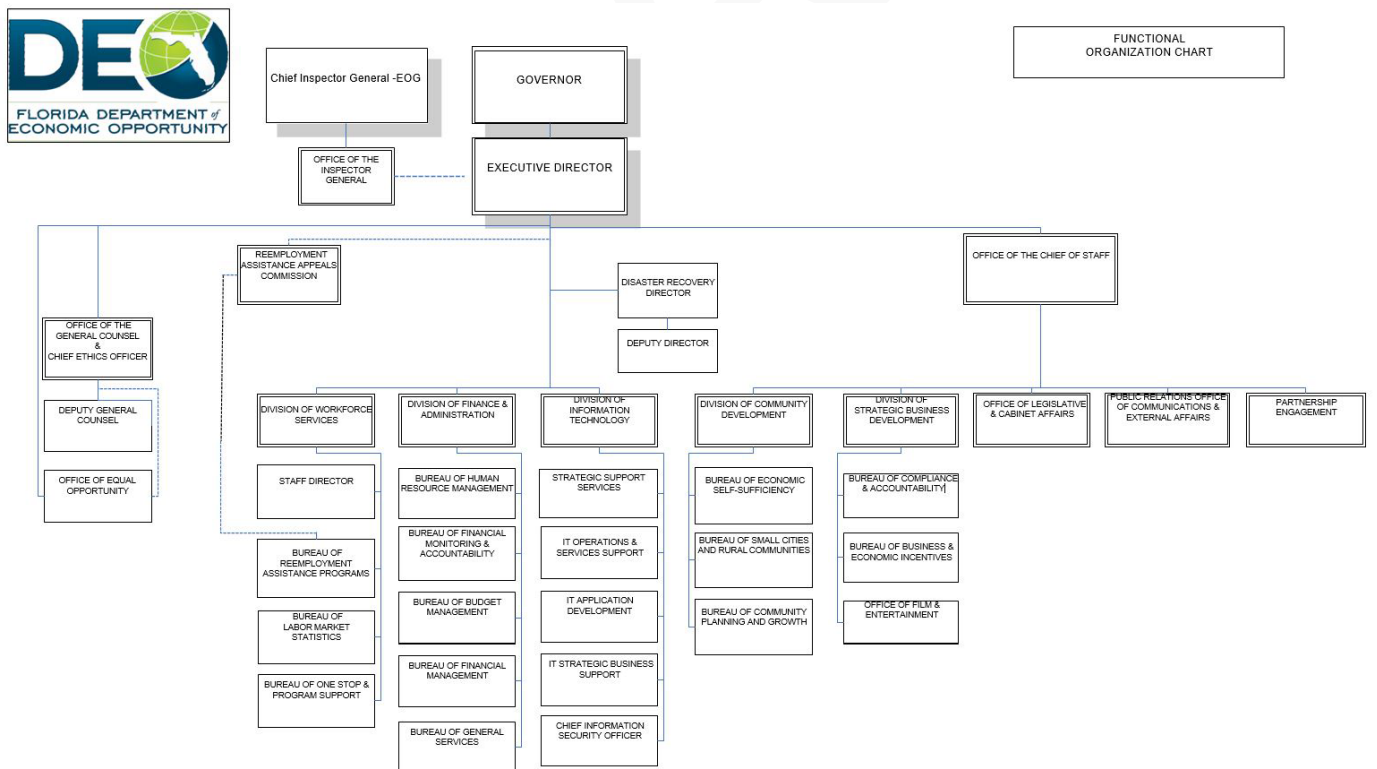
(3) State Program and State Board Overview

(A) **State Agency Organization.** Describe the organization and delivery systems at the state and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

Department of Economic Opportunity

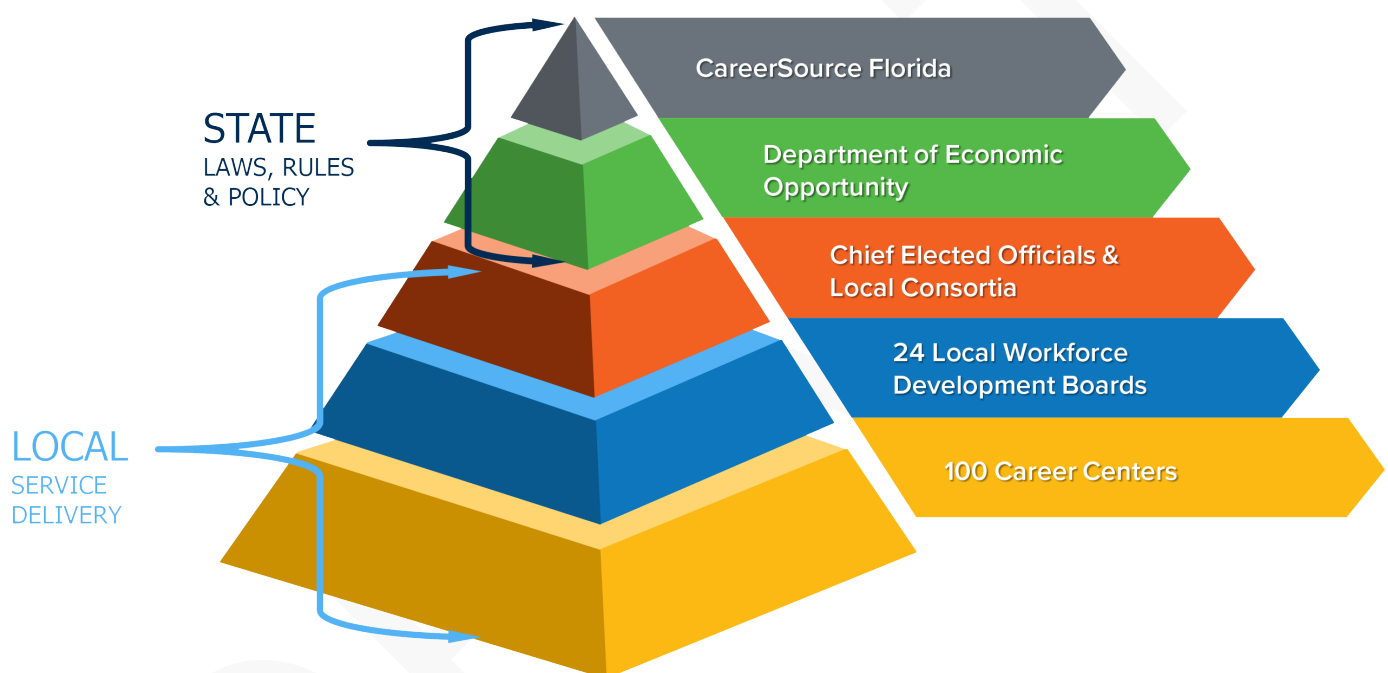
The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is the Governor's agency for workforce support and training, economic development and community development. DEO partners with CareerSource Florida and the state's 24 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to strengthen Florida's business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed and advance in their careers. DEO oversees the administration of the state's workforce system and receives and accounts for federal funds for the system. DEO reports financial and performance information to USDOL and other federal organizations. DEO distributes workforce guidance and policy initiatives and provides training, technical assistance and monitoring to LWDBs. DEO operates Florida's Reemployment Assistance program, Labor Market Statistics program and many other programs and initiatives.

Figure 3.03
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Organizational Chart



Administration of the state's workforce policy, programs and services is carried out by DEO and the business-led LWDBs. Services are delivered through approximately 100 career centers and service sites throughout Florida and through the state's online job matching system, Employ Florida, at employflorida.com. This includes 79 full-service sites and 29 satellite offices. Programmatic and administrative requirements are set forth in a Grantee-Sub-Grantee Agreement executed by DEO and each LWDB, requiring their compliance with all federal and state laws, regulations and any special state requirements.

Figure 3.04
Florida's Workforce System Organization



Florida Department of Education

The mission of the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) is “to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system, by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents and communities and to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress.”

FDOE serves more than 2.8 million students, 4,300 public schools, 28 colleges, 171,000 teachers, 45,000 college professors and administrators and 325,000 full-time staff throughout the state; the department enhances the economic self-sufficiency of Floridians through programs and services geared toward college, workforce education, apprenticeships, job-specific skills and career development. The department manages programs that assist individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or have other disabilities succeed either in school settings or careers – encouraging independence and self-sufficiency. FDOE provides oversight to 28 locally governed public state colleges and 49 school district technical centers.

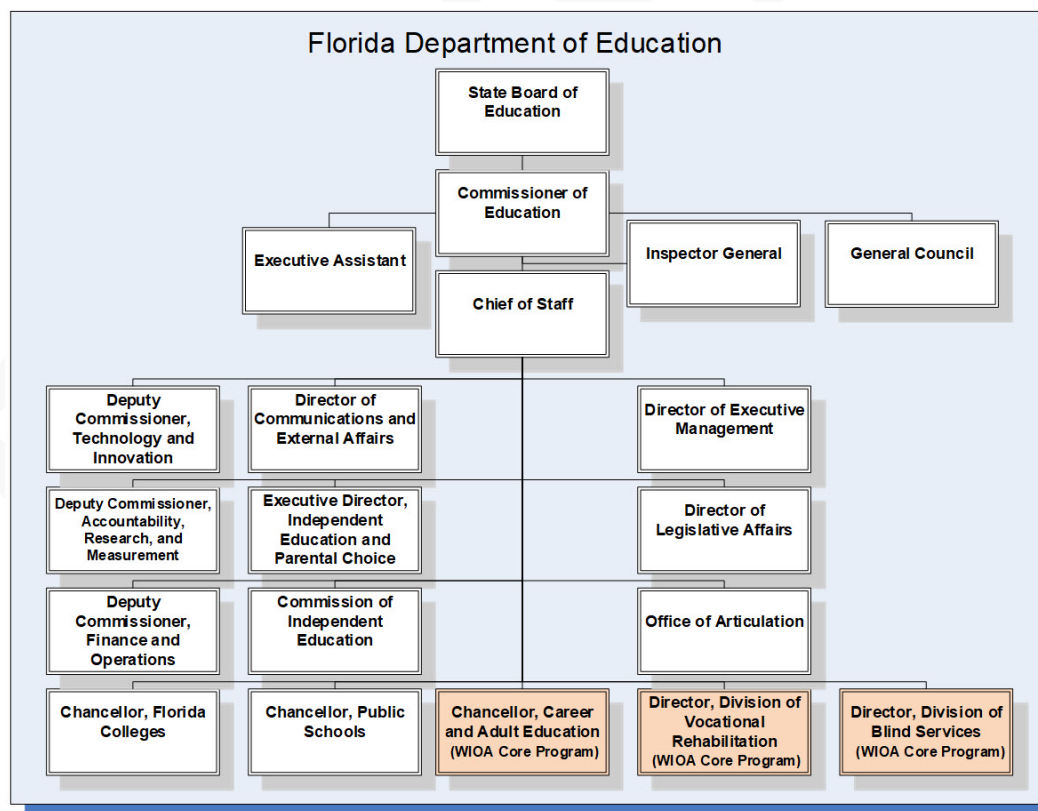
FDOE is currently appropriated 2,123.75 total full-time positions, including 884 positions in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 290 positions in the Division of Blind Services and 73 positions in the Division of Career and Adult Education. The department's annual operating budget for all entities in state fiscal year 2018-19 was approximately \$17.7 billion.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

The FDOE organizational and governance structure includes the State Board of Education which consists of seven members appointed by the Governor to staggered four-year terms, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Except for the State University System, the State Board of Education is the chief implementing and coordinating body of public education in Florida. The state board focuses on high-level policy decisions and has the authority to adopt rules to implement provisions of federal and state law. General duties include, but are not limited to, adopting education objectives and long-range plans for public education in Florida, exercising general supervision over the department, submitting an annual coordinated PreK-20 education budget and adopting uniform standards of student performance.

FDOE policies and operations are led by the department's senior leadership team, consisting of the Commissioner of Education, chief of staff, division leaders and directors of support divisions (see organizational chart below). FDOE manages the core WIOA programs for adult and career education, vocational rehabilitation and blind services. The senior leadership team develops strategies, designs operational policies and manages the department's business processes. Senior leader meetings are held weekly. Strategy development meetings are conducted quarterly. Strategies are tracked and adjusted as needed. FDOE financial and operational performance is reported on a regularly scheduled basis to the U.S. Department of Education, the Executive Office of the Governor and the Florida Legislature.

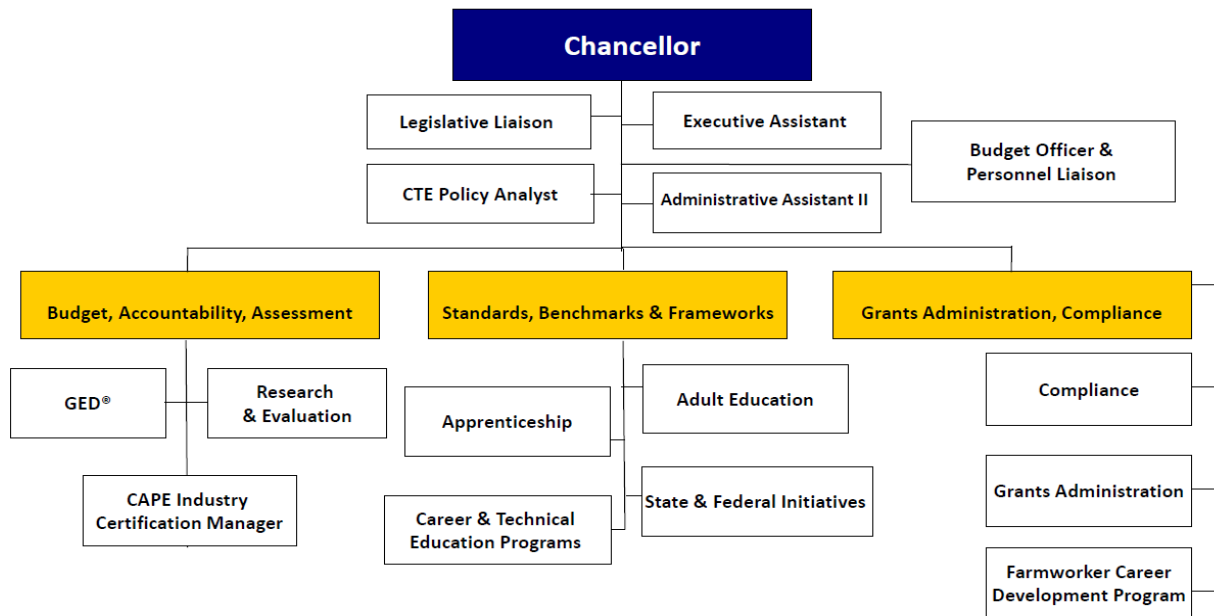
Figure 3.05
Florida Department of Education
Organizational Chart



Adult Education

The Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE) has oversight over the adult education system implemented in districts, colleges and community-based organizations. The division coordinates the distribution of federal adult education grants. DCAE works closely with local programs and provides guidance on state and federal guidelines, professional development and support in reporting data and technical assistance on program improvement plans.

Figure 3.06
Division of Career and Adult Education
Organizational Chart

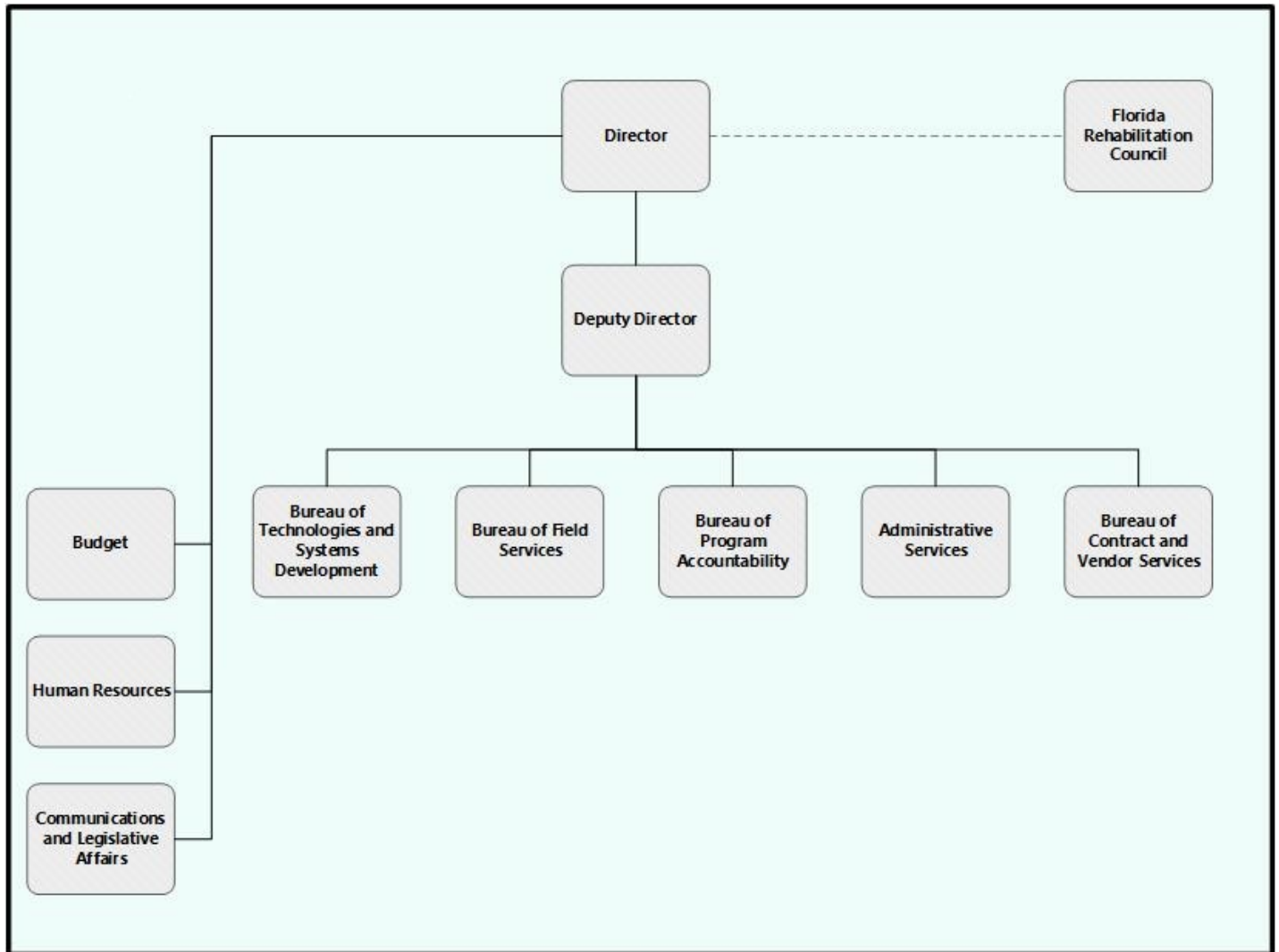


Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is federally established under the Rehabilitation Act, as Amended (1998) and reauthorized as a core program of WIOA (2014). In Florida, VR is a division of the Florida Department of Education. VR comprises a headquarters office, seven area offices and 96 unit offices located throughout Florida where customers receive direct services. The VR program is funded as a federal-state partnership, in which 21.3 percent of state general revenue matches a 78.7 percent federal grant. Most programmatic oversight and governance is established in the federal laws and code of federal regulations. Florida state laws for vocational rehabilitation are in Chapter 413, Florida Statutes. VR provides annual planning updates and annual/quarterly performance and financial reports to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) which conducts regulatory and programmatic monitoring and oversight activities approximately every four years.

WIOA retains the presence of a state rehabilitation council, known as the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC). Council members are volunteers appointed by the Governor and represent a variety of perspectives from the disability community. The council is not a governance board but is required by federal law to review, analyze and advise VR. Key collaborative activities with the council include input and recommendations for the VR services portion of the state plan, key programmatic policies, assessing VR customer satisfaction and the progress and outcomes of administrative hearings for VR customers. VR's organizational structure is represented in Figure 3.07.

Figure 3.07
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Organizational Chart

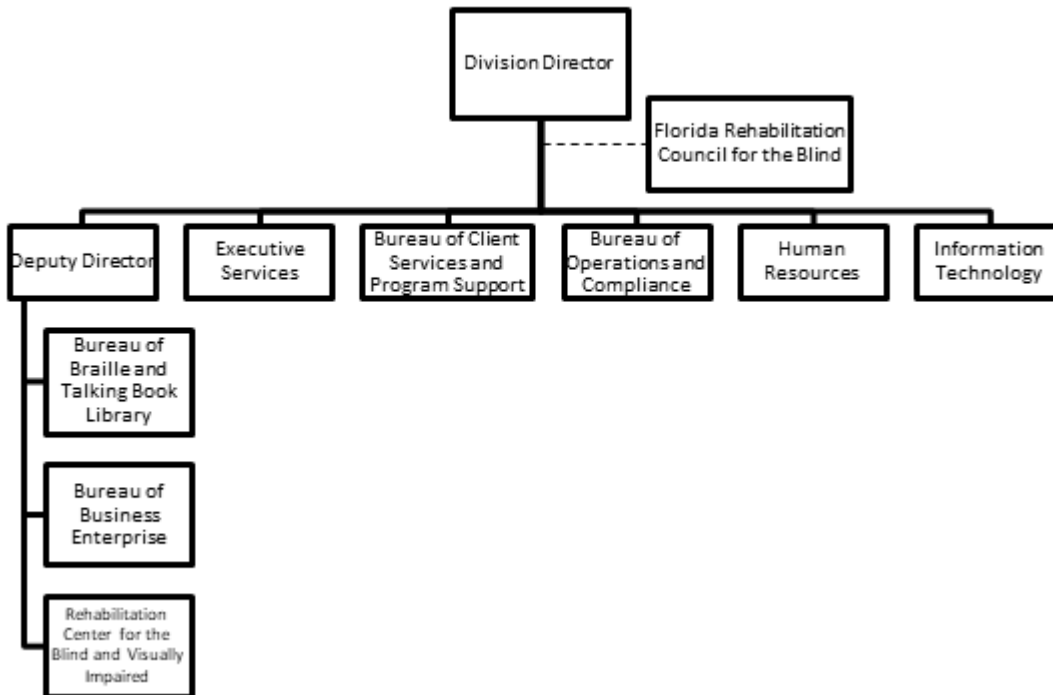


Division of Blind Services

The Florida Division of Blind Services (FDBS) employment program is a federally established program under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended (1998), and reauthorized as a core program of WIOA (2014). The FDBS vocational rehabilitation program is funded as a federal-state partnership. FDBS is part of the Florida Department of Education and serves blind and visually impaired Floridians. Coordination of Services is administered through 15 FDBS office locations, and the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. FDBS services are procured through a combination of state, federal and community funding. In partnership with community rehabilitation providers and other local partners, the division provides services to customers based on individual needs.

Figure 3.08
Division of Blind Services
Organizational Chart

Figure 3.08 can be viewed online at https://careersourceflorida.com/FDBS_Organizational_Chart.png



(b) State Board

1. Membership Roster

The full roster of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors with their affiliations is available at <https://careersourceflorida.com/boardroom/>.

2. Board Activities

CareerSource Florida's Board of Directors is statutorily required to meet either in person or by teleconference four times a year. CareerSource Florida councils meet separately, in person or by teleconference, as scheduled and/or at the request of the Council Chairman.

These meetings provide opportunities for the Board of Directors to address issues impacting the state network, guide and create strategic policy, obtain information about performance and oversee funding initiatives.

By law, CareerSource Florida is the statewide Workforce Investment Board charged with policy setting and oversight of the workforce system. Section 445.004, Florida Statutes, defines CareerSource Florida's purpose as designing and implementing strategies that help Floridians enter, remain in and advance in the workplace. Information about the role of each council and the executive committee is available, along with board and council meeting schedules and materials, on the CareerSource Florida website at <https://careersourceflorida.com/boardroom/>.

ii. Assessment of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

(A) Assessment of Core Programs

Core programs are assessed each year based upon actual performance relative to federally required negotiated levels of performance at the state and local areas. Using the Statistical Adjustment Model, negotiations are conducted with each LWDB annually. Each quarter, performance is evaluated and, if necessary, technical assistance provided in areas of concern. Periodic training sessions are provided as necessary to identify and replicate innovative practices and engage in continuous improvement.

(B) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs

Florida's WIOA core program partners worked through a WIOA Interagency Measurement and Performance Reporting Workgroup to identify and compare federal WIOA measurement and reporting requirements with current federal performance measures and reporting requirements. The workgroup developed a high-level proposal regarding collection, management and reporting of performance data. CareerSource Florida and DEO participate in the workgroup, providing analyses of existing measures with comparisons of WIOA indicators of performance.

Information technology data collection and reporting systems within each core partner are examined to ensure an integrated systems approach for statewide data collection, reporting and validation. The measurement and performance reporting workgroup designed a reporting flow process identifying how data are collected, compiled, integrated, evaluated and reported to USDOL and USDOE. This process reflects statutory requirements of individual programs and business requirements governing the collection and submittal of performance data. The group continues collaborative efforts, currently reviewing requirements for the sharing of data across core programs for the purposes of federal reporting. This recently resulted in a decision to evaluate the efficacy of adopting a data-hub approach designed to establish universal registrations and further integrate job-seeker referrals across WIOA core programs.

Performance assessments are conducted on a quarterly and annual basis through the core partners'

submission of data to FETPIP for data validation and compliance with WIOA requirements and subsequent reporting to USDOL and USDOE. DEO conducts statewide workforce performance assessments and works closely with core partners to enhance data collection and reporting. Performance reports are routinely provided to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors and to LWDBs.

(C) Previous Assessment Results

Department of Economic Opportunity

DEO continuously conducts data analysis of workforce system performance within the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) primary indicators of performance. This analysis is used in annual presentations to each local workforce development board to show how each LWDB is performing against its locally negotiated goal for the measures.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Florida workforce law expressly requires increased accountability of the workforce system for the state, localities and training providers. Florida has several valuable methods for continually monitoring performance as both real-time management tools and tools for continuous improvement.

Levels of Service

Total participants served during Program Year 2018-19 increased by 11.4 percent for Adults. Dislocated Workers participants served decreased by 9.0 percent and Youth participants served decreased by 6.7 percent. The chart below presents the total number of participants served and exiters leaving the WIOA program during Program Year 2018-19.

Figure 3.09
2018-2019 WIOA Participants/Exiters

WIOA Program	Total Participants Served	Total Exiters
Adults	29,866	8,988
Dislocated Workers*	7,012	2,841
Youth	12,352	4,111

* DW numbers include DW grants, which served 1,853 participants and had 787 exiters.

Figure 3.10
2017-2018 WIOA Participants/Exiters

WIOA Program	Total Participants Served	Total Exiters
Adults	26,804	11,405
Dislocated Workers*	7,705	4,032
Youth	13,236	3,832

* DW numbers include DW grants, which served 1,899 participants and had 1,163 exiters.

WIOA Performance Measures

Data on core measures and primary indicators of performance are collected from Florida's Management Information System (MIS), Reemployment Assistance (RA) Wage Records, Wage Record Information System 2 (WRIS2) through December 2019, and the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) beginning January 2020. The MIS gathers exit information on participants and covers the real-time data elements referenced above. RA Wage Records contain information such as wages used to determine retention information after exit. The WRIS2 and SWIS are databases consisting of wage and employment records from other states. WRIS2 and SWIS records supplementing Florida's RA data provide a more comprehensive picture of participant outcomes.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

The chart below illustrates Florida's negotiated rate for each of the required primary indicators of performance along with the actual statewide outcomes achieved. Pursuant to federal policy, states achieving at least 90 percent of the negotiated goal are considered to have met the goal. The 90 percent criterion is shown in parentheses. Florida met all performance targets for Program Year 2018-2019.

Figure 3.11
State WIOA Statewide Primary Indicators of Performance
Program Year 2018-2019

WIOA INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE	NEGOTIATED GOAL (90% of Goal)	ACTUAL PERFORMANCE	DIFFERENCE COMPARED TO 90% of Goal
Adult Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	85.0% (76.5%)	85.7%	+ 9.2%
Adult Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	82.5% (74.3%)	87.0%	+ 12.7%
Adult Median Wage 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	\$6,850 (\$6,165)	\$8,272	+ \$2,107
Adult Credential Attainment Rate	62.0% (55.8%)	84.2%	+ 28.4%
DW Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	83.0% (74.7%)	88.7%	+ 14.0%
DW Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	79.0% (71.1%)	86.7%	+ 15.6%
DW Median Wage 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	\$6,850 (\$6,165)	\$8,199	+ \$2,034
DW Credential Attainment Rate	68.0% (61.2%)	81.9%	+ 20.7%
Youth Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	75.0% (67.5%)	81.5%	+ 14.0%
Youth Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	69.0 % (62.1%)	80.1%	+ 18.0%
Youth Credential Attainment Rate	75.2% (67.7%)	79.8%	+12.1%

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Local Performance

Expected levels of performance or goals were agreed upon for each LWDB. The chart below summarizes outcomes based on these goals and the previous federal 90 percent criterion.

Figure 3.12
Local Workforce Development Board WIOA Performance
Program Year 2018-2019

WIOA INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE	STATE GOAL	# OF LWDBs ACHIEVING GOAL	% OF LWDBs ACHIEVING GOAL
Adult Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	85.0%	22 of 24	91.7%
Adult Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	82.5%	23 of 24	95.8%
Adult Median Wage 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	\$6,850	23 of 24	95.8%
Adult Credential Attainment Rate	62.0%	21 of 24	87.5%
Dislocated Worker Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	83.0%	22 of 24	91.7%
Dislocated Worker Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	79.0%	22 of 24	91.7%
Dislocated Worker Median Wage 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	\$6,850	20 of 24	83.3%
Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate	68.0%	18 of 24	75.0%
Youth Employed 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	75.0%	24 of 24	100.0%
Youth Employed 4 th Qtr. After Exit	69.0%	24 of 24	100.0%
Youth Credential Attainment Rate	75.2%	17 of 24	70.8%

*Based on U.S. Department of Labor Training and Employment Guidance Letter 26-15, August 23, 2017, "fails" is defined as the number of performance measures less than 90 percent of the negotiated goal. "Meets" is defined as the number of performance measures between 90 percent – 100 percent of the negotiated goal. "Exceeds" is defined as the number of performance measures above 100 percent of the negotiated goal.

Performance Indicators: Section 116 of WIOA identifies indicators of performance for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. These measures for FY 2019-2020 are below:

Figure 3.13
Florida Primary Indicators of Performance Goals
Program Year 2019-2020

Adult Measures	PY 2019-2020 Goals
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	85.2%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	83.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,850
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%
Dislocated Worker Measures	
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	83.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	79.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,850
Credential Attainment Rate	68.0%
Youth Measures	
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	75.5%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	69.0%
Credential Attainment Rate	75.5%
Wagner-Peyser Measures	
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	62.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	64.2%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,850

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Florida integrated customer satisfaction surveys are a component of its workforce management system, Employ Florida. Customer satisfaction survey results are invaluable to the state as they identify and improve on strategies implemented to better serve workforce services customers.

Figure 3.14
Customer Satisfaction of the Employ Florida System

Question	2017	2018	2019	Trend
It was easy to find information	↑ 68.5%	↓ 67.2%	↓ 67.1%	
The data was easy to understand	↑ 70.0%	↓ 68.5%	↑ 68.6%	
The data met my needs	↑ 69.3%	↓ 68.4%	↓ 68.2%	
Overall, how would you rate your visit with this website	↑ 69.8%	↓ 68.1%	→ 68.1%	
Users (Year to Date)	2,699,787	2,177,526	1,863,666	

Response rate equals the percentage of visitors to the Customer Satisfaction Survey page responding to the survey (7,711 respondents for Jan – Oct 2019).

* Annual survey results for each year (Jan – Dec) with 2019 data through Oct 31, 2019

Local Workforce Development Board Performance Reviews

Section 445.007(3), Florida Statutes, directs DEO, under CareerSource Florida's direction, to meet annually with each LWDB to review performance and certify compliance with state and federal laws.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

During PY 2018-2019, DEO staff presented information on the local board's program and financial performance. Annual presentations provide a unique opportunity for dialogue with local board members, offering them a complete understanding of how state and federal performance requirements impact their local board's performance outcomes.

Florida's approach to performance provides for consequences in situations indicating a pattern of low performance. Typically, low-performing local workforce boards are required to develop and implement their own Corrective Action Plans. If low performance persists, state-level staff work with local workforce board staff to design a state-approved performance improvement plan policy with specific deliverables, often supported by state and peer Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) and supplemental funding for specific interventions. Chronic performance and operational problems can result in progressive levels of direct, sustained onsite oversight by state staff or state-designated local workforce board peer supervision, receivership, or replacement of local executive staff. As an ultimate sanction, a local board may be re-designated or consolidated due to performance problems. To date, no local board has been sanctioned in this manner.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

VR's rehabilitation rate remains below the federal target, but has increased over the past two years, as has the overall number of customer employment outcomes. This is expected as VR releases customers from the Category 3 wait list.

VR collaborates with partners at the state and local levels to maximize employment services for people with disabilities. VR anticipates that the following projects will have a positive impact on program performance:

- Support employers and community partnerships through the Business Relations program.
- Continue providing Career Counseling/Information and Referral (CCIR) services to individuals participating in subminimum wage employment. Due to the positive response to CCIR services, VR is developing an orientation and follow-up process for CCIR service recipients who expressed interest in VR services.
- Assist customers in making informed choices about employment providers through the use of the Services Provider Choice Directory.
- Implement additional mental health training for counselors and expand Individual Placement and Support and to improve success for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Continue to increase provider capacity for Discovery, Customized Employment and CBTAC services.
- Implement additional Project SEARCH sites.
- Establish additional casework quality assurance review practices to validate data entry.
- Strengthen data validation practices to detect errors prior to reporting.
- Expand use of Benefits Planning services for Social Security recipients to promote self-support. Purchase these services when not available from SSA.

Figure 3.15
Florida Vocational Rehabilitation
Federal Performance Indicators and Targets

Federal Performance Indicators and Targets	Actual Performance (FFY 18)	Previous (FFY 17)
Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: Increase over prior year)	+1,173	+265
Indicator 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: 55.8%)	40.7%	37.8%
Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment Outcome (Primary) (RSA Target: 72.6%)	99%	96.4%
Indicator 1.4: Significance of Disability (Primary) (RSA Target: 62.4%)	88.8%	92.56%
Indicator 1.5: Earnings Ratio (Primary) (RSA Target: 52%)	56.4%	55%
Indicator 1.6: Self-Support (RSA Target: 53%)	42.78%	54.53%
Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (RSA Target: 80%)	94.74%	94%

Division of Blind Services

The Division commissioned San Diego State University to conduct a needs assessment in 2018. The assessment revealed the following areas of need related to the workforce system:

- Educate employers on the abilities of individuals who are blind or visually impaired
- Retain Employment Rehabilitation Specialists
- Market services to the community and increase public awareness of the organization
- Identify transportation resources to help clients become and/or remain employed
- Provide training on assistive technology at an early age
- Provide soft skills training to youth in transition
- Greater outreach and service to minorities, namely Hispanic and Asian individuals

Based upon the results of the needs assessment, the FDBS will develop strategies that are incorporated and described throughout this plan to address these needs. [See Section X\(j\) for further details.](#)

Adult Education

State targets are negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and established for each of the educational functioning levels for ABE, Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and ESOL on an annual basis. The target percentage is based on prior program year performance and a comparison of the state with national averages.

The percentages represent the portion of students who must meet the goal for each educational functioning level. The chart below shows the target and performance for 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 3.16
Florida Adult Education State Targets
Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education

Measure	2016-17 Target	2016-17 Performance	2017-18 Target	2017-18 Performance	2018-19 Target	2018-19 Performance
ABE Beginning Literacy	40%	22.24%	43%	26.93%	42%	15.51%
ABE Beginning	40%	27.34%	42%	28.88%	42%	16.46%
ABE Low Intermediate	39%	31.26%	41%	33.83%	42%	25.83%
ABE High Intermediate	40%	33.93%	42%	40.14%	42%	33.38%
ASE Low	42%	41.74%	44%	37.54%	42%	34.25%

Figure 3.17
Florida Adult Education State Targets English for Speakers of Other Languages

Measure	2016-17 Target	2016-17 Performance	2017-18 Target	2017-18 Performance	2018-19 Target	2018-19 Performance
ESL Beginning Literacy	42%	41.48%	44%	46.87%	40%	36.42%
ESL Low Beginning	51%	35.45%	53%	33.61%	40%	30.67%
ESL High Beginning	42%	28.86%	44%	27.51%	40%	25.11%
ESL Low Intermediate	39%	28.64%	41%	25.03%	40%	23.17%
ESL High Intermediate	38%	28.89%	41%	24.16%	40%	23.94%
ESL Advanced	26%	22.32%	28%	12.69%	40%	18.70%

(D) Evaluations and Research Projects

Selected research and improvement projects are aligned to strategies in this unified plan and monitored by the core program planning workgroup. To select projects, core program partners use the working group flow discussed in Section IV to recommend areas for analysis or improvements. These projects are presented to and approved by the leadership of the core program partner agencies and coordinated as necessary with the Secretaries of the Departments of Labor and Education.

iii. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

(A) State's Methods and Factors Used to Distribute Funds to Local Areas for —

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

Seventy percent of the total regional allocation is based on the required allocation factors of the relative number of unemployed individuals in an area of substantial unemployment, the relative number of unemployed individuals who exceed 6.5 percent of the civilian labor force in that workforce region and the relative number of economically disadvantaged individuals in the workforce region. The state board approved the application of the maximum allowable factor of 30 percent to the adult and youth regional calculations based on the relative excess poverty levels within the 24 local areas. Excess poverty is defined as the number of economically disadvantaged individuals (adult or youth) in excess of 1.25 percent of the civilian labor force within the workforce region.

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

Please see response for section III (5)(A)(i).

3. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned

Florida uses the following four factors (with relative weight of each factor noted) in determining allocation percentages used to distribute Dislocated Worker funding to the 24 LWDBs:

Figure 3.18
Distribution of Dislocated Worker Funding Percentages

Factor	Weight
12-month average of reemployment assistance claimants	20%
12-month average of unemployed individuals	25%
Mass Layoff Statistics (number of initial claims)	25%
Long-Term Unemployed (12-month average unemployment compensation Final Payments)	30%

Note: All factors are based on the most recent calendar year data available.

For each of these four factors, relative percentages are calculated for each LWDB, weights are then applied, and the resulting amounts combined to determine the full 100 percent factor for each local workforce development board.

Funds not distributed using these formula factors are reserved at the state level for discretionary awards

to address specific dislocation events and operate the state's rapid response unit.

(B) For Title II:

(i) Awarding multi-year grants on contracts to eligible providers

In accordance with Section 231 under Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIOA, the DCAE provides funding to eligible local entities to provide adult education services through a competitive process for 2020-2021, and a competitive process for multiple years. This includes grant projects funded under Section 225 – Corrections and Other Institutionalized.

A competitive bidding process will be conducted in the spring of 2020. DCAE will identify, assess and award multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities that may include a/an:

- Local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Public library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- Partnerships between an employer and an entity described above.

In the grant and contract awarding process, the required 13 considerations identified in Section 231 are included in the evaluation and selection process. Other factors considered include: the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, the ability to comply with WIOA expectations, the demonstrated and past performance of the entity in providing literacy instruction and meeting programmatic goals and the overall qualifications and expertise of the provider's personnel.

As part of the grant application awarding process, Florida will incorporate integrated education and training services which provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation and occupational cluster for educational and career advancement.

(ii) Direct and equitable access to all eligible providers

DCAE ensures all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants and contracts. The Request for Proposal (RFP) announcement, for the 2020 competition, will be distributed through various communication outlets including the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) communication system, regional and local media outlets, a formal press release, and an announcement on the FDOE website and major statewide educational publications to ensure all prospective eligible providers have access to the same standardized information. An annual webinar will be conducted to review the grant application process and facilitate any questions from prospective eligible providers. Grant application procedures are the same for all eligible providers.

(C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In Florida, vocational rehabilitation services are delivered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Division of Blind Services (FDBS), both of which are administratively housed in the Florida

Department of Education. Based on a mutual letter of understanding, Florida's federal grant funding for vocational rehabilitation services is allocated as follows: 83 percent of grant funding is allocated to VR and 17 percent of grant funding is allocated to FDBS.

iv. Program Data

(A) Data Alignment and Integration

1. Interoperable Management Information System

Core partner agencies convened a data workgroup to obtain information about the data systems and applications used by each partner and to identify essential actions to comply with data collection and reporting requirements for WIOA. These meetings revealed most state systems use the same database platforms, or platforms between partner agencies are highly extensible and interoperable. Florida will use a federated model with key systems interacting in intervals of real-time daily, monthly and quarterly. This allows minimal interruption of the data collection, management and reporting practices of each of the core and sub-entities involved within the partner agencies.

2. State's Plans to Integrate Data Systems

Streamlined intake takes place at the LWDB level instead of the system level. When intake data are captured by any of the core partner agencies and are necessary for the reporting and performance of other partner programs, these agencies contribute to a central repository system either in real-time or by system interface. Florida is also currently exploring the efficacy of using a hub system to further integrate across WIOA core programs through universal intake and referral of job seekers.

3. Aligning Technology and Data Systems Across Mandatory One-Stop Partner Programs

The state uses technology to assist with data collection across the mandatory one-stop career center partner programs. Most mandatory program data are captured and shared extensively between three systems using a strong federated architecture. All participants have access to the labor exchange and labor market information systems. The state is combining the SNAP and TANF data system into the labor market exchange and WIOA case management system to streamline services under one roof at local career centers. Completion of the new system is scheduled for 2021. The state is exploring the implementation of a data hub to allow workforce assistance experts access to case management information for all core partners including VR and Adult Education to ensure all available services are provided to job seekers.

4. State's Plans to Develop and Produce Reports Required Under WIOA Section 116

The state's current infrastructure and proposed infrastructure is positioned to meet WIOA reporting requirements. Through collaboration with the vendor of Florida's online job matching portal, necessary data files are configured on a quarterly basis for federal reporting and submitted through the Enterprise Data Reporting Validation System. Prior to submission, files are analyzed for data consistency and vetted using internal queries and tracking reports. All reports are reviewed and approved by both DEO and CareerSource Florida staff prior to certification. Florida core partners continue to work toward improving the process via modified data sharing mechanisms and reporting protocols.

(B) Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success

Driven by the transparency and accountability priorities of the CareerSource Florida Board, the

Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative assesses quarterly achievement and drives systemic change to help Florida become a global leader for talent. The initiative encourages the 24 local workforce development boards to focus on staff-assisted, high-quality services for Florida businesses in targeted sectors identified the local plans. The initiative also places a focus on accelerated job placement and high-quality training services to job seekers with barriers to employment as defined in WIOA. The Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative website can be viewed at <https://performance.careersourceflorida.com/CIP>.

CareerSource Florida and DEO offer ongoing technical assistance through webinars, one-on-one telephone consultations and in-person presentations, including trainings at the Florida Workforce Professional Development Summit.

Additional information is collected through CareerSource Florida sector initiatives, local board pilot projects and statewide higher education data to support market-informed decision-making and enable statewide policy development.

(C) Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Pursuant to Section 1008.39, Florida Statutes, FETPIP is mandated to provide outcome reporting on workforce and education programs in Florida. The primary mechanism employed by FETPIP is UI and State Wage Interchange System (SWIS). All core partners report participant data to FETPIP under WIOA. Florida UI wage information will be made available, as the law allows, to the core partners for employment and wage-related outcome identification for federal performance standards. With the use of wage record data, performance accountability and program evaluations for all core programs can be conducted in a similar manner.

(D) Privacy Safeguards

Core partners agree to follow all applicable federal, state and local laws pertaining to confidential information. Each partner ensures the collection and use of information containing personally identifiable information is limited to purposes that support its programs and activities.

v. Priority of Service for Veterans

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires priority be given to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient when providing individualized career services and training services for adult participants. Priority applies regardless of funding levels. The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) and the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 outlines the Priority of Service for WIOA-eligible veterans and eligible spouses. JVA calls for priority of service to be implemented by all "qualified job training programs," defined as "any workforce preparation, development or delivery program or service that is directly funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor." Other eligible individuals may be served only after first serving individuals who meet the established veteran Priority of Service criteria. Priority of service applies to participants served in the WIOA adult program. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy – Priority of Service outlines to local workforce development boards the requirements for providing priority of service to eligible individuals under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy – Priority of Service can be viewed online at [Insert Link to Policy].

USDOL implemented priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, as required under the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) and as specified by the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care and Information

Technology Act of 2006. JVA calls for priority of service to be implemented by all “qualified job training programs,” defined as “any workforce preparation, development or delivery program or service directly funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.” Since enactment of JVA in 2002, priority of service has been implemented under policy guidance issued by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The purpose of these regulations is to further articulate how priority of service is to be applied across all new and existing qualified job training programs.

Key Definitions

- *Covered person* – The regulations adopt and apply this statutory term, which includes *eligible spouses*.
- *Veteran* – The regulations specify that the definition for *veteran* specified at 38 U.S.C. s. 101(2) applies across all qualified job training programs for the purpose of priority of service.

The definition includes two key criteria:

- Service in the active military, naval, or air service
- Discharge under conditions other than dishonorable

Eligible veterans and covered persons identified at the point of entry shall be notified of programs and/or services available. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as CareerSource Florida career centers, as well as websites and other virtual service delivery resources.

In 2020, CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy on Priority of Service was implemented to outline to LWDBs the requirements for providing priority of service to eligible WIOA adult program participants in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, including the underemployed, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
2. Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who are included in the groups given WIOA priority selection criteria, including recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, including the underemployed, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. All other veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA priority groups (see items 1 and 2, above).
4. Other individuals who do not meet the statutory priority, but who are identified as priority populations established by the governor and/or local workforce development boards.
5. Other individuals who do not meet the statutory priority and who do not meet the governor’s or local workforce development board’s discretionary priority, but who do meet the WIOA adult program eligibility.

WIOA focuses on serving “individuals with barriers to employment,” and ensures access to these services on a priority basis. LWDBs must give priority for the provision of individualized career and training services in the following sequential order:

1. Recipients of public assistance.
2. Low-income individuals. Payments for unemployment compensation, child support

payments and old-age survivors' insurance are not excluded from income calculations for determining if an individual is low income.

3. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

LWDBs will ensure their local plan provides clear strategies and policies for providing veterans and covered persons with the highest quality of service at every phase of services offered. Policies shall be implemented to ensure eligible veterans and eligible spouses are aware of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service
- The full array of programs and services available to them
- Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services

Priority of Service means the right of eligible veterans and covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs. Eligible veterans and covered persons shall receive access to the service or resources before non-covered persons. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or covered person shall receive access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. Services can range from basic functions of the CareerSource Florida network, such as assistance with job search and identification of needed skills, to more customized initiatives, such as creating career pathways with corresponding competency assessments and training opportunities.

To accommodate Priority of Service at point of entry, the vendor, Geographic Solutions, implemented changes to Employ Florida to accommodate changes in the Priority of Service to veterans. A "pop-up" targets newly registering veterans and covered persons. This pop-up helps ensure newly registered veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of services and the types of services available under Priority of Service.

Monitoring Priority of Service

A veteran's self-registration automatically records service code 089, "Notification of Veterans Priority of Service." A manual service code 189 is recorded when the "Notification of Veteran Priority of Service" is given as a staff-assisted service. Veterans and covered persons who register in Employ Florida or who are being entered into Employ Florida by staff will be advised of their entitlement to priority of services and the code 189 is entered on the service plan screen in Employ Florida. The 089 and 189 service plan codes serve as a priority of service indicator in conjunction with periodic state- and local-level program reviews to ensure compliance with Priority of Service. Additional monitoring guidance from the ETA is forthcoming in accordance with 20 CFR Part 1010, Priority of Service for covered persons' final rule.

Eligible veterans and covered persons receive priority in all USDOL programs funded in whole or in part operating in Florida's career centers.

Programs include, but are not limited to:

- WIOA Adult
- WIOA Dislocated Worker
- National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG)

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Wagner-Peyser
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program

Additional programs include:

- WIOA Youth Program
- Community-Based Job Funding Grants
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) Program
- Indian and Native American Program
- H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants
- Office of Disability Employment Programs
- Labor Market Information Formula Grants
- Pilots and Demonstration Grants
- Research and Development
- Other Internet-based tools operated by USDOL grantees

Other examples of Priority of Services for veterans include the following:

- Referral of qualified veterans to new job openings, especially federal contractor job orders, prior to all non-veteran job referral activity
- Job fairs for veterans and all-inclusive job fairs giving priority to veterans

Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)

Florida's Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) refocusing is a partnership between DEO and the U.S. Department of Labor/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) established to meet the employment needs of veterans and eligible customers who contact local career centers throughout the state. Frontline/WP/WIOA staff focus on providing core services and initial assessment to veterans seeking employment assistance (majority of veterans will be served by frontline/WP/WIOA staff).

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists only provide intensive services to veterans with identified SBE(s). DVOP specialists determine potential SBE population using ETA 9173, which is a quarterly report, and the ETA 9169, which is an annual report, Individualized Career Services, previously referred to as intensive services, to veterans with identified SBE(s). The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) provides individualized career services directly to veterans and eligible persons who have significant barriers to employment, as identified in 38 U.S.C. s. 4103A(a)(1).

Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff conduct employer outreach and job development in local communities on behalf of all veterans served through local career centers, including working directly with the DVOPs with case-managed veterans with SBE(s).

Veterans entering career centers are identified and asked to complete the veterans' initial intake questionnaire. Customers are directed to the first available career center staff with their completed initial intake form.

Veterans are notified of Veterans Priority of Service (POS) and their intake questionnaire is reviewed. A complete initial assessment is conducted. Customers are only referred to a DVOP specialist if an SBE, which prevents the veteran from obtaining or maintaining meaningful employment, is identified during the initial assessment. The identified SBE(s) is documented in the case notes prior to referral.

The DVOP completes an objective assessment, then proceeds as appropriate for each individual veteran job seeker.

vi. **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for People with Disabilities**

DEO was one of the original recipients of the Department of Labor's Disability Program Navigator (DPN) grant in 2002 and has expanded services to people with disabilities at CareerSource Florida career centers throughout the state. The DPN grant focused on developing relationships across agency and entity lines to leverage resources and enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The grant was a catalyst to:

- Expand opportunities and increase staff awareness of the variety of assistive technologies and services available
- Provide technical assistance and training on assisting people with varying disabilities
- Ensure career centers were readily accessible

After the U.S. Department of Labor's DPN ended, CareerSource Florida awarded state-level funding to LWDBs to support accomplishments of the DPN grant and assist local areas with staffing, purchasing of assistive technology and services and modifications to workstations and offices to better accommodate people with disabilities. The CareerSource Florida center system expanded the range of local partners who provide supplemental services to maximize the success of people with disabilities in the workplace.

LWDBs continue expanding employment and training services for people with disabilities. Eighteen of Florida's 24 LWDBs have been approved as Employment Networks (EN) under the Ticket to Work program.

The state and several LWDBs have accessible mobile CareerSource Florida career centers that provide onsite services to people with disabilities. These mobile centers provide additional access to remote job fairs, assist those impacted by mass layoffs and provide access to other employment and training events for people with disabilities.

At the state level, the workforce system increased active participation on boards working to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities such as:

- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Florida Developmental Disability Council-led Employment First Initiative and its Employment and Transportation Task Force
- Community Services Block Grant Advisory Council
- Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) has representation within the workforce system and several members of the Statewide Strengthening Youth Partnership are entities focusing on providing quality services to people with disabilities.

VR has been a partner in the CareerSource Florida network since the inception of WIOA. Many other state and local entities provide resources that help to maximize employment opportunities for people with disabilities. These partners enhance services career centers offer customers and provide support the workforce system cannot. Non-core partners and the workforce system maximize comprehensive services for job seekers offering the opportunity for self-sufficiency through meaningful employment.

As noted previously in this report, VR launched the Abilities Work web portal within the state MIS, Employ Florida. The portal was created in response to recommendations made by the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities. The Abilities Work web portal was developed by DEO in partnership with VR, FDBS, APD, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and stakeholders from around the state to provide single point of contact for employers who seek to hire individuals with disabilities. The portal provides guidance and information. The portal's help desk is operated by VR staff with specialized knowledge in disability resources who can guide job seekers and employers navigating the employment system. DEO and these partners continue monitoring the web portal and make improvements in response to suggestions from users and staff.

Resources described above provide a strong foundation for accessibility in the CareerSource Florida network service delivery system. To support and strengthen existing resources, DEO's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) conducts regular onsite and desktop reviews of each LWDB's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and 29 CFR Parts 32 and 37.

LWDBs are required to conduct self-audits and participant data analysis to annually monitor their own compliance with the ADA. The primary compliance criteria are contained in Florida's Methods of Administration, as required by federal equal opportunity regulations. To obtain meaningful information about the level of service provided to people with disabilities, OCR conducts the following reviews as necessary:

- Staff interviews
- Customer surveys and interviews
- Facility accessibility survey review and assessment
- Review of customer informational materials, including materials in alternative formats and languages other than English
- Review of community contact programs

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Observation of center activities
- Complaint file review
- Discussion of intake and assessment processes, including provisions to serve people with disabilities or who are non-English speaking
- Review of compliance monitoring reports prepared by or on behalf of the LWDB
- Review of program and equipment available

OCR provides ongoing technical assistance to LWDB/career center staff on such topics as reasonable accommodation requests from customers and employees. Based on these technical assistance requests and its reviews of LWDBs' compliance with ADA requirements, OCR provides formal training onsite or on critical topics by webinar.

In 2013, VR introduced a strategic initiative to ensure accessibility of all agency components including programs, facilities, personnel and hiring practices, online resources, internal and external communications, and technology systems. Strategies are now built into VR operational procedures. Following ADA Title II requirements, FDOE Leasing staff conducts ADA inspections of all new or renewed VR office leases. VR offices inspected and found not in compliance have a 504 Plan which describes accessibility improvements planned for the facility. VR customers are included in this process when possible. VR employees in every area are required to complete ADA Coordinator certification training and ADA informational training. Hearing loops and other adaptive equipment and/or software is available in VR facilities. Specific applications were developed using custom JAWS script and workflow documentation to meet the needs of users.

The FDBS has an accessibility team that provides training to staff on creating accessible documents. The team reviews materials and assists other agencies with applying guidelines to ensure their websites are accessible. The Division's IT team created a detailed resource guide for staff, partners, community rehabilitation providers, etc., covering these topics and more in notable detail. This guide is under review by FDOE leadership. The FDBS is working with a vendor to obtain unlimited licenses for assistive technology (AT) such as JAWS (computer screen reader) and Zoom Text (screen magnifier and voice over). This will allow the Division to provide AT to clients, core partners, and state agencies. The FDBS will also provide licenses to other agencies as requested. Core partners are in mid-stages of establishing a Hub for common intake.

Additional VR internal strategies and activities to increase equal access to individuals requesting services are as follows.

- Use a comprehensive safety plan for monitoring VR facilities statewide. Specific components include a process for reporting defective/unsafe working conditions, safety and facilities management training for area staff, a move manual, a statewide safety manual, statewide first aid information, furniture inspection instructions and a facility security/building access policy at HQ.
- Continue to use interpreters, translators, and VR's online resources, as well as websites of other partners and stakeholders, to reach underserved populations and increase communication with customers.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Offer expanded access to services and provide materials and program information in English, Spanish and Haitian-Creole for various agencies, employers, churches, community leaders, health clinics and other settings.
- Continue assigning counselors and consultants to serve specialized populations, such as deaf and hard-of-hearing customers, deaf and blind customers and transition students.
- Collaborate with CareerSource Florida and other career center partners to implement universal design principles into the workforce development system's facilities and operations, with the intent to include universal design as a separate component of the one-stop career center certification process.

vii. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Florida's adult education programs offer adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction for adults to improve written and spoken English skills. This program assists customers in improving academic skills to provide a path to earning a high school credential, entering postsecondary education and improving individual career options. Florida's one-stop career center partners collaborate to provide quality services, resources and referrals to job seekers with limited English-speaking skills. The FDBS pays for interpreter services to assist job seekers with the vocational rehabilitation process. Program forms are also available in Spanish.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Florida Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Core Leadership

Similar to the work of the Florida WIOA Task Force described in section (II)(c)(2) above, a WIOA Interagency Implementation Team consisting of professional team members from all core programs was created. This team met monthly to learn about each core program – its structure, purpose and customer base – and what contributions could improve the statewide system. This work set the stage for program alignment and identification of opportunities for interagency collaboration on implementation activities. Initial implementation workgroups were created to conduct the beginning phases of WIOA implementation and recommend future approaches.

Following the initial efforts of the WIOA Interagency Implementation Team workgroups, the core partners used the WIOA Unified Plan Two-Year Modification as an opportunity to review and update coordination with state plan programs. WIOA core program leadership revised WIOA teams and streamlined the approach for implementation and tracking of progress. The WIOA Core Leader Team changes are summarized below:

- 1) Adjusted membership for the WIOA Core Leader Team and the State Plan Implementation Team to include at least two members from each core partner (adding members from new partners as needed) to ensure appropriate representation. Membership structures were designed to ensure a “thread” of participants throughout the system so key issues may be identified at each level and brought for discussion at the WIOA Core Program Leadership meetings.
- 2) Workgroup updates and relevant WIOA information that impacts the Florida workforce networks are presented at the monthly WIOA Core Leader meetings. The Core Leader Team uses tracking and communication tools to ensure a venue to report progress, identify resource needs and make recommendations for additional workgroups to implement key components of the unified state plan.
- 3) Specialized personnel with experience such as legal or information technology programming may be requested as subject matter experts for specific meetings.

Adjustments made since the development of the WIOA Unified Plan Two-Year Modification eliminated redundancy between planning and implementation teams, streamlined the decision-making process, reduced the number of participants (and associated time commitments) and reduced administrative support requirements. Florida now has a more streamlined and efficient approach made up of three key business relationships for coordinating WIOA programs. Each group and associated coordination activities are listed below:

1) The State Workforce Investment Board (CareerSource Florida Board of Directors)

Membership: Appointed workforce and policy investment board business and government leaders

- Approve state workforce system policies pertaining to the implementation and management of WIOA
- Review overall state and local performance
- Arrange for resource supports as needed and available
- Provide support and assistance in delivering key policy messages and recommendations to the governor, legislators, federal entities and other key stakeholder groups as needed.

2) WIOA Core Program Leadership Team

Membership: WIOA Partner Program Directors and subject matter expert staff – CareerSource Florida; Department of Economic Opportunity Division of Workforce Services; Department of Education Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation, Blind Services, Career and Adult Education; and Colleges and Universities

- Receive and consider recommendations for WIOA implementation and management from the WIOA State Plan Implementation Team
- Discuss potential issues of mutual concern and seek solutions
- Provide thorough vetting of complex issues prior to submitting key information and recommendations from the WIOA State Plan Implementation Team to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors
- Commission implementation workgroups as needed
- Arrange for resource supports as needed
- Prepare and deliver key information and recommendations for implementation, strategy and performance to the governor, agency heads, legislators, the state workforce investment board and federal Departments of Labor and Education

3) WIOA State Plan Implementation Team

Membership: Planning Directors and Program Leadership for WIOA partner programs

- Review and interpret legal and regulatory requirements of WIOA
- Incorporate the requirements into the state planning and performance processes
- Identify and communicate resource and information supports across WIOA partner programs
- Draft policies, guidelines and tools for developing and tracking the state plan
- Prepare and deliver state plan (and plan updates) and coordinate the development and delivery of local plans
- Track approved state plan workgroups and activities to ensure goals are achieved
- Consider and approve recommendations of workgroups
- Report plan progress to WIOA Core Program Leadership Team
- Make recommendations for additional teams or resources to maintain progress
- Communicate key messages and issues to agency heads

These activities allow the formation of workgroups to engage in coordinated projects designed to continue implementation and enhancement of the workforce system within the WIOA framework. These workgroups include planning directors, program leadership and subject matter experts for WIOA partner programs.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Examples of topics these workgroups have covered include the following:

- Enhancing infrastructure and data sharing processes including development of state data sharing agreement
- Conducting studies to evaluate case management systems and make recommendations for features and functionality of future Florida workforce network solutions (copy of reports available upon request)
- Designing and implementing a Continuous Improvement Performance Initiative that collects and tracks key performance indicators that complement the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance (<https://careersourceflorida.com/performance/>)
- Exploring the use of the Mississippi Data Hub located at the national Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NASPARC) to enhance the integration of the Florida workforce network across WIOA core programs for job seekers (<https://nsparc.msstate.edu/>)
- Designing and implementing a standardized Policy Development Framework (<https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Policy-Development-Framework.pdf> and <https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Policy-Development-One-Pager.pdf>)
- Continuing expansion of apprenticeships into key industry sectors (<https://apprenticeflorida.com/>)
- Researching the Gig Economy to gain deeper understanding and develop future strategies for Florida's workforce, education and economic development (<https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Gig-Economy-Report.pdf>)
- Coordinating membership of state and local workforce boards
- Coordinating development of a network of qualified benefits planners to augment Social Security Administration contracts for Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) services
- Completing a stakeholder engagement analysis to determine where to target outreach efforts, including business engagement
- Reviewing services, programs and partnerships of core WIOA programs to reduce duplication of efforts as well as gaps between programs
- Working collaboratively to ensure that disability coordinators are cross-trained with core partner processes
- Identifying opportunities to expand services/programs to meet ongoing needs of people with barriers to employment, including people with disabilities

Workgroups use project management and process-driven approaches and tools. This includes charter and mission statements, flowcharting, timelines for deliverables, requirements matrices and other management documents. Meetings are managed and documented using detailed agendas and workgroup documents are accessible to all team members across agencies. Decision points, recommendations and progress updates from the workgroups are vetted through the core program leadership and other key stakeholder groups prior to their presentation to the CareerSource Florida

Board. This encourages and ensures transparency, flow of information and open communication between all core programs.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES

1.	<p>The state has a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a state board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents and procedures to resolve such conflicts;</p> <p>http://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2012.05.24.A.2-State_LWDB-COI-Policy.pdf</p> <p>https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2012.05.24.A.2-Amended-State_LWDB-Contracting-COI-Policy.pdf</p> <p>https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2012.05.24.A.2-State_LWDB-Contracting-COI-Policy-FORMS.pdf</p>
2.	<p>The state has established a policy to provide the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of state boards and local workforce development boards and information about activities of state boards and local workforce development boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;</p> <p>Please see the Florida Statute related to the general state policy on public records found at http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0100-</p>
3.	<p>The lead state agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs have reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the unified or combined state plan and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;</p>
4.	<p>(a) The state has obtained input into the development of the unified plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local workforce development boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs and the other programs included in the state plan, other primary stakeholders, and the general public and that the unified plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>(b) The state has provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the state board, including state agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the state board;</p>
5.	<p>The state has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of and accounting for funds paid to the state through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;</p>
6.	<p>The state has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this act, including that the state will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);</p>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

7.	<p>The state has taken the appropriate action to comply with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;</p> <p>All programs are monitored for compliance with the non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity provisions of WIOA;</p>
8.	<p>The federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core;</p>
9.	<p>The state will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the state board) of the costs of carrying out section 116 from funds made available through each of the core programs;</p>
10.	<p>The state has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);</p> <p>http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2017-guidance-papers/oscc_certification-ap93.pdf?sfvrsn=2</p>
11.	<p>Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and</p> <p>http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/lwdb-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers/2019-guidance-papers/adminpol102_jvsg-vetsinitintakeprocatajc.pdf?sfvrsn=700b7fb0_2</p>
12.	<p>Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC s. 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.</p>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

CareerSource Florida

Michelle Dennard, President and CEO

DATE: _____

Department of Economic Opportunity

Ken Lawson, Executive Director

DATE: _____

Florida Department of Education

Commissioner Richard Corcoran

DATE: _____

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS – ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Activities under Title I-B. The unified or combined state plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B:

(a) General Requirements

(1) Local Workforce Development Areas

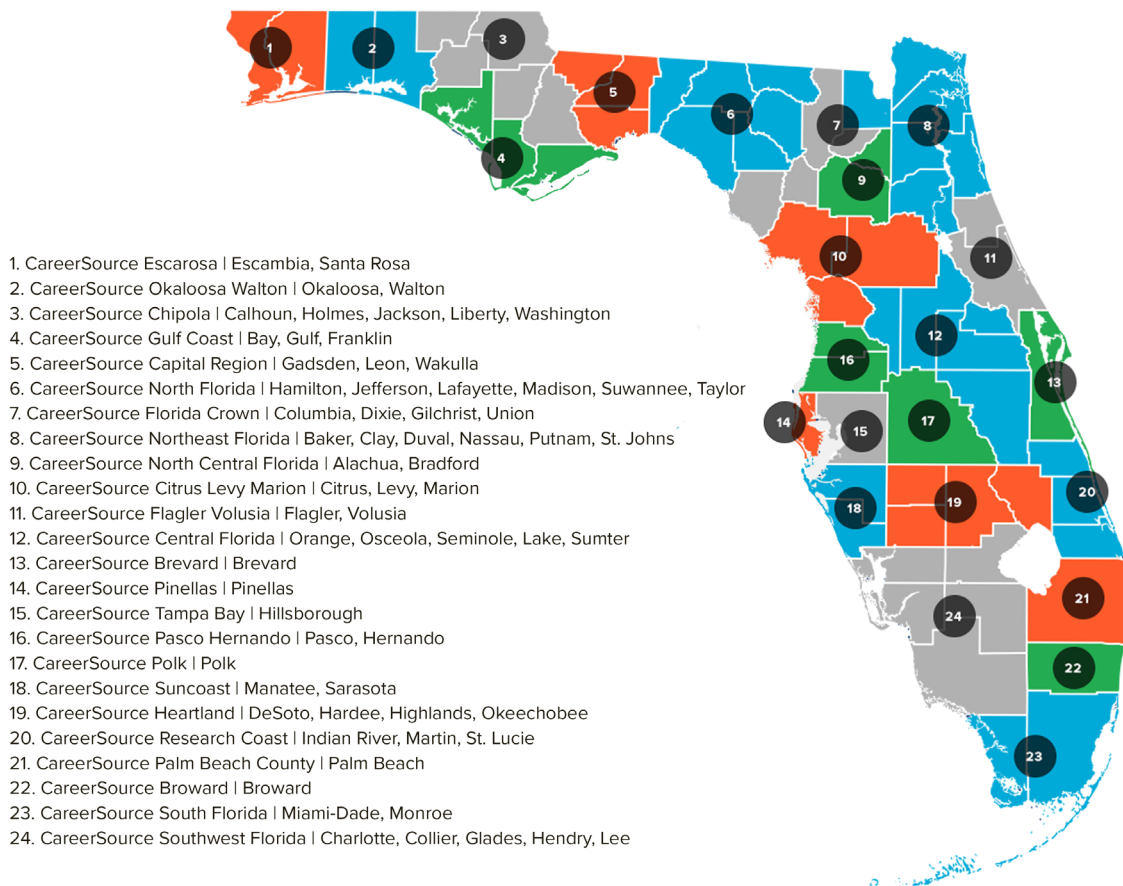
Regions and the Local Workforce Development Areas Designated in the State

Florida's 24 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and the local workforce development areas (LWDAs) they serve are shown in the map below and are listed at careersourceflorida.com.

Figure 6.01
CareerSource Florida Network Map

Figure 6.01 can be viewed online at http://careersourceflorida.com/2020/CareerSource_Florida_Network_Map.png

CareerSource Florida Network



(A) Process Used for Designating Local Areas

Local Areas

CareerSource Florida, in coordination with the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), reviewed the performance and financial integrity of each of the state's 24 designated workforce local areas and existing LWDBs. A recommendation was presented to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors to designate all 24 workforce local areas previously designated under the Workforce Investment Act and to continue the charter of existing local workforce development boards for the period from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2017.

In a public meeting, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors reviewed the action to provide the initial designation to the existing workforce local areas and to continue the charter to the existing LWDBs contingent upon receipt of an official completed request from each local Area that demonstrated local elected official consultation. Consistent with language established under WIOA which states local workforce development areas that receive an initial designation shall be granted a subsequent designation if they meet the requirements outlined in WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1), CareerSource Florida and DEO issued a policy that describes the requirements and process by which subsequent area designation would be determined and granted.

Planning Regions

Florida designated a planning region to each local area. This designation was agreed upon based on consultation with the Florida WIOA Task Force, state stakeholder groups and the LWDBs. Florida identified six factors for the development of regions including:

1. Single Labor Market
2. Common Economic Development Area
3. Federal and Non-Federal Resources to Carry Out WIOA Activities
4. Population Centers
5. Commuting Patterns
6. Industrial Composition and Sector Alignment

Using these six factors, various regional alignments may be considered and proposed by workforce system stakeholders including state policymakers, state and local CareerSource Florida board members, state and local workforce staff, partner program staff, business and industry partners and workforce and education associations. For the state to consider and designate local areas, a formal proposal must be presented to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors including a rationale for the local area designation using the six factors and a description of why the regional alignment proposed is in the best interests of the state, business and industry and workers and job seekers. Each local workforce development board plan incorporates its respective strategies to continue evaluating potential regional planning areas.

(B) Appeals Process Referred to in WIOA Section 106(b)(5)

Florida established an appeals process specific to objections on local area designations. This process is published in Guidance Paper 005 found online at: <http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2017-guidance-papers/localareadesignatn-ap94.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

The Appeal Process for Denial of WIOA Area Designation. The appeal process has never been invoked or used.

(C) Appeals Process Referred to in WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(E)

LWDBs use federal guidelines to work with required partners to determine and agree upon infrastructure funding. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) provides LWDBs the development requirements and procedures under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This policy requires LWDBs to make every effort to resolve any disputes at the local level and describes the process for resolution of issues including escalation from the LWDB to senior leadership in the affected agencies (e.g., CareerSource Florida, DEO and DOE). The senior leadership would review concerns and choose to remand the issue back to the local partners to execute recommended action. If issues remain unresolved, the LWDB must notify CareerSource Florida and include the details of the impasse. CareerSource Florida will work with the Commissioner of Education, the Executive Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity or other agency heads to resolve the impasse and provide a resolution response to the affected parties. Decisions are final.

If recommended action or required resolution is not implemented, the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) will be initiated according to federal guidelines.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy - Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements can be viewed online at [\[Insert Link to Policy Here\]](#).

(2) Statewide Activities

(A) State Policies or Guidance for the Statewide Workforce Development System

Federal and state program guidance is communicated to local workforce development partners through participation in state-level policy development activities described in the Policy Development Framework, formally promulgated and documented in a series of administrative guidance papers developed by DEO. These policy documents are evaluated by state and local partners before final issuance. This policy and administrative information can be found at:
<http://floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers>.

Programmatic and administrative requirements are described in a Grantee-Sub-Grantee Agreement executed by DEO and each local workforce development board requiring their compliance with all federal and state laws, regulations and any special state requirements.

State Policy Guidance Information:

- Chapter 445, Florida Statutes (Workforce Innovation Act), Section 1008 FETPIP and other administrative requirements described in State Guidance <http://leg.state.fl.us/STATUTES/>
- State Workforce Plan <http://careersourceflorida.com/>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Policy Development Framework <https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/>
- State Board Strategic Policies <https://careersourceflorida.com/>
- Local Planning Instructions
<https://careersourceflorida.com/docking/WIOALocalPlanningInstructionsTwo-year-modification.docx>
- Department of Economic Opportunity Regulations, Division of Workforce Services, Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 73B [flrules.org](http://rules.org)
- DEO Administrative Policies organized by workforce program
<http://floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers>
- DEO Memoranda, organized by year of issuance
floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources/professional-development-and-training/training-materials
- DEO Monitoring Tools
<http://floridajobs.org/local-workforce-development-board-resources/program-monitoring-and-reports/Programmatic>

DEO forwards federal directives and other resource materials via communiqués (issued when DEO comments on the federal document) or via email notification and posting on the DEO website.

(B) Governor's Set-Aside Funding and Rapid Response Funds

Governor's Set-Aside Funding

From these state-level funds, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors allocates certain funds for administrative and program costs of DEO and CareerSource Florida. In accordance with Section 445.003(3)(a)2., Florida Statutes, \$2 million in WIOA set-aside funds must be allocated for the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program, administered by the CareerSource Florida professional team. From the balance of state-level WIOA funds, the board determines any additional or specific allotments for purposes of state demonstration and pilot projects as well as other workforce development initiatives.

Rapid Response Funding to Respond to Layoffs

DEO Reemployment and Emergency Assistance Coordination Team (REACT) serves as Florida's state-level Dislocated Worker Unit. REACT is responsible for carrying out statewide rapid response activities and overseeing rapid response activities carried out by the LWDBs.

DEO REACT staff are the initial contact for employers who submit layoff and business closing notices under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act of 1988. REACT staff request information such as the name and telephone number of the employer's local contact person at each location, the type of business issuing the WARN, the reason for the layoff or business closing and the possible applicability of the Trade Act. REACT staff enter the WARN notice into the REACT database and distribute the WARN and the background information to the affected LWDBs.

An online summary report of WARN information is available from the DEO public website at floridajobs.org. DEO REACT staff are responsible for updating the list and keeping it current within three business days of receiving a WARN notice. The online WARN Summary Report includes:

- Company name and address;

Section VI. Program-Specific Requirements—Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Activities

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Total number of affected workers;
- Affected employer's industry;
- WARN notification date;
- Layoff dates; and
- Copy of WARN notice.

Each LWDB has a business services unit that includes a rapid response coordinator. Local board staff respond and provide rapid response services to employers submitting WARN notices and Trade Act Petitions. Local workforce development board staff are responsible for making initial contact with a company official to obtain information about the layoff. If workers are still attached to the employer, the Rapid Response Coordinator conducts Rapid Response Information Meetings to the workers providing information on various services offered in the CareerSource Florida One-Stop Career Center and through partner programs. Information provided includes Reemployment Assistance, Labor Market Information, training opportunities, seminars, workshops, job search assistance and other services.

When possible, on-site services are offered to employers requesting Rapid Response Assistance. Rapid response visits are usually made to employers laying off 50 or more workers. When a layoff is fewer than 50 workers, affected workers are directed to the nearest career center for re-employment services.

(C) Rapid Responses in Cases of Natural Disasters

In cases of natural disasters, the DEO rapid response coordinator works closely with the DEO emergency coordination officer who collaborates with the Florida Division of Emergency Management, local county emergency management staff and FEMA to assess the situation and needs of the affected area. Once it is approved by the local emergency management officials, staff from DEO and the CareerSource Florida network deploy to affected areas to deliver rapid response services.

DEO and the CareerSource Florida network have 22 mobile career centers equipped with telecommunications equipment. These mobile units contain computers, workstations and supplies for providing rapid response assistance. After natural disasters, these units can go into affected areas and serve as a mobile career center when local offices are flooded or without power. Mobile career centers serve as branch offices if local services are disrupted by natural disasters.

DEO has a memorandum of understanding with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) allowing DEO to use mobile units owned by MDES if needed.

(D) Early Intervention to Worker Groups on Whose Behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Petition Has Been Filed

DEO uses either a WARN, TAA Petition filing provided by the USDOL Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA), newspaper articles or other reliable means of notification to initiate rapid response assistance to workers who have been notified of potential layoffs or have been laid off because of trade. Each LWDB has a business services unit that includes a rapid response coordinator responsible for making initial contact with a company official to obtain information about the layoff. If workers are still attached to the employer, the rapid response coordinator conducts rapid response informational meetings providing workers with information about the services offered at a career center and through partner programs.

If the TAA petition is filed and not approved during the rapid response meeting, the customer is provided a brief description of TAA program services. Workers are advised that once the petition is filed and approved, a scheduled TAA informational session will be made available and an official notice will be mailed to the trade-affected workers. It is the state's practice not to conduct an actual TAA informational session unless the petition is certified.

Section VI. Program-Specific Requirements—Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Activities

If the worker group has not received rapid response assistance, although workers may have officially separated from the company or firm, it is encouraged that a rapid response meeting be conducted. If the petition is approved and rapid response has not been conducted, the state trade coordinator ensures a combined Rapid Response/TAA informational meeting is conducted for the affected workers.

LWDBs maintain a roster of customers who attended orientation meetings and record information in the state management information system, Employ Florida.

When mass layoffs occur, and state-level rapid response funding is needed, LWDBs may request funds to assist workers in need of career counseling, resume preparation, interviewing skills and other workforce services. The state-level rapid response funding may be used for layoff aversion.

(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

(1) Work-Based Training Models

Quick Response Training (QRT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs are flagship training programs of CareerSource Florida. These market-relevant programs provide timely training driven by industry's needs and choice of training providers. QRT and IWT serve as powerful tools for workforce investment in leveraging public/private funds for targeted training for in-demand skills to maximize use of limited public sector funds. Most businesses receiving training grants are within the state's targeted industries, ensuring investment in economically prosperous jobs for Florida's continued growth.

Quick Response Training Program

Established in 1993, the Quick Response Training grant program provides state-level funding for customized training to new or expanding businesses. During 2014-2015, Florida enhanced the application process for businesses to quickly respond to training objectives in demand-driven areas. In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, CareerSource Florida awarded Quick Response Training grants of nearly \$10.6 million to support skills upgrade training for 4,851 new and existing employees.

The Florida Legislature provided funding to develop and launch a strategic marketing and business outreach plan for Florida's nationally recognized Quick Response Training program. The marketing plan was developed to identify a long-term vision and strategic objectives for Quick Response Training. Recommendations for communications and outreach tools and tactics to enhance the program's competitive position and market outreach were considered, based on research that provided a greater understanding of business customers and potential customers; key influencers, including, but not limited to, economic developers, site selection consultants, and workforce development professionals, particularly those within the CareerSource Florida network who provide employment and training solutions for businesses of all sizes; education and training partners and stakeholders; and public policy leaders. The plan provided a clear, concise roadmap for CareerSource Florida's current and future investments in the marketing and promotion of Quick Response Training among businesses, including small businesses and key influencers.

This project enabled CareerSource Florida to implement marketing strategies for messaging of business services including Quick Response Training grants to internal and external audiences. CareerSource Florida developed an education and marketing toolkit for partners, marketing and brand-building materials such as brochures, digital outreach, including website enhancements, and social media outreach and advertisements and media placements to support strategic marketing and business outreach objectives.

Incumbent Worker Training Program

Established in 1999, Incumbent Worker Training grants provide funding for customized training including skills upgrade training to existing for-profit businesses. This grant enables Florida to effectively retain businesses and help them stay competitive by supporting skills-upgrade training for existing full-time employees. In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, CareerSource Florida awarded Incumbent Worker Training grants totaling more than \$1.9 million to help companies train and retain more than 4,005 full-time employees. Trainees' wages increased more than 11 percent on average within fifteen months of completing IWT-supported training. Florida's IWT program is funded \$2 million annually, with additional funding at the discretion of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. Funding priority is given to small businesses and those located in rural, enterprise zone, brownfield or inner-city areas and businesses in targeted industries.

Since its inception, more than \$100 million in requests for IWT funding have been received and 58 percent of the requests have resulted in awards. Extensive outreach through digital advertising, presentations and workshops has been conducted to ensure that as many small businesses as possible are aware of the benefits of the IWT program. IWT is popular and meets a critical need for Florida's businesses. For every \$1 of IWT funds invested in training, companies matched \$7.39.

Transitional Jobs and On-the-Job Training

Florida increased available training opportunities through alternative methods such as Transitional Jobs and **On-the-Job Training** (OJT). LWDBs are encouraged to leverage current partnerships and develop new ones with local businesses and industry to support economic development in their communities. The coordination of workforce training programs with economic development strategies as envisioned by Florida Law begins at the LWDB level and is coordinated at the state level by CareerSource Florida.

LWDBs may allocate up to ten percent of local Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to transitional jobs for individuals with barriers to employment. LWDBs offering transitional jobs as an alternative training model must ensure transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid, subsidized work experiences that help individuals who are chronically unemployed and/or have an inconsistent work history. Transitional jobs are used to assist these individuals establish a work history, develop skills to access unsubsidized employment and progress in the workplace. The LWDB's transitional jobs strategy/model is incorporated into its local plan and must include local definitions for chronically unemployed and inconsistent work history. The local plan must include the duration for transitional jobs and the strategy the board uses to promote or encourage the individual's transition into a permanent job when the subsidy ends.

OJT ensures high-quality training for both participants and employers as both have a vested interest in the program's success. Employers have the unique opportunity to train potential candidates the correct and most efficient way to perform tasks for their company at a subsidized cost. Participants receive direct training and experience which increase their skillset. Participants gain new skills to meet the requirements of a new occupation or industry, becoming better equipped to compete for available jobs. All OJT experiences are provided through contracts between local employers and the LWDB.

Customized Training

Customized training is designed to meet the specialized skill needs or requirements of one or more employers. Customized training is conducted through a commitment by the employer to employ an individual upon successful completion of training. The employer is required to pay a share of the cost of the training. Customized training offers opportunities for employers to train individuals to their specific needs and gives the individual a chance to learn and gain desired skills specific to an employer or industry.

(2) Registered Apprenticeship

CareerSource Florida works with the Florida Apprenticeship Advisory Council, convened through the Florida Department of Education, to identify opportunities to promote registered apprenticeship and

explore education opportunities for local workforce development boards to engage the state apprenticeship office and its local representatives. Florida received an ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to integrate Registered Apprenticeships within the state's existing workforce and economic development system. As part of the grant implementation, CareerSource Florida has joined forces with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the Florida Department of Education's Office of Apprenticeship, local workforce development boards, Industry intermediaries and many other strategic partners to identify barriers, opportunities and pilot models of success. By positioning apprenticeships as a proven model that helps employers build a highly skilled workforce, education and workforce partners are breaking through systemic barriers to strengthen the state's sector strategy initiatives.

(3) Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

The policy governing training provider eligibility is online at:

<http://floridajobs.org/frequently-asked-questions-directory/eligible-training-provider-list-guidance-faq>

Priority for Public Assistance Recipients, Other Low-Income Individuals, or Individuals Who are Basic Skills Deficient

Implementation of the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient is completed at the local level. Priority for adult services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals, with added priority for individuals who are basic skills deficient. Each LWDB is required to describe in its local plan its locally established policies and procedures to give priority to these customers. The results of these efforts are monitored and evaluated at the state level through the review and evaluation of physical documentation and participant files in the state's MIS.

(4) Criteria for Local Area Transfer of Funds Between the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

WIOA allows up to 100 percent of funds between programs with prior approval from the governor. DEO will ensure any transfer of funds between WIOA programs complies with federal law. LWDBs are required to record and document their use and application of local funds according to instructions described in a Grantee-Sub-Grantee Agreement.

(c) Youth Program Requirements

(1) Criteria for Awarding Grants for Youth Workforce Investment Activities

Local areas will award youth grants in compliance with and based on criteria established in WIOA, Section 123. Local areas must describe, in their local plans, the criteria established to award youth grant contracts. Local areas shall award youth grants or contracts with qualified youth service providers through a competitive procurement process.

(2) Improved Outcomes for Out-of-School Youth

By leveraging resources and expertise in core programs, Florida will inventory services provided to out-of-school youth and align them in its system integration strategy.

(3) Youth Program Elements

Each LWDB will develop a plan to accomplish youth program elements in accordance with WIOA, Section

129(c)(2). Each local board shall ensure all youth program elements are available to youth as part of a menu of services based on their objective assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

(4) Language Specified in WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII)

Each LWDB shall define the term “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.” The definition shall be included in the LWDB’s local plan. Policies established at the local level must be reasonable, quantifiable and based on evidence that specific characteristics of the youth identified in the policy objectively require additional assistance. For example, “reading below grade level” is an example of an evidence-based, quantifiable characteristic; whereas “low GPA” is an example of a policy requiring specificity. Policies improve where the characteristic is specific and quantifiable, such as a youth with a GPA below a specific threshold.

(5) State’s Definition for Not Attending School and Attending School

The state of Florida defines an out-of-school individual as one who is not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at the time of enrollment in a WIOA-funded youth program and who is not attending a regular or alternative school as an out-of-school youth. Youth within the specified age range who attend adult education or a General Education Development (GED) program are considered out-of-school youth. Out-of-school youth must meet the above requirements and be one of the following:

- A school dropout;
- A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter. School year calendar quarter is based on how a local school district defines its school year quarters;
- A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
- An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
- A homeless individual (as defined in sec. 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. s. 14043e-2(6))), a homeless child or youth (as defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(2))), a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. s. 677), or a child in an out-of-home placement;
- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or
- A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Florida defines in-school youth as a low-income individual who is not younger than age 14 or older than age 21 at the time of enrollment into a WIOA-funded youth program who is attending secondary or post-secondary school.

This definition includes youth, within the specified age range, attending Florida Virtual Schools and youth in Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) youth facilities who do not have a high school diploma or

GED. In-school youth must meet the above requirements and be one of the following:

- Basic skills deficient;
- An English language learner;
- An offender;
- A homeless individual (as defined in sec. 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. s. 14043e-2(6))), a homeless child or youth (as defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(2))), a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. s. 677), or a child in an out-of-home placement;
- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or
- An individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Definition of Basic Skills Deficient

The state continues to allow each local workforce development board's definition of to determine if an individual meets the definition of basic skills deficient as generally defined in WIOA section 3(5)(B) for individuals 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. The local workforce development board will include the definition of basic skills deficient in the LWDB's local plan.

(d) Single-area State Requirements

This section is not applicable.

(e) Waiver Requests (optional)

This section is not applicable.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The state has implemented a policy to ensure adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;
2.	The state has implemented a policy ensuring local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;
3.	The state has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment boards;
4.	The state has established a written policy and procedures ensuring local workforce development boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with;
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a state board, the state has a written policy and procedures ensuring the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA Section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
6.	The state has established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the state workforce development board help determine the methods and factors of distribution and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions;
7.	The state will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA Section 181(b)(7);
8.	The state will distribute adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the state, and no local area will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this plan;
9.	If a state workforce development board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency will cooperate with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
10.	The state agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report; and
11.	The state has secured compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise act to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under WIOA section 184(a)(3).

CareerSource Florida

Michelle Dennard, President

DATE: _____

Department of Economic Opportunity

Ken Lawson, Executive Director

DATE: _____

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS – WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM

(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development

(1) Professional Development for Employment Service Staff

Florida designed a comprehensive certificate exam, formally known as Tier I, to equip all employment services staff with appropriate knowledge to provide high-quality services to job seekers and employers. Within one year of hire, all front-line staff and employees who provide direct services to job seekers or employers are required to complete a series of standardized training modules providing foundational information about the workforce system.

The Tier I Certificate is a thorough online training program that covers topics including workforce system history, workforce program overview and customer service and other job placement techniques. Upon completion of the online training modules, staff are required to complete a comprehensive exam to demonstrate comprehension of the material. Staff must successfully pass the exam to be Tier I certified and proficient to assist job seekers and employers.

Staff are required to seek new training opportunities annually to enhance job knowledge and ensure satisfactory knowledge of new workforce tools and existing strategies. To assist staff in attaining continuing education units, Florida designed a Tier II certificate program. Tier II content includes in-depth information of specific workforce programs and prepares staff in WIOA, Wagner-Peyser (WP), TAA, SNAP and Welfare Transition (WT) programs. The Tier II certificate program is a cost-effective method to train staff in one convenient location that is immediately accessible.

Florida hosts periodic on-site and web-based training opportunities to share information and keep staff informed of trends. In collaboration with other agencies, Florida's workforce system enhances the knowledge base of staff by linking duties and responsibilities of career center staff with those of other partners and departments.

(2) Training and Awareness on Identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Eligibility Issues

Florida provides available curriculum from the Tier I certificate program to all core partners. The curriculum covers topics including the history of Florida's workforce, system, workforce program overview and customer service and other job placement techniques. Florida designed a Tier II curriculum for Reemployment Assistance which provides staff with in-depth concepts and information of specific workforce programs including WIOA, WP, TAA, SNAP and Welfare Transition (WT). Florida may incorporate curriculum into the Tier II certificate program that includes program-specific training for Adult Education, VR and RA. This information will increase awareness on the identification of RA eligibility issues.

(b) Assistance in Unemployment Compensation Claims Through Career Centers

Florida's career centers have resource rooms equipped with computers for customers to use. Individuals seeking to file Reemployment Assistance claims are able to connect to the state's Reemployment Assistance claims and benefits system to complete the online application and subsequent work registration steps. Career center staff assist customers with general computer and unemployment application questions. Career centers are equipped with telephones customers may use to contact representatives for initial claims questions and assistance.

(c) Assistance to Unemployment Insurance Claimants and Other Unemployed Individuals

In Florida, most Reemployment Assistance claimants are registered as job seekers in Employ Florida within 24 hours of filing for unemployment benefits. This is accomplished through an automated interface between the unemployment compensation system and Employ Florida. Each night, new Reemployment Assistance claimant information is sent to Employ Florida where a basic registration is created. This includes the client's email address and a partial work history, if supplied. The career services skills matching functionality of Employ Florida is used to generate an initial listing of current jobs posted in the system based on the employment information given by claimants when filing claims.

This generates an automatic email to the claimant that:

- Informs the claimant of his/her Employ Florida login information;
- Provides a link to the initial list of jobs matching the claimant's employment history; and
- Provides the link the claimant to complete a full résumé and begin active use of the system to search and apply for jobs.

This information is immediately available to staff who use it to contact claimants to provide information about available career center services. The claimant's skills information automatically becomes available to employers seeking specific candidates to fill job openings.

Florida requires all claimants filing an initial online Reemployment Assistance claim to complete a full work registration in Employ Florida prior to receiving benefit payments. The full work registration requires the claimant to create an individual account. This account includes demographic information, an email address attached to the Employ Florida account, and a complete background wizard which collects education, employment and skills information and allows the claimant/job seeker to post a résumé. The full registration process provides LWDBs with integral information with which to target reemployment services to claimants and job seekers. Some claimants elect to complete an online skills assessment available to individuals seeking Reemployment Assistance and job services. The skills assessment measures an individual's skills, abilities and career aptitude. LWDBs use results obtained from the assessment to provide a customized and tiered level of service. Higher scores or results from the assessment may indicate the claimant is equipped with skills to seek jobs and obtain employment before his or her benefits expire. These individuals require less staff intervention. Lower scores typically indicate a claimant may require more intensive staff intervention before being job ready.

Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS)/Priority Reemployment Planning (PREP) Program Florida's reemployment services are centered on the Priority Reemployment Planning (PREP) Program, the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services effort which is operational statewide. A PREP pool consisting of Reemployment Assistance claimants is created on a weekly basis from initial reemployment claims filed during that week. Prior to the transfer into Employ Florida, the following factors are used in the profiling methodology to determine those individuals most likely to exhaust their benefits based on: tenure with their most recent employment, education level, total unemployment rate in the local labor market, last occupation being one of the occupations most in decline (O*NET) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). Excluded from the PREP pool are:

- Claimants whose program identification is other than intrastate claimant;
- Interstate claimant;
- Transitional claimant;
- Claimants on recall status within eight weeks of filing their claim; and
- Claimants with a first payment issued more than 42 days after the benefit year beginning date.

Claimants are placed in the PREP pool on the fourth week of their claims for early intervention purposes. A group assessment interview and the development of a service plan, if necessary, are coupled with the orientation service. Based on the service plan, the following services are made available for claimants who are not job ready: job search workshops, testing, counseling, specific labor market information and referral to education and or training.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant

In 2016, Florida shifted to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program where the target populations changed to all transitioning veterans receiving assistance and claimants *most likely to exhaust RA benefits*.

The RESEA program addresses reemployment needs of RA claimants most likely to exhaust benefits and transitioning veterans receiving unemployment for ex-service members (UCX). The program provides specific intensive services to these populations and helps detect and prevent erroneous Unemployment Insurance (UI) payments. The RESEA program uses a one-on-one intensive appointment process.

Each RESEA participant receives:

- An orientation about the career center's services;
- An initial assessment to determine the claimant's strengths, weaknesses and barriers to employment;
- Labor market information unique to the participant's past or future occupation and work experience. If the labor market information shows the participant's occupation to be in decline, he or she may be referred for training;
- An Employability Development Plan developed jointly by career center staff and the claimant;

- Referral to at least one work-search activity such as résumé writing or an interviewing workshop; and
- Referral to training, if needed.

Consistent with Section 443.091, Florida Statutes, failure to appear as directed for reemployment services at the appointed career center may affect a participant's eligibility for benefits and services. There is a feedback loop to the Reemployment Assistance Program for RESEA participants who miss their initial appointment. Reemployment Assistance adjudicators review the reason for the participant's failure to report to the career center and if there are no extenuating circumstances (such as moved out of state, returned to work, etc.), issue a determination of ineligibility. The determination of ineligibility includes a disqualification for the week in which the claimant failed to report for reemployment services. When an assessment is completed, an automatic notice is generated and sent to the Reemployment Assistance Program to conduct an eligibility review questionnaire to determine the claimant's eligibility for continued Reemployment Assistance benefits.

(d) Wagner-Peyser Funds to Support UI Claimants

(1) Labor Exchange Services for UI Claimants

Claimants may be selected to attend the mandatory PREP program if they are profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits prior to returning to work. Selection to attend a PREP appointment provides claimants with an orientation of the career center to include services available and an initial assessment to determine additional needs. The RESEA program allows LWDBs to elect to participate in this program instead of the PREP program. For LWDBs who elect to participate in the RESEA program, claimants selected for reemployment services in these areas receive an intensive one-on-one session with career center staff. During the one-on-one session, claimants receive an orientation, initial assessment, specific labor market information, and development of an employability plan and are scheduled for additional reemployment services. Claimants not profiled and scheduled to attend PREP or RESEA are offered the full array of Wagner-Peyser career services depending on the claimant's request and other needs. Career services may be scheduled in the management information system requiring the claimant to fulfill his or her obligation to actively pursue employment. Failure to comply with scheduled services may be communicated to the RA program for referral to an adjudicator to conduct fact finding.

Claimants are one priority population supported by Florida's Wagner-Peyser funds. Florida's automated processes allow RA claimants to receive reemployment services quickly and seamlessly. Upon filing an initial claim in the RA reporting system, various data points are collected from the claimant's application and transmitted into Employ Florida to create a basic Wagner-Peyser application. The claimant is sent an introductory welcome message that provides helpful resources about services in the system they may use in their job search. Every week, characteristics collected from the RA claims application (including, but not limited to, the number of jobs the claimant had over a certain period; the claimant's job tenure and wages; the industry from which the claimant was laid off and the time of year the layoff occurred; the availability of comparable jobs in the area, etc.) is processed through a regression model to obtain a profiling coefficient.

The coefficient value determines the claimants' likelihood of exhausting RA benefits prior to returning to work. This is used to determine which mandatory reemployment program the claimant is assigned to attend. Upon assignment of the coefficient, the claimant is transmitted into a pool used to assign the claimant to the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) program, or the RESEA program. This automated pool collection and event assignment typically occurs every Saturday.

Every Monday, LWDB staff are responsible for viewing the number of claimants in their respective pools and creating events accommodating as many claimants as possible. LWDBs operate PREP or RESEA, but never operate both programs simultaneously. DEO sets the goals of the number of claimants to schedule and complete each year for each LWDB operating the RESEA program. These goals are used to determine how many claimants will be scheduled each week from their respective pools. LWDBs operating the PREP program typically schedule their full pool but have no predetermined numbers to complete. Every Monday night, based on the number of claimants each LWDB determines to schedule, the automated process uses those numbers to populate events. Once events are populated, Employ Florida automatically generates letters for the LWDB to send to the claimant. Staff prints and mails these letters to the claimants at least two weeks in advance of their scheduled appointments.

(2) Registration of UI Claimants with the State's Employment Service

In 2013, Florida began requiring all claimants who filed an initial online claim to complete a full work registration in Employ Florida prior to receiving benefit payments. The full work registration requires the claimant to create an individual account with basic demographic information and an email address on the Employ Florida account. Claimants are required to use the background wizard to provide education, employment and skills information and to post a résumé. This process provides LWDBs with important information used to target reemployment services to claimants. This registration must be completed before claimants receive any benefit payments.

(3) Administration of the Work Test for the State Unemployment Compensation System

Section 443.091, Florida Statutes, requires all Reemployment Assistance claimants to engage in systematic and sustained efforts to find work, including contacting at least five prospective employers for each week of unemployment. In small counties – defined as having a population of 75,000 residents or fewer - a claimant must contact at least three prospective employers for each week of unemployment claimed. Claimants file their work search activities online each week and the Reemployment Assistance Program office conducts random work search reviews. Alternatively, instead of claimants contacting three or five prospective employers, as appropriate, claimants may, for that same week, report in person to a LWDB to meet with a career center representative and access reemployment services.

Upon completion of the RESEA appointment, career center staff are required to electronically submit information related to whether the claimant reported for and received all required services to satisfy the program's minimum requirements. If a claimant has not reported to the required appointment, an automatic notification is transmitted to the Reemployment Assistance system notifying an adjudicator of potential eligibility issues. The Reemployment Assistance unit conducts a follow up to determine if the absence should result in a disqualification. An eligibility review program (ERP) questionnaire is conducted for all RESEA claimants to determine eligibility for continued benefits.

For the PREP program, claimant attendance is recorded in Employ Florida and reported to the RA system. Claimants failing to report for their appointment are contacted by adjudication for benefit eligibility determinations.

(4) Provision of Referrals to and Application Assistance for Training and Education Programs and Resources

Regardless of their point of entry, claimants are assessed to determine their employment and/or training needs. The assessment may range from an informal interview to a standardized set of tests. Upon completion of the assessment and interpretation of results, claimants may be referred to a partner program, such as WIOA, for additional training information and/or enrollment. When referred to a partner program, the claimant's eligibility for training is determined based on the program's eligibility criteria. Career centers throughout Florida have collaborated and are often colocated with educational institutions where claimants may be referred for education assistance.

Wagner-Peyser funds help provide preliminary work readiness workshops including interviewing skills, résumé writing, and job search strategies and can be used to provide referrals to internal and external training and education programs and resources.

(e) Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)

(1) Assessment of Need

(A) Assessment of Agricultural Activity in the State

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the agricultural industry in Florida employs approximately two million people and contributes more than \$120 billion to the state's economy. An estimated 47,500 commercial farms in Florida produce nearly 300 different commodities on 9.7 million acres. In 2018, Florida ranked first in the United States in the value of production for processing cucumbers, grapefruit, citrus, squash, sugarcane, and fresh market tomatoes. During the 2017-2018 season, Florida farmworkers produced 49.6 million boxes of oranges and 3.88 million boxes of grapefruit. Production decreased for all citrus varieties when compared to the previous season. Florida ranks second to California in the production of fresh market vegetables. Florida growers harvested vegetables for fresh market potatoes, sweet potatoes, strawberries and blueberries from 208,000 acres in 2018. Cash receipts for all agricultural products totaled \$7.64 billion in 2017. Crop commodities, such as oranges, greenhouse/nursery, sugarcane and tomatoes, accounted for 77.0 percent of these total cash receipts.

According to USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Florida Field Office, 2017 Annual Statistical Bulletin, some pre-harvest activities such as planting, transplanting, tying, staking and pruning are performed by farmworkers, as well as post-harvest activities such as packing and juice processing. In 2018, Florida ranked second nationally in the production of bell peppers, fresh market sweet corn, strawberries, fresh market snap beans, fresh market cucumbers and watermelons; third in the production of fresh market cabbage; and fourth in the production of peanuts and sweet potatoes.

The following breakdown illustrates Florida's top major labor-intensive crop activity during the 2017-2018 season, per data gathered internally from local career centers and from external partner agencies.

Figure 7.01
Florida's Top Major Labor-Intensive Crop Activity

Crop	Usual Harvesting Begins	Usual Harvesting Most Active	PRIMARY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF ACTIVITY	LABOR POOL
Oranges	Mid-September	September - June	Polk, Highlands, DeSoto, Hendry, Hardee, Collier, Manatee, Lake, St. Lucie, Martin, Hillsborough, Pasco, Osceola, Indian River, Lee, Charlotte, Glades, Orange, Okeechobee	35,000
Grapefruit	September	September - June	Indian River, St. Lucie, Polk, Hendry, Highlands, Osceola, Charlotte, Collier, Lake, Okeechobee	3,500
Specialty Citrus	June	June - April	Polk, Lake, Highlands, Hendry, Charlotte, Hardee, St. Lucie, Collier, DeSoto, Indian River, Hillsborough, Lee	800
Tomatoes	Mid-October	November - June	Manatee, Collier, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Hendry, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jackson	8,500
Blueberries	March	March - May	Polk, Alachua, Hardee, Hamilton, Levy	9,500
Strawberries	Mid-December	February - March	Hillsborough, Manatee, Hardee, Miami-Dade	11,500
Snap Beans	Mid-October	November - April	Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Suwannee, Hendry, Alachua, Jackson	5,000
Bell Peppers	Mid-October	November - May	Palm Beach, Collier, Hillsborough, Manatee	5,000
Sugarcane	November	November - February	Palm Beach, Hendry, Glades, Martin	3,500
Watermelons	April	May - June	Hendry, Levy, Gilchrist, Highlands, Collier, Suwannee, DeSoto, Alachua, Manatee, Marion, Hardee, Jackson, Sumter, Lake, Gadsden, Washington	4,000
Sweet Corn	Mid-September	November - June	Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Hendry, Suwannee, Hamilton	3,100
Potatoes	Mid-December	February - May	St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, Okeechobee, Suwannee	2,500
Squash	September	November - May	Miami-Dade, Collier, Lee, Hillsborough, Gadsden, Jackson, Suwannee	2,500
Cabbage	Mid-October	January - April	Flagler, St. Johns, Palm Beach, Manatee, Putnam	1,500
Cucumbers	Mid-September	November - April	Manatee, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Collier, Hardee, Hendry, Miami-Dade, Levy	1,500
Tomatillos	April	April - July & September - November	Collier (November - March), Manatee, Gadsden, Jackson	500
Eggplants	April	April - July & September - November	Collier (November - March), Manatee, Gadsden, Jackson	500

Results of the annual Commercial Citrus Inventory show total citrus acreage is 480,121 acres, down four percent from the last survey and the lowest in a series which began in 1966. The gross loss of 31,365 acres is the largest loss recorded in a single season since the beginning one-year interval surveys in 2009. New plantings at 10,090 acres is less than each of the last two seasons.

According to the 2014 Census of Agriculture, Florida has the second largest nursery industry in the country, after California.

An estimated 100,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) are employed in plant nurseries and ferneries throughout the state. An estimated 2,000 or more MSFWs are employed in sod farming for commercial sale. According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' 2016 Florida Agriculture by the Numbers, the state's expanded wholesale value of floriculture crops increased \$107 million over 2014 totals, surpassing the \$1 billion mark for the first time in 10 years. Total greenhouse and nursery cash value sales of \$1,039,411.

Assessment of the Unique Needs of Farmworkers

Based on local MSFW-related data and reports, there were an estimated 247,678 MSFWs in Florida during Program Year (PY) 2018. During the low season, this number may drop to fewer than 100,000.

Section VIII. Program-Specific Requirements—Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs

MSFWs need affordable housing that is not substandard, access to public transportation, health insurance coverage and safer working conditions.

As of December 2018, the volume of fruit harvested continued to run behind the prior season on all varieties. Packinghouses were open and running field-run oranges and grapefruit packinghouse eliminations. Grove caretakers continued with normal spray programs, fertilizing, applying herbicide, hedging and taking care of young trees.

(2) Outreach Activities

(A) Farmworkers Not Being Reached by Normal Intake Activities

All career centers have an obligation to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted by career centers. Outreach is not limited to those offices designated as significant MSFW career centers or significant multilingual MSFW career centers. Significant MSFW career centers are those centers where MSFWs account for ten percent or more of annual participants in employment service activities.

Significant multilingual MSFW career centers are centers where 10 percent or more of the MSFW participants are estimated to require service provision in a language(s) other than English. Florida has ten career centers designated as significant multilingual MSFW career centers (referred to as "significant offices") located in Winter Haven, Bradenton, Tampa, Sebring, Wauchula, Port Saint Lucie, Belle Glade, Homestead, Immokalee and Clewiston. Each significant office has at least one full-time, year-round workers assigned to conduct outreach duties. State merit staff performing outreach are bilingual and, whenever possible, have a MSFW background or are members of a minority group representative of the MSFW population.

Outreach workers focus on areas with significant MSFW populations and work to locate and contract MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities. Outreach to the MSFW community is accomplished through personal contacts, printed material, the media, community involvement and cooperative ventures with private and public agencies. Outreach workers make personal contacts with MSFWs daily to explain services available through career centers and other agencies, including the availability of referrals to employment, training and supportive services; information on specific employment opportunities currently available, such as H-2A jobs and other low-skilled jobs; a summary of farmworker rights; and information on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, including the Florida Farmworker Helpline.

When an MSFW seeks services at a career center, or is contacted through outreach, the services available through the career center must be explained and provided in writing. To accomplish this, all MSFWs must be provided a copy of the Services to MSFWs through Career Centers (Form DEO-511N) in their native language (available in English, Spanish and Creole). The form contains information on DEO's toll-free Farmworker Helpline for farmworkers who may want to file a complaint, report an apparent violation or obtain employment service information. Additional materials provided during outreach include a brochure outlining basic farmworker rights and other materials from partner agencies describing available services. MSFWs are given the location of and encouraged to visit their local career center to obtain a complete range of employment and training services. The Form DEO-511N includes the locations of offices in Florida.

To contact the maximum number of MSFWs, outreach workers visit sites where farmworkers live, work

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

and gather, including day-haul sites, mass recruitments and orientations at farms, migrant health clinics and sites where social services are provided. Posters and other printed materials are distributed at these locations to maximize outreach efforts into the farmworker community. Outreach workers conduct follow-up to MSFWs as necessary and appropriate to assist MSFWs and ensure their needs are met and to determine if other services are necessary. DEO enhances existing relationships with local, state and federal organizations serving farmworkers, employers and employer organizations to solicit and exchange information on behalf of MSFWs.

Florida operates its ten-designated significant multilingual MSFW career centers during PY 2020 through PY 2024. Following is a list of these career centers, along with corresponding outreach goals per program year.

Figure 7.02
MSFW Significant/Bilingual Office Locations

Career Center Location	LWDA	# of Assigned FTE Positions	# of MSFW Outreach Contacts	# of Quality MSFW Outreach Contacts	# of Staff Days
Winter Haven	17	1	1,800	1,250	185
Tampa	15	1	2,200	1,700	185
Bradenton	18	1	2,000	1,650	185
Sebring	19	1	2,200	950	185
Wauchula	19	1	2,200	950	185
Port Saint Lucie	20	1	1,800	1,100	185
Belle Glade	21	1	1,950	1,050	185
Homestead	23	1	2,000	1,350	185
Immokalee	24	1	2,200	1,250	185
Clewiston	24	1	2,200	950	185
Total	N/A	10	20,550	12,200	1850

Achieving the level of services attained at career centers is attributed to the unique Florida workforce delivery system and its intensified efforts to reach and serve all customers. Outreach workers are required to spend a total of 185 staff days, or 80 percent of staff time, conducting outreach. For PY 2018, MSFW outreach workers made 39,250 outreach contacts with MSFWs. Florida's focus on outreach allowed it to exceed its goal of 20,550 MSFW outreach contacts by more than 109 percent. For PY 2018, 606,153 Wagner-Peyser applications were entered in Employ Florida. Of those applications, 14,307 were MSFWs. Processing job applications, conducting assessments and providing non-agricultural job referrals were also emphasized to assist in year-round employment. This allowed the state to increase the number of MSFWs who were placed in permanent positions (jobs over 150 days).

(B) Technical Assistance to Outreach Workers

Outreach workers are trained in all aspects of employment-related services to MSFWs. New outreach staff receive training on Wagner-Peyser services, benefits and protections afforded to MSFWs through the career centers and procedures by the LWDB. The state monitor advocate (SMA) provides onsite technical assistance to new staff on MSFW regulations including outreach requirements, full applications in Employ Florida, reporting requirements and agricultural job orders.

The SMA also provides training on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System and basic farmworker rights including training on protecting farmworkers against sexual harassment. Outreach workers are encouraged to observe the working and living conditions of MSFWs and, upon observation or upon receipt of information regarding a suspected violation of state or federal laws, to document and report the suspected violation to the appropriate enforcement agency for investigation.

The significant multilingual MSFW career centers were formally monitored onsite this program year by the SMA. The SMA provided technical assistance to significant multilingual MSFW career center staff during the onsite monitoring reviews to address any immediate training needs.

Outreach workers are encouraged to refresh their knowledge of policies and procedures through online training, as well as through in-person trainings and webinars offered by DEO. Florida also has an established complaint system supported by written procedures.

Refresher training and farm labor compliance training is provided to outreach workers during an annual MSFW professional development conference. The annual conferences are held in partnership with the Florida Department of Education's Farmworker Career Development Program (FCDP), Florida's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee. When the conference is held jointly, training sessions are designed to foster increased collaboration and increased awareness between partners.

The annual conference customarily includes guest speakers from state and federal enforcement agencies such as the USDOL Wage and Hour Division, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Florida Department of Health. DEO staff customarily present workshops on Wagner-Peyser and WIOA requirements, the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System and Foreign Labor Certification Job Orders, among others. The workshops provide career center staff with knowledge necessary to discuss farmworker rights with MSFWs onsite and during outreach.

(C) Increasing Outreach Worker Training and Awareness Across Core Programs Including UI

Career center staff, including outreach workers, have access to online training modules and resources through DEO's website for core programs including unemployment insurance (UI) benefits (referred to as Reemployment Assistance benefits in Florida). In-person trainings and webinars are offered each year. Outreach workers use this information to ensure MSFWs are aware of the different programs and services available through the workforce system as well as their potential eligibility for Reemployment Assistance benefits.

(D) Providing State Merit Staff Outreach Workers Professional Development Activities

The annual MSFW Staff Development Conference provides outreach workers with professional development activities to ensure they are proficient at providing high-quality services to job seekers and employers. Outreach staff are encouraged to attend the annual MSFW Staff Development Conference.

(E) Coordinating Outreach Efforts with NFJP Grantees as Well as with Public and Private Community Service Agencies and MSFW Groups

To maintain targeted service levels, outreach services are supplemented through partner agencies.

Informal cooperative agreements with other public and private social service agencies, such as local providers of the NFJP, are established to provide joint outreach efforts to the MSFW population. For PY 2016, approximately 531 additional contacts were made through nonfinancial agreements with cooperating agencies.

A memorandum of understanding outlining outreach efforts was executed with the Florida Department of Education's FCDP, the state's NFJP grantee. The memorandum outlines requirements for significant career center outreach staff and FCDP local provider staff to supply information about other partner programs and services during individual outreach efforts, conduct outreach jointly when feasible, and report outreach activities and contacts to the other party. Career centers with agricultural activity that do not meet the ten percent criteria for the significant career center designation are required to have nonfinancial agreements with cooperating agencies.

The MSFW outreach workers maintain a continuing relationship with community groups, public agencies and advocacy groups involved in the welfare of farmworkers. Contact is made with agricultural employers for possible job openings and outreach workers to assist career center staff in recruiting MSFWs for specific job orders.

(3) Services Provided to Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers through the One-Stop Delivery System

(A) Employment and Training Services to the Agricultural Community

1. Career and Training Services Provided to MSFWs

Career and training services are provided to MSFWs. Basic and individualized career staff-assisted services are provided through outreach and in career centers to MSFWs. Florida's management information system, Employ Florida, allows for self-services at any location without the need of visiting a career center. Customers using self-services at the career center have access to staff assistance.

The MSFWs' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are assessed to determine appropriate jobs to which they may be referred. Job referrals are provided through mass recruitments, H-2A job referrals, other low-skilled job referrals and job developments. Effort is made to refer MSFW job seekers to H-2A job orders whenever possible. Jobs located in Georgia, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina, Alabama and Delaware H-2A jobs are posted in Employ Florida. Staff ensure terms and conditions of employment are discussed prior to referral and that the job seeker is aware of afforded assurances. H-2A job orders are suppressed in the Employ Florida system to ensure maximum protections to the applicant. Staff are required to follow up on referrals made to H-2A job orders.

Referrals are made to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to reduce language barriers and improve resume and interviewing skills. Workshops enable MSFWs to become more competitive in the workforce. Staff provide career guidance and suggest training programs best suited to the needs of customers who are not job ready or those prepared for a change in occupation. Referrals are made to local FCDP training programs and LWDB training programs. Co-enrollments take place when possible. Other programs' MSFWs are referred to include Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) for MSFWs with disabilities, older workers programs and housing assistance agencies. Staff are familiar with and refer MSFWs as appropriate to other community supportive services.

The SMA conducts quality assurance visits to significant offices on an annual basis to ensure MSFWs have equal access to employment opportunities through Florida's career center delivery system. Wagner-Peyser monitoring staff ensure MSFWs have equal access to services during quality assurance desk reviews of non-significant LWDBs.

2. Services to Agricultural Employers

Florida ensures all career centers make assistance available to employers, including those in the agricultural industry.

Outreach to public and private community agencies, MSFWs and employer organizations is conducted to facilitate the widest possible distribution of information about employment opportunities. Career center staff in significant multilingual MSFW centers and LWDB business services representatives perform marketing outreach to growers, harvesters and processors. Career centers obtain employer contact information, maintain existing contacts and encourage employers to create job orders in Employ Florida through local career centers. Career center staff assist MSFWs in the preparation of applications for employment services and assistance in obtaining referrals to current and future employment opportunities. DEO office staff promote labor exchange services to agricultural employers through participation at employer conferences and seminars and through DEO's website. The SMA partners with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division and agricultural employer organizations to conduct employer forums for agricultural employers and provide information on available services for employers including services pertaining to the agricultural industry such as local mass recruitments and the Agricultural Recruitment System.

Identifying the needs of employers is a high priority. CareerSource Florida's efforts continue to promote strategies that support the growth of targeted industries in the state. Sector strategies are regional, employer-driven partnerships of industry, education and workforce development leaders focused on identifying solutions to the workforce needs of the local labor market. Strategies used to promote labor exchange services to agricultural employers include recruiting agreements, job fairs and establishing new business relationships. These efforts include advising worker advocates and groups through job order notifications published in English and Spanish, and providing notification to employers and advocates of changes to the Foreign Labor Certification Program requirements affecting workers.

Florida continues to see an increased number of agricultural employers using the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program. The H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program allows U.S. employers who meet specific regulatory requirements to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs. DEO's Foreign Labor Certification office enters H-2A job orders in the state's online labor exchange system, Employ Florida. During PY 2018, the Department processed 620 H-2A applications and job orders for Florida employers, an increase from the previous year. Applications are expected to steadily increase for PY 2019, based on previous years' trends. During PY 2018, 621 MSFWs were referred for job placements under the H-2A program.

Career centers in significant agricultural areas are provided approved clearance (job) orders that provide staff, including outreach workers, with current information on job availability. Career centers are provided information about out-of-state clearance orders found in Employ Florida. Domestic farmworker crews, family groups and individuals are recruited and referred to agricultural employers who submit job orders in agricultural occupations. For PY 2018, 12,760 MSFWs were referred to agricultural employers as indicated in the Migrant Indicators of Compliance Statewide Report.

(B) Marketing the Employment Service Complaint System to Farmworkers and Other Farmworker Advocacy Groups

Outreach workers take complaints while in the field. The Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System is marketed to farmworkers and to agencies. The Florida Farmworker Helpline is used to promote the complaint system. The helpline is a toll-free number farmworkers can call to file a complaint or report violations anonymously. Outreach materials such as the Form DEO-511N, farmworker rights brochure and Farmworker Helpline business cards include the helpline number. This number is featured prominently on complaint posters located in significant MSFW career centers. Helpline business

cards are provided to agencies and businesses serving farmworkers. Farmworkers and agencies are informed that complaints can be filed in person at any career center or with an outreach worker.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to Agricultural Employers

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is an alternative to the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program offered to employers who have temporary agricultural or food processing jobs and need workers. The SMA promotes the ARS during employer forums to agricultural employers and employer organizations as a more cost-effective alternative to H-2A. Outreach workers provide information on this program during employer visits. ARS brochures are shared with employers during forums and visits.

(4) Other Requirements

(A) Collaboration

The memorandum of understanding previously described establishes a basis for collaboration between LWDBs and FCDP local projects statewide. Local FCDP providers foster memorandums of understanding with their LWDBs.

As part of a strategic initiative to increase collaboration and co-enrollments with FCDP local providers, the State Monitor Advocate and FCDP state staff facilitate onsite meetings with local WIOA program staff, case managers, office managers, outreach staff and local FCDP coordinators. These meetings usually occur during the SMA's onsite monitoring visits.

Partnerships between the significant multilingual MSFW career centers and the local FCDP grantees have strengthened over the past few years resulting in an increase in cross-referrals and co-enrollments of MSFWs for services. The Department of Education (DOE), through a contract with DEO, continues to utilize a database module in Employ Florida, which launched on January 26, 2016, for FCDP to provide activities and services that will better serve Florida's MSFW population. Local FCDP providers have staff accounts for their own program module in Employ Florida to document intake, enrollment, services and outcomes. FCDP providers can view Wagner-Peyser services provided to mutual customers. This maximizes a seamless service delivery to MSFW customers by career centers and FCDP providers. The partnership between DOE and DEO has greatly enhanced collaboration efforts and allowed for efficient data sharing and co-enrollments between the Wagner-Peyser and FCDP programs.

(B) Review and Public Comment

Information was solicited from NFJP grantees and other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and interested organizations for at least 30 days for review and comments. Comments received are considered in the preparation of the final AOP.

(C) Data Assessment

Florida is the second most MSFW significant state in the country, behind California. In PY 2018, the state had a total of 14,307 MSFW applicants in its labor exchange system and in PY 2017, there were a total of 16,537 MSFW applicants. These reductions in MSFW applications from PY 2018 and PY 2017, 14,307 and 16,537, respectively, are likely attributed to MSFWs not returning to Florida after migrating north for work and an increase in the use of foreign workers through the H-2A program.

Florida meets its goals of providing services to MSFWs on a quantitatively proportionate level as those provided to non-MSFWs. MSFW Indicators of Compliance Reports for the past four program years show all five equity ratio indicators are met. These indicators are referrals to jobs, referrals to supportive services, received staff assisted services, career guidance and job development contacts.

(D) Assessment of Progress

Florida exceeded its outreach goals outlined in the PY 2018 Agricultural Outreach Plan, meeting the goal of 20,550 outreach contacts at the rate of 109 percent, by conducting 39,250 outreach contacts during PY 2018. The goal of 12,200 quality outreach contacts where staff assisted services were provided was not met. Only 8,447 staff assisted outreach contacts were made during PY 2018, a rate of 69 percent. 1,250 staff days of the 1,850 goal for staff days of outreach was not met. An extended vacancy in one significant office and the conversion of another significant office to non-significant status impacted outreach activities. The goal of 185 staff days per outreach worker was still ambitious, even after being reduced from 210 and then 190 staff days in previous plans. The required number of staff days dedicated to outreach was decreased to 185 per outreach worker.

The goal for 500 outreach contacts made by cooperating agencies was met; a maximum of 1,509 contacts was reported for PY 2018. DEO, in partnership with the LWDBs, strives to meet or exceed all equity and minimum service level indicators. During PY 2018, Florida met all five equity ratio indicators and seven of seven minimum service level indicators.

The level of services attained is attributed to intensive outreach efforts by MSFW outreach workers and career center staff properly serving customers.

The SMA is involved in the LWDBs reporting system by providing training and technical assistance during monitoring visits to address statistical data related to MSFWs. The SMA maintains on-going contact with MSFW outreach workers to ensure accurate data are collected and reports are submitted in a timely manner. The report accurately reflects data of LWDBs' efforts to assist MSFWs through out-of-office contact, referrals to supportive services and provisions of employment information and referrals.

(E) State Monitor Advocate

The SMA formulated the 2020-2024 WIOA Unified Agricultural Outreach Plan. All comments, suggestions and recommendations of the State Monitor Advocate are incorporated in the plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

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

CareerSource Florida

DATE: _____

Michelle Dennard, President and CEO

Department of Economic Opportunity

DATE: _____

Ken Lawson, Executive Director

VIII.PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS—ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

(a) Aligning of Content Standards

Florida has a longstanding history of standards-based instruction from the original Sunshine State Standards, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, and in 2014, the adoption of the Florida Standards (English Language Arts and Mathematics) by the State Board of Education. In 2020, the Florida Department of Education will implement new standards that represent the highest quality knowledge-based standards in the nation. The new Florida Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards provide an excellent foundation for teaching and learning for adult learners. The B.E.S.T. Standards are the official state-adopted academic content standards fulfilling statutory requirements under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. s. 6311(b)(1)). The B.E.S.T. Standards share the dual purpose of preparing both K-12 and adult students to be college and career ready.

Florida sets clear expectations between K-12 and its content-equivalent counterpart in adult education by ensuring standards-based instruction is aligned to state-adopted content standards in K-12. This guarantees all students (K-12 or adult), regardless of their pathway to graduation, have access to a high-quality, market-driven education. The state's Adult Basic Education (ABE) standards are the grade level equivalent of K-8 of the B.E.S.T. Standards and are revised and reviewed on an annual basis by the Division of Career and Technical Education (DCAE). The State Board of Education approves the adult education curriculum frameworks containing the aligned standards.

At the secondary level, adult high school credit programs implement the same course descriptions and standards as those used in the K-12 educational system and adult students participate in the same statewide assessment program measuring student mastery of the B.E.S.T. Standards and, upon successful completion, adult education students earn a standard adult high school diploma. GED® preparation courses are a component of Florida's adult secondary level programming aligned to both Florida's Standards and its college and career readiness standards. Upon successful passage of all four subject test areas, students are awarded a state of Florida High School Diploma (high school equivalency diploma) issued by the Florida Department of Education.

A high school equivalency diploma is issued to candidates who successfully demonstrate competency in the areas of Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science and Social Studies. The assessment used for the diploma program is the 2014 GED® Test, which was selected through a competitive procurement to designate a single assessment product for high school equivalency. The review process confirmed alignment of the assessment with the existing challenging academic standards. The current contract period for using the assessment is through December 2020. A new procurement process (Invitation to Negotiate) will take place in 2020 in view of alignment to Florida's new B.E.S.T. Standards.

In the end, the four-year State Plan communicates Florida's commitment to the continuous improvement of adult education programs and to equitable access to quality adult education programs to all students, including special populations. It aims to not just align its adult basic education and secondary adult education programs to the state's new B.E.S.T. Standards, but proposes aggressive and innovative ways to reengage Florida's adults in the completion of their high school diploma while also connecting them to a credential of value and/or a postsecondary credential.

(b) Local Activities

In accordance with Section 231 under Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of WIOA, DCAE will award multi-year grants to eligible providers of adult education services through a competitive process for 2020-2021. This also includes grant projects funded under Section 225 – Corrections and Other Institutionalized Individuals and Section 243 – Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). Family literacy programs are optional, and activities may be included in the local project applications.

DCAE administers funds to eligible providers and provides program/performance oversight to grantees. DCAE provides funding to eligible local providers for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFP) process. The RFP is the mechanism through which DCAE identifies, assesses, and awards multi-year grants to eligible providers to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities throughout the state.

An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- Local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- Partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

The DCAE will host a grant competition in 2020 for eligible providers to enable them to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities. Local eligible providers may apply for multi-year funding for the provision of adult education in local areas. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media outlets throughout the state. A grant notification will be published via the DCAE Office of Communications in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the DCAE website or social media outlets, and other means of available communication. In addition, communications regarding grant availability will be sent to agencies that serve Corrections and English Language Learner populations. Further, the DCAE will offer technical assistance grant writing workshops, and maintain a question and answer document on the RFP website. Both the workshops and the question and answer document will be accessible to any interested party, and will provide useful information pertaining to the grant procurement process.

Questions in the RFP are structured in a manner that gives applicants the opportunity to respond to their capacity and readiness to meet the 13 Considerations for Funding and other expectations as outlined in WIOA statutes and regulations. The RFP identifies each of the considerations and specifies probing questions to generate a detailed narrative.

Applicants are evaluated on their ability to meet literacy needs of the area, their ability to comply with WIOA expectations, and past performance of the provider in providing literacy instruction and meeting programmatic goals. Decisions about course offerings are made depending on local need.

In the grant and contract awarding process, the DCAE shall utilize the 13 Considerations for Funding, identified in Section 231(e), to be included in the evaluation and selection process. Some of the factors

considered include: the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, the ability to comply with WIOA expectations, the demonstrated effectiveness and past performance of the entity in providing literacy instruction and meeting programmatic goals and the overall qualifications and expertise of the provider's personnel. In addition, Florida also encourages eligible providers to incorporate integrated education and training services, which provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation and occupational cluster for educational and career advancement.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) Adult General Education Programs and Courses

DCAE reviews the standards for each course annually and updates and submits updated courses to the State Board of Education for approval. The program and course numbers are identified in the state Course Code Directory and Data Dictionaries to ensure enrollment and educational gains are accurately reported. If major modifications are needed, the recommendations are outlined in a change document and posted on the FDOE website notifying stakeholders of changes to standards or courses.

Each course framework identifies content standards to be used by programs for the local curriculum development process, including the following strands: civic literacy, financial literacy, and basic technology literacy skills. Adult education course standards provide guidance for instructors in teaching adult basic education classes. The standards inform what should be taught in the classroom. To assist with the implementation of these standards, professional development is provided through local face-to-face workshops and webinars. The curriculum frameworks are available at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/adult-edu>.

Figure 8.01
Adult General Education Programs and Courses

Adult Basic Education and Integrated Program	<p>Courses in this program are designed for students to obtain a level of educational instruction intended to improve the employability of the state's workforce through instruction in mathematics, reading, language and workforce preparation skills at grade level equivalency of 0-8.9. These courses are based on the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.</p> <p>The Integrated courses in mathematics, reading and language provide access to ABE standards through an integrated, concurrent and contextualized approach to instruction utilizing a single set of learning objectives. The adult education and literacy activities are provided along with workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.</p>
Adult High School Program	<p>This program is designed for students to receive high school credit in one or more courses leading to a standard high school diploma. Students obtain credits upon completion of courses and passing state mandated assessments necessary to qualify for a high school diploma. Except as provided elsewhere in law (Section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes), graduation requirements for adults are the same as those for secondary students.</p>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

GED® Program	Preparation	This program prepares adults to successfully complete the four subject area tests leading to the award of a State of Florida High School Diploma. The four courses included are: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science and Social Studies. These courses are aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards.
GED® Course	Integrated	This comprehensive course includes coursework in the following: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science and Social Studies. This course was developed for students with simultaneous enrollment in the GED® Preparation program and a career and technical certificate program.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program

Adult ESOL Course	The adult ESOL course is designed to improve employability of adults seeking to enter the state's workforce by acquiring communication skills and cultural competencies that enhance their ability to read, write, speak and listen in English. College and career readiness standards are included in the ESOL advanced level 6.
English Literacy for Career and Technical Education (ELCATE) Course	This course is designed for ESOL students who have a goal of enrolling in a career and technical program. The course helps prepare students for a successful transition to and completion of career and technical education.

Additional Adult Education Courses: Not Supported with Federal Funds and Not Reported for National Reporting System (NRS) Purposes

Adult ESOL College and Career Readiness Course	The purpose of this course is to improve advanced ESOL students' abilities to communicate in English, allowing them to acquire secondary level English language skills. College and career readiness standards are integrated into this course with the intention of successful transition to and completion of postsecondary education.
Adult ESOL Literacy Skills Course	The purpose of this course is to provide English language and literacy instruction for English language learning adults whose first language is not English and who are non-literate or semi-literate in their home language, enhancing their ability to communicate in English.
Applied Academics for Adult Education Course	This course is designed for students who test at the equivalent of 9th grade and above but lack the required level of basic skills for completion of the CTE program in which they are enrolled. Students may or may not have earned a high school diploma. These courses are updated annually to align with the secondary (9-12) college and career readiness standards.

Workforce Preparation Activities

Workforce preparation activities include activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills.

For example, career planning and exploration, technology (digital literacy), and computer science education are all included in the adult education curriculum frameworks. In coordination with advisory groups for ABE, ESOL and ASE programs, additional standards in employability skills will be integrated into the adult education courses to ensure maximum alignment to the future of work and the demands of the 21st century economy.

Moreover, DCAE intends to explore the introduction of entrepreneurship skills training and standards. It will seek to provide support for robust co-curricular engagement around business incubation and acceleration for its adult population, particularly for those adult participants of low socioeconomic status. Emphasis will be placed on working with core partners, such as CareerSource Florida, to identify and secure business support and input into improving our current adult education frameworks and co-curricular initiatives. ABE Standards are based on the United States Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education's Framework for Employability Skills and additional resources. DCAE submits all updated courses annually to the State Board of Education for approval. ABE, ESOL and GED® preparation courses align with college and career readiness standards (CCRS) and will align Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards. The learning objectives of the CCRS represent an application of skills including critical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills that prepare students for success in career and postsecondary education.

DCAE will also provide on-site skill-based learning experiences in partnership with eligible partners and community economic development agencies. In partnership with CareerSource Florida, area educational agencies, and Florida College System (FCS) institutions, DCAE will work to develop a plan to enroll eligible adult education participants in targeted Career Pathway courses and information sessions and increase opportunities for enrollment in Integrated Education and Training programs that align to a postsecondary credential or degree program.

Additionally, DCAE will collaborate with CareerSource Florida to identify local workforce needs and opportunities for businesses to connect with students. DCAE will explore a strategy around enrolling eligible participants in apprenticeship programs, the development of micro-credentialing as a kind of credential of value, and formalizing other in-demand work-based learning opportunities. DCAE will provide leadership for local providers in connecting them to CareerSource Florida boards to identify regional needs and develop targeted instructional programs to meet workforce needs.

Lastly, WIOA requires the submission of "infrastructure agreements" between local AEFLA recipients and CareerSource Florida boards to identify shared costs. DCAE will work to improve the development of more integrated Infrastructure agreements to ensure all are working with local partners to meet academic and workforce needs. Working with the same partners, state government officials and the State Board of Education, DCAE will develop a communication campaign consisting of webinars, improved website capabilities, and a more comprehensive plan around a new media marketing for adult education – all of which is available through AEFLA state leadership funds.

Integrated Education and Training

DCAE promotes the planning, development and implementation of an integrated education and training (IET) service approach that provides concurrent and contextualized adult education and literacy activities in combination with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The IET service approach provides all levels of adult education students the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to:

- Transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs;
- Obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency; and
- Exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

All IET programs must include the following three components:

- Adult education and literacy activities (§463.30);
- Workforce preparation activities (§463.34); and
- Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupation cluster which can be any one of the training services defined in section 134(c)(3)(D) of WIOA.

In order to meet the “integrated” requirement of IET, all services must include the following:

- Adult education and literacy activities run concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement;
- Activities are of sufficient intensity and quality, and are based on the most rigorous research available, particularly with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals;
- Activities and training occur simultaneously; and
- Activities and training use occupational relevant instructional materials.

The integrated education and training program must have a single set of learning objectives that identifies specific adult education content, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training competencies, and the program activities must function cooperatively.

Professional development provides support for the success of IET programs. Professional development is available through a variety of means such as conferences, webinars and local training.

Local education providers must develop and implement local IET programs as outlined in the state plan and specify the required components within the grant proposals and/or applications.

Development of Career Pathways

WIOA, Section 3(7) defines a career pathway as a “combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services” that: 1) aligns to the skills industry needs, both regionally and statewide; 2) prepares individuals to be successful in a full range of secondary and postsecondary programs and training opportunities, including apprenticeships; 3) includes counseling mechanisms around the individual’s passion and place in the workforce; and 4) organizes the adult education experience in a way that “accelerates” the educational and career advancement of the person in a given occupational cluster.

Career pathway strategies aim to leverage education, workforce development, and social service supports to help residents obtain the skills they need to find employment and advance in their careers. Florida is proposing, therefore, to develop a more robust career pathways system for adult education – i.e., one that not only coordinates residents and adult education learners with career resources, but attempts to provide structured work-based learning opportunities, targeted training and other services to accelerate the educational and career advancement of the individual, and an opportunity for the acquisition of at least one micro-credential of value and one postsecondary credential. By aligning programming, funding, and services within and across the community, providers assist individuals with the transition into and out of education and training programs and employment.

The state intends to promote the development of career pathways by means of the following five strategic priorities:¹

1. Increase interagency and intra-agency partnerships by coordinating activities carried out among adult education providers, colleges, career and technical institutions, workforce development, businesses, and other entities to implement a comprehensive local/regional career pathways system.
2. Increase industry engagement in informing and supporting adult education courses and activities to target occupations and the skills, training, and credentials required for target occupations.
3. Improve and focus professional development opportunities to support staff in delivering education and training services.
4. Develop and encourage local career pathway policies and guidance for conducting assessment, delivering instruction, providing advising, and increasing support services.
5. Improve statewide and regional communication around career pathway opportunities through ongoing professional development opportunities for providers.

In order to implement these strategic priorities, the state intends to review individual adult education providers' performance and identify regions without robust career pathway agreements and work with area stakeholders to develop. It also intends to develop a plan to provide individualized assistance to address specific deficiencies in adult education program functions that relate to preparing clients for further education, training, or employment.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

DCAE provides unique educational opportunities to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enable adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. The IELCE programs, supported by section 243 of WIOA funding, are delivered in combination with IET. Professional development is provided to practitioners on developing and delivering an integrated and contextualized curriculum.

Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

(c) Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

As specified in section 225 of WIOA, the DCAE spends no more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the state grant allotted to local programs for correctional education activities. Funding allocations are determined as part of the planning process for implementation of WIOA. Priority is given to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Adult education programs offered in correctional institutions include ABE, GED® Preparation and ESOL.

¹ Cotner, H. "The Career Pathways Planner: A Guide for Adult Education State Leaders to Promote Local Career Pathways Systems" (December 2016), available at https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/topic/mpf/TACP_Planner_for_OCTAE_ADA.PDF.

Individuals participate in career exploration and planning activities to develop a career and education plan based on career goals.

Florida is committed to providing high-quality educational programs in state correctional settings and intends to continue its partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) to ensure inmates have access to Adult Education and CTE programs that can prepare them for current and emerging employment in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. These instructional services are critical to ensuring the ease of transition for incarcerated individuals and ideally reduce the rate of recidivism upon release.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

The term “Integrated English literacy and civics education” means education services that are provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries, to enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE) services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

Florida’s B.E.S.T. new civics standards will be integrated into ESOL and ELCATE curriculum frameworks which also include career information and workforce preparation activities in addition to the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education. Adult educators can participate in IELCE regional workshops, conferences and webinars sponsored in collaboration with the state leadership grant awardees. Emphasis will be placed on education for democratic citizenship and the instruction of those foundational concepts and beliefs constitutive of successful self-rule. Emphasis will now be placed on the development of innovative and targeted IELCE workshops and sessions around education for democratic citizenship, entrepreneurship education, how adult education can be a mechanism for engagement, and economic and social mobility for Florida’s residents.

IELCE funds for local and state leadership activities are distributed through multi-year competitive and continuation local grants. Only sites with established ESOL and ELCATE programs are eligible to apply for IELCE funds. Each program that receives funding will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency, and integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. To ensure workforce preparation activities are integrated into the classroom, standards were developed and included in the adult education courses and will be updated to include Florida’s new B.E.S.T. educational aims.

Eligible providers are required to demonstrate in the grant application their program delivery model to ensure integrated education and training activities are provided directly or through collaboration with identified partners or with other community-based organizations.

DCAE provides face-to-face workshops and webinars on the integration of English literacy and civics into the ESOL and ELCATE programs. The IELCE competitive grant process will be conducted in the spring of 2020.

(e) State Leadership

The state uses leadership funds, no more than 12.5 percent of the total grant, to execute the four mandatory leadership activities and other state leadership activities described in section 223 of WIOA.

The four mandatory leadership activities are:

- 1. Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with core partners and CareerSource Florida partners.***

Each eligible agency shall use funds to align adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the development of career pathways systems for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.

Through leadership grants, DCAE works to support local career pathways design, agreements, activities, and implementation. Given the fact that a functional career pathways system is one that consists of multiple agencies, with differing missions but all sharing a common goal of preparing individuals for career and life success, DCAE will focus on improving the collaboration of local providers and core partners. DCAE will also work to create stronger opportunities for adults with disabilities to participate in career pathway services and IET by providing professional development through leadership funds. Best practices will be identified and shared throughout the state to support continuous program improvement. These best practices will be shared through regional workshops, conferences, online training materials, and webinars.

Additionally, through advisory committee meetings and targeted trainings with experts in the field, DCAE will share in the collaboration of establishing career pathways and will be committed to pathways development. In addition, DCAE will continue to work with and utilize the expertise of CareerSource Florida, the State College System, school districts and business and industry leaders to ensure adult education students are provided up-to-date information on career pathways. This will occur through local advisory and counseling services. DCAE will provide professional development opportunities for administrators, advisors and counselors during regional workshops, conferences, and webinars. Online training materials will also be developed through our leadership funds.

Engaging the field is critical to building and sustaining career pathways systems. State leadership grant recipients are encouraged to provide additional professional development on strategic engagement practices such as:

- Development of a comprehensive intake process involving the students' development of a career and education plan;
- Technical assistance for agencies on developing a vision of comprehensive and coordinated services;
- Recruiting a diverse range of students who would benefit from the career pathways model; and
- Creating a vision of the types and sequences of career pathways services and credentialing programs that can be delivered by an adult education provider.

2. *The establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs (section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA):*

DCAE supports professional development with leadership grants to the Adult and Community Educators (ACE) of Florida Foundation, the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) and the Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators (IPDAE).

The state leadership recipients provide face-to-face and online professional development opportunities for adult education practitioners and various resources are available at <http://aceofflorida.org>, <http://floridaliteracy.org> and <http://floridaipdae.org>.

Resources include electronic documents, toolkits, lessons, videos, workshops, webinars, virtual trainings, online training modules, newsletters and consistent communication outreach through an email contact database. The state leadership groups provide the convergence of subject matter experts, interactivity engagements, planning/coordination and a technology platform to disseminate information

required for implementing adult education programs. In addition, the state leadership groups provide methods to measure and assess the involvement and effectiveness of adult education programs through data reports, evaluations and surveys.

Priorities for establishing professional development are identified through statewide needs assessment surveys, advisory committee meetings, conferences, and administrator meetings. These identified priorities, which are funded through this state plan, include research-based reading strategies, integrated education and training, career pathways systems, contextualized instruction, math training for ABE and GED® preparation, implementation of college and career readiness standards in adult education and ESOL, and training specific to community-based and volunteer tutoring services.

3. *Technical Assistance:*

DCAE provides technical assistance on programmatic and data collection and reporting processes to providers through email, webinars, telephone inquiries and site visits. Technical assistance papers on assessment and adult high school policies receive annual updates and are posted on the Florida Department of Education website.

The Adult Education Assessment Technical Assistance Paper and the Adult High School Technical Assistance Guide are available at <http://fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/adult-edu/technical-assistance-papers.shtml>.

Current practices with one-stop career centers and provider partnerships include referrals, locating teachers and classrooms at the local CareerSource Florida centers, or providing space for the CareerSource Florida activities in the adult education center. As part of the RFA and RFP process, eligible recipients submit their applications for review to the local workforce boards to ensure alignment with their plans.

4. *Monitoring and Evaluation:*

In accordance with section 223, Florida uses AEFLA State Leadership funds to monitor and evaluate the quality of and the improvement in adult education and literacy activities utilizing various means of assessment in its annual and ongoing evaluation process, including site monitoring visits, desk monitoring, program improvement processes, and performance and financial audits. The results of these processes determine program improvement actions.

DCAE implements a Quality Assurance System that analyzes student performance, provides for financial accountability, evaluates program quality, and establishes regulatory compliance of local providers in accordance with federal laws and regulations, state statutes and rules. The monitoring component of the Quality Assurance System uses risk assessment, which is a process used to evaluate variables with federal adult education grants associated with workforce education grants and assign a rating for the level of risk to the FDOE and DCAE associated with each provider. In order to complete a risk assessment, certain risk factors have been identified which may affect the level of risk for each agency. A risk matrix is completed for each provider. DCAE conducts an annual risk assessment by the quality assurance team to determine the monitoring strategy appropriate for each provider. A range of monitoring strategies includes conference calls, improvement plans, desk-top self-assessments, grant reviews, etc., with the more comprehensive strategy, such as an onsite visit, designated for providers deemed to be at higher risk.

To improve the quality of a program, if non-compliance finding(s) are identified, a corrective action plan will be implemented. The corrective action plan must identify the finding(s) and specific strategies the provider will implement to ensure the finding(s) have been resolved.

The state provides a leadership grant to the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) to support state or regional networks of literacy resource centers. FLC serves as the designated state literacy resource center. A literacy center is a community-based resource which provides literacy services for adult education students. The resources may include printed educational materials, tutor services, and health and financial literacy skills training. Professional development is customized for tutors and volunteers and is available online and in-person. The coalition provides leadership support to literacy centers operating throughout the state. An annual conference provides an opportunity to share best practices with adult education practitioners, teachers, volunteers, tutors and students. A resource center is also available with a toll-free number for student referrals and for information requests. DCAE monitors the performance of FLC by attending the annual conference, participating in online tutor trainings, and processing quarterly reports.

(f) Assessing Quality

Assessing Quality of Professional Development

Participants are surveyed after all workshops, conference presentations and webinars to evaluate and provide feedback on the activity or event. In regional workshops, changes are made to future workshops based on feedback from participants. Programs review student data to determine if training impacted student outcomes and to determine areas where additional training may be needed. The annual training plan includes state priorities, input from surveys about training needs and advice from a statewide professional development advisory committee. Survey results are reviewed with the professional development advisory committee to determine how training is best delivered: face to face or online webinars. Workshops conducted on college and career readiness are formatted for online courses which include a post-test to determine if learning objectives were met.

The IPDAE website provides methods to measure and assess involvement and effectiveness of online modules, webinars and regional workshops through data reports, evaluations and surveys. All IPDAE workshop and webinar registrations are online. Once an individual creates an account in the IPDAE portal, a record is kept of all professional development activities he or she attends. This record is available by county so administrators can review and make local professional development decisions. In addition, DCAE reviews comments submitted by participants.

Assessment of Programs Receiving Federal Grant Funds

DCAE uses various methods of assessment during the annual and ongoing program evaluation process. This evaluation includes site monitoring visits, desk monitoring, program improvement processes and performance and financial compliance reviews. The results of these processes determine program improvement actions.

DCAE implements a Quality Assurance System that ensures student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality and regulatory compliance of local providers in accordance with federal laws and regulations, state statutes and rules and the provisions of an approved grant award.

The monitoring component of the Quality Assurance System is risk-based. Risk assessment is used to evaluate variables associated with workforce education grants and to assign a rating for levels of risk to the FDOE and DCAE associated with each provider. In completing a risk assessment, certain factors are identified which may affect levels of risk for each agency. A risk matrix is completed for each provider.

To determine the monitoring strategies appropriate for each provider, an annual risk assessment is conducted by the quality assurance team. A range of monitoring strategies includes conference calls, improvement plans, desktop self-assessments and grant reviews. Additional comprehensive strategies are implemented, such as onsite visits, for providers deemed to be at higher risk.

Program Accountability

DCAE established minimum benchmarks for eligible providers. Each eligible provider is required to demonstrate the ability to meet the benchmarks in the initial grant application and during the grant period. DCAE developed an accountability system to measure student enrollment, progression, and performance. These requirements are applicable to all three competitive grant-funded programs: adult general education, integrated English literacy and civics education, and corrections education.

The accountability system established by DCAE requires an eligible provider to demonstrate a program's size, scope, and quality. The system requires an applicant to establish a minimum level of instructional service necessary to improve literacy and workforce preparation in the lives of working-age adults who lack basic literacy skills, a diploma, and/or English language skills. The DCAE requires providers to establish minimum enrollment targets and meet the enrollment targets during the grant period. Periodic verification is conducted to determine agency progress on meeting its enrollment target. Providers must offer instruction for a minimum of 10 hours per week for at least 32 weeks for each WIOA-eligible program offered by the agency. Periodic updates are required according to a set program schedule. DCAE establishes a maximum finding level an applicant may request based upon the number of students served.

Program accountability is measured through the following WIOA outcome measures:

- Measurable skills gains (MSG) are reported to DCAE during regularly established survey windows as required by the National Reporting System. This is based on the lowest functioning level, the participant earned at least one eligible literacy completion point, earned a diploma or GED®, or exited and enrolled in postsecondary career and technical education by the end of the reporting year.
- Credential Attainment Rate measures student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or enrollment in postsecondary education or career training within one year of exit.
- Employment Rate (second quarter after exit) measures the number of exiters during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit, divided by the number of exiters during the reporting period.
- Median Earnings (second quarter after exit), for all exiters in a core program, is the report of the wage that is at the midpoint between the highest and lowest wage earned in the second quarter after exit.
- Employment Rate (fourth quarter) measures the number of exiters during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit, divided by the number of exiters during the reporting period.

During the spring of 2020, DCAE will negotiate state performance with OCTAE and all local providers will be expected to meet the state target for each measure in order to develop a more rigorous accountability system. Local provider performance will be analyzed and reports will be provided to share information.

Program Improvement Plans

DCAE conducts annual performance evaluations of local providers' performance on the WIOA measures discussed above through a data-driven accountability system for adult education programs. If a program does not meet state performance targets, a Program Improvement Plan is required. DCAE staff reviews the improvement plans to identify opportunities to improve local practices. DCAE provides supports such as targeted professional development, teacher training, and site visits.

In addition, DCAE takes the following actions to continually improve the quality of the programs:

- New Director Training
The annual new director training provides new directors with information such as federal and state guidelines, data collection and NRS reporting and resources needed to administer their programs.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- **TABE and CASAS Training/Trainers**
Through on-going training, a network of trained professionals ensures the uniform administration and reporting of assessments used for determining federal level gains.
- **Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training**
Data reporting and program improvement training provides training on the fundamentals of the NRS. Topics include monitoring, data analysis and collection, types of data and measures, assessments, data quality and related information.
- **Technical Assistance**
Adult education calls and webinars are available to inform adult educators of program changes, to report announcements and to provide opportunities for practitioners to ask questions of the DCAE staff. DCAE updates and posts technical assistance papers on the FDOE website.
- **Teacher Training**
Teacher training provides information and resources to support instruction in the areas of ABE, ESOL, GED® preparation, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, career pathways, reading and math instructional strategies and adults with disabilities.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

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

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1.	The eligible agency expends funds appropriated to carry out Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement and not supplant requirements);
2.	The eligible agency will ensure there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3.	The eligible agency will not use any funds available under Title II of WIOA for supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4.	Using funds made available under Title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the
5.	The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. ss. 8301-8303).

1. SF424B – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>
2. Grants.gov – Certification Regarding Lobbying
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable) <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Florida Department of Education

Commissioner Richard Corcoran

DATE: _____

DRAFT

IX. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS—VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

(a)Input of State Rehabilitation Council

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) is pleased to be a strategic partner with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), housed within the Florida Department of Education (DOE). The FRC promotes high standards and expectations for every area of service delivery by recommending best practices in policies using data driven recommendations and by sharing each council member's unique perspective from the constituency they represent.

The FRC meets quarterly in-person and by teleconferences throughout the year. Each quarterly meeting includes an overview by the Area Directors specific to the geographic area the meeting is occurring. In addition, a training topic is provided to enhance the FRC members understanding of policies, procedures, and best practices related to a specific topic. FRC members will select specific training topics to be covered during the meetings and often allows the FRC to provide additional recommendations for improvement.

The FRC appreciates the vision that new leadership has brought to the agency and is ready to meet the challenges with VR as a partner. The following six recommendations were provided by the FRC and focus on Deaf and Hard of Hearing services, counselor recruitment and retention, transition, job placement strategies, mediation and conflict resolution, and public awareness.

State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations

The FRC offers the following robust recommendations to enhance service delivery and career achievement by individuals with disabilities.

Recommendation 1. Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- The FRC recommends the creation of a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Bureau be considered by VR and the DOE.

Agency Response:

The Division appreciates FRC's concerns about how the needs of individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are addressed; however, VR disagrees with this recommendation.

- As a cross-disability organization, VR strives to create organizational structures and strategies to build capacity to meet the needs of people with all types of disabilities, including those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind. VR also relies on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), conducted in conjunction with FRC, to make data and research driven strategic decisions.
- Section Three of the CSNA, "Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, Including Needs of Individuals Who May Have Been Underserved or Unserved by the VR Program," provides the following observation: "Deaf individuals were characterized as potentially underserved because there is a shortage of qualified interpreters in many parts of the State." The CSNA goes on to recommend that VR "recruit and hire bilingual staff, including those that are fluent in sign language,"
- VR agrees with this assessment and recommendation and has taken action in anticipation of it.

- In recent years, VR has:
 - Elevated Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind Services to a specific unit, rather than being a part of the general VR policy team. Moved Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind Services to the Bureau of Field Services to strengthen the connection between the technical assistance and coordination services the unit provides and the field staff who deliver the services, thus increasing the capacity of all field staff. Creating a separate bureau would risk severing the connection.
 - Recognizing that one of the main barriers to serving individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind, is the lack of qualified sign language interpreters, and the difficulty in retaining staff interpreters, VR has entered into a contract with ServiceSource to increase the number of staff interpreters that are available. This contract added nine interpreters in geographic areas of need identified by field staff. VR staff members who are qualified interpreters are eligible for salary enhancements during the hiring process or if they obtain credentials while employed by VR. To the extent this has not been sufficient, the ServiceSource contract is intended to expand capacity further.

Recommendation 2. Counselor Recruitment, Retention

- Implement the Learning Management System and other training opportunities that will increase staff confidence and skillsets.
- The FRC strongly recommends additional, immediate pay incentives to meet or exceed the national average for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors currently hired or working to attain the credential. The FRC believes this is a critical need to stabilize the VR workforce.
- Provide supervisors with opportunities for the training they need in an environment where they can be productive. Ensure that staff is equipped with state-of-the-art resources to do their job duties.

Agency Response:

- VR agrees with all aspects of the Counselor Recruitment and Retention recommendation and has every intention to continue these activities.
- Pay incentives are more complex than just the agency approving and requires legislative involvement. While this recommendation is supported by VR, the project will be complex and take additional time to complete or approve.

Recommendation 3. Transition

- Promote early contact and assistance to all students with disabilities under an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan.
- Expand and offer career paths to include vocational exploration, technical training, apprenticeships and post-secondary options for transition students.
- Continue to emphasize peer mentoring in Florida, especially to underserved groups who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. Assure that there is a network of proficient providers and supports for those providers, including those working with individuals who are deaf.

Agency Response:

- VR has many pilot projects and initiatives anticipated to create additional training and employment opportunities for students and youth. There are 35 school districts currently participating in the Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE) as a provider for VR.
- The current caseload of VR customers is 50% youth age 14-21. This demonstrates the intentional focus the agency has on the youth population.

Recommendation 4. Job Placement Strategies

- Analyze and identify any trends in services provided under the rehabilitation technology service category by service type and VR area.
- Continue strengthening efforts with business leaders to improve employment opportunities and meaningful careers, including increasing partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce.
- Develop a deeper understanding of customer strengths and develop tools to communicate effectively and succinctly to potential employers.
- FRC applauds VR efforts to increase capacity of the number of providers using the Discovery model
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the Abilities Work Help Desk and provide regular reports to the FRC.
- Further build capacity for job customization and Innovation and Expansion projects to include unserved and underserved populations.
- Evaluate self-employment services across the board to include the evaluation of the Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant model. Consider ways to streamline and expedite the provision of self-employment services.

Agency Response:

- Analyze and identify any trends in services provided under the rehabilitation technology service category by service type and VR area.
- Continue strengthening efforts with business leaders to improve employment opportunities and meaningful careers, including increasing partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce.
- Develop a deeper understanding of customer strengths and develop tools to communicate effectively and succinctly to potential employers.
- Continued identification of providers for services to the most significant disability population including Discovery, Customized Employment and Supported-Employment services.
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the Abilities Work Help Desk and provide regular reports to the FRC.
- Further build capacity for job customization and Innovation and Expansion projects to include unserved and underserved populations.
- Evaluate self-employment services across the board to include the evaluation of the Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant model. Consider ways to streamline and expedite the provision of self-employment services.
- Continue efforts to collaborate with workforce partners on sector strategies through apprenticeship opportunities and on-the-job training programs

Recommendation 5. Mediation and Conflict Resolution

- Promote Rights education for customers and VR staff as a core principle. Collaborative discussions enhance informed choices.
- Implement strategies to improve satisfaction survey results on client knowledge of all levels of rights to resolve any difficulties with VR.

Agency Response:

- VR agrees with FRC in the importance of Rights education and is included in training required of all VR staff. VR requires staff to complete training on confidentiality procedures, the Americans

with Disabilities Act, the Client Assistance Program, and Disability Etiquette and Auxiliary Aids. VR redesigned its customer orientation process, VR Works!, to ensure focus on customer rights and responsibilities within the rehabilitation process.

Recommendation 6. Public Awareness of VR

- Develop a media campaign to share the history of VR, Florida specific services, successes and accomplishments.
- Provide an accessible online application system.
- Engage businesses as mandated partners.

Agency Response:

- VR agrees with the recommendation of an accessible, online application process, but at this time, resources are not available for this project.
- VR agrees with up-to-date modernization of our marketing tools, including updated brochures and informational packets.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The FRC is required to review and analyze the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with VR agency functions, rehabilitation services and employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals including the availability of health and other employment benefits. The FRC and VR contract with Market Decisions to conduct the customer satisfaction surveys quarterly. The wealth of data is being used effectively by the FRC and VR to focus on specific areas of excellence for recognition, as well as, specific opportunities for improvement. The improvements are implemented through policy guidance, field services operating procedures, training opportunities through a web-based platform or Area Continuing Education Days. In addition, performance evaluations are updated annually to reflect the focus areas for improvement.

Annual highlights from the SFY 2018-19 survey results are below.

VR customers satisfied with Florida's VR program.....	82%
VR customers satisfied with the services provided by VR.....	82%
VR customers satisfied with their involvement in their VR experience.....	85%
VR customers who say VR staff treated them with dignity and respect.....	96%
VR customers satisfied with their choice of vocational goal.....	84%
VR customers who say VR staff were helpful in achieving their job goal.....	85%
VR customers who say the VR services they received helped them become more independent.....	84%
VR customers who say the VR services they received helped them become more financially independent.....	81%
VR customers satisfied with what they are doing at their current job.....	80%
VR customers who would tell their friends with disabilities to go to VR.....	93%

(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) does not request a waiver of statewideness due to the fact all services are available on a statewide basis. Intentional focus has been given to rural areas where limited providers were available. This effort has expanded services to all 67 counties.

(c) Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce System

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) maintains agreements with agencies and other entities not carrying out activities under the Workforce Investment System. A description of current VR partners and agreements are below.

The Able Trust

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c)(3) public-private partnership foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. The Able Trust assists community organizations throughout the state to help thousands of Floridians with disabilities enter the workforce. They accomplish this by administering grants, as well as supporting educational and public awareness programs. The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition to many students with disabilities annually, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school. The Able Trust submits its budget, annual report, audit and any changes to the Articles of Incorporation or by-laws to the Vocational Rehabilitation director annually for review, and VR provides necessary approval, as required.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

The agreement between the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and VR contains a detailed and specific focus on collaborative planning and funding of Supported Employment services for individuals with the most significant disability. Specifically, the agreement addresses the transition of secondary students to the community and to provide a seamless transition of services. The agreement includes local strategies and joint obligations for both agencies. The agencies have a common goal of assisting eligible persons to achieve greater independence through employment. The specific goal of this agreement is to coordinate support and services throughout the state, maintaining maximum customer satisfaction and informed choice. This agreement is currently being updated to ensure compliance with the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations and to include a data sharing agreement.

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.

VR and the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. agree to share specific information about their customers to optimize service delivery. Both agree to specific procedures that facilitate the delivery of services to their respective and mutual customers. Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology offers an Alternative Financing Program for the purchase of assistive technology to all residents of Florida who have disabilities.

Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.

VR coordinates with Florida Independent Living Council, Inc. (FILC) and the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state. Through memoranda of agreement with each of the 16 Centers, VR provides funding, outlines roles and responsibilities and ensures cooperative planning.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

VR and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind agree to cooperate in serving students and customers who are deaf or hard of hearing and in establishing transition meetings. Activities are implemented to increase public awareness of programs serving these customers and to improve transition between the school and local counselors.

The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe

The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe, located in southern Georgia, is the recipient of the Federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. There is not a 121 program in Florida. However, VR and the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe have a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate services for eligible Native Americans with disabilities residing on or near the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe Tama Reservation within a 150-mile radius. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of both groups, including services for joint customers and technical assistance.

Mental Health Program, Florida Department of Children and Families

VR coordinates with the state mental health authority to assist customers who have mental illnesses. One of these is participation on the Florida Assertive Community Treatment Team, a community-based, outreach-oriented method of delivering services to individuals with mental illnesses coordinated by the Mental Health Program. VR provides staff liaisons with many of these teams to help serve this group of customers in a comprehensive manner. VR is an active member of the State Mental Health Planning Council of Florida. The cooperative agreement promotes coordination so that appropriate services can be delivered to maximize customer choice and satisfaction. This agreement is currently being updated to ensure compliance with new WIOA regulations.

Division of Blind Services (FDBS), Florida Department of Education

Both VR and FDBS serve individuals with visual impairments. This agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of each division, including those for individuals with one-eye pathology, bilateral visual impairment, multiple disabilities, and for individuals who are deaf-blind.

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education; Division of Blind Services; Florida Department of Health; Department of Economic Opportunity

The Florida Interagency Agreement for the Transfer of Assistive Technology, signed in 2006, establishes a framework for an efficient transition of technology as individuals with disabilities move through the continuum from educational services to employment. Specifically, the agreement ensures children and youth with disabilities and their families, educators and employers are informed about the continued use and transfer of assistive technology devices. These devices may remain with the person as he or she moves from home to school and to post-school activities to assist in meeting transition needs. The agreement outlines the conditions for coordination, the authority for transfer of property by local education agencies, financial responsibilities and other topics.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Employment Standards Administration

Both agencies agree to further the common goal of providing VR equal employment opportunities and protecting against discrimination. VR will provide expertise on matters relating to disability issues and employment, cross-referral of individuals with disabilities and will participate in interagency training programs, staff meetings and conferences. Both agencies agree to a coordinated public outreach effort.

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE)

VR uses the services and manufactured items produced in correctional work programs through PRIDE. PRIDE is a Florida corporation that provides these goods and services as a state-use contracting program. A similar product or service of comparable price and quality, found necessary for use by a state agency, may not be purchased from a source other than PRIDE. Contracts between VR and any private vendor require all items be purchased through PRIDE. This is consistent with Section 946.515, Florida Statutes.

Rehabilitation Foundation of Northwest Florida

The purpose of this agreement is to maximize funding of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with physical disabilities residing in northwest Florida. The Foundation contributes \$25,000 to VR toward meeting its non-federal funding requirements. In turn, VR will allocate an additional \$94,371 in federal funds to match the Foundation's contribution for vocational rehabilitation services in the following northwest Florida counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton.

The intent of these cooperative efforts is to increase the services leading to high quality competitive, integrated employment outcomes that are responsive to the strengths, resources, interests and capabilities of individuals with disabilities residing in northwest Florida. VR agrees to provide quarterly reports of expenditures to the Foundation's Trustees. Each report will include the number of individuals served and a description of services provided under the terms of the agreement.

Employment Networks

One of VR's ongoing objectives for the Ticket to Work Program is to increase the number of partnerships with Employment Networks (Employment and Rehabilitation Service Providers). VR hopes to expand the resources available to customers to meet the current and future levels of demand. It is also the goal of VR to ensure customers have a choice in service providers available within their communities. VR has also implemented an Employment Network Referral Partnership that creates more opportunity to develop partnerships with Employment Networks. The partnership features a transitional approach by assisting Social Security Administration customers in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency through core VR services followed by ongoing support services from employment networks. VR will continue to monitor the Agreement's effectiveness in meeting the previously stated goal.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

The need to serve Florida veterans who have disabilities led to the development of an agreement between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and VR. The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of VR and the Department of Veterans Affairs. It clarifies which agency can provide specific services and includes information regarding shared planning, joint activities and coordination.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) entered into a formal Agreement in August 2018, to coordinate transition services with state education officials based on new procedures required for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This was an interim measure while the state awaited the publishing of final regulations before updating the State Interagency Agreement to coordinate transition services for students with disabilities. It is a state-level agreement, including agencies charged with providing transition services to students leaving high school and going to postsecondary education, training and/or employment. The educational

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

agencies listed below agree to meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives, collaborate on training and special projects, cooperate in planning and budgeting and generally support any areas of work that are mutually beneficial. These agencies all within the Florida Department of Education include:

- Division of Public Schools (DPS)
- Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Division of Blind Services (DBS)

This formal interagency agreement serves as a transition services model for improved collaboration, communication, coordination and cooperation among local education agencies and local offices of VR and DBS.

VR has increased staffing to two dedicated state-level administrators for VR Transition Youth programs and Pre-Employment Transition services. The administrators serve as liaisons to all 67 school districts and a Deaf and Hard of Hearing administrator provides additional liaison support for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Administrators coordinate and plan for effective transition services delivery with VR staff and external stakeholders statewide. The VR Transition Youth program is responsible for training internal employees and making presentations about VR transition services at conferences statewide to increase understanding and awareness of the agency's role in assisting eligible students with disabilities.

The VR Transition Youth program provides transition and pre-employment transition services-related technical assistance to the Florida Rehabilitation Council. Both administrators serve jointly as a representative on the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee and work closely with the regional representatives of Project 10: the Transition Education Network. Project 10 is funded through a grant from BEESS to the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. Project 10 helps Florida school districts and stakeholders increase their ability to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and postsecondary outcomes. Project 10 helps implement secondary transition services, interagency collaboration, transition legislation and policy, and student development and outcomes. VR counselors serving transition students participate in each area's local interagency councils. The interagency councils are a collaborative effort between VR and Department of Education partners, public high schools, adult service agencies, workforce programs, parents, students, advocates, and employers working together to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

The VR Director or designee serves on the State Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Education of Exceptional Students. This committee is administered by BEESS. The SAC includes parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, educators and administrators from secondary and postsecondary institutions as well as foster care and juvenile justice representatives. The SAC also includes representatives of various state agencies that provide transition and other services to children, youth and young adults with disabilities. The committee advises the state education agency on what children with disabilities need and helps them develop corrective action plans to address findings in related federal monitoring reports. The committee also helps the state education agency develop evaluations and policies, implement policies and report data. The committee may comment publicly on rules and regulations proposed by the state relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

VR services delivered under WIOA do not remove, reduce, or change the school district's

responsibility to deliver a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students served under the auspices of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. VR services supplement, but do not supplant services delivered through the school districts.

The VR Transition Youth program collaborates with education officials and partners to offer youth with the most significant disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for successful employment. Collaborations such as Project SEARCH and Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) programs engage youth in experiences that blend academics with career and technical education. They also provide hands-on career exploration and preparation activities where learned skills, attitudes, and behaviors can be applied. These evidence-based applications of learning, which includes internships and community-based work experiences, often lead to successful employment. For some students, these programs include earning postsecondary credentials, which allow them to explore professional jobs that may lead to higher-wage careers. VR involvement in these collaborations provides funding for participants to receive needed services and other supports. This shared support helps partner programs serve more youth. VR partnerships deliver career development and employment options through direct services to youth who would not otherwise have access to these opportunities.

Provisions for Development and Approval of Individualized Plans for Employment for Students with Disabilities

VR encourages early referral and application for transition students during high school so that they may receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and better coordinate with local education agencies. Pre-ETS includes Career Exploration and Counseling, Work Readiness Training, Work Experiences, Postsecondary Educational Counseling and Self-Advocacy Training, including Peer Mentoring. Students with disabilities may receive Pre-ETS through the WIOA potentially-eligible process without the need to apply or to be determined eligible. Students who require additional VR services or supports may still obtain Pre-ETS while applying to VR. VR brochures describe how students and families can access Pre-ETS or other VR services beginning at age 14 and beyond. Students with disabilities who are at high risk for dropping out of school may be referred at any age. This early referral process allows the counselor to develop a rapport with the transition student and family, explore vocational options and comparable benefits and begin necessary guidance and counseling.

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Supported Employment IPE, Individual Support Plan and/ or Care Coordination Plans are completed or updated as early as possible prior to graduation or leaving school to allow a seamless transition to a student's desired postsecondary outcome.

VR counselors, with assistance from VR technicians, serve as representatives to work with public and private high school across the state. They provide outreach and vocational rehabilitation orientation services to students, school officials, parents and others involved in transition services. The counselor works collaboratively with key stakeholders and family to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment prior to completion of secondary school to assist with a seamless transition to post-secondary training or job placement.

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

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

Employment First

As an employment leader, VR strongly encourages partner agencies, organizations and employers to promote competitive integrated employment in the community as the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities who are employed experience enhanced

independence and quality of life. They are also contributing to the rich diversity of the workforce so the entire community benefits. VR was a founding partner in the State's Employment First movement. As a result of the partners working together, The Employment First Act is now in statute. This identifies the responsibilities of the partners to improve and increase employment opportunities for all Florida's citizens. The Employment First Committee submits a report to the Governor annually, describing the coordination of participating agencies to advance the Employment First philosophy as a way of work throughout Florida.

Technical Assistance and Consultation

Local education agencies are strongly encouraged to have written agreements with VR and DBS, including other agencies that offer supports or services during student transition. The agreements address consultation, coordination, and providing technical assistance to each other, as well as to students and their families/ guardians/surrogates to plan for the transition from high school to postsecondary activities and becoming part of the adult community.

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

Local education agencies work collaboratively with VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services in the Transition Individual Educational Plan process. Local education agencies that are considering transition services during the Individual Educational Plan meeting will invite representatives from any other agency who may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, after obtaining permission from the parent, guardian, or age-of-majority student. If the agency representative is not available to attend the meeting, the school will make an effort to invite another representative. If the agency representative cannot attend the meeting, the school will then look for alternative ways to provide for the student's transition needs. The local education agency must reconvene the Transition Individual Educational Plan team to identify alternative strategies for providing a student's transition needs if an agency fails to do so. To plan effective transition services for students with disabilities, it is essential that all invited partner agencies encourage and support participation in the Transition Individual Educational Plan (IEP) process.

VR invests 35-40 percent of its statewide staffing resources in transition services to serve students with disabilities in Florida's 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Additional improvements to the rehabilitation information management and billing systems are being implemented to improve the collection and analysis of transition student data. Several of these additional data enhancements were implemented to simultaneously meet WIOA requirements. The enhancements will enable VR to conduct differential analysis to better evaluate agency performance and identify how to best improve service delivery and outcomes for students with disabilities.

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for each partner agency as required by federal and state regulations are as follows:

1. Local education agencies provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education for students with disabilities, including preparation for transition from school to work or other postsecondary activities.
2. VR assists with student transition from secondary school to work through postsecondary training, education, or direct placement services necessary to achieve a successful

employment outcome.

3. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities focuses on reducing the use of sheltered workshops and other noncompetitive employment day activities and promote opportunities for gainful employment for persons with developmental disabilities who choose to seek such employment (Chapter 393, Florida Statutes). Additionally, "to promote independence and productivity, the agency shall provide support and services, within available resources, to assist customers enrolled in Medicaid waivers who choose to pursue gainful employment." If an individual is eligible for APD waiver services and employment is a needed service, then this service must be provided to meet standards as outlined in Florida rule.
4. Children's Medical Services ensures a smooth and successful transition process to adult healthcare services and providers for youth and young adults with special healthcare needs.
5. Mental Health Services, in partnership with families and the community, provides a system of care that enables children and adults with mental health or emotional disabilities to live successfully in the community, become self-sufficient or to attain self-sufficiency at adulthood and realize their full potential. Mental health support and services enable adults and transitioning students to participate in community activities such as employment and other valued community roles.

Specific Purpose

Specific intent of the interagency agreement is to:

1. Provide guidance to the local education agencies, VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services' front-line employees, when serving students transitioning from school to work or postsecondary activities.
2. Provide information to parents/students so they know what they can expect from the local education agencies, VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services during the transition process.
3. Provide parameters to the local education agencies, VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services' administrators/managers/nursing supervisors when developing, negotiating and implementing local cooperative agreements.
4. Encourage and support the participation of all agency personnel in the IEP process at the local level through the development of guidelines, policies and/or procedures.

Financial Responsibilities

The Department of Education, VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services are committed to meeting financial responsibilities as required by law. Agency/Division heads for the organizations will periodically identify areas for improved programmatic and financial efficiencies and develop strategies to meet financial responsibilities, including joint appropriations requests from the state legislature and negotiations with federal agencies. Each party is financially responsible for the services it provides under its own laws and rules.

Conditions and Terms of Reimbursement

If a non-education agency fails to provide or pay for services for which they are responsible, and which are also considered special education and related services, the local education agency (or state agency responsible for developing the student's IEP) shall provide or pay for these services to the student in a timely manner. The local education agency or state agency may then claim

reimbursement for the services from the non-education agency that was responsible for the provision of the services and failed to provide or pay for these services and that agency shall reimburse the local education agency or state agency in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

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

Outreach and Identification of Students

Local education agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with VR, DBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services employees, on the outreach methods used to inform students with disabilities who may need and could benefit from these agencies.

Brochures, flyers, website resources, presentations, transition fairs, or informational letters are available to the local education agency, students and their parents or guardians, to explain the role that VR and other agencies play in the transition process and the agencies' referral/application policies and procedures.

As of December 2019, VR has executed 35 Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE) contracts with schools in 29 counties for the 2019-20 school year. The goal of these contracts is to create new or expand existing transition services with a vocational rehabilitation focus. The WBLE program is an instructional model that uses real work experiences to provide students with disabilities the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to future career options. Participating students with disabilities develop appropriate work skills, behaviors and work tolerance needed to achieve successful employment after high school.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has a variety of relationships and agreements with private non-profit organizations. These include fee-based services purchased through registered vendors, contracts and other cooperative, non-financial agreements.

All new vendors/providers, whether through a contractual or vendor relationship, must go through a registration and approval process. VR reviews the qualifications of vendors providing services to its customers to ensure the quality of these services, as well as the safety of the public. In addition to approving and registering vendor/provider services, VR conducts employment verifications on customer placements facilitated by vendors /contract providers.

VR policy ensures that customers have a choice of qualified service providers to select. Customers are also informed if the provider has employees experienced in working with special disability populations, foreign languages and other communication skills. Customers have a choice of necessary services, service providers and settings in which to receive the services included in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

Currently, VR has approximately 342 registered Employment Services Providers that deliver employment, supported employment, OJT, Pre-ETS and other related services on a fee-for-service basis. Additionally, VR maintains the following contracts and/or agreements:

- 16 agreements with the Centers for Independent Living located throughout the state to provide independent living services;
- 35 Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE) contracts with local school districts;

- Additional contracts with agencies for services such as delegable VR services, interpreting services, rehabilitation technology, assistive technology and special projects.

VR also has five contracts for Innovation and Expansion pilot projects to benefit and complement WIOA- related initiatives. These contracts are for various innovative opportunities that could improve employment services and successful employment outcomes for individuals with unique abilities, defined in Florida legislation as including individuals who have intellectual disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorders.

VR has collaborative, non-contractual arrangements and agreements with non-profit organizations that provide referrals, other vocational rehabilitation services and comparable benefits. Through coordinating with Centers for Independent Living, individuals with disabilities receive life skills training, employability skills training and support such as transportation, clothing and emergency funds.

Relationships with organizations that serve customers with hearing impairments provide opportunities for support groups, sign language classes and placement assistance.

Throughout the state, many VR employees serve as liaisons with specific groups and organizations. Individuals are referred to those groups if it is determined that they can benefit from their services. Services are coordinated with numerous non-profit hospitals and clinics for referrals and medical assistance. Foundations and associations such as the Easter Seals Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, National Kidney Foundation, Brain Injury Association of Florida, Epilepsy Foundation, Family Network on Disability of Florida and others provide individual and family support groups and disability education to mutual customers.

VR intends to continue with the above referenced contractual agreements, cooperative arrangements and liaison relationships through FFY 2020.

(f) Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is currently in the process of updating a new Memorandum of Agreement with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) the state agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid Plan. The revised agreement will establish a framework, including terms and conditions, which will guide the partners' collaborative efforts to advance the development, improvement, and expansion of opportunities for competitive integrated employment as the first and preferred option for individuals with most significant disabilities. This MOA will also include a Data sharing agreement to assist agencies in sharing information needed to provide effective services to mutual customers and to identify the financial requirements for providing Supported Employment Services.

VR continues to be an active partner with other state agencies and organizations in implementing Employment First, a national effort to assure individuals with disabilities are offered employment as the first and preferred option in planning their lives. Employment First is consistent with VR's belief that individuals with disabilities, even the most significant disabilities, can achieve meaningful employment when provided with appropriate supports.

Executive Order 13-284 (Reaffirming Commitment to Employment for Floridians with Disabilities) was signed by the Governor of Florida in October 2013. The order mandates that an Interagency Cooperative Agreement be developed and requires nine agencies/organizations to participate in the

agreement. This order has now been placed in Florida's statute.

- The Department of Education-Division of Blind Services
- The Department of Education-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- The Department of Education-Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- The Department of Children and Families-Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- The Department of Economic Opportunity
- CareerSource Florida
- The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
- RESPECT of Florida

Six broad-based objectives govern the Employment First Interagency Agreement. VR works closely with the partners to continue to make progress on these objectives.

1. Continue to develop and enhance Supported Employment for persons with the most significant disabilities. The state system for the provision of Supported Employment reflects: (a) mutually agreeable definitions of the services to be provided; (b) administrative responsibility of the intensive component of Supported Employment services to eligible individuals as the primary responsibility of VR for individuals with the most significant disabilities; and (c) administrative responsibility of the extended services component as the primary responsibility of other stakeholders, including APD and the Department of Children and Families' Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs.
2. Continue to improve the statewide management of Supported Employment programs by avoiding duplication of effort and funding while ensuring accountability. This process will provide a coordinated system of program development for SE services.
3. Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring a comprehensive, continuous, efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services, information collection and dissemination, confidentiality and technical assistance.
4. Identify issues, policies and practices that present systemic barriers to effective participation of individuals with the most significant disabilities and develop appropriate resolutions to remove such barriers.
5. Continue to implement an interagency planning process for budget coordination, which defines and projects the number of people in need of intensive and extended services for each fiscal year and facilitates program and fiscal planning.
6. Support the belief that all individuals with disabilities can work if provided appropriate services and supports and that a team approach is needed to facilitate quality and appropriate services.

Supported Employment Services

VR is responsible for the first phase of Supported Employment services. VR provides intensive vocational services until the individual and employer are satisfied with the Supported Employment placement and then the individual transitions to a plan for extended services. Supported Employment services consist of intensive, time-limited vocational rehabilitation services (the responsibility of VR)

and extended services, also known as the second phase. Funding for the second phase of services is provided by other sources that may include, but are not limited to, APD, the Department of Children and Families' Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs, natural supports or other identified funding sources.

Extended Services

Funding for the second phase of services is provided by other sources that may include, but are not limited to, APD, the Department of Children and Families' Mental Health, Employer Supports and Substance Abuse Program, Natural Supports or other identified funding sources.

The purpose of extended services is to maintain the individual in SE that is competitive and integrated, enhance the individual's involvement in the workplace culture and provide supports for career advancement. The nature of services provided during the intensive and extended phases may be similar to the initial services provided by VR but will differ in intensity.

VR and its partners continuously seek alternative methods (e.g. Social Security incentives, natural supports, etc.) to provide extended services. VR has encouraged Supported Employment providers to focus on developing natural supports and to encourage employers to act in a support role since this will often occur naturally in the labor market.

VR is now authorized to fund Extended Services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years, if necessary and funding permits. Allowances would be made for individuals who, while receiving extended services, require additional intensive services through VR because they have destabilized on the job. When appropriate, VR will again assume the responsibility and cost of providing intensive vocational services, including necessary job-related support services.

(g) Coordination with Employers

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has formalized a Business Relations Program, with the vision to build and sustain partnerships with business and industry through effective services that meet the needs of employers. These partnerships will lead to competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR customers, including those receiving pre-employment transition services.

Efforts are underway in the Business Relations Program to define and customize services to employers, create strategic partnerships to support workforce needs and establish an employment-focused culture within the rehabilitation process. Listed below are the program's goals, objectives and strategies.

Goal 1: Become the foremost recognized and trusted resource for employers' disability inclusion needs.

Objective: Increase the number of employers engaged as business partners.

Strategies:

1. Develop and use a standard business needs assessment.
2. Develop and use a business customer satisfaction tool.
3. Staff and train a team that is responsive to business. The team includes the program administrator; a senior VR consultant; a business projects specialist; and 11 business relations representatives located across the state in each of VR's seven administrative

areas.

4. Implement a business customer relationship management tool.
5. Define the services offered to employers and customize them to meet business needs.
6. Create statewide consistency in business relations outreach and services.
7. Use targeted marketing to engage employers across multiple industries.
8. Participate in business-led organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Disability: IN, trade and sector specific organizations, etc.
9. Create strategic practices that can be replicated across the state.
10. Align services with the Workforce Development Boards and other community partners.
11. Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET) and the NET-Southeast regional team to share referrals and best practices.
12. Engage with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners to share best practices.

Goal 2: Become a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

Objective: Increase referrals of qualified applicants to business partners.

Strategies:

1. Facilitate direct access to qualified applicants through business relationships.
2. Market career opportunities internally to VR staff.
3. Use the AbilitiesWork Help Desk for applicant-matching services for employers.
4. Coordinate support services provided by VR contractors.
5. Provide a seamless connection to VR services and qualified applicants across a company's footprint locally, regionally, statewide and nationally through the NET.
6. Engage in local talent pool coordination with other agencies to meet businesses' workforce needs.
7. Participate with the NET and the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to create increased opportunities for VR job seekers and employers recruiting VR job seekers.
8. Collaborate with business to create a pipeline of qualified candidates.

Goal 3: Expand career opportunities for VR candidates.

Objective: Prepare ready-to-work applicants for in-demand careers and jobs that are available now.

Strategies:

1. Meet with business and industry to assess workforce needs to better align training with those needs.
2. Communicate information from employers about business needs and qualification requirements to VR staff.
3. Engage in sector partnerships.
4. Provide information to VR staff about in-demand jobs and high growth industries and sectors using labor market information.
5. Collaborate with business and education to determine industry recognized training opportunities and inform VR staff about them.
6. Collaborate with WIOA core partners to share resources and best practices.
7. Generate opportunities for worksite training, including pre-employment transition services, with business partners.

Florida VR is working in collaboration with University of Massachusetts, Boston for technical assistance related to business engagement.

(h) Interagency Cooperation

VR is in the process of developing and implementing a cooperative agreement with the state agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid Plan (AHCA) and the agency primarily responsible for providing services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (APD). This agreement will specifically focus on Supported Employment services and the roles and responsibilities for coordinating these services on a statewide basis.

The purpose of the agreement is to establish a framework, including terms and conditions that will guide collaborative efforts to advance the development, improvement and expansion of opportunities for competitive integrated employment as the first and preferred option for persons with significant disabilities.

The agreement will formalize the collaborative processes that have been implemented to improve employment outcomes for mutual customers. It will focus on coordinating efforts in interagency planning, referrals, informed choice, cross and joint training as well as the provision of technical assistance.

The agreement endorses a shared philosophy with a common set of guiding principles. These principles include but are not limited to the following:

- All programs, projects and activities will be person-centered and include respect for individual dignity, self-determination, pursuit of meaningful careers and informed choice.
- Reliance on and pursuit of evidence-based best, promising and emerging practices.
- The use of qualified staff to facilitate the achievement of competitive integrated employment.
- Establishment of a referral process for mutual customers.
- To clearly define and clarify boundaries between the VR and APD programs to ensure the complimentary provision of employment services and promote timely access for persons with the most significant disabilities.

VR is working closely with APD to develop competitive integrated employment alternatives for individuals receiving services in a segregated setting. VR will provide technical assistance and support as APD expands these program options. Under WIOA requirements, VR will provide or coordinate information and education for individuals receiving services in sheltered workshops receiving subminimum wages.

VR collaborates with the Florida Department of Children and Families', Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs to improve and increase employment opportunities for people with mental illness. Part of this collaborative work is conducted through a formalized Employment First agreement, while other coordination occurs during a customer's transition from the initial and intense phase of Supported Employment to the ongoing and extended service phase of Supported Employment services.

VR also works in partnership with local education agencies and partners to offer youth with the most significant disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for successful employment. Collaborations such as High School/ High Tech (HSHT), Project SEARCH, Third Party Cooperative Arrangements and Postsecondary Education programs engage youth in experiences that blend academics with career and technical education. They provide hands-on career exploration and preparation activities where learned skills, attitudes and behaviors can be applied. These evidence-based applications of learning, which includes internships and other work experiences, often lead to successful

employment with appropriate supports.

For some students, these programs include earning postsecondary credentials which allow them to explore professional jobs that may lead to higher-wage careers. VR involvement in these collaborations provide funding for participants to receive services and other supports needed to prepare for and maintain employment. This shared support helps partner programs serve more youth. VR partnerships deliver career development and employment options through direct services to youth who would not otherwise have access to these services.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Assurance of an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessional personnel is the major driver for the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (VR) Human Resource Development Section. Data from numerous sources is used to determine current and projected needs, as well as VR's progress toward meeting them. The table below includes VR personnel and turnover data for SFY 2018-2019 and projected staffing requirements for SFY 2019-2023. It should be noted that positions are vacated for many reasons, including termination, promotion, lateral position transfers, resignation or retirement. VR continues to employ strategies to address turnover as well as develop and prepare staff for advancement opportunities.

Figure 9.01
VR Personnel and Projected Staffing Needs

Personnel Category*	Number of Personnel, as of 10/1/19	Turnover Rate for SFY 2018-19	**Projected Staffing Needs for SFY 2020-23
Counselor Staff	392	45%	175
Staff Supporting Counselor Activities	339	25%	90
Administrative Staff	155	7%	10
Total Full-time Equivalents	884		
Contracted Counselor Staff	77		
Total Contracted Field Staff	134		

*Categories are based on RSA-2 Report definitions and positions included in each category.

**This number is an annual average derived by multiplying the number of positions for the job category by the percentage of vacated positions.

Staffing needs for Transition Youth Program counselors remains consistent with overall counselor staffing projections. When factoring in population growth, the projected five-year staffing needs are slightly higher than noted above but would require that VR be provided with additional FTEs.

The state's automated People First personnel system maintains employment histories to help project human resource needs. The state continues to make available a deferred retirement option program (DROP) that allows individuals to continue working for the state for five years beyond their original retirement date. Because it is impossible to anticipate how many individuals will accept the deferral option, projecting future employment needs is difficult. However, it is known that there are currently 44 individuals in DROP, 39 individuals with 30 or more years of service and 49 individuals over the age of 62.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

VR uses People First and RIMS data, as well as internal reports, to obtain:

- The number and classification of authorized positions for each local unit and state headquarters in relation to the number of individuals served
- The number and classification of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services
- The projected number and classification of personnel who will be needed in five years to provide vocational rehabilitation services
- The state institutions of higher education that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by program type
- The number of students in each of these institutions, by program type

The number of students graduating from each program and the credentials they have received

To ensure the continuity of quality rehabilitation services and to address employee vacancies and turnover in particularly difficult to fill geographic areas, VR has contracted for employees. The contracts ensure that qualified personnel are hired to provide necessary rehabilitation services. A VR counselor/ analyst reviews each case and performs/ authorizes administrative activities that federal regulations (34 CFR 361.13) specify are the responsibility of VR and cannot be delegated to private providers. These activities include:

- All decisions affecting eligibility for VR, the nature and scope of available services and the provision of these services and the suspension, reduction and termination of these services
- The determination to close the records of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome
- Policy formulation and implementation
- Allocation and expenditure of VR funds
- Participation as a partner in the CareerSource Florida service delivery system

Described in the following table is information from institutions of higher education in Florida that prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals, categorized by institution and type of program.

Figure 9.02
Program Data for Institutions of Higher Education

Institution, Program Type and Degree	Students Currently Enrolled	VR/RSA Sponsored Employees	VR/RSA Sponsored Graduates	Previous Year Graduates
Florida Atlantic University- Graduate-level Rehabilitation Training Program; MEd and PhD	MEd- 30 PhD- 3	MEd- 0 PhD- 0	MEd- 0 PhD- 0	MEd- 6 PhD- 0

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Florida International University- Rehabilitation Counseling Program; MS in Counselor Education	MS- 12	MS- 0	MS- 2	MS- 2
University of South Florida- Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program; MA	MA- 136	MA- 3	MA- 20	MA- 40

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

VR maintains close relationships with universities including minority institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and disability-specific organizations. VR employees collaborate with universities in securing grant funding, invite university employees to help with training and education activities and provide practicum and internship slots for students.

VR acknowledges that it will not be able to recruit an adequate number of qualified rehabilitation counselors to replace those retiring and departing for other reasons. VR is currently engaged in the activities indicated below to address recruitment, preparation and retention of counselors.

Personnel Standards

There is not a state-approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. VR, in conjunction with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) established the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) educational eligibility requirement as its standard.

Efforts are made to recruit and hire counselors who meet the CRC educational eligibility status. If VR is unsuccessful in finding enough qualified applicants, it will accept those who meet the minimal initial standard for providing counseling and guidance services. The individual(s) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university and one year of experience counseling individuals with disabilities. Alternative majors other than social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science may be considered along with the minimum qualification requirements for the position.

When evaluating the suitability of alternative majors, the hiring authority should consider the major area of study's applicability to the required knowledge, skills and abilities. A master's degree from an accredited university in a social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science can substitute for the year of required experience.

The State of Florida allows employees to use a tuition waiver to enroll in six hours (or less) of courses per semester on a space-available basis at public universities. Florida has three CACREP-accredited programs (Florida Atlantic University, the University of South Florida, and the Florida International University) offering Rehabilitation Counseling degrees. There are several other Florida universities that offer degrees and courses in related fields, including two sign language interpreting programs.

VR employees are encouraged to use the State of Florida Tuition Waiver program as much as possible, since it represents a significant savings to VR.

In addition to the Florida public universities referenced above, VR uses the resources of Auburn University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, the University of West Virginia, the University of Alabama, University of North Texas, UMass Online, Thomas University, Emporia State University, Troy State University, and the University of Wisconsin-Stout, all of whom provide online Masters-level rehabilitation programs. VR will continue to use additional programs, as appropriate.

Personnel Development

VR's Learning and Development Office (LDO) efforts will continue to be oriented toward appropriate and adequate training for all employees, with available resources allocated to the CSPD effort. Although the in-service training grant was the primary funding source for these activities, it was not the only resource used to fund staff development and training activities. Supplemental funds were provided from other budget resources.

Although there has been an emphasis on helping counselors meet the CSPD standard and developing the technical, managerial, and leadership skills of supervisors and managers, VR provides staff development opportunities to employees at every level. Examples include the Counselor Training Program:

- Up to 30 hours of learning within the first 8 weeks of hire.
- Attendance in a 3.5-day classroom training, which includes an individualized Competency Checklist outlining the strengths and weaknesses for each participant.
- “Longboarding” over the remaining 12 months. This is in the form of Webinars and the completion of a Longboarding To-Do list, a list of activities required to enhance their learning experience with their supervisor and bookend classroom training.
- Webinars on over 15 topics annually are available for new and existing staff and many are being developed in direct response to recommendations from participants.
- Developing Welcome Packets for all field job classes. In addition to welcoming someone to the agency, this provides new staff with information on the mentorship program, professional development while working with the agency, the benefits of joining a professional organization such as the National Rehabilitation Association, and how to handle difficult situations they may be presented with for the first time, for example: first ethical dilemma or working with a transition customer.
- Evolving Partnerships with University and Professional Organizations. This includes working with Indiana University to further strengthen staff competencies in functional capacities, significance of disabilities, and the impact of mental and physical disabilities. Introducing them to the National Rehabilitation Association to help them connect with like-minded people, build their leadership skills, and keep up with current trends in the rehabilitation field.
- New LDO Support Process for Area-level Trainers. Area trainers receive training and assistance on: available technology, facilitator skills, targeting trainings on a local level, reviewing existing trainings for consistency, and development of trainings for staff. This will assist in VR identifying more trainings that qualify for CRC credits, sharing of quality material across the state, and ensure uniform and up-to-date information is being delivered.
- Focused training on field level supervisors to expand the support and guidance provided to vocational rehabilitation counselors. Efforts will include identifying areas to reduce administrative burdens while maintaining a high level of quality assurance and fiscal responsibility.
- Proposal to develop a Distance Learning Network using Video Conferencing Technologies and identified training facilities to increase access to learning opportunities across the state.

Additional Personnel Development Activities

The Organization and Employee Support Team (OES) recently designed a new human resource

information site, available through VR's SharePoint application. Using SharePoint increases the level of support and customer service provided to VR's employees, volunteers, contracted staff, supervisors and personnel liaisons. The intent is to provide user-friendly experiences for new and existing employees.

The OES Homepage provides job opportunity announcements, access to more than 900 HR forms, procedures and policies and a calendar of upcoming important HR dates and events.

In carrying out its staff development and training program, VR addresses several topics in its training curricula. The training curricula include (but are not limited to) modules on the following: preliminary assessment, eligibility determination, assessment, IPE development, vocational counseling (within the modules on eligibility determination and individualized plan for employment development), job placement, rehabilitation technology, cultural competence, ethics, supported employment, transition from school to work, medical and psychological issues, caseload management and special programs.

VR places emphasis on the professional development of unit supervisors, area supervisors and area directors. Topics are selected based on policy or procedure changes, new initiatives, audit and review findings and general professional development.

Counseling and non-counseling employees, including administrative employees, will continue to receive training in core subjects through distance and onsite learning. As caseloads and customer needs continue to grow more complex, the role of the paraprofessional technician becomes more and more critical to the effective management of caseloads. All counseling staff will continue to work toward CRC eligibility and/or degrees in rehabilitation or counseling through tuition waivers and other mechanisms.

Engineers from the Rehabilitation Technology Engineering Program, contracted through the University of South Florida, provide training on rehabilitation technology and engineering. The contract ensures that rehabilitation technology engineers are available statewide.

State labor market information, as well as national data, provides information on the employment and advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities. Job announcements are published online through the People First website, providing access to all state jobs through one internet portal.

Manuals related to policy and rehabilitation information management are available online. Employees can find more information about medical and psychological conditions, rehabilitation technology, federal and state plans, legislation and regulations and employment-related information.

Onboarding

Onboarding helps new personnel successfully assimilate into their new position, with a quicker ramp-up to productivity. VR wants to help all personnel be successful in their new job, get up-and-running with their new duties quickly and smoothly, and contribute to VR's success. Since VR personnel includes career service, selected exempt service/senior management service and OPS employees, as well as volunteers and contracted staff, all with differing onboarding needs, it became apparent that a one-size-fits-all approach to onboarding was not sufficient.

Based on that, OES created Onboarding resource sites specific to needs of VR's career service, selected exempt service/senior management service, and OPS employees, as well as sites specific to VR's volunteers and contracted staff. Each site provides onboarding information for the specific

personnel category, such as New Hire Paperwork that provides the new employee with all of the required hiring forms and related policies, VR Mentorship Program information, TED- Training, Education, and Development links and resources, and the Human Resources Page.

VR's Mentorship Program

A major reason why newly hired employees struggle and ultimately leave is failure to establish connections and build strong interpersonal relationships within the organization. Understanding that new employees need connection, a sense of belonging, a sense of their potential, and a need to feel valued, OES worked with various sections within VR to create a Mentorship Program.

Mentors often play an important role in making new employees feel valued, developing coworker relationships, and helping new employees feel comfortable during the first few months of employment. Each new employee, or protégé will be assigned to a mentor for a period of up to a year. No mentor will be assigned to more than two active protégés at any one time.

The Mentorship Program is composed of two parts. The first is a comprehensive information resource site delivered through SharePoint. The site has information specific to mentors, protégés, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and supervisors. The second component is the Individualized Mentoring Action Plan, or IMAP. The IMAP is a software application designed specifically for the mentorship program. In the IMAP, mentors and SMEs create personalized profiles. The profiles are used to assist with assigning mentors and SMEs to appropriate protégés. The software is designed to quickly sort through hundreds of mentor and SME profiles that match the needs identified in the protégé's profile.

Human Resources Page

The Human Resources page is a one-stop information resource for VR personnel. The Human Resources page consists of six functional groups, which are further divided into subject groups, specific categories, and detailed information pages. Topics include employee rights, benefits and responsibilities, resources such as forms, procedures, and policies, and useful information about VR and state government. Most pages have embedded links to either an internal portion of the VR Intranet, or to an outside website. Each employee can then bookmark any page for easy access.

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

A bi-annual training needs assessment is conducted using information from a number of sources. These include a formal needs assessment instrument, performance evaluation data, training evaluation sheets obtained from every sponsored program, exit interviews, and supervisory input. The needs assessment data determines program development and modification.

Annual performance evaluations are conducted on each employee, with intermittent evaluation, if indicated. Performance is evaluated according to standards and goals established at the beginning of the evaluation period. Employees are evaluated in the context of their knowledge, skills, and abilities within the field of rehabilitation, and on policy about priority of service to individuals with the most significant disabilities. If circumstances change, training and professional development activities are provided to help the employee meet his/her goal in support of VR's mission.

In carrying out its staff development and training program, VR addresses several topics in its training curricula. The training curricula include (but are not limited to) modules on the following: preliminary assessment, eligibility determination, assessment, IPE development, vocational counseling (within the modules on eligibility determination and individualized plan for employment development), job placement, rehabilitation technology, cultural competence, ethics, supported employment, transition from school to work, medical and psychological issues, caseload management, and special programs.

VR places emphasis on the professional development of unit supervisors, area supervisors, and area directors. Topics are selected based on policy or procedure changes, new initiatives, audit and review findings, and general professional development.

Counseling and non-counseling employees, including administrative employees, will continue to receive training in core subjects through distance and on-site learning. As caseloads and customer needs continue to grow more complex, the role of the paraprofessional technician becomes more and more critical to the effective management of caseloads. All counseling staff will continue to work toward CRC eligibility and/or degrees in rehabilitation or counseling through tuition waivers and other mechanisms.

Engineers from the Rehabilitation Technology Engineering Program, contracted through the University of South Florida, provide training on rehabilitation technology and engineering. The contract ensures that rehabilitation technology engineers are available statewide.

State labor market information, as well as national data, provides information on the employment and advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities. Job announcements are published online through the People First website, providing access to all state jobs through one internet portal.

Manuals related to policy and rehabilitation information management are available online. Employees can access the internet to find information about medical and psychological conditions, rehabilitation technology, Federal/State Plan, legislation and regulations, and employment-related information.

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Presenters provide orientation and training for employees serving transition students with disabilities from VR, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) and community partners. Cross-training between BEESS and VR staff is emphasized through interagency agreements as presented in Section (d) of this plan portion. The Department of Education's State Education Agency (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) profiles are used to gather important statistical information on graduation rates, dropout rates, Individual Educational Plan compliance and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. BEESS and VR continue to share and analyze student data to identify students with Individual Education Plans or 504 Plans who can benefit from VR services and any potential gaps in service.

VR strives to help LEAs meet the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. VR support includes offering an early VR referral and application process beginning at age 14, VR Transition Liaisons Contact List, VR Transition Brochures and coordination of the Individual Education Plan with the Individualized Plan for Employment when served by both agencies. VR endorses evidence-based LEA services that benefit students with disabilities, including educating students in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers and having access to the original curricula. VR counselors continue to attend regular in-service training that specifically targets transition youth issues and helps meet the requirements of the CSPD.

VR and community partners continue to make presentations and participate in annual transition conferences at the national, state and local level to better serve students with disabilities. These events allow for agency updates, contributing information on promising initiatives and sharing evidence-based best practices. When VR employees and local educators are assigned to teams at events, they use this time to discuss issues and learn from one another about effective transition practices. This information is often incorporated into VR staff trainings.

Statewide transition training is provided on a yearly basis. New counselors also receive this training, which includes resources from the VR Transition Youth Program. The VR Transition Youth Guidelines and Best Practices is a resource for VR transition teams to assure statewide consistency in coordinating services to students with disabilities. VR employees have access to the "Effective Practices for Working with the

School System” and the “Outreach for the School System” presentations developed to improve collaboration between VR and the LEAs. At the local level, VR employees participate in interagency groups with a transition focus to improve local coordination and services to students, families, schools, employers and agency partners.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

VR employees need to be able to work with Florida’s diverse population. One way VR does this is to actively recruit counselors and support employees who have diverse backgrounds. VR places advertisements in newspapers that reach diverse group of people and collaborates with local civic and social service groups. VR also provides a five percent pay increase to bilingual staff, for positions where this is beneficial to the agency. Bilingual individuals are on staff, but qualified interpreters or translators will continue to be used when a counselor is unable to communicate directly with a customer in his/her preferred language. VR will continue to partner with local vendors to offer this service.

American Sign Language interpreting needs for customers who are Deaf or Deaf blind are met using a either staff interpreters (including those hired via the contract with Service Source) or arrangements with qualified local interpreter service providers. When either staff interpreters or local interpreters are not available, VR will reschedule appointments or use available text communication devices with customers. VR also has assistive listening devices available in most offices for VR employees to communicate with individuals who are hard of hearing or late-deafened and do not know sign-language.

In addition, VR complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing materials in braille and large print as requested by the customer. Further, VR provides for an initial increase in a starting salary for individuals who are fluent in Spanish, Creole or Haitian. Staff also arranges for bilingual spoken language interpreters/translators if a bilingual staff is not available.

(j) Statewide Assessment

In February 2019, VR, in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), completed its three-year comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The CSNA was conducted by the San Diego State University Interwork Institute. They worked closely with VR, FRC, and VR’s stakeholder groups to describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Florida. The CSNA consisted of the following components: analysis of existing data sources, key informant and focus group interviews, surveys of individuals with disabilities, partner surveys, VR staff surveys, and business surveys. Findings and recommendations from the CSNA will guide agency planning and development of state plans for federal fiscal years 2020 - 2023.

With respect to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment, the CSNA identified the following recurring themes:

- Transportation remains the most significant need of consumers served by VR, and this is especially true in rural areas
- The most frequently cited vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities included all types of training, work skills, increased education, work experience and social skills development.

- Employer misconceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities is a significant barrier to employment and becomes more significant with the increase in the significance of the disability.
- There is an ever-increasing percentage of individuals being served by VR that have significant mental health impairments. VR staff and service providers need training to ensure they are aware of how to best serve this population.
- There is a reduction in the number of individuals working in subminimum wage employment in Florida, and VR and their network of providers needs to be sure that they have the capacity to serve these individuals through furthering developing their capacity to provide supported and customized employment.
- Self-advocacy training for individuals with disabilities is an essential rehabilitation need.

B. who are minorities;

With respect to the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, the CSNA identified the following recurring themes:

- The need for work skills, education, training and rehabilitation professionals that speak their language were the most frequently noted needs of individuals from diverse cultures.
- Deaf individuals were characterized as potentially underserved because there is a shortage of qualified interpreters in many parts of the State.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

With respect to the needs of individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program, the CSNA identified the following recurring themes:

- Individuals with disabilities living in the rural areas of Florida were the most frequently mentioned underserved group. The lack of public transportation and the distance that has to be travelled to get to the VR offices or to work was the primary reason noted for being underserved
- Deaf individuals were characterized as potentially underserved because there is a shortage of qualified interpreters in many parts of the State.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

With respect to the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System, the CSNA identified the following recurring themes:

- The relationship of the CareerSource Centers with VR remains one primarily of referral rather than co-enrollment and braiding of funding.
- The CareerSource Centers were characterized as being ineffective in their service to individuals with disabilities in Florida, though there are areas that do better than others.
- Ongoing consistent cross-training between the core partners is a need so that staff are aware of how each other's programs function and what limitations in service exist.

- CareerSource Center staff need to receive ongoing training on how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities, especially those with mental health impairments.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

With respect to the needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, the CSNA identified the following themes:

- All of the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant rehabilitation needs of students with disabilities in Florida, with work-based learning experiences being the most significant and important need.
- Transportation is a major barrier for students and their ability to experience work
- The primary rehabilitation needs of youth with disabilities in Florida are work skills, soft skills, education, training and transportation.
- Youth with disabilities in Florida need to develop the ability to advocate for themselves to ensure they have access to the same opportunities as their peers without disabilities.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

With respect to the need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Florida, the CSNA identified the following recurring themes:

- The need to develop service providers is greatest in the rural areas, especially providers for supported and customized employment.
- There is a need for service providers that are skilled in working with individuals with mental health impairments and other most significant disabilities.
- There is a need to develop providers that can sign and have experience working with Deaf individuals.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The CSNA made several recommendations related to the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career service and pre-employment transition services.

1. VR should develop a program in partnership with secondary and postsecondary schools throughout Florida that ensures that students with disabilities that will be pursuing postsecondary education get connected to the Disabled Student Services programs at the colleges prior to the first day of college classes. This will ensure that any reasonable accommodation needs are met prior to the start of course work and will maximize the potential for student success.

2. VR should recruit pre-employment transition services providers that will provide training in self-advocacy to help address the apparent shortage of these services. In addition, VR should consider partnering with the Centers for Independent Living in Florida as a way to address this service gap.

3. VR is encouraged to consult with the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) to develop an intensive technical assistance agreement aimed at improving services to Juvenile Justice and Foster Care Youth. The Y-TAC can help VR conduct process mapping of the Juvenile Justice and Foster Care systems and develop procedures that facilitate access to VR services for these youth. The Y-TAC may be able to help VR establish partnerships with the Title I Youth programs to help increase services to out-of-school youth in Florida.
 4. Continue to develop opportunities for work experiences in the community, but also consider the impact of time-limited experiences on participants. Create a supportive pathway for students that may want permanent employment.
 5. VR should work with schools to identify and refer students receiving services under a 504 plan and encourage schools to refer these students to VR earlier than their senior year.
 6. Examine strategies to enhance parent involvement in the planning and delivery of transition services. VR may wish to consult with the PROMISE programs in California and Wisconsin to identify successful family engagement strategies. Information about the California PROMISE program can be found here: <https://www.capromise.org/>. Information about the Wisconsin PROMISE program can be found here: <https://promisewi.com/>.
 7. VR should actively recruit pre-employment transition services providers that can communicate using sign language and that have experience working with deaf individuals. In addition, VR should identify peer mentors for the youth with deafness that will help them develop self-advocacy skills and help them develop high expectations.
- VR is pursuing technical assistance to address these recommendations through a variety of initiatives, including major revisions to our fee-for-service model, expanding opportunities for school districts to be providers of pre-employment transition services, and streamlining the case management process for students who are potentially eligible.

(k) Annual Estimates

Number of Individuals in the State Who are Eligible for Services under this State Plan

From October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) anticipates that approximately 49,185 Floridians will be eligible for VR services.

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Cost of Services with Funds Provided Under Part B of Title I and Part B of Title VI of the Act

From October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) anticipates a workload of 49,185 individuals. Because of limited resources, VR has determined that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services. The following projections for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020-21 are based on case management and budget projection models.

The projected number of eligible individuals to receive vocational rehabilitation services by priority category and cost of services per category are as follows:

Figure 9.03
Projected Number of Eligible Individuals to Receive VR Services

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Priority Category	Projected Number Served	Projected Service Cost
Category 1	28,643	\$54,485,158
Category 2	19,752	\$37,572,560
Category 3	790	\$1,502,750
Total	49,185	\$93,560,468

The estimated number of customers to be served in Supported Employment (Part B of Title VI of the Act) is 10,618.

Total projected costs for IPE services are \$93,560,468. Additionally, the cost for assessment services is projected at \$23,229,531. Total projected revenue needed for IPE and assessment services for FFY 2019 is \$ \$116,790,000. The revenue available for IPE and assessment services is estimated to be \$137.4 million.

Some expenditures associated with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) initiatives such as pre-employment transition services and Job Retention Services (discretionary services under Order of Selection) have not been factored into these projections. Until these costs are fully realized and included into service and cost projections, VR will continue its current management of wait list categories under Order of Selection.

(I) State Goals and Priorities

VR Vision

To become the first place people with disabilities turn when seeking employment and a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

VR Mission

To help people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence.

Strategic Goals and Priorities

During FFY 2018-2019, VR, in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), completed its three- year comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Information obtained from the needs assessment, management reports and feedback from VR employees, stakeholders and customers were used to evaluate current goals, objectives and projects and establish new strategic priorities.

Following the previously established planning process, the Senior Executive Leadership Team regularly reviews progress and updates strategies as needed. Annually, the Senior Executive Leadership Team completed a thorough review of the strategic plan and then held a planning meeting to determine which projects to include in the updated strategic plan. Strategy updates are provided quarterly and reported out to VR Leadership and stakeholders.

Current Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1.Enhance employment opportunities through individualized services to meet workforce demands and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1 Expand service delivery options.

Strategy 1.1.1 Enhance services for individuals with the most significant disabilities to assist them to avoid, or transition from, subminimum wage employment, by expanding service delivery options

with the goal of competitive, integrated employment, such as: supported employment, CCIR, customized employment, and Discovery.

Strategy 1.1.2 Enhance services for individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities by expanding Individual Placement and Support (IPS) to additional areas via strengthened partnerships.

Strategy 1.1.3 Strengthen the Business Relations program, including implementation of technical assistance provided by WINTAC.

Measure of Success:

- Customer satisfaction survey results
- Increased employment outcomes
- Increased business engagement and retention

Objective 1.2 Improve communication with customers.

Strategy 1.2.1 Update publications and brochures to be more informative and user-friendly.

Strategy 1.2.2 Revise VR's website for ease of use, clarity of information, and accessibility.

Strategy 1.2.3. Implement a data-driven case review process to verify that contact timeframes are adhered to.

Measure of Success:

- Improved customer satisfaction survey results
- Reduced number of "no contact" closures
- Increased employment outcomes
- Reduced number of valid communication complaints made to the Ombudsman Unit

Goal 2. Increase organizational effectiveness by reducing complexity, streamlining processes, and encouraging a flexible, supportive workplace culture.

Objective 2.1 Streamline internal systems/processes.

Strategy 2.1.1 Simplify service delivery by creating a new electronic referral system that manages referrals to providers, documentation of services provided, and payment processes.

Strategy 2.1.2 Implement a new case management system that streamlines case documentation, accountability, and reporting.

Measure of Success:

- Reduced turnover rates
- Improved Climate Survey results
- Increased employment outcomes

Objective 2.2 Enhance availability and use of data.

Strategy 2.2.1 Improve data integrity by continuing to incorporate internal controls for data collection and reporting.

Strategy 2.2.2 Continue to improve ease of access to data to facilitate data-driven decision-making.

Measure of Success:

- Increased compliance with statutory requirements
- Reduced number of errors in data collection and reporting

Goal 3. Stabilize the VR workforce through improved quality of life for staff.

Objective 3.1 Develop the capacity of existing resources.

Strategy 3.1.1 Increase the availability and quality of training for all staff and all positions.

Strategy 3.1.2. Evaluate positions, roles, and organization of staff to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, including simplifying responsibilities via technical assistance from WINTAC.

Measure of Success:

- Reduced turnover rates
- Improved Climate Survey results
- Improved employment outcomes

Objective 3.2 Incentivize high quality performance.

Strategy 3.2.1. Explore options for improving compensation for staff members.

Measure of Success:

- Reduced turnover rates
- Improved Climate Survey results
- Increased employment outcomes

Goal 4. Maximize engagement with partners to enhance access to services for improved service delivery.

Objective 4.1 Document and implement partnerships.

Strategy 4.1.1. Continue to facilitate effective partnerships with CareerSource Florida, and its local boards, by collaborating on and implementing memorandums of understanding and infrastructure funding agreements to streamline services for job seekers and businesses.

Strategy 4.1.2. Continue to facilitate effective partnerships with state and local education agencies by collaborating on and implementing mechanisms to streamline services for students with disabilities.

Strategy 4.1.2. Continue to facilitate effective partnerships with state agencies that serve individuals with developmental and/or mental health disabilities by collaborating on and implementing mechanisms to streamline services for students with disabilities.

Measure of Success:

- Increased number of individuals served via partnerships
- Increased employment outcomes

Objective 4.2 Enhance the effectiveness of partnerships.

Strategy 4.2.1 Increase the availability and quality of training for partner organizations.

Measure of Success:

- Increased capacity of partners
- Increased employment outcomes

(m) Order of Selection

Justification for the Order of Selection

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) determined that sufficient resources were not available to provide rehabilitation services to all individuals with disabilities who apply. Consequently, VR established an Order of Selection (OOS) within the state to ensure that individuals with the

most significant disabilities are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services, those with significant disabilities second and all other eligible individuals selected last. This decision was based on use of funds in the preceding years, projected funding, projected number and types of referrals, number of eligible individuals and counselor caseloads.

The OOS remains in effect statewide and does not select one type of disability over another. The OOS is not established based on age, sex, marital status, religion, race, color, national origin, or political affiliation, and is not based on the vocational goal of the individual with a disability. Elements that relate to the significance of disability are the only factors used in OOS. In accordance with Section 412 of WIOA, VR has elected to provide Job Retention Services (discretionary services to eligible individuals regardless of order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment).

Each month, the Executive Leadership Team looks at expenditure and revenue projections, numbers of individuals in each OOS category, numbers of individuals on the waitlist for services, and staff capacity, to determine whether to release individuals from the waitlist. Based on the available data, VR periodically releases individuals from the waitlist into service. The number of potentially eligible students with disabilities receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services is also a consideration.

Figure 9.04
Projected Outcome and Service Goals and Time Frames
for Federal Fiscal Year 2020-21

Priority Category	Projected Number Served	Average Case Cost	Projected Service Cost	Projected Successful Closures	Projected Unsuccessful Closures	Months to Complete
Category 1	28,643	\$1,930	\$54,485,158	3,290	5,676	22.4
Category 2	19,752	\$1,840	\$37,572,560	2,992	4,602	13.6
Category 3	790	\$1,739	\$1,502,750	442	70	6.8

Service Costs for FFY 2020-23

Total projected costs for IPE services are \$93,560,468. Additionally, the cost for assessment services is projected at \$23,229,531. Total projected revenue needed for IPE and assessment services for FFY 2019 is \$ \$116,790,000. The revenue available for IPE and assessment services is estimated to be \$ \$137.4 million.

Some expenditures associated with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) initiatives such as pre-employment transition services, and Job Retention Services (discretionary services under Order of Selection) have not been factored into these projections. Until these costs are fully realized and included into service and cost projections, VR will continue its current management of wait list categories under Order of Selection

Order of Selection Policies

Individuals needing Supported Employment services are assessed as having a most significant disability. Additionally, individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits as a result of being determined to be disabled or blind are assessed as having at least a significant disability and are evaluated to determine whether they meet the criteria for individuals with most significant disabilities.

After an individual is found eligible for VR services, an OOS determination is completed. Additional evaluations or assessments to make this determination may be needed. The VR counselor and individual

jointly determine the individual's OOS priority category by evaluating his or her functional limitations, anticipated services needed and the duration of the services.

This policy does not affect an individual who began to receive services under an approved individualized plan for employment prior to the implementation date of OOS, or those individuals who are in need of post-employment services.

VR officially notifies all individuals of their individual OOS determination. Individuals not immediately activated for development of an employment plan are offered Information and Referral services and the option to be placed on a waiting list until employment plan development services can be initiated. Individuals on the waiting list are contacted annually to determine if additional information is available. As resources become available, those with the most significant disabilities are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services, those with significant disabilities second and all other eligible individuals selected last.

Order of Selection Priority Category Description Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities (Priority Category 1)

An eligible individual with a disability which:

1. Seriously limits three or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome;
2. Requires three or more primary services;
3. Requires services which must be provided over an extended period (at least 12 months); and
4. Requires services that are not likely to be corrected through surgical intervention and/or other treatment modes.

Individuals with Significant Disabilities (Priority Category 2)

An eligible individual with a disability which:

1. Seriously limits one or two functional capacities, in terms of an employment outcome;
2. Requires two or more primary services;
3. Requires services which must be provided over an extended period (at least six months); OR
4. The individual is a recipient of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as a result of disability or blindness.

Other Eligible Individuals (Priority Category 3)

An eligible individual with a disability which:

1. Limits one or more major life activities; and/or
2. Services are expected to last less than six months.

VR provides Job Retention Services (discretionary services to eligible individuals regardless of order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment). This is a new option

created by WIOA. Between May 2016 and January 2018, 658 customers were released from the OOS wait list and received Job Retention Services.

(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

To meet the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) collaborates and contracts with community partners to provide Supported Employment services. For FFY 2017-18, Supported Employment services are funded solely by Title I funding, as Title VI-B funding was not federally approved for this fiscal year. These funds are available on a statewide basis. Florida VR uses the majority of its Supported Employment expenditures on allowable services to youth.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) presents VR with the opportunity to provide a wide array of services with a focus on youth. Additional opportunities available include the provision of Extended Services to youth for up to four years or until 24 years of age, as funds permit. VR is now also authorized to provide supported employment services up to 24 months and may extend this time period if necessary.

VR has increased its age range of services to include 14-year olds. VR has focused on youth services and has expanded several options designed to help youth achieve employment outcomes. These options allow youth to gain a variety of skills and exposure to multiple career options and are designed to provide skills and direction for youth so that when they are ready for Supported Employment services they have skills and knowledge to help their efforts be successful.

Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive Supported Employment services.

VR will:

Continue to provide supported employment services on a statewide basis through Title I funds. Statewide allocation of funds allows for equal delivery of services throughout Florida. Individuals may receive supported employment services using a combination of Title I funds and revenues generated from Social Security reimbursements, community rehabilitation partners, or other state program revenues.

Provide a variety of training and awareness programs designed to increase the awareness of supported employment as a vocational service for individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR Senior Program Consultants have increased outreach activities with a focus on state and local education partnerships. The VR consultants have provided trainings with a focus on sharing information to assist youth, adults and families in their consideration of pursuing Supported Employment Services.

Review pilot and innovative employment practices and assess the feasibility of replicating programs with successful strategies.

VR has initiated Discovery Services, a person-centered planning tool as a way to increase the number of individuals with significant and complex disabilities receiving supported employment services. Discovery provides an opportunity for individuals to move seamlessly from this person-centered assessment and planning to Supported Employment Services.

VR has initiated a Supported Employment Customized Placement Benchmark to incentives providers to work with individuals who will need more intense supports and assistance to become successfully employed. Training opportunities were developed for providers and VR staff on this customized employment strategy.

Goal 2: Use Title I funds for Supported Employment services to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities with a focus on youth.

- Use Title I funds to provide supported employment services as specified in the Individualized Plan for Employment for youth.
- Purchase supported employment services based upon established performance benchmarks. The contract for supported employment focuses on performance and reinforces the focus on successful outcomes for individuals served.
- Funds may also be used for related customized employment strategies of Supported Self-Employment services
- Provide up to four years of extended services for youth 24 and under when appropriate
- VR Consultants have provided extensive outreach to educators, community providers, individuals, families, community partners, VR staff to promote Supported Employment as an opportunity for youth to become successful in becoming employed and developing a career path.
- VR works closely with the Statewide Employment First Interagency Committee. This group focuses on promoting competitive integrated employment as a first choice for youth and adults with

disabilities in Florida.

- The Program Development and Assistance Bureau provides technical assistance and support to a wide variety of stakeholders.
- VR has provided youth receiving subminimum wage employment training opportunities to encourage their consideration of competitive integrated employment opportunities. VR offers a four-hour course focused on self-advocacy, communication, employment options in local communities, how to obtain supports and services and other related topics.

Goal 3: Increase Supported Employment training opportunities for VR Counselors, Community Rehabilitation service staff, families and individuals.

VR will:

- Increase supported employment training opportunities for VR counselors, providers, families and individuals.
- Participate in the development of a consortium of providers designed to identify, share and promote innovative employment practices.
- Promote awareness of social security benefits planning as a way to fund extended services.
- Continue to provide joint training opportunities for VR employees and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).
- Provide funding to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities.
- Participate as an advisory member on a variety of grants from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council that provide training and collaborative activities for providers, counselors and other agency employees.

Goal 4: Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services.

VR will:

- Participate as a key member of the Employment First Interagency Committee. This committee is composed of nine agencies/organizations. The focus is on competitive integrated employment as a preferred option for youth and adults. The group also works on a statewide level to leverage and collaborate on the use of resources to benefit all individuals served by the agencies. This includes mutual training, technical assistance, advocacy and other mutually beneficial activities.
- Continue to work with APD to make sure that referred customers know about the extended service resources they can get through Medicaid Waiver Funding and/or general revenue funding.
- Continue to work with a network of providers to provide technical assistance and support of innovative projects that promote employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Provide training on the availability of funding ongoing support through Ticket to Work-Employment Network partnerships, natural supports and Social Security Work Incentives as possible resources for ongoing supports.
- Encourage the use of employer and natural supports.
- Enhance relationships with businesses and employers to let them know that on-the-job supports

for individuals in supported employment are available. VR will continue efforts to strengthen community partnerships to increase access to appropriate employment services.

- Use the Business Relations Team to provide training and technical assistance to employers interested in working with VR customers. They will also develop positive relationships with employers to increase employment opportunities.
- Use the AbilitiesWork Help Desk as a resource to link employers to qualified job seekers with disabilities. VR is a partner in the development of and administers the AbilitiesWork Help Desk, a collaboration between the state's Workforce system, Division of Blind Services and APD.

(o) State's Strategies

In an effort to address executive order 19-31, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) continues to provide support and services that lead to advance knowledge and skills to find meaningful work and productive careers. Specifically, DVR provides support for students with disabilities and collaborates with customers in the areas of post-secondary vocational training and education, as well, job training and work-based learning to help individuals move into competitive integrated employment. During the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 18/19, DVR assisted businesses and employers with their workforce needs by connecting the talents, skills, and abilities of 5,924 customers with disabilities. This is a 24.7% increase from the previous SFY. In addition to helping more people receive employment outcomes, we increased the number of hours worked for those closures (29 hours a week from 28) and the average weekly salary (\$370 from \$340). Our Return on Investment for each dollar spent increased to \$8.34 from \$6.66 the previous year.

The legislation that authorizes VR, The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prioritizes youth transition so that youth with a disability are ready to excel in the workplace. DVR has shown its commitment to this vision by increasing the number of individuals we support achieve a high school diploma or a GED by 7%. Additionally, DVR saw an increase of 8.8% in the number of individuals it supported in participants' post-secondary education services.

Below are some example training programs that assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for 21st century careers:

- Comprehensive Transition Programs include career and technical schools
- High School High-Tech
- BRICK Program
- Agritourist Collaboration
- Career Camps
- Hands on Education
- Project Search
- Industry Readiness Training
- Self-Employment Program

DVR Business Representatives will continue to stay current and abreast of the labor market needs to align training and employment opportunities with sector strategies and targeted industries. This leads to pathways that are in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand careers and occupations. DVR collaborates with career and technical education, career source, college systems, schools, businesses and the Department of Economic Opportunity, to provide informed choices on career pathways into the 21st labor market.

To reinforce the critical importance of VR in our state's emerging efforts to support workforce, DVR is currently updating its policy related to serving individuals with disabilities who have substance use disorders to ensure access to vocational rehabilitation services to help them achieve employment success. Also, DVR is collaborating with Agency for Persons with Disabilities to identify and serve individuals with most significant disabilities to provide opportunities for workforce inclusion. DVR is a partner in the Employment First initiative along with ten other agencies to ensure the long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. Additionally, DVR is working to expand its current Individual Placement Support Program, which is designed to assist individuals with significant mental health disorders obtain employment.

With regard to the state's investment in Apprenticeship and computer science opportunities, DVR will continue to partner with Deloitte and Specialisterne to strengthen its efforts towards building an Autism at Work program, which recruits college graduates with autism into full-time positions in Science, Technology Engineer and Math (STEM) careers including: cyber security, information management systems, computer science, engineering, and other IT related fields. Also, DVR partners with targeted industries to deliver work-based learning experiences for youth and adults. For example, Project Search. Project Search is a nationally recognized and trademark internship program for student with most significant disabilities, providing opportunities to complete job rotations in industries, such as healthcare, universities, hospitality and retail.

Moreover, DVR will continue to partner with the Brevard Internship in Construction Knowledge (BRICK) program which is a partnership with the Home Builders and Contractor Associations of Brevard and the Northeast Home Builders Association, which offer Work-Base Learning experiences (WBLE) in construction and trades. Also, we will strengthen collaboration with the Federal Aviation Administration to recruit individuals with disabilities into their Air Traffic Controller Training Program. DVR partnered with Aerospace that resulted in a networking and career event with seven business partners to include Lockheed Martin, Collins Aerospace, Bevilacqua Research Corporation (BRC), Lockheed Martin, Jacobs, Micro Systems, Inc., Raytheon, Zel Technologies, VT Mobile Aerospace Engineering, Inc. (ST Engineering), Your TEK Professionals which created multiple on the job training opportunities and employment.

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds

VR recognizes Innovation and Expansion projects as beneficial and complementary to WIOA-related initiatives. Following a formal procurement process, VR will renew contracts for two Innovation and Expansion projects, described below. Contracts for the projects run through SFY 2021.

1. The Arc-2-Work: a work-skills training program - Operated by Arc of Alachua County. The Arc-2-Work program is providing pre-employment training and participation in volunteering positions to high school students and clients of the Arc that will foster employment placement for individuals with unique abilities in Alachua County.
2. The Industry Readiness Training (IRT) Program - Operated by Brevard Achievement Center. The IRT Program is providing pre-employment training and participation in volunteering positions that will foster employment placement for individuals with unique abilities in Brevard County.

Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation Technology is provided through a contractual agreement with the Center for Assistive, Rehabilitation and Robotics Technologies at the University of South Florida. The program provides rehabilitation technology assessment and evaluation services for VR customers across all stages of the rehabilitation process. Rehabilitation technology includes a range of services and devices that supplement and enhance individual functions. It includes services like job redesign or worksite modifications that improve the work environment.

Assistive Technology Services and Devices

VR sponsors the Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology Project that is directed by the Assistive Technology Advisory Council in accordance with Section 413.407, Florida Statutes. The project provides for the coordination and delivery of appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art assistive technology services and devices on a statewide basis. The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST), is a not-for-profit corporation for which the Assistive Technology Advisory Council acts as the board of directors, manages the project and provides administrative and technical support to the council.

FAAST is responsible for administering a low interest loan authority that provides funding to individuals with disabilities who may be unable to qualify for traditional loans and bank financing to purchase assistive technology devices.

Assistive technology includes both devices and services. A device is any item or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability. Many high-tech and low-tech devices are available to help people with disabilities in daily living tasks, communication, education, work and recreation.

Expansion and Improvement of Services

Results gained through the Innovation and Expansion projects described above will contribute to increased employment opportunities for VR customers. In addition to the innovation and expansion projects, VR's strategic plan contains the following initiatives anticipated to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities:

- Develop and implement all components of the VR Business Relations Program.
- Redesign and implement pre-employment services for transition-age customers.
- Design and implement a program about service alternatives for customers to use in making an informed choice prior to entering subminimum wage employment.
- Design and implement enhancements to the Vendor Profile document for customer use in making informed choices regarding employment providers.

Outreach to Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and/or who have been Unserved or Underserved

VR continues to assess its services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and individuals who may be unserved or underserved, as well as those with the most significant disabilities who may be from minority populations. VR will be completing its next CSNA during FFY2018-19, which will further identify unserved and/ or underserved groups, as well as recommendations for how to better serve these groups. Strategic projects and local-level outreach activities to ensure services to minorities and unserved/underserved groups include the following:

- Develop and implement all components of the VR Business Relationship Program.
- Redesign and implement pre-employment services for transition-age customers.
- Design and implement a program about service alternatives for customers to use in making an informed choice prior to entering subminimum wage employment.
- Design and implement enhancements to the Vendor Profile document for customer use in making informed choices regarding employment providers.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Continue to explore partnership opportunities with community/faith-based organizations. Develop contact lists of faith-based and other diverse programs as resources for partnership opportunities.
- Continue to identify outreach activities conducted by VR area offices for underrepresented populations. Conduct outreach in local communities to promote VR as an agency and help individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who may be unserved or underserved to return or remain in the workplace.
- Continue to conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families through contracts with community-based organizations and other partners.

Continue to implement activities outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe. DVR currently collaborates with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Foster Care to ensure access to pre-employment transition services for student with disabilities in institutional settings. DVR is in partnership with the Department of Corrections to collaborate on the Adult Re-entry and Employment Strategic Planning Program Grant to identify strategies for connecting re-entry citizens to employment.

Improving and Expanding VR Services for Students with Disabilities

WIOA provides great opportunities for VR to increase transition services and opportunities to youth with disabilities. Increased information and referral to transition age youth is built into WIOA and VR has already begun providing more transition service-related information to youth. Strategies noted below are anticipated to increase opportunities for students with disabilities.

- Continue to offer Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) to all school districts annually. Although VR approaches and offers WBLE partnerships to all school districts in Florida, the partnership is dependent on the individual district's decision to participate. VR has recently hired another transition administrator to ensure that information is provided consistently to all school districts and to coordinate and monitor active and potential WBLE partnerships.
- Continue to provide activities for youth and students designed to assist in developing a concept of work, navigating the community and obtaining work experience during high school. Pre-Employment Transition Services include vocational evaluation, career guidance and counseling, work readiness and self-advocacy training and experiential activities such as community-based work experience and on-the-job training. Support services include assistive technology and services, transportation and uniforms. Intensive services are designed for those who need additional support with appropriate work behavior, require repetition to acquire skills, build endurance to work and identify the right fit or environment for work. These services include Discovery, Youth Peer Mentoring, Project SEARCH, services provided under Work-Based Learning Experiences with school districts and tuition, books and supplies for postsecondary education programs.
- Additional initiatives are under way to increase provider capacity and offer more opportunities to youth. These include approval of CareerSource Florida to provide pre-placement services, revision of Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultants (CBTAC) recertification procedures and increase in CBTAC and Discovery providers. VR partners with Volunteer Florida, Centers for Independent Living, Florida ARC and High School High Tech to offer more OJT and community work experiences.

Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR assesses its business processes and organizational capacity on an ongoing basis to make consistent improvements. Results of the FFY 2018-19 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicate a need to develop service providers in the rural areas of the state, particularly providers for supported and customized employment, as well as providers that are skilled in working with individuals with the most

significant disabilities. The CSNA also identified a need to develop providers that can sign and have experience working with Deaf individuals.

VR has increased its number of registered CRPs from 154 in 2017 to 342, as of January 2020. Each new provider went through stringent vetting, including background screening, and attended mandatory onboarding before being approved to deliver services. VR's Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services continues to engage service providers on a quarterly basis through face-to-face meetings, area wide provider trainings and Provider Engagement Conference Calls.

Recognizing the need to develop a service delivery model that would allow the flexibility and creativity necessary to better serve our customers, a cross functional team of VR staff worked together to develop a new service delivery model and rate structure. This new structure incentivizes better outcomes, such as higher pay; allows for payment sooner in the process; incorporates Individual Placement Services (IPS); and creates distinct Pre-Employment Transition Services benchmarks. The new model has been shared with stakeholders, including all current service providers. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

VR is also in the process of developing an e-referral system that will allow service providers to receive referrals and bill for services electronically. The new system will replace multiple standalone systems, thereby streamlining the process and relieving some of the undue administrative burden currently felt by our providers. VR is targeting October 1, 2020 for full implementation of both the new service delivery model and the new e-referral system.

Strategies to Improve the Performance Related to Goals, Priorities and Performance Indicators

Figure 9.05
Federal Standards and Indicators

Federal Performance Indicators and Targets	Actual Performance (FFY 17)	Previous (FFY 16)
Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: Increase over prior year)	+265	+419
Indicator 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: 55.8%)	37.9%	40.8%
Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment Outcome (Primary) (RSA Target: 72.6%)	96.94%	97.7%
Indicator 1.4: Significance of Disability (Primary) (RSA Target: 62.4%)	92.56%	99.5%
Indicator 1.5: Earnings Ratio (Primary) (RSA Target: 52%)	55%	53%
Indicator 1.6: Self-Support (RSA Target: 53%)	54.53%	60.2%
Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (RSA Target: 80%)	94%	95%

VR's rehabilitation rate remains below the federal target, but has increased over the past two years, as has the overall number of customer employment outcomes. This is expected as VR continues to release customers from the Category 3 wait list.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

VR collaborates with partners at the state and local levels to maximize employment services for people with disabilities. VR anticipates that the following projects will have a positive impact on program performance.

- Support employers and community partnerships through the Business Relations program.
- Expand the Youth Peer Mentoring pilot to all VR areas.
- Provide Career Counseling / Information and Referral (CCIR) services to individuals participating in subminimum wage employment. Due to the positive response to CCIR services, VR is developing an orientation and follow-up process for CCIR service recipients who expressed interest in VR services.
- Assist customers in making informed choices about employment providers through use of the Service Provider Choice Directory.
- Redesign and implement pre-employment services for transition-age customers.
- Implement additional mental health training for counselors and develop transitional employment, Individual Placement and Support and peer specialist models to improve success with individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Expand the capacity for providing Discovery and Customized Employment services.
- Establish additional casework quality assurance review practices to validate data entry.
- Continue data validation practices to detect errors prior to reporting.
- Expand use of Benefits Planning services for Social Security recipients that will promote self-support. Purchase these services when not available from SSA.

Strategies for the Statewide Workforce Investment System to Assist Individuals with Disabilities
WIOA presents requirements and opportunities for VR to strengthen its partnership with entities of the Statewide Workforce Development System. In addition to requirements outlined in WIOA, the following strategies will increase partnerships with the statewide workforce development system to further help job seekers with disabilities.

- Continue implementation of WIOA with other core programs, including design of the one-stop career center system and integrated performance accountability system.
- Collaborate with and offer training to CareerSource Florida and Employment Networks to provide services.
- Continue area directors' and representatives' participation on the local Workforce Boards.
- Continue to promote VR's presence in CareerSource Florida through co-location of VR units in One-Stop Career Centers, employees being out-stationed and/or through regular visits by VR employees to One-Stop Career Centers.
- Develop a network of qualified benefits planners to augment the SSA contracts for Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program services. SSA contracted networks are insufficient in quantity and they have reprioritized their service population so that ticketholders, youth and SSI/

SSDI beneficiaries who are not yet working or ready to work are in last place. VR believes benefits planning must be provided early to families and youth and will purchase these services when not available through SSA capacity.

Equitable Access

Since 2013, VR has made great progress in accommodation and access to services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Specific accomplishments include completion of revised best practices guides for services and communication, as well as hiring a specialized consultant in the field of deaf-blindness to develop best practices, provide consultation, training and advocacy with stakeholders involved in these cases. VR also repurposed a vacated FTE into a Deaf-Blind Specialist position, which was filled during FFY 2014.

Key administrators from VR and FDBS held monthly meetings to revise and update the Memorandum of Agreement, develop strategies, discuss training needs, create informational guides needed by both agencies for this population and provide case consultation. Additional VR strategies and activities to increase equal access to individuals requesting services are as follows:

- Develop a comprehensive safety plan for monitoring VR facilities statewide. Specific components include a process for reporting defective/unsafe working conditions, safety and facilities management training for area staff, a move manual, a statewide safety manual, statewide first aid information, furniture inspection instructions and a facility security/building access policy at HQ.
- Continue to use interpreters and translators and VR's online resources as well as the websites of other partners and stakeholders (where permitted) to reach underserved populations and increase communication with customers.
- Offer reasonable accommodations to give equal access to services and make sure materials and other program information are available in English, Spanish and Haitian-Creole for various agencies, employers, churches, community leaders, health clinics and other settings.
- Continue to assign counselors and consultants to serve specialized populations, such as the deaf and hard-of-hearing, transition students, mental health customers and brain and spinal cord injury customers.
- Collaborate with CareerSource Florida and other One-stop system partners to implement universal design principles into the workforce development system's facilities and operations, with the intent to include universal design as a separate component of the One-stop career center certification process.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), established three strategic goals for FFY 2015. These goals and priorities were developed based on an analysis of VR's performance on the federal standards and indicators, the preliminary results of the statewide needs assessment and input from customers, providers and other stakeholders.

The following section provides VR's evaluation and report of progress towards achieving its strategic goals.

Review of Current Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1: Ensure Customer success and satisfaction by improving business and support processes.

Objective 1.1: Improve and align VR business processes to support WIOA implementation

Strategy: 1. Develop and implement all components of the VR Business Relationship Program.

Performance Measure:

- Full integration and implementation of all components, including business services, field services operations and IT support systems

Actual Performance:

The VR Business Relations Program (BRP) developed processes to streamline their operations and better integrate into field service operations. BRP has developed partnerships with businesses and industry sectors to expand customized employment and summer worksite opportunities. BRP staff have provided numerous trainings and presentations to businesses, providers, VR staff and local groups such as Chambers and trade-group chapters. BRP implemented and customized Salesforce software to track employer information and outreach activities and allows for reporting out area level employer and performance data. BRP also participates in collaborative activities such as the ApprenticeshipUSA grant team and USDOL-ETAs Integrated Business Services Cohort.

Strategy: 2. Redesign and implement pre-employment services for transition-age customers.

Performance Measures:

- Services re-aligned to new WIOA guidelines and implemented within required timeframes
- Budget set-aside requirements met

Actual Performance:

VR has recently lowered the age limit for Transition services to 14 years of age and implemented pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) through the following activities.

- Expansion of Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with school districts to include pre-employment transition services and providing updated training and resources to schools, providers and VR staff.
- Piloting Youth Peer Mentoring Services in 3 counties and entering into an Intensive Technical Assistance Plan to expand the program statewide.
- Developing the Student Transition Activities Record (STAR) Program to track Pre-ETS referrals and providing training to school districts, providers and VR staff. VR is also working with stakeholders to develop ways to engage school districts not using the STAR program.

VR continues to work toward meeting the Pre-ETS budget requirements and is working with WINTAC on a Technical Assistance Agreement to better plan future services.

Strategy: 3. Design and implement a program about service alternatives for customers to use in making an informed choice prior to entering subminimum wage employment.

Performance Measure:

- Number of people diverted from or transitioned out of subminimum wage jobs

Actual Performance:

VR has successfully implemented Career Counseling/ Information and Referral (CCIR) services for participants in subminimum wage employment. During SFY 2018-2019, approximately 4700 participants

received CCIR services. VR has approved 21 agencies to provide this service. VR also provides internal and external stakeholders technical assistance and support on compliance with Section 511.

CCIR services have received positive feedback from providers and participants, and VR is working with stakeholders to develop a follow-up process for CCIR participants who express an interest in VR services or employment.

Strategy: 4. Design and implement enhancements to the Vendor Profile document for customer use in making informed choices regarding employment providers.

Performance Measures:

- Establish baseline use of Vendor Profile
- Customer satisfaction with Vendor Profile

Actual Performance:

VR launched the Service Provider Choice Directory (SPCD) in August 2017, through the VR external website. Prior to its launch, VR delivered live orientation webinars for VR staff and providers to discuss the information available in the Directory and system use. Usage statistics for October-December 2017 are below.

Usage Statistics for Website: <http://ChoiceDirectory.Rehabworks.org> (external)

- Date Range: October 1st, 2018 - September 30th, 2019
- Total number of Visit During this Date Range: 961,323
- Total Number of Pages Viewed by Visitors: 7,191,100

Usage Statistics for Website: <http://it-in-web-01/vendorprofile> (internal)

- Date Range: July 1st, 2018 - September 30th, 2019
- Total number of Visit During this Date Range: 14,476
- Total Number of Pages Viewed by Visitors: 22,930

Objective 1.2: Redesign supports for VR service & business processes

Strategy: 1. Coordinate and develop the VR services portion of the statewide plan.

Performance Measure:

- Timely submission of all required information

Actual Performance:

VR successfully developed and submitted the VR services portion of the Unified State Plan.

Strategy: 2. Design and implement an approach for integration of performance and business intelligence information.

Performance Measures:

- Number of revised management reports implemented
- Satisfaction of affected VR Managers with revised reports

Actual Performance:

This strategy is on hold until after all current reporting processes are modified to meet WIOA requirements.

Goal 2: Ensure Employee success and satisfaction by improving development opportunities and workplace environment.

Objective 2.1: Provide a comprehensive workforce planning and development system

Strategy: 1. Implement employee onboarding and mentoring processes statewide.

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of new employees completing all requirements within 90 days
- Percentage of new employees assigned a mentor within 10 days from start date
- Protégé/mentor/supervisor satisfaction ratings

Actual Performance:

From June to July 2016, a series of webinars provided VR staff information on the new mentoring program, how to use the system and setting up personal profiles. This concluded with a Mentor / Protégé Matching Day. The Mentoring Program officially kicked off in August 2016. The VR Organizational and Employee Support Section (OES) is available via the Mentorship Program Help Desk email to assist with any Mentorship program questions and IMAP software assistance.

Strategy: 2. Develop an agency-wide workforce and succession management plan, including a process to capture organizational knowledge.

Performance Measures:

- Process accurately identifies critical positions and information
- Participant satisfaction with process / components

Strategy: 3. Design a program for identifying and developing VR Leadership candidates.

Performance Measures:

- Successful pilot/ rollout of program
- Percent of VR employees initiating participation
- Participant satisfaction with program components

Actual Performance (3 & 4):

VR's Supervisor Succession Training Program (SSTP) was successfully launched statewide in October 2016. As of December 2019, 32 participants have successfully graduated from SSTP.

Strategy: 4. Develop standards, guidelines and curriculum for VR employee training.

Performance Measures:

- Improvement in climate survey items: Q8. Opportunities to learn and grow- 83.61%
- Q11. I am satisfied with the training provided by VR- 77.19%
- Percentage of VR employees successfully completing identified training requirements

Actual Performance:

VR's Learning and Development Office (LDO) has developed standardized resources for designing VR training and courses, that allow curriculum to be designed in various (blended) formats. LDO has collaborated with program and administrative staff to revise New Counselor Training materials and provides consultation and support to VR staff on training aspects when launching new programs or services.

Objective 2.2: Provide a safe, accessible and adequately equipped work environment

Strategy: 1. Develop a comprehensive safety plan for monitoring VR facilities statewide. Specific components include a process for reporting defective/unsafe working conditions, safety and facilities management training for area staff, a move manual, a statewide safety manual, statewide first aid info, furniture inspection instructions and a facility security / building access policy at HQ.

Performance Measures:

- Improvement in climate survey item: Q17. Physically safe work environment- 81.94%
- Pulse survey results following implementation of each improvement

Actual Performance:

VR has developed a comprehensive safety plan and resources that are used in all VR offices and facilities. This strategy continues operationally.

Explanation of Performance:

Strategies that contributed to achievement of goals and priorities

Following the previously established planning process, VR Senior Leaders regularly review progress and update strategies as needed. Annually, the Senior Leadership Team completed a thorough review of the strategic plan, and then held a planning meeting to determine which projects to include in the updated strategic plan. Strategy updates are provided quarterly and reported out to VR Leadership and stakeholders.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) completed their monitoring visit with VR in April 2017. In addition, VR completed its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), which informed agency planning in FFYs 2020-23. VR updated its strategic goals and priorities after receipt of the RSA Monitoring Report and completion of the CSNA. Currently, VR agency priorities are to ensure IT systems are fully capable of collecting data required for federal reporting, and to refine its service delivery procedures to meet Pre-ETS budget requirements while continuing to meet the needs of other customers.

Smooth operation of the strategic planning process is in part due to VR senior leaders' commitment to provide all supports necessary for project teams to be successful. Senior leaders also realize the value of feedback received from VR customers, personnel, stakeholders, and concerned citizens. Arrangements are in place so that anyone can provide feedback on the state plan, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using a dedicated email address on the Florida VR website, rehabworks.org/plans.shtml. The email

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

address is vrplan@vr.fldoe.org. Concerted effort has also been made to standardize and streamline VR operational processes and procedures, such as staff development, planning, IT governance and development schedules, and business intelligence functions.

Barriers that impeded achievement of goals and priorities

Despite obstacles such as changes to waitlist management, fiscal strains, preparing for and implementing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), staff turnover and rising caseload sizes, VR made great progress towards achieving its strategic projects and agency priorities. When waitlist categories were closed due to fiscal and human resource deficits, field staff used this time to reconnect and engage customers, as well as close cases for customers no longer interested in services. Budget and caseload projection models were also developed during this time and have allowed VR to better manage and plan.

Preparing for WIOA implementation forced VR to reexamine its business processes and organizational structure, which has resulted in more efficient and standardized operations. It allows VR to develop true partnerships and connections with other employment-focused entities. These improvements, borne out of necessity, have increased VR's ability to plan, as well as to be flexible when barriers are encountered.

Figure 9.06
WIOA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

WIOA MEASURES	Actual Performance (FFY 19)	Previous (FFY 18)
Employment Two Quarters after Exit	baseline	baseline
Employment Four Quarters after Exit	baseline	baseline
Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit	baseline	baseline
Skill Gains	3.5%	baseline
Business Engagement	baseline	baseline

Explanation of Performance:

VR's rehabilitation rate remains below the federal target, but has increased over the past two years, as has the overall number of customer employment outcomes. This is expected as VR continues to release customers from the Category 3 wait list. VR has multiple strategies and initiatives anticipated to improve the rehabilitation rate, overall agency performance and customer outcomes.

Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

In FFY 2013-14, with the agreement of the FRC, VR continued to use funds designated under this section to support the functions of the FRC and Florida Independent Living Council (FILC) and to support opportunities for improving the efficiency of service delivery.

Actual Performance:

VR continues to support and collaborate with the FRC and FILC as required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. In SFY 2018-19, a total of 12,717 independent living plans were developed, and 23,334 independent living goals were set through the network of 16 Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs served a total of 17,151 individuals with significant disabilities. Information and Referral services were provided to approximately 22,788 individuals and Community Transition Assistance was provided to 118 individuals.

VR recognizes Innovation and Expansion projects as beneficial and complementary to WIOA-related initiatives. Following a formal procurement process, VR has entered into contracts for five Innovation and Expansion projects, described below. Contracts for the projects run through SFY 2020.

1. The Business Center for Diversity and Inclusion (BCDI) - Operated by The Diversity Initiative, Inc. (TDI). TDI is providing a “no fee” Business Center provides consultation, development, training, and support services to local businesses and organizations to facilitate employment placement for individuals with unique abilities. The BCDI serves Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Hernando counties.
2. The Arc-2-Work: a work-skills training program - Operated by Arc of Alachua County. The Arc-2-Work program is providing pre-employment training and participation in volunteering positions to high school students and clients of the Arc that will foster employment placement for individuals with unique abilities in Alachua County.
3. The Industry Readiness Training (IRT) Program - Operated by Brevard Achievement Center. The IRT Program is providing pre-employment training and participation in volunteering positions that will foster employment placement for individuals with unique abilities in Brevard County.
4. Discovering Your Potential (DYP) - Operated by Gulfstream Goodwill Industries, Inc. The DYP Program is providing highly focused, intensive discovery, training, and support to individuals with unique abilities in order to increase employment outcomes in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Okeechobee counties.
5. Discovering Your Potential (DYP) - Operated by Gulfstream Goodwill Industries, Inc. The DYP Program is providing highly focused, intensive discovery, training, and support to individuals with unique abilities in order to increase employment outcomes in Palm Beach County.

Explanation of Performance:

These collaborative efforts helped strengthen leadership and improve services, which led to increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It is anticipated that the new Innovation and Expansion projects will contribute positively to VR's rehabilitation rate and provide more informed customer choice and options.

Evaluation of Supported Employment Program

Review of Section (n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI-B Funds in 2016-17

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is committed to providing quality Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR collaborates and contracts with community rehabilitation providers across the state of Florida. VR has focused this year on increasing the quality and capacity of the employment providers. VR may now provide Supported Employment services for up to 24 months, if necessary.

VR has also focused on expanding services to Transition Youth. The Career Exploration, Workplace Readiness, Community-Based Work Experiences, Self-Advocacy, Youth Peer Mentoring and Postsecondary Educational Counseling are all services that were expanded to assist youth in their eventual pursuit of employment.

VR may also offer youth extended services for up to four years, as necessary and as funds permit.

- VR continues to provide Supported Employment Services on a statewide basis through Title VI- B funds, and with Title I funds when Title VI-B funds are expended
- Fully expend Title VI-B funds for the provision of Supported Employment services after reserving no more than 5% for program administration

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Provide a variety of training and outreach programs designed to increase the awareness of Supported Employment as an appropriate vocational program for individuals with most significant disabilities
- Review pilot and innovative employment practices and assess the feasibility of replicating programs using successful strategies

Update:

Supported Employment services were provided to adults and youth who required these services on a statewide basis. Supported Employment funds were used to pay for Placement, Stabilization, Transition, and placement for successful Employment Outcomes. Funds were fully expended on services. Five percent or less was used to support program administration.

VR increased training opportunities for individuals, youth, counselors, providers, and other stakeholders to promote Supported Employment services as a first and preferred service option. Transition Youth services were expanded to offer an array of services that would support youth in pursuing competitive integrated employment opportunities. Fifty percent of the Title VI B funding was expended on youth 24 and under.

VR developed and implemented a Career Counseling Information and Referral Course for individuals participating in subminimum wage employment in 14 (C) entities as required under the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. This course provides information that allow individuals to make an informed choice about current and future employment opportunities. Approximately 4,700 individuals participated in this training opportunity. Individuals who stated an interest in pursuing VR services will be provided the information and support needed to apply for VR services.

VR staff have worked with Employment First Partners, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Project 10 staff, local Education Agencies and other partners to increase Third Party Cooperative Arrangements, Project SEARCH programs and other work experience programs that provide training opportunities that lead to employment.

VR staff have also collaborated with the Florida Association for Rehabilitation Facilities and the ARC of Florida to develop a package of VR services that would assist individuals with most significant disabilities to pursue competitive integrated employment opportunities.

Goal 2: Use Title VI, Part B funds to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities

- Use Title I funds, supplemented with Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services as specified in the individual plan for employment.
- Purchase Supported Employment services based upon established performance benchmarks. The contracts for Supported Employment focuses on performance and reinforces the focus on successful outcomes.
- Funds may also be used for related customized employment strategies and supported self-employment services.

Update:

VR provided Supported Employment services to individuals with most significant disabilities who requested these services. Data below represents VR's performance in serving Supported Employment customers.

SFY 2018-2019 Supported Employment Performance Data

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Number of active cases: 10,618
- Number of Individualized Plans for Employment: 3,384
- Number of Employment Outcomes: 1,107

VR has increased the number of Supported Employment Providers throughout Florida. Additional training and support has been provided to new employment providers. VR has also added a Customized Job Placement benchmark to support individuals with most significant disabilities who may need a customized employment option.

Goal 3: Increase Supported Employment training opportunities for VR Counselors, Community Rehabilitation Providers, families and individuals.

- Increase Supported Employment training opportunities for VR counselors, providers, families, and individuals.
- Participate in the development of a consortium of providers designed to identify, share, and promote innovative employment practices.
- Promote awareness of social security benefits planning as a way to fund extended services.
- Continue to provide joint training opportunities for VR employees and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).
- Provide funding to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities.
- Participate as an advisory member on a variety of grants from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council that provide training and collaborative activities for providers, counselors, and other agency employees.

Update:

The Supported Employment Senior Consultant continues to provide training on service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities to new counselors, as well as follow-up trainings and technical assistance to seasoned counselors and supervisors at conferences, meetings, and workshops.

VR Consultants provided training to families and members in the community as requested. These sessions are designed to provide information and a vision that Supported Employment services are designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities. They provide families and customers with the information they need to become successfully employed. The sessions were provided to the groups and organizations listed below. Additional presentations are made throughout the year to local stakeholder groups.

- Florida Developmental Disability Council
- Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
- Florida ARC Membership
- Florida Rehabilitation Council
- Florida Project SEARCH Sites
- Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultant Area Trainings
- Standing Transition Committees throughout Florida
- Individualized Technical Assistance and Trainings as requested
- Florida Department of Education - Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- Family Café Participants
- Visions Conference Attendees

VR Senior Consultants provide technical assistance and consultations on individual cases as requested by supervisors, family members, VR staff, and individual customers.

A number of strategies were used to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities listed below.

- Representation on the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and Employment Task Force. This included helping develop pilot projects on a wide array of employment topics. Administrators were involved as task force members, on advisory committees, and as monitors of projects. The projects complimented and supported VR's mission of helping individuals prepare for, get or keep a job.
- Presentations on Supported Employment at conferences around the state. Audiences included professionals, families, and students regarding employment options.
- Participation as a board member for the Florida Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE).
- Representation on the Statewide Employment First Initiative by VR's Supported Employment and Transition Consultants.
- The VR Senior Consultant coordinated and developed training for providers and staff on Discovery and Customized Employment Services.

VR initiated and implemented training opportunities for adults who were participating in subminimum wage employment. This service was provided in collaboration with 14 (C) employers and community providers. 4,780 individuals received Career Counseling Information and Referral Services during the first year of the program. This course is designed to promote competitive integrated employment opportunities.

Goal 4: Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services

- Continue to work with APD to make sure that referred customers know about the resources for extended service they can get through Medicaid Waiver Funding and/or general revenue funding.
- Continue to work with a network of providers to provide technical assistance and support of innovative projects that promote employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Provide training on the availability of funding extended services through Ticket to Work-Employment Network partnerships, natural supports, and Social Security Work Incentives.
- Encourage the use of employer and natural supports as a resource for extended services.
- Enhance relationships with businesses and employers to let them know that on-the-job supports for individuals in Supported Employment are available. VR will continue efforts to strengthen community partnerships to increase access to appropriate employment services.
- Use the Business Relations Team to provide training and technical assistance to employers interested in working with VR customers. They will also develop positive relationships with employers to increase employment opportunities.
- Use the AbilitiesWork Help Desk as a resource to link employers to qualified jobseekers with disabilities. VR is a partner in the development of and administers the AbilitiesWork Help Desk, a collaboration between the state's Workforce system, Division of Blind Services, and APD.

Update:

VR continues to work closely with the Agency for Persons (APD) with Disabilities to assist VR customers in receiving seamless ongoing support services. VR and APD staff are working together to identify mutual customers and coordinate the needed services.

VR continues to expand its services to include Discovery and Customized Placement services to help individuals with most significant disabilities become employed. Discovery improves the quality of the placements, increases the success of the job placements, and reduces the need for intense follow up supports. Concentrated efforts are in place to continue to increase capacity across the state.

VR and APD consultants work together to provide training for VR counselors, waiver support coordinators, and for APD field staff on best practices in Supported Employment and the roles and responsibilities of all partners. Training included a focus on all of the possible extended service options.

VR may offer youth extended services for up to four years, as necessary.

The Supported Employment administrator provides training to field staff on the multiple options available for extended services. The development of natural and employer supports available on the jobsite has been a specific focus of VR efforts.

(q) Quality, Scope and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Quality

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is committed to providing quality Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR supports the individual in making employment choices consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. The scope of services varies based on the amount, intensity, and support needed by each individual.

VR counselors work in partnership with the individual when developing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This plan guides the services and supports that are needed for that individual. The IPE is evaluated throughout the process and updated as needed.

The quality of Supported Employment outcomes is assessed individually. Each individual receives services that are determined based on the specific needs of that person. A key component of evaluating the service is the individual satisfaction with the services and supports, as well as a successful employment outcome.

VR makes every effort to provide opportunities for individuals to provide their feedback on the services they received from VR. This feedback is useful information in adjusting and improving VR services to better meet their needs. There are formal service surveys, public hearings and satisfaction surveys. The VR counselor has regular communications with the individual and the Supported Employment provider to monitor, provide counseling, and assist the individual, as needed.

VR recognizes that it is important to get feedback from the employer and provider's perspectives to determine the quality of service and make necessary improvements. They are also encouraged to let VR know at any point if support is needed.

Scope

The scope of Supported Employment services varies based on the amount, intensity, and type of support each person may need to obtain and maintain a job. VR provides the intensive initial services needed to help an individual with a most significant disability obtain and maintain a job of his/her choice.

Supported Employment makes possible competitive integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities and for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, and because of the severity of their disability, need ongoing support services in order to maintain their jobs.

Service limits have recently been increased from 18 months to 24 months. Under special circumstances, the customer and VR counselor may jointly agree in writing to extend the time, when doing so will achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE.

Services are individually designed around the needs and desires of the individual and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Initial placement

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Stabilization in the workplace
- Job Coaching
- Assistive Technology
- Specialized Job Training
- Social Skills Training
- Discovery
- Establishing formal and informal worksite-related expectations (e.g., time and attendance, dress, communication)
- Supported Self-Employment
- Customized Job Placement

VR has added Discovery as a service option to its array of Supported Employment services. It offers a more thorough person-centered planning approach for those individuals with the most significant and complex disabilities who may need a more customized approach to employment.

VR has also added a customized job placement option for individuals in Supported Employment who may need a more individualized job development process. Individuals receiving Supported Employment services will have access to this service as needed.

Post-Employment supports and services may be provided when an intensive need arises during the provision of ongoing extended services. This may occur when job duties substantially change, the work environment is altered or the impact of the individual's disability increases.

Extent

VR will continue to expand Supported Employment services by educating community members, providers, and relevant stakeholders on the need and advantages that Supported Employment provides for individuals and employers.

Supported Employment services are available for individuals with most significant needs who meet the criteria for VR services and supports.

VR has increased its focus on youth and expanded its Transition Youth services to begin at age 14. In addition, VR has increased several initiatives designed for youth with most significant disabilities. The following experiences are anticipated to help youth in their desire to have a successful career.

- High School High Tech
- Project Search
- Inclusive Postsecondary Education programs
- Third Party Cooperative Transition Agreements
- Pre-Employment Transition Services

The VR Transition Youth program collaborates with education officials and partners to offer youth with the most significant disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for successful employment. These evidence-based applications of learning, which include internships and other work experiences, often lead to successful employment.

VR also provides the opportunity for youth to receive up to four years of extended services funded through VR, when necessary. This is the only situation where VR is permitted to provide extended services.

VR will continue to actively engage and partner in order to:

- Develop a collaborative agreement with APD specific to Supported Employment and removing or reducing barriers for employment for individuals with significant disabilities.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Implement the Interagency Employment First Agreement between the nine signatory parties. Continue to implement the agreements at the local and state level with appropriate stakeholders.
- Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring an efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, and coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services available for youth and adults.
- Expand available services through youth-related initiatives.
- Seek additional resources for extended services through collaborations with agency partners, including APD, Agency for Healthcare Administration, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Education agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Collaborate with community organizations, employers, families, and support groups to develop natural supports for Supported Employment extended services.
- Distribute information and train counselors about Social Security Work Incentives. Increase awareness of using a Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency or other work incentives as an option for funding extended services. Include training on the new Able Act as a potential way for individuals to fund their own services.

Provide opportunities for counselors, providers, and support coordinators to receive training on innovative employment strategies designed to promote employment success for individuals.

Extended Services

VR's approach for Supported Employment uses the nationally accepted "best practices" models of Supported Employment services and has added new customized strategies as well. The key to the approach is an emphasis on person-centered planning and facilitation of natural supports. Individualized job development is conducted and based on job-matching assessments, informed choice, strengths, interests and skills. Individuals are assisted with employment planning and placement by selected providers. Job skills training is provided at the job site either by job coaches or through natural supports of existing resources.

Transition to Extended Services occurs when an individual has sufficient time to learn the tasks and is comfortable in the work culture, has had the supports addressed and is satisfied with the type of work and work hours. At the time of transition, the counselor, providers, individual and others, as applicable, will have agreed that the individual is stable in their employment and expected to succeed. VR counselors confirm this information with the individual, provider and employer. They will continue to monitor the case until the person reaches a successful employment outcome of a minimum of 90 days of stabilized employment after transitioning to extended services.

VR continues to:

- Emphasize providing services to all racial/ethnic minorities
- Seek additional resources for extended services in collaboration with VR partners
- Collaborate with community organizations, families and support groups to develop natural supports as an option for assisting customers on the job site
- Participate on interagency committees to expand initiatives and increase employment outcomes
- Distribute and provide technical assistance to counselors on the use of Social Security Work Incentives to help with funding extended services

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Extended services are provided and/or funded by sources other than VR. VR works collaboratively with other state agencies and organizations to ensure that extended support services, identified on the individualized plan as needed for employment, are available for as long as the customer needs them.

A Senior Consultant serves as a statewide coordinator who monitors Supported Employment issues that arise in the field and serves as a resource person to field staff. The coordinator also assists leadership when implementing programmatic policies in accordance with federal mandates, developing effective programs, recommending training for Supported Employment staff and other liaison duties as requested.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS & ASSURANCES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The Florida Department of Education is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ¹ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ² ;
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Florida Department of Education ³ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁴ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁵ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁶ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁷ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

¹ Public Law 113-128.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act .

⁵ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

⁶ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The Commissioner of Education has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The Commissioner of Education has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION


Commissioner Pam Stewart

DATE: 12/7/15

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (A) is an independent State commission. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60. (d) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No) (e) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No) (f) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes/<input type="checkbox"/> No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (g) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	<p>assurances:</p> <p>(l) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <p>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>(c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes/<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No)</p> <p>(d) comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.</p> <p>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>(f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs</p>
5.	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</p> <p>(a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the</p>

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.	<p>(a) Financial Administration: The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
7.	<p>(a) Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

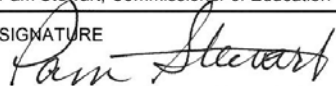
As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;

(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME
Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	Basic-VR: H126A160086
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education	
SIGNATURE	DATE
	12/7/15

X. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS— FLORIDA DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES

(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

The Florida Division of Blind Services (FDBS) partners with the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (FRCB) in serving individuals with visual impairments. The FRCB is an integral part of helping the Division improve services and achieve its goals by reviewing, analyzing, and advising on policy decisions. The FRCB functions to create a positive impact on the fairness, efficiency, and accessibility of services through the evaluation of consumer feedback and the Division's performance.

The FRCB voted on officers and nominated members for committees at the first quarterly meeting held on February 5, 2019. On the second day of this meeting, the Council welcomed six newly appointed members and two reappointed members. As of November 2019, the Council has eleven active voting members and eight vacancies. Robert L. Doyle, Director of the Division of Blind Services, serves as an ex-officio member of the Council. Vacant seats include representatives from advocacy groups, business/industry, State Educational Agency, State Workforce Investment Board and the Independent Living Council. The Council continues to encourage appointees to apply and monitors action by the Governor's office to encourage timely appointments and reappointments. Recruitment of new applicants focuses on individuals who are passionate, dedicated, and interested in improving the lives of Floridians with visual impairments.

The Council held four business meetings during 2019: February 5-6 (Daytona Beach), May 9-10 (Tallahassee), July 25 (Ocala), and October 25 (Jacksonville). The FRCB is required to hold a public forum at least twice a year; three were hosted in 2019. The public forums give consumers around the state an opportunity to provide input that encourages optimal services. The Council continues to focus on increasing awareness during public forums through collaboration with FDBS and stakeholders in each host district.

The FRCB reviews policies and advises on the implementation of best practices. During 2019, the Council reviewed and provided input on Policy 2.09 (Post-Secondary Education), Policy 2.35 (Competitive Integrated Employment), and Policy 2.05 (Informal/Formal Review Process and Mediation). The Council oversees the development and implementation of the Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The FRCB contracts with Dr. Minna Jia, Director of the Florida State University Survey Foundry (FSUSF) to conduct the CSS. Dr. Jia provided the Council with quarterly reports and a written annual report for 2018-2019. Results from the annual report were presented at the quarterly meeting in October 2019. The Council also played an essential role in the completion of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) facilitated by San Diego State University.

The FDBS and FRCB conducted a call on November 6, 2019, to discuss their input for this plan. The Council provided feedback and completed a draft for this section. The dialogue continued at the quarterly meeting on February 6, 2020, with feedback for the rest of the plan. The FDBS values the Council's time and their review and evaluation of the Division's services/projects. Their feedback and suggestions are incorporated in each reviewed policy, the CSNA, evaluation tool, and the Unified State Plan.

(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

The FDBS is not requesting a Waiver of Statewideness for this plan.

(c) Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce System

The FDBS has contracts with 20 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and values the services they provide to our clients. The Division's CRPs directly provide and facilitate vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with blindness and low vision to enable clients to maximize their opportunities for employment and career advancement. The CRPs collectively have 14 contracts for pre-employment transition and transition services, 16 contracts for vocational rehabilitation, and 1 contract for supported employment. The CRPs provide education; independent life skills; job training; and job development, retention, and placement services to clients who participate in vocational rehabilitation programs. The list of community rehabilitation programs includes:

Center for the Visually Impaired	Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind
Conklin Centers for the Blind	Lighthouse of Broward
Elder Care of Alachua County	Lighthouse of Collier, Inc.
Florida Center for the Blind	Lighthouse of Manasota
Florida Outreach Center for the Blind	Lighthouse of Pinellas
Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind	Lighthouse of the Big Bend
Florida State College at Jacksonville	Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Independence for the Blind of West Florida	New Vision for Independence
Lighthouse Central Florida	Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind
Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches	Lighthouse of Southwest Florida, Inc.

To increase accountability, ensure quality services, and drive outcomes, the Division plans to incorporate common performance measures (or a variant thereof) prescribed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to determine the effectiveness of CRP performance. The CRPs will be responsible for tracking and reporting the number of consumers who obtain employment as a result of receiving their services. Other measures consist of those still employed in the second and fourth quarters after exit and credential attainment.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

Executive Order 19-31 outlines actions designed to make Florida number one in the Nation in workforce education by 2030, which includes ensuring students are prepared for the jobs of the future. The Division's mission is aligned with the Governor's goal for Florida's students and workforce. The activities that follow are aimed at meeting the Governor's goal and the Division's mission.

The FDBS works has been working jointly with the Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE) to increase apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship participation for individuals who are blind or visually impaired under the Perkins grant. Under WIOA, FDBS staff began to strengthen the focus on career pathways for clients. This includes assisting clients with earning credentials and certifications in fields consistent with labor market demands. Once the Perkins V plan is approved, the FDBS will work with the DCAE to ensure both plans are aligned in areas where collaboration and partnership will lead to sustainable outcomes for those who are blind and visually impaired.

The Last Mile College Completion Program is designed for students who left college within 12 or fewer credit hours of obtaining a degree. This program creates greater collaboration between the Division and the Florida College System. Early review of the data indicates there are FDBS consumers who may benefit from this program. The Division plans to track the number of consumers eligible and of that number, how many are interested in going back to college. Once identified, the FDBS staff will reach out to those consumers and assist them with their college goals.

FDBS pays post-secondary tuition rates for qualifying consumers. The FDBS counselors work with staff from each college when determining how much of the total cost for tuition the FDBS will sponsor. This ensures there is no duplication of funding. The FDBS assists students in navigating the college system, including receiving support through the Office of Student Disability Services.

High school students who participate in work-based learning experiences and career/technical education can earn credits toward graduation requirements. The Division will continue to collaborate with Career and Technical Education and students with visual impairments to encourage dual enrollment and increase student involvement in this program.

The FDBS has a formal interagency agreement with other divisions within the Florida Department of Education that provide transition services to high school students progressing to postsecondary education/training, support services, and/or competitive integrated employment. These agencies agree to meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives; collaborate on training and special projects; cooperate in planning and budgeting; and support areas of work that are mutually beneficial. The parties included in the formal agreement are the Divisions of Blind Services, Public Schools (DPS), and Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). This agreement functions as a transition services model for improved collaboration, communication, coordination, and cooperation among the parties included.

To implement the Florida statutes and federal laws/regulations, the FDBS and the Division of K-12 Education agree to coordinate activities in serving students who are blind and visually impaired through the following:

1. The development of the Florida State Plan under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
2. The preparation and implementation of guidelines, policies, rules, and regulations which affect the interests of students with visual impairments through joint planning committees and publications, as appropriate;
3. The development of new programs or the initiation of new services for students with visual impairments;
4. Interchange of information on the monitoring and evaluation of special programs for students with visual impairments;
5. Promotion and provision of training for teachers and FDBS staff who work with students who are blind and visually impaired; and
6. The dissemination of information and other activities to increase public awareness of visual disabilities and services available to students with visual impairments.

Provisions for Development and Approval of Individualized Plans for Employment for Students with Disabilities

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for vocational rehabilitation consumers is completed or updated annually as needed, prior to graduation or leaving school for seamless transition to a student's desired postsecondary outcome. The counselor determines eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, develops an approved IPE, and sponsors the delivery of necessary transition services to assist the student with planning, preparing for, and achieving competitive integrated employment. The development of the IPE must occur within 90 days.

The average caseloads for VR and Pre-ETS/Transition is 60 and 20 respectively. The average time between application submission and eligibility determination for VR is approximately 31 days. The average time between eligibility determination and IPE development is approximately 14 days.

Information on Formal Interagency Agreements with Respect To:

Technical Assistance and Consultation

The FDBS and DVR will assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including Pre-ETS. Technical assistance may be provided through various means, such as conference calls, video conferences, and in-person training opportunities. Each agency shall share in the responsibilities of providing training and technical assistance as requested to students, family members, advocates, educators, counselors, service providers, other state agency staff, and the general public regarding policies and procedures related to transition services, including Pre-ETS. The partners work together to build capacity within local education agencies (LEAs) and vendors to provide quality transition services throughout Florida by providing training, technical assistance, on-site reviews, and consultation. When possible, the partners will conduct joint staff trainings or the cross-training of staff to ensure operational activities continue to meet the needs of all partners involved.

Transition Planning by FDBS and Educational Agency Representatives for Development and Completion of the Individual Educational Plan

The FDBS or DVR will attend meetings for the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when invited, with appropriate consent and as resources allow. In collaboration with LEAs, the FDBS will provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS to all students with disabilities who may need these services. The FDBS will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) - in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 - as early as possible during the transition planning process; however, no later than exit from the school setting.

The FDBS enhanced the AWARE Case Management System to collect and track transition data required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The enhancements will enable FDBS to conduct differential analysis and tracking to better evaluate agency performance and identify how to best improve service delivery and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Financial Responsibilities of Each Agency

The parties of the interagency agreement commit to aligning or designing programs that are complementary, which will assist with the provision of Pre-ETS and other transition services to students with disabilities - including youth with the most significant disabilities - to assist them in achieving competitive integrated employment. Each partner has a financial responsibility for delivering services identified under the respective student plans (e.g., the IPE, IEP, 504). The FDBS sets aside 15% of the yearly federal allotment for client services to fund Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. The FDBS, FDVR, and DPS will use the following criteria for determining financial and programmatic responsibilities:

- **Purpose of the service** - Discuss at the State level whether the purpose of the service is related to an employment outcome or education attainment, or if it is considered a special education or related service.
- **Customary services** - Is the service one that the school customarily provides under IDEA part B?
- **Eligibility for services** - Is the student with a disability eligible for transition services under IDEA?

Procedures for Outreach to Students with Disabilities (SWDs) Who Need Transition Services

The FDBS employs a Program Consultant as the central point of contact for the School to Work Transition Program. The consultant serves as the liaison for the 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Transition specialists serve as representatives who work with public high schools statewide and charter schools requesting assistance. Transition specialists provide and coordinate outreach and

vocational rehabilitation services to students, school officials, parents, and others involved in transition services.

In addition, the FDBS provides outreach to students with disabilities under the following activities:

1. Coordinating with LEAs, state and community partners, CareerSource, and postsecondary institutions to disseminate information on available services and resources for students with disabilities.
2. Presenting information about services and programs at education conferences and other transition-focused training sessions.
3. Providing printed materials to schools to share with students, family members, and other interested parties.
4. Local staff participating on Interagency Councils.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

The FDBS contracts with private non-profit organizations for specialized services for individuals who are blind. The primary services include: Assistive Technology, Orientation and Mobility (O&M), Braille Instruction, Vocational Rehabilitation, Pre-Employment and Transition Services, Supported Employment, and Rehabilitation Engineering. The FDBS also has collaborative, non-contractual arrangements with other non-profit organizations that provide referrals, vocational rehabilitation services, and comparable benefits. All vendors/providers must go through a registration and approval process that includes a review of the vendor's qualifications to promote quality services and public safety.

The CRPs are required to hire certified staff to work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. CRPs providing O&M direct client services must have, at minimum, one full-time qualified or currently Certified O&M Instructor satisfied by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP), National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC) or endorsed by a qualified State Education Board. CRPs providing non-O&M, vision-related direct client services must have a minimum of one full-time staff member that meets one of the following requirements:

- Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS);
- Certified Visual Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT);
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and/or
- Low Vision Therapist (LVT).

(f) Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

The FDBS has a contractual agreement with the Conklin Center for the Blind to identify and provide services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

On October 8, 2013, Governor Rick Scott signed Executive Order 13-284 mandating the creation of an interagency cooperative agreement between specific state agencies and other service organizations to ensure the continuation of a long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. CS/HB 7003: Individuals with Disabilities become effective on July 1, 2016. The legislation was codified in Florida Statute as the Employment First Act in section 413.80, Florida Statutes. As a result of this legislation, the FDBS entered into an interagency cooperative agreement with other state agencies and organizations to implement Employment First - a national effort to ensure individuals with disabilities are offered employment on a preferred basis. Employment First is consistent with the FDBS belief that individuals with disabilities, even the most significant disabilities, can achieve meaningful employment when provided with appropriate supports. The following lists the names of all parties of this agreement.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Agencies for Persons with Disabilities	CareerSource Florida
Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services	Department of Children and Families
Division of Blind Services	Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
Department of Economic Opportunity	The Arc of Florida

(g) Coordination with Employers

Under the interagency cooperative agreement referenced above, the FDBS' coordination with employers is part of a range of activities that include: Developing a long-term communications plan to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by 1) motivating employers to hire, 2) promoting a consistent message of awareness among employers about the value individuals with disabilities bring to the workforce, and 3) informing employers about the resources that are available to assist with their hiring needs.

As part of collaborative effort with the statewide workforce systems, the Division Director serves on the statewide workforce board and district administrators collaborate with their local boards during visits to workforce centers and other venues. The following strategies are designed to increase partnerships with the statewide workforce investment system and employers in the state of Florida.

- Work with businesses/employers to encourage sponsorship of registered apprenticeship programs
- Increase utilization of online job systems/portals to expose employers to consumers who are ready for employment
- Develop and strengthen employer relationships by providing employer training, support, education, and resources
- Develop mechanisms to maximize job placement effectiveness among FDBS Employment Placement Specialists and contracted service providers
- Create training methods to better integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce
- Collaborate efforts between multiple agencies and organizations to achieve the intent of the Employment First Act
- Promote service innovation
- Identify baseline employment outcome data for individuals with disabilities and set targets for improvement

The Division plans to utilize and implement these strategies to foster equal access for clients, increase the number of employers hiring clients, generate program awareness, and strengthened infrastructure.

(h) Interagency Cooperation

The FDBS collaborates with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Children and Families, and other state agencies to development opportunities for competitive integrated employment. Each agency is responsible for completing activities under the cooperative agreement. Activities are coordinated at three levels: Partner (Coalition) Level – advise and make recommendations that inform the work of the state level; State Level – identify barriers that hinder individuals with disabilities from obtaining employment and determine potential solutions; and Local Level – seek training solutions and best practices to close program gaps and improvements. The partners will meet at least twice a year with representatives from each partner agency.

The FDBS works in conjunction with the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind to review, analyze, and advise the Division on its performance of responsibilities under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Blind Services Foundation of Florida is also a key partner with the FDBS. The Foundation's purpose is to serve as a Direct Support Organization to the FDBS and individuals with visual impairments living in Florida. The Foundation receives proceeds from the Biker's Care license tags. Funds of the Foundation are used to support programs of the FDBS, to conduct activities, and to initiate developmental projects for the benefit of Floridians who are blind or visually impaired.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

The Division recognizes the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credentials as a standard for counselors. Counselors who wish to obtain certification or acquire CEUs (for standing CRC holders) receive the Division's support to the highest extent. The FDBS encourages credential attainment by providing a salary increase to those who have or achieve certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

Personnel must meet the academic requirements described in the "Personnel Standards" section of this document. Personnel information related to hiring and staff records are maintained in the state of Florida's human resource system, People First. Data is exported from People First indicating staff vacancies and those who are enrolled in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP). Each employee in the DROP system must terminate on a specific date which enables the division to predict, to the extent possible, when vacancies will occur. Supervisors are notified of employees who are in the DROP system 12 months prior to their term/retirement date.

The following table identifies the number of positions within the Division during SFY 2018-2019. Positions, such as district administrators, assistant district administrators, VR counselors, employment placement specialists, and program administrators contribute to the coordination of vocational rehabilitation services and consists of those carrying a case load. Additionally, a number of employees at the Rehabilitation Center conduct assessments and provide orientation and mobility training, counseling/guidance, and job placement under the VR umbrella. Currently, these totals/positions are sufficient to meet the needs for FDBS to provide vocational rehabilitation services for the blind. Considering factors such as retirement of staff who are in the DROP system, staff resignations (turnovers), and the number of clients who will require vocational rehabilitation services, the FDBS projects little to no changes to the number of staff needed to administer program services in 5 years.

Figure 10.01
Personnel Employed by FDBS

Bureau	Positions
Administrative Office	17
Fiscal	8
Information Technology	6
Operations and Compliance	12
Business Enterprise	16
Braille and Talking Book Library	26
Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired	46
Client Services	159
Total	290

In SFY 2018-2019 the FDBS served 4,854 individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In SFY 2017-2018, the FDBS served 4,903 individuals (49 more individuals). The average ratio of clients per

counselor was 99 to 1 in the VR Program. A comparison of the previous year indicates a statistically insignificant change in the ratio of clients served per counselor (See Figure 10.02). Data to determine the counselor to client ratio was obtained from the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) case management system.

Figure 10.02
Counselor to Client Ratio

State Fiscal Year	Number served	Ratio (person
2018	4,854	89
2017	4,903	79
2016	5,038	64
2015	5,202	75
2014	5,225	74

Figure 10.03
Personnel Serving Vocational Rehabilitation Clients:
Vacancy Information

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies Over 5 years
District Administrator	10	2	3
Assistant District Administrators	13	1	2
Vocational Rehabilitation	53	5	5

Each of the following seven state universities offer a graduate counseling degree that fulfills the educational requirements for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification with a minimum of other required classes.

- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida International University
- Florida State University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Florida
- University of North Florida
- University of South Florida

Program Data for Institutions of Higher Education

The following information is derived from Florida institutions of higher education that prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals. The information is categorized by institution and type of program.

Institution: Florida International University

Type of Program: Master of Science in Counselor Education – Rehabilitation Counseling Track (MS)

Number and Type of Students Enrolled: The Division was unable to obtain information.

Number of Graduates Eligible for CRC Certification: The Division was unable to obtain information.

Number of Graduates:

- 2012-2017 = 26 MS

Institution: University of South Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (MA)

Number and Type of Students Enrolled: The Division was unable to obtain information.

Number of Graduates Eligible for CRC Certification: The Division was unable to obtain information.

Number of Graduates:

- 2014 = 41 MA
- 2015 = 50 MA
- 2016 = 22 MA
- 2017-2018 (The Division was unable to obtain information on graduates for these years.)

None of the graduates in the referenced educational programs were sponsored by Rehabilitation Services Administration. The division acknowledges that there are many graduate level counseling related majors at public state universities that qualify graduates for certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

In 2019, the Division pushed for senior rehabilitation specialists to become Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) to increase knowledge of Social Security benefits and the effects employment has on such benefits. There is a competitive selection process for participation in these trainings and applicants must successfully complete an introductory course. Out of the 15 counselors who applied for the training, 5 were selected.

All Florida state employees can take up to six credit hours per semester using the Florida Tuition Waiver Program. The FDBS expects employees who do not meet CSPD requirements to take advantage of the state's tuition waiver program or participate in federal grant/stipend programs. When necessary, the FDBS may pay for tuition, e.g., when a state university is not within driving distance, when a staff member is unable to use tuition waiver for any required courses, etc.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

The FDBS uses People First for recruiting qualified personnel. Selected candidates must be hired using minimum qualifications with the expectation that standards will be met within a specified period. The Division focuses on recruiting persons with disabilities and referring employment opportunities to disability organizations. However, remains an equal opportunity employer and hires persons with and without disabilities at all levels of employment.

Salary is believed to be the main factor impacting recruitment and retention. To address this barrier, the Division Director championed higher wages for the Human Services Program Consultant (i.e., VR Counselors) and Rehabilitation Specialists (i.e., Employment Placement Specialists) based on education and tenure. It is Division leadership's intent to address the salaries of other positions in the future. When funding permits, the FDBS awards a \$2,000 pay additive to the base salary of Human Services Program Consultant who become a CRC during employment. If a Human Services Program Consultant is a CRC at the time of hire, the beginning salary is set at \$2,000 above the base salary. The same applies for Assistant District Administrators and District Administrators having or attaining a credential as a CRC.

The Division works with state universities that provide master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Activities include attending board meetings and presenting to college classes upon request to share

pertinent information related to the Division and recruitment efforts. Clients with Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling are encouraged to apply for vacant positions.

Personnel Standards

Due to difficulty in hiring individuals who meet current CRC certification standards, the Division routinely hires those who meet the academic standards. The following table illustrates the required qualifications for vocational rehabilitation staff by position title.

Figure 10.04
FDBS Personnel Standards by Position
State Fiscal Year 2018-2019

Position Title	Minimum Qualifications
Word Processor	One year operating word processing equipment; or 2 years of secretarial or clerical work; or completion of 720 classroom hours of vocational/technical training in word processing; or possession of a Certified Professional Secretary Certificate; or college education; or vocational/technical training in secretarial science or office/business studies; or high school diploma/GED + 1 year of secretarial or clerical experience
Senior Word Processor	Two years operating word processing equipment; or 3 years of secretarial or clerical work; or possession of a Certified Professional Secretary Certificate; or completion of 720 classroom hours of vocational/technical training in word processing + 1 year operating word processing equipment; or college education + 1-2 years secretarial or clerical experience; or college education + 1 year operating word processing equipment; or vocational/technical training in secretarial science or office/business studies at 720 hours rate + 1-2 years secretarial or clerical experience; or vocational/technical training in secretarial science or office/business studies at 720 hours rate + 1 year operating word processing equipment; or high school diploma/GED + 2 years secretarial or clerical experience
Staff Assistant	Three years secretarial or clerical experience; or college education + 0-2 years secretarial or clerical experience; or vocational/technical training in secretarial science or office/business studies + 0-2 years secretarial or clerical experience; or high school diploma/GED + 2 years secretarial or clerical experience
Rehabilitation Technician	Bachelor's degree or high school diploma/GED + 4 years of professional or nonprofessional experience in health, social, economic or rehabilitation programs
Rehabilitation Specialist (Employment Placement Specialist)	Master's degree + 2 years of professional experience in health, social, economic; or rehabilitation programs or Bachelor's degree + 3 years of professional experience in health, social, economic or rehabilitation programs; or 7 years of professional or nonprofessional experience in health, social, economic or rehabilitation programs

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Human Services Program Consultant (VR Counselor)	Master's degree + 3 years of professional experience in social, economic, health or rehabilitation programs; or Bachelor's degree + 4 years of professional experience in social, economic, health or rehabilitation programs; or 8 years of professional or nonprofessional experience in social, economic, health or rehabilitation programs
Assistant District Administrator and District Administrator	Requirements of the VR counselors + one or more years of supervisory experience

The Division will provide training for ongoing CEUs, using the vocational rehabilitation grant funding. The reimbursement standards described below are addressed in Division Policy 12.12, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development as required by federal regulations. All personnel are eligible for reimbursement of the following expenses.

- **Tuition** - All individuals seeking further education will be required to use the Department of Education Tuition Waiver, if available. Note that prior approval of payment must be obtained from the Bureau Chief in instances where a course must be repeated.
- **Textbooks and course Materials** - These expenses include textbooks and other materials required for course enrollment. (Paper, notebooks, computer disks, etc., are not items for which the Division will pay).
- **Additional Training** - Staff may be provided additional training in job related areas as needed and recommended by leadership. This type of required training will be sponsored by the Division and staff may participate in agreed upon training during work hours.

Graduate Record Examination Fees and University application fees will not be sponsored by the Division. Class assignments incorporated into required work duties (e.g., practicum activities, internships) may be completed during working hours. Completion of other homework assignments (e.g., reading, writing, and research) is not permitted during regular work hours.

The Division tracks the current educational status of personnel as well as their progress in complying with the CSPD requirements. VR counselors are encouraged to obtain certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. Currently, the Division has 15 personnel with a CRC designation and 2 certified orientation and mobility instructors as of SFY 2018-2019. The following table indicates the CRC eligibility status of staff by position.

Figure 10.05
FDBS Personnel Eligible for CRC
SFY 2018-2019

Position Description	Vacancies	Not Eligible	Eligible	Total
District Administrators	2	3	5	10
Assistant District Administrators	1	6	6	13
Senior Rehabilitation Specialists	5	43	5	53
Total	8	52	16	76

Staff Development

The Division monitors personnel development needs on an annual basis. Training is funded through the VR basic support grant. The Division based its core training programs on the areas emphasized in the federal regulations: rehabilitation technology, career guidance and counseling, job development, placement, and assessment. Additional training will be provided to ensure that staff have a 21st century

understanding of the evolving labor force. The Division collaborates with CareerSource Centers and shares information about its services and the referral process with disability navigators at the CareerSource Centers. The Division will seek opportunities to coordinate training with the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) by referring clients to FAAST for assistive technology. The FAAST demonstrates, trains, and temporarily loans equipment for clients to test.

The assessment of training needs is an ongoing process consisting of ensuring compliance of federal and state mandates and examining individual personnel training requirements related to current job performance, future job requirements, and promotional or career advancement needs. Training is an essential component to the VR program, but it is often complicated by turnover. The Division plans to incorporate a new Learning Management System (LMS) into its training process. The LMS is designed specifically for vocational rehabilitation programs and includes an array of courses to enhance understanding of the rehabilitation process. Several staff serving in positions with varying roles and responsibilities were chosen to complete online courses offered via the Yes LMS. Based on their feedback, the Division determined this system best fits its needs as it relates to the VR program. Analysis of training needs compiled from performance reviews, the FDBS Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, training evaluations, and surveys indicated continual training is necessary in the following areas:

- Expanding staff knowledge of serving individuals with dual disabilities (where individuals have a primary disability of blindness and a dual disability unrelated to vision)
- Overcoming employment barriers for visually impaired consumers with a criminal history
- Providing rehabilitation counseling for individuals with visual impairment and substance abuse issues and/or psychiatric disorders
- Information on benefits counseling and the Ticket to Work Program

VR counselors also benefit from training in supported employment, identifying appropriate candidates, working through the rehabilitation process with these individuals, and recording accurate information for federal reports. Vocational rehabilitation staff will receive annual training on various aspects of the VR program, including career counseling and assessment. The annual training in October 2019 focused on topics specific to vocational evaluations, case management/documentation, apprenticeship programs, assistive technology, conflict resolution, reading eye medical reports, and virtual career fairs. In addition, the EPS participated in a separate session that focused on job development and placement, on the job training, work experiences, and workers' compensation.

Given that job placement and development are pivotal elements to client success, the Division requires all rehabilitation specialists, senior rehabilitation specialists, and assistant district administrators to participate in three levels of training - assessment, job development, and placement as part of the Employment Outcomes Professional II Training Manual developed by DTG-EMP, Inc.

Training during the assessment level entails eligibility determination, understanding low vision reports and eye diseases terminology, and vocational assessment. The assessment level also includes training on developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). For the job development level, training is concentrated on the process of developing jobs, which includes generation of leads, selection for time management purposes, holding face-to-face meetings with employers to identify needs and closing the deal (actual placement). This level of training incorporates a tool for self-assessment as job developers. The job placement level focuses on training employees to identify the essential elements needed to obtain/maintain a job including motivation, abilities, access to employers, and credibility. In this level, employees learn intervention tools and marketing strategies to manage their caseloads as job developers.

The Division will utilize the rehabilitation technology training program conducted by the FDBS Rehabilitation Center for all professional and paraprofessional personnel. This training includes a week-long introduction to rehabilitation technology for blind and visually impaired individuals and incorporates the

use of rehabilitation technology in job development activities. Training is provided annually to update existing personnel on new technology issues. The Division is also exploring the use of the Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for People with Visual Impairments (CATIS) in lieu of the FDBS rehabilitation technology training for those with CATIS credentials.

Dissemination of Knowledge from Research and other Resources

Knowledge is disseminated via trainings, conference calls, emails, memos, policies/procedures, and technical assistance. Employees have internet access and are provided with relevant and informative websites. Each district office is required to provide a quarterly in-service training for employees on topics such as blindness rehabilitation, informed choice, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Social Security work incentives. When funding is available, employees are encouraged to attend an array of conferences in the field of rehabilitation or blindness.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

The Division employs individuals who communicate in the native languages of applicants and eligible individuals. District offices in areas highly-populated with non-English speaking individuals strive to hire personnel who speak the native languages of individuals in the community. The Division will purchase language interpreter services (including sign language) when necessary to communicate with an applicant or eligible individual. Documents such as an application for services, Client Rights, Guidelines for Developing an Individualized Plan for Employment, and informational brochures are available in appropriate formats (e.g., large print, Braille, Spanish).

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

The Division has a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Public Schools to coordinate activities for students who are blind and visually impaired. This will be accomplished through the preparation and implementation of guidelines, policies, rules, and regulations that affect the interests of students with visual impairments through joint planning committees and publications, as appropriate. The FDBS will promote and provide training for teachers and personnel who work with students who are blind and visually impaired. Both Divisions share information and coordinate activities to increase public awareness of visual disabilities and services available to students with visual impairments.

(j) Statewide Assessment

The Division commissioned a three-year comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) to determine vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with visual disabilities. The purpose of the CSNA is to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and visual impairments residing in Florida. Dr. Chaz Compton, Project Director of San Diego State University Interwork Institute (SDSU) led the completion of the CSNA in 2019. The CSNA addressed requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which states that each state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) must conduct a comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of its residents and in particular, needs for supported employment services, needs of minorities and other unserved/underserved populations, needs of persons served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs. Interviews were conducted with FDBS staff, community partners, consumers, and businesses. A total of 49 people were interviewed individually and 288 as part of a focus group. The interviews took place July through September 2018 in each district office. The assessment is driven by the needs in several categories.

- Section I - Overall agency performance

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Section II - Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment
- Section III - Needs of individuals with blindness or visual impairments from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program
- Section IV - Needs of youth and students with blindness or visual impairments in transition
- Section V - Needs of individuals with blindness or visual impairments served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System
- Section VI - Need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Florida
- Section VII - Needs of businesses

The CSNA utilizes quantitative data for FFY 2015 through 2017 and qualitative data from FFY 2015 through September 2018. The following details the specific methods used for gathering the data for this assessment. The project team at SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources to identify and describe demographic data within Florida, including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by FDBS. Data relevant to the population of Florida, the population of persons with blindness or visual impairments in Florida, ethnicity of individuals, the number of Veterans, income level, educational levels, and other relevant population characteristics were used in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2016 American Community Survey, 1- and 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2017
- 2018 Social Security Administration SSI/SSDI Data
- The Florida Department of Education
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Cornell University's disabilitystatistics.org;
- DBS case service data compiled at the request of the project team
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 data for DBS and data submitted and entered into RSA's Management Information System (MIS)

Additional sources used were key informant and focus group interviews, and surveys of individuals with visual impairments, FDBS staff, partners, and businesses. The CSNA identified the most relevant and pressing needs of the Division, consumers, and community partners. Strategies developed to address these needs are covered in Section O of this plan.

Overall Agency Performance

- Staff turnover presents a challenge that has an effect on service delivery speed and the continuity of partner relationships. Staff turnover is a common challenge faced by VR agencies across the country.
- The Division needs to more effectively market services to the community and increase public awareness of the organization.
- Staff training is an essential need.

The Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their Need for Supported Employment

- Transportation was cited most frequently as a significant need of consumers; this is especially true in rural areas where options for public transportation are extremely limited. The lack of available public transportation for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with blindness and visual impairments, is often cited as a significant barrier to employment.

- Assistive technology, independent living skills, and self-advocacy skills training were cited as significant needs of individuals with blindness and visual impairments by those interviewed and surveyed for the CSNA.
- The fear of the loss of SSA benefits affects the return-to-work behavior of individuals with blindness and visual impairments in Florida; this is also a common concern of SSA beneficiaries across the nation.
- Supported employment services are purchased from one primary provider - with the ability to contract with other providers as needed.

The Needs of Individuals with Blindness or Visual Impairments from Different Ethnic Groups, including Needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program

- The lack of transportation in rural areas was the most frequently cited reason for those areas being potentially underserved.
- The FDBS should examine its outreach and service to Hispanic and Asian individuals to ensure that they are aware of services.

The Needs of Youth and Students with Blindness or Visual Impairments in Transition

- All of the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant rehabilitation needs of students with blindness and visual impairments, with work-based learning experiences being the most significant and important need.
- Youth with blindness and visual impairments need to receive AT early and receive adequate training in its use to maximize the likelihood of their success in postsecondary education.
- Benefits counseling, self-advocacy, and peer mentoring are needs of youth with blindness and visual impairments.
- Soft skills training was cited repeatedly as a need for youth in transition.

The Needs of individuals with Blindness or Visual Impairments Served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System

- The CareerSource Centers are not effectively meeting the service needs of individuals with blindness and visual impairments throughout the State.
- The relationship between the FDBS and the CareerSource Centers remains primarily one of referral.
- There is a need to effectively track and report co-enrollment of FDBS and CareerSource consumers.

The Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs

- Having one primary CRP that provides a full array of VR services in some districts limits choice and affords few options if a change is needed/desired.
- There is an overall need for more providers in the rural areas.
- There is a need for more providers that have experience working with individuals that have a secondary disability of mental illness.

The Needs of Businesses

- Retaining Employment Placement Specialists is a challenge for the Division.

- Employer bias and misconceptions about hiring individuals with blindness and visual impairments is a key barrier to consumers who wish to obtain employment.
- Employers need education about the ability of individuals with blindness and visual impairments to dispel stereotypes and increase belief in the ability of consumers to work and function independently.

(k) Annual Estimates

The FDBS estimates the number of individuals eligible for VR services in the state is approximately 5,500. Of this number, FDBS estimates that approximately 5,000 will receive services under the Title VI, Part B program. Estimates were based on a review of historical information such as the number of individuals served over the past 5-year average, average caseload size, number of applications, number of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) written, and number of consumers who continue to require services from one year to the next.

For SFY 2018-2019, the Division spent \$35,540,171 - excluding expenditures for the Supported Employment - for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Given the specialized nature of services and the need for specific equipment for individuals who are blind, the cost per person for was \$9,215.26, which was \$409.74 less than the previous year. This cost is based on the total amount of vocational rehabilitation dollars spent divided by the number of individuals served.

For SFY 2018-2019, the Division spent \$1,569,638 for the provision of Supported Employment services. The cost for individuals served under SE was \$10,464.25 per person. This is based on the total amount of supported employment dollars spent divided by the number of persons served under Supported Employment. The FDBS will continue to use basic 110 funds to provide SE services. Greater detail regarding SE is outlined in Section N.

(l) State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities are based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), strategic plan, and requirements related to the performance standards and indicators. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) The Division developed the goals described below to ensure blind and visually-impaired Floridians have the tools, support, and opportunities to achieve success. These strategies assist the Division in providing equal access for clients, increasing the number of employers hiring clients, generating program awareness, and strengthening infrastructure. All goals and strategies were derived from stakeholder input, the DOE strategic plan, customer satisfaction surveys, and results of the CSNA. The Division discussed these goals and strategies with the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and incorporated feedback received by the Council.

The four goals supporting the Division's vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs are aligned with DOE's strategic plan goals, but have specific strategies for these programs. These goals are 1) Highest Student Achievement, 2) Seamless Articulation and Maximum Access, 3) Skilled Workforce and Economic Development, and 4) Quality Efficient Services.

(m) Order of Selection

The FDBS is not under an Order of Selection currently.

(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Pursuant to Florida Statute 413, FDBS is mandated to provide services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired of all ages. The FDBS routinely partners with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs)

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

to provide services that enhance the lives of people with vision loss. The extents of services provided through the CRPs are based, in part, on the types of services available through a specific CRP, the needs of the specific community, and the resources available within the FDBS.

Historically, the FDBS contracted with one community rehabilitation program, the Conklin Center for the Blind, to provide residential Supported Employment Services using basic 110 funds. The Division uses a tracking system to ensure funds are spent as it relates to Supported Employment (SE) and Pre-employment Transition Services (PETS). The table below depicts the expenditure allocations as follows: Services to all eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities is allocated to half (50%) of the Pre-ETS expenditures (84018). Services to youth with the most significant disabilities between the ages of 14 to 24 (not older than 24) is allocated to half (50%) of the Pre-ETS expenditures (84218). A state match of 10% is required for youth with the most significant disabilities (89218). Since the Division no longer receives direct funding for Supported Employment, basic 110 funds will continue to be utilized for these types of services.

Figure 10.06
Support Employment Spending Patterns SFY 2018

Community Rehab Provider	Supported Employment Grant (Title VI) (84018)	Basic Support (82018)	State Funds (Match) (89218)	Total
Conklin Center for the Blind	\$0	\$1,028,370	\$529,477	\$1,557,847
Authorizations (842xx)	\$0	\$9,197	\$0	\$9,197
Authorizations (892xx)	\$0	\$0	\$2,594	\$2,594
Total	\$0	\$1,037,567	\$523,071	\$1,569,638

In the Supported Employment Programs, the FDBS provided services to 150 individuals during the SFY 2018-2019. Of the 150 individuals served, 68 were served by the Conklin Center - with 13 coded as an SE outcome and 20 as an SE placement. The current contract with the Conklin Center expires in October 2020; the Division is exploring the best mechanism to procure and deliver services to consumers historically served by the Conklin Center.

Figure 10.07
Individuals Served by Supported Employment Programs

Community Rehab Provider	Clients Served	Supported Employment Placements	Supported Employment Outcomes
Florida Lions Conklin Center for the Blind	68	20	13
SE Clients Served via Authorization (Case Services)	137	34	26
SFY-2018-2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment	150 (unique clients)	36 (unique clients)	28 (unique clients)

(o) State's Strategies

The FDBS utilizes the strategies listed below to foster success for Floridians who are blind or visually impaired and assist the Division with its vision to create a barrier free environment for individuals with visual disabilities.

Goal 1.0 Highest Client Achievement

Objective: Coordinate and secure high-quality training, education, work experiences, and partnerships that create opportunities for blind and visually impaired Floridians to obtain and maintain independence, post-secondary education credentials, and successful employment outcomes.

Strategy 1.1: Secure opportunities for students/youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills.

Strategy 1.2: Ensure clients participating in training and education programs are benefiting.

Strategy 1.3: Increase utilization of online job systems/portals to expose employers to job ready FDBS consumers.

Strategy 1.4: Increase consumer participation in industry certifications, apprenticeships, and post-secondary outcomes/impacts.

Strategy 1.5: Develop and implement an Employment Skills Training Program at the Residential Rehabilitation Center.

Goal 2.0 Seamless Articulation and Maximum Access

Objective: Create a comprehensive service delivery system that fosters accessibility and provides positive experiences for blind and visually impaired Floridians enabling them to matriculate from school/training to work. Improve outreach methods to reach more consumers, advocates, providers, employers and other stakeholders.

Strategy 2.1: Increase the provision of accessibility tools, awareness, and regular follow-up with consumers to ensure equality in educational experiences and vocational opportunities.

Strategy 2.2: Create and implement a comprehensive communications and outreach plan.

Strategy 2.3: Increase the number of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities receiving services.

Strategy 2.4: Increase outreach services to under-served and unserved populations.

Goal 3.0 Skilled Workforce and Economic Development

Objective: Assist blind and visually impaired Floridians with obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive integrated employment.

Strategy 3.1: Develop and strengthen employer relationships by providing employer training, support, education, and resources.

Strategy 3.2: Increase successful employment outcomes, including self-employment outcomes for transition age youth, adults, and seniors receiving services through FDBS.

Strategy 3.3: Create successful job outcomes in the Business Enterprise Program.

Strategy 3.4: Support FDBS consumers in becoming self-supporting.

Strategy 3.5: Strengthen statewide collaborative partnerships with core partners.

Strategy 3.6: Developing mechanisms to maximize job placement effectiveness among FDBS Employment Placement Specialists and contracted service providers.

Goal 4.0 Quality Efficient Services

Objective: Create an accountable and exemplary division workforce that ensures high quality services.

Strategy 4.1: Increase staff development and continuing education.

Strategy 4.2: Incorporate elements of the common performance measures into employee expectations and evaluations.

Strategy 4.3: Increase opportunities for data sharing and improve data validity and integrity.

Strategy 4.4: Decrease federal and state audit findings.

Strategy 4.5: Develop strong fiscal policies and procedures to promote responsible stewardship of available resources and addresses WIOA requirements.

Strategy 4.6: Strengthen contract language to ensure increased contractor accountability, improve resource allocations, address WIOA regulations and encourage maximum achievement of consumer independence.

Strategy 4.7: Strengthen contract monitoring activities and procedures/protocol to reflect new requirements.

Strategy 4.8: Develop Return on Investment (ROI) methodology for DBS programs.

Strategy 4.9: Improve employee workplace environment.

Strategy 4.10: Improve library services by obtaining customer feedback.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Goals

The Division modified its state goals and priorities to better align with the agency's strategic plan. All goals for the VR program were determined using information from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, customer satisfaction survey, program data, leadership strategies, and other documentation. Input from the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, input from stakeholders, consumer feedback, employee feedback, and RSA monitoring report was also considered during goal development. For the current approved plan period (July 2016-June 2020), the goals described below drive the Division's activities and service delivery for the VR program.

Goal 1: Highest Client Achievement

Strategy 1.1: Secure opportunities for students and youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills.

Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) were included in the 2017-2018 VR contracts. By adding these services, the FDBS provides students and youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in work-based learning experiences, apprenticeships, and internships to improve workplace skills.

Strategy 1.2: Ensure clients participating in training and education programs are benefiting.

The Division collaborates with CareerSource Florida and the Division of Public Schools to provide opportunities for training, education, and workplace activities. Details of these activities are outlined in the agreement between the Division of Blind Services, Division of Public Schools, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In this plan period, the Division will assist consumers who may benefit from the Reverse Transfer Initiative. Reverse transfer is defined as the process of retroactively granting associate degrees to students who have not completed the requirements of an associate degree before they transferred from a two-year institution to a four-year institution.

Strategy 1.3: Increase utilization of online job systems/portals to expose employers to job ready FDBS consumers.

Employees who provide VR services are trained on how to use Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) throughout the state. Utilization of this resource is captured in a monthly report. The FDBS works with the Abilities Work staff to increase employer relationships and placements, such as connecting employers referred by the Abilities Work help desk to the division's job ready clients.

Strategy 1.4: Encourage and track industry certifications, apprenticeships, post-secondary outcomes/impacts, and explore expanded employment opportunities.

The Bureau of Business Enterprise (BBE) tracks Continuing Education Units (CEUs), food manager certifications, and vendor licensures.

Strategy 1.5: Develop and implement an Employment Skills Training Program at the Residential Rehabilitation Center.

A team of professional staff determined the Pre-Employment Program (PEP) Model, developed by Dr. Karen Wolffe best meets the needs of the division's clients ages 14 to adulthood. The purpose of this program is to increase the number of blind and visually impaired individuals preparing to enter competitive integrated employment. This is achieved through highly comprehensive and coordinated vocational rehabilitation services provided at the Florida Rehabilitation Center. These services include, but are not

limited to, pre-employment training, career counseling, job readiness training, work experience opportunities, job shadowing, advocacy, self-awareness, and exposure to post employment. The program is unique in establishing an action plan and follow-up for each client that involves the client, home-base counselors and Rehabilitation Center Staff. The PEP at the Residential Rehabilitation Center began in 2016. Classes are conducted quarterly to increase the employment rate for visually impaired youth and adults. There were 21 PEP graduates in 2018. Of which, 5 were employed, 5 were enrolled in college, 3 were in work experiences, and 8 were actively seeking employment.

Goal 2: Seamless Articulation & Maximum Access

Strategy 2.1: Increase the provision of accessibility tools, awareness, and regular follow-up with consumers to ensure equality in educational experiences and vocational opportunities.

The Division strengthened its relationship with the Lighthouses to ensure appropriate and client-specific assistive technology is consistent with needs of all clients and is reflected in the Individualized Plan for Employment. The FDBS monitors contracts with the Lighthouses and solicits client feedback via satisfaction surveys.

Strategy 2.2: Implement a comprehensive communication and outreach plan.

The FDBS began development of a comprehensive communication and outreach plan. Due to vacancies in key positions, the plan was not completed. The FDBS retained this goal for the upcoming plan period and has key staff in place to accomplish this goal. Data from CSNA will be used to create marketing strategies to reach under-served and unserved populations.

Strategy 2.3: Increase the number of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities receiving services.

The Division served 4,541 individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. This represents a decrease of 31 from the prior year.

Figure 10.08
Clients Served by Service Category

Service Categories	Clients Served (SFY 2018-2019)
College students	516
None (*regular FDBS- vocational rehabilitation	3,476
Supported employment	78
Transition (including Pre-Employment Transition)	535
Total	4,854

Strategy 2.4: Increase outreach services to underserved and unserved population.

Each district identifies the unique underserved populations in their area. Each month, the identified unserved and under-served populations are targeted to increase services to these populations. The District Administrators maintain a log of activities relating to under-served populations. Outreach activities are included in the monthly report submitted to the Program Administrator, who maintains a log for statewide analysis and record keeping purposes. The chart below depicts an increase in the number of clients served in all minority categories except Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Figure 10.09
Change in Number of Clients Served in Minority Groups

Minority Group	SFY 2014	SFY 2015	SFY 2016	SFY 2017	SFY 2018	Difference from previous year
African-American	1,136	1,453	1,829	1,442	1,419	-23
Hispanic	635	877	1,156	933	956	+23
Asian	58	70	87	70	59	-11
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders	14	13	9	9	3	-6

Strategy 2.5: Ensure client IEP goals are consistent with transportation resources.

The Division created a list of transportation vendors based on feedback from each district office. This list serves as a resource to all districts and is updated as needed.

Goal 3: Skilled Workforce & Economic Development

Strategy 3.1: Develop and strengthen DBS employer relationships through employer outreach, support, education and resources.

The Division provides Employment Placement Specialists with marketing tools/toolkit to use when meeting with potential employers and CareerSource Florida staff. Employers receive education regarding FDBS programs/services with the goal of increasing opportunities for clients seeking employment. The Division recognizes businesses that provide an increased number of employment opportunities to consumers. Each district holds an annual open house for employers and potential employers. Consumers who are employed or seeking employment are invited to attend. Each district nominates at least one employer for the joint agency statewide exemplary employer event in October. The Director gives plaques to those awarded as statewide exemplary employers. This is an annual process.

Strategy 3.2: Increase successful employment outcomes including self-employment outcomes for transition age youth, adults, and seniors.

When comparing SFY 2017-2018 to SFY 2018-2019, the Division boasts a respectable number of successful outcomes. Closures decreased by 1 from 854 to 853, which represents a minor change. The Division strengthened its relationship with Community Rehabilitation Programs and local employment networks in job placement related services. VR counselors and EPS staff use the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), an online platform that connects persons with disabilities seeking employment to businesses who are actively hiring. The following table represents wage earnings of FDBS consumers over five years.

Figure 10.10
FDBS Performance Standards and Indicators

	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	FFY 2016	FFY 2017	FFY 2018
Average # of Hours worked per week	\$29.64	\$28.98	\$27.76	\$28.94	\$29.96
Average Hourly Wage	\$13.54	\$13.96	\$12.98	\$13.85	\$14.61
Average Weekly Wage	\$399.85	\$403.56	\$384.61	\$405.21	\$441.62
Projected Average Annual Earnings at Placement	\$20,792.15	\$20,984.93	\$19,999.86	\$21,070.72	\$22,964.30
Average Case Cost	\$6,931.53	\$7,982.29	\$8,288.05	\$9,625.00	\$9,215.26

Strategy 3.3: Create successful job outcomes in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP).

The Division determined one of the most important measurements of a successful BEP is the percentage of recently licensed vendors remaining at their first facility for at least 12 months. This measure demonstrates training adequately prepared new licensees to start at a facility and stay. It is a good indicator of the individual's perseverance and on-the-job skills development.

Figure 10.11
Outcomes in Business Enterprise Program

	SFY 2014-2015	SFY 2015-2016	SFY 2016-2017	SFY 2017-2018	SFY 2018- 2019
Gross Sales	\$20,971,054	\$21,756,454	\$22,057,794	\$22,526,780	\$23,767,126
Gross Profit	\$11,194,406	\$11,812,329	\$12,055,980	\$12,312,635	\$13,017,849
Average Vendor Earnings	\$61,499	\$64,717	\$70,049	\$69,340	\$73,618
Number of new clients licensed	13	9	7	8	7
Number of clients awarded their first facility, regardless of the year licensed	10	9	6	10	10
Number of licensed vendors assigned	118	121	115	118	119
Number of those which were awarded facilities that were employed in the BEP at least 1 year	9 of 10 (90%)	7 of 9 (77.78%)	6 of 6 (100%)	7 of 8 (87.5%)	Not available until end of SFY 2019-20
% of increase from previous year	10.00%	(12.22%)	22.22%	(12.50%)	Not available until end of SFY 2019-20

Note: Clients who are licensed are not always awarded their first facility during the same state fiscal year.

Strategy 3.4: Support FDBS clients in becoming self-supporting.

The Independent Living Program (ages 18-54) and Older Blind Program provide services to train visually impaired individuals on orientation and mobility, cooking, and other support (e.g., job placement, supported employment, purchase of adaptive equipment, etc.) to foster independent living goals of clients. These programs served 493 and 3,414 individuals respectively for SFY 2018.

Strategy 3.5: Strengthen statewide collaborative partnerships with core partners.

The Division established multiple MOUs/interagency agreements with core partners. Each outlines the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Strategy 3.6: Develop mechanisms to maximize job placement effectiveness among Employment Placement Specialists (EPS) and contracted service providers.

All EPS are required to attend Employment Outcome Professionals II training conducted twice a year. The EPS are also armed with a toolkit with resources on building relationships with employers and other pertinent information. In 2019, an EPS desk manual was created for additional training and tools. The Abilities Work Help Desk supports the Employment First initiative. The FDBS partners with this resource for referrals from businesses interested in hiring individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Division maintains contact with the National Employment Team (the NET) and its southeast subcommittee to connect with businesses on a national and regional level. These partnerships will continue during the new plan period.

Strategy 3.7: Support and track successful employment outcomes for blind Floridians with significant and most significant disabilities.

Successful employment outcomes are tracked on a monthly basis. The Business Consultant compiles this data and sends a monthly report of to the district staff to motivate everyone to strive toward meeting the Division's goal. Clients who are ready for employment are tracked via the AWARE case management system. The information is pulled from AWARE and put into a bi-weekly report in QPIS.

Strategy 3.8 Adopt and Modify the Vermont Progress Employment Model.

The Division tested the Vermont Model in a limited number of districts. The model will not be implemented statewide. However, strategies of the model were instrumental in expanding employment outcomes for some of the most difficult to place clients.

Strategy 3.9 Identify an approach to expedite eligibility and service delivery to individuals who are at risk of losing employment.

Policy 2.16 Timeliness of Services was revised in 2019, to expedite the provision of services for clients at risk of losing employment. Communication with employers has increased and the EPS have a faster placement process. Marketing materials have been rebranded and are distributed to field staff upon request.

Goal 4: Quality Efficient Services

Strategy 4.1: Increase staff development and continuing education. Figure 10.10 illustrates the dates and types of training provided in 2019.

Figure 10.12
FDBS Training Offered in 2019

Date	Training Description
January 24, 2019	WINTAC
February 4-7, 2019	New Employee Training
May 6-9, 2019	New Employee Training
April 2019	FRCB Evaluation Committee Meeting
May 2019	Staff Development and Self Study
June 11-14, 2019	Introduction to Social Security Disability
July 22-26, 2019	FRCB Meeting and District Administrator's Meeting
July 22-26, 2019	WINTAC (Career Pathways)
July 22-26, 2019	Policies and Apprenticeships
Aug 13-15, 2019	New Employee Training
Oct 1-4, 2019	Statewide VR Comprehensive Training
Nov 5-7 2019	New Employee Training

Strategy 4.2: Align DBS policies and procedures to new WIOA requirements.

All policies in the Bureau of Client Services were reviewed and revised as appropriate to include WIOA requirements in 2018. The Bureau has a policy team that meets monthly to review policies as an ongoing process. Policies are updated as necessary.

Strategy 4.3: Increase opportunities for data sharing and improve data validity and integrity.

The State Wage Data Sharing agreement with core partners was signed on July 31, 2019. The purpose of this agreement is to establish and implement operating conditions and procedures related to access of wage data for performance accountability. The core partners have a separate data sharing agreement that establishes conditions, safeguards, and requirements under which the Parties agree to exchange confidential information with each other for the purpose of administering their respective programs. This agreement was executed in September 2019.

Strategy 4.4: Decrease federal and state audit findings.

The Division has a quality assurance protocol specific to program services. The protocol activities include remote desk and district onsite reviews to identify and resolve potential issues prior to federal/state audits. Monthly case reviews aim to achieve a compliance rate of 96%, exceeding its standard compliance rate of 90%. Details of findings from case reviews are shared with staff and additional training opportunities are provided as requested. This process decreases audit findings and allows additional training in areas of quality assurance related to authorizations. The division monitors compliance during quarterly case reviews and provides vocational rehabilitation staff with ongoing feedback and training. The RSA conducted an audit of the FDBS in April 2017.

Strategy 4.5: Develop strong fiscal policies and procedures to promote responsible stewardship of available resources and address WIOA requirements.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

The Division has a case service allocation protocol which determines district allocations and ensures dollars are spent appropriately. To address appropriate allocation disbursements, FDBS evaluates historical expenditure data (e.g., number of clients served, services provided, contractual agreements in regions, business enterprise program expenditures self-employment opportunities, and social change). Policies for prior approval and internal control were implemented in 2019.

Strategy 4.6: Strengthen contract language to ensure increased contractor accountability, improve resource allocations, address WIOA regulations and encourage maximum achievement of consumer independence.

The Division implemented Pre-ETS contracts with CRPs requiring employer outreach activities and work experiences.

Strategy 4.7: Strengthen contract monitoring activities and procedures/protocol to reflect new requirements.

Strategy 4.9: Improve employee work-place environment.

The Division applied employee onboarding and mentoring processes statewide. Employees drafted desk manuals for succession planning and to capture organizational knowledge. Figure 10.13 represents the current Federal Standards and Indicators and the Division's performance on these standards.

Figure 10.13 Performance Standards and Indicators

[illegible]

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Figure 10.14

Additional standards outlined in the Division's Long-Range Program Plan

Approved Performance Measures FY 2019-20	Approved Prior Year FY 2018-19 Standard	Actual Prior Year FY 2018-19 Standard	Approved FY 2019-20 Standard	Requested FY 2020-21 Standard
Number/percent of rehabilitation customers gainfully employed at least 90 days (regardless of wage earned)	747/68.3%	888/63.16	747/68.3%	747/68.3%
Number/percent rehabilitation customers placed in competitive employment (at or above minimum wage)	654/ 4.3%	881/ 9.91%	654/ 4.3%	700/ 0%
Projected average annual earnings of rehabilitation customers at placement	\$16,500	\$23,588	\$16,500	\$20,000

Innovation and Expansion

Innovation and expansion funds were used in FFY 2018-2019 to support Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (FRCB). The following table illustrates expenses for all FRCB meetings during this period.

**Figure 10.15
FRCB Meeting Expenses**

Expense Category	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Total
Council Travel	\$2,242.61	\$0	\$0	\$810.88	\$5,734.72	\$0	\$1,190.55	\$4,594.93	\$0	\$6,595.24	\$0	\$0	\$ 21,168.93
Client Satisfaction Survey	\$13,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,500	\$27,000
Advertising	\$76.72	\$0	\$26.32	\$0	\$56.70	\$0	\$26.88	\$60.06	\$0	\$25.34	\$0	\$0	\$272.02
Venue Meeting Space	\$1,342.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,074.00	\$0	\$1,994.49	\$0	\$0	\$5,410.49
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$63.30	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$108.00	\$0	\$0	\$171.30
Interpreters	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1755.00	\$0	\$0	\$2875.00	\$0	\$1,800.00	\$0	\$0	\$6,430.00
Total	\$17,161.33	\$0	\$26.32	\$810.88	\$7546.42	\$63.30	\$1,217.43	\$9603.99	\$0	\$10,523.07	\$0	\$13,500	\$60,452.74

A summary of FRCB Accomplishments and Activities for calendar year 2018-2019 include:

- Governor Rick Scott announced six appointments and two reappointments on January 4, 2019.
- The Council maintained its mission and focus on strategic planning that is closely aligned with

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

the priorities of the Florida Division of Blind Services.

- The Council reviewed FDBS policies and provided advice on the implementation of best practices.
- The Council elected a new Chairperson, First Vice-Chairperson and Second Vice-Chairperson at the first quarterly meeting held in February 2019.
- The Council elected new members to serve on the Evaluation and Planning Committees.
- The Council continued to strengthen its working relationship with other councils within the state as required under Sec 105 of the Rehab Act. This included collaborating with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) during committee week in January 2019, and providing handouts to Legislators to increase awareness of the services provided by the FDBS.
- The Council served as an effective vehicle for cultivating meaningful partnerships between the FDBS and other stakeholders.
- The Council conducted four public forums at each of its quarterly business meetings.
- Council members participated in both the NCSRC spring and fall training conferences.
- The Council continued to oversee the development and implementation of the Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS).
- The Council provided feedback for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment facilitated by San Diego State University Interwork Institute.
- The Council recognized employers who hire individuals with visual disabilities by presenting each with a plaque during the quarterly meetings. The following employers were recognized for 2019: Disability Solutions & Merry Maids, Sodexo, Taxes Untangled, and Challenged Enterprises.

Meeting Dates and Locations

- October 17-19, 2018 - Miami
- February 5-6, 2019 - Daytona Beach
- May 9-10, 2019 - Tallahassee
- July 25-26, 2019 - Ocala

Quarterly Meeting Agenda Items:

- Welcome, Introductions, and Pledge of Allegiance
- Adoption of Agenda
- Director's Report: Division of Blind Services Updates
- District Administrator's Report
- Employer Recognition
- Local Community Rehabilitation Program Report
- Client Satisfaction Survey Data Updates
- Division of Blind Services State Plan Updates
- Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Outcome Updates
- New Committee Appointments
- Bureau of Business Enterprise Updates
- FDBS Budget Report and Legislative Updates
- Blind Services Foundation Updates
- Updates on Outreach to Underserved/Unserved population
- Strategic Plan Discussions

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

- Policy Reviews of Policy Numbers 2.09 Post-Secondary Education and Training, 2.35 Competitive Integrated Employment, and 2.05 Review Process and Mediation

Other accomplishments for the VR program for 2018 and 2019 included the following.

- Assisted 856 consumers in obtaining competitive integrated employment (successful closures) in SFY 2018-2019
- Served over 10,000 consumers in the VR program
- Trained all VR staff on new policies and WIO regulations
- Improved contracts with service providers
- Strengthened relationships with local CareerSource regions through the development and execution of MOUs and Infrastructure Funding Agreements
- Developed a process for referring clients to online tools, such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM), and Ability Works
- Identified approach to expedite eligibility and service delivery to individuals who are at risk of losing employment
- Provided Employment Placement Specialists with marketing toolkit to use when meeting with potential employers and CareerSource staff. Employers received education regarding programs/services
- Re-established the quality assurance team to conduct random case reviews to increase compliance and quality assurance
- Created new policy and procedures entailing new legislation on Workers' Compensation coverage for consumers participating in work-based learning experiences
- Updated the AWARE case management system with new modules for documenting work experience, work history, and education to assist with resume development and increase employment related skills
- Completed sustainability study (fee study)

(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

The FDBS has elected to defer Supported Employment funds to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation due to administrative burden. However, the Division provides residential services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who require ongoing support to meet their employment goals via a contract with one vendor (the Conklin Center). The Division also issues authorizations to ensure continued services for all consumers via other providers throughout the state. These services are funded using basic 110 funds. SE is provided singly or in combination, and assists eligible individuals in gaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment.

Quality

The Division is committed to providing quality services to this population. Individuals are supported in making employment choices consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. Human Services Program Consultants (i.e., Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors) help individuals pursue goals detailed in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by using supported employment resources to the individual's best advantage. As appropriate, consumers and families are actively involved in assessment, planning, and decision-making throughout the service delivery process. Services are evaluated for effectiveness and improvements are made as necessary.

The Division provides ongoing training for staff and assesses/updates policies and processes to ensure efficient services. The quality assurance team conducts quality assurance reviews consisting of onsite and remote desk reviews. The reviews focus on include adherence to state policies, compliance of federal regulations, sufficient case documentation, IPE development timelines, plan amendments and required signatures, eligibility determination, activities tied to the IPE, approval of authorizations, etc. The quality assurance team remains current on all federal and state regulations.

Scope

Assistance to this population is comprised of an intensive array of services - conducted in person - for blind and visually impaired individuals who require complex services, including youth with the most significant disabilities. These services are provided for a time period not to exceed 18 months, but can be extended under special circumstances with the consent of the individual to achieve objectives of the rehabilitation plan. Services are individually designed around the needs and desires of the consumer and may include:

- Individual Assessment
- Job Coaching and Development
- Assistive Technology, including repair and maintenance
- Intensive on the job training
- Employability and Social Skills Training
- Transportation Assistance
- Money Management
- Follow-up services with employers and trainees
- Formal and informal work site related expectations (e.g., time and attendance, dress, communication)

Extent

Services are provided based on available resources. Community service providers are responsible for funding ongoing support services. The amount of services provided is determined by the statewide needs assessment, analysis of performance data, and data provided by agency partners (Agencies for Persons with Disabilities, CareerSource Florida, Department of Children and Families, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation).

Transition to Extended Services

Transition occurs a minimum of 90 days after “stabilization,” which is defined as stabilized in employment at or above minimum wage with 20% or less support in the workplace from program staff for a period of 90 days. A consumer is “successfully rehabilitated” when job placement is maintained for 60 days after transitioning to extended services.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS & ASSURANCES

The Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified Plan and Its Supplement: The Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan;
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected):<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Is an independent State commission.2. Has established a State Rehabilitation Council- YESc. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (No)f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	<p>appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (No)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified State Plan? (Yes) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified State Plan.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes)d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.e. Comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed wither in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) OF the Rehabilitation Act.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programsj. With respect to students with disabilities, the State, has developed and will implement,<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; andii. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; andiii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(2S)).
5.	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.b. The Department of Education assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.c. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: The Department of Education assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under Title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the Department of Education and division of Vocational Rehabilitation will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.b. The Department of Education assures that it will use funds made available under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

	in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Provision of Supported Employment Services: The Department of Education assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.b. The Department of Education assures that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(8) of the Rehabilitation Actii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with Title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Florida Department of Education

Commissioner Richard Corcoran

DATE: _____

APPENDIX 1- PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Performance measurements are negotiated annually with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. The below are expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Employment in 2 nd Quarter After Exit	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	85.2%		85.2%	
Dislocated Workers	83%		83%	
Youth	75.5%		75.5%	
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Wagner-Peyser	62%		62%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	

Employment in 4 th Quarter After Exit	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	83%		83%	
Dislocated Workers	79%		79%	
Youth	69%		69%	
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Wagner-Peyser	64.2%		64.2%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	

Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	\$6,850		\$6,850	
Dislocated Workers	\$6,850		\$6,850	
Youth	TBD		TBD	
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Wagner-Peyser	\$4,850		\$4,850	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	

Credential Attainment Rate	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	65%		65%	
Dislocated Workers	68%		68%	
Youth	75.5%		75.5%	
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Wagner-Peyser	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	

State of Florida
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Unified Plan

Measurable Skills Gains	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	TBD		TBD	
Dislocated Workers	TBD		TBD	
Youth	TBD		TBD	
Adult Education	42%		42%	
Wagner-Peyser	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Vocational Rehabilitation	3.5%		TBD	

Effectiveness in Serving Employers	2020 Proposed/Expected Level	2020 Negotiated/Adjusted Level	2021 Proposed/Expected Level	2021 Negotiated/Adjusted Level
Adults	TBD		TBD	
Dislocated Workers	TBD		TBD	
Youth	TBD		TBD	
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Wagner-Peyser	TBD		TBD	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	

