# SECTION I. WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**(a) Florida submits its Combined State Plan which includes the following core and combined partner programs:**

- The Adult Program (Title I of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)).
- The Dislocated Worker Program (Title I).
- The Youth Program (Title I).
- The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II).
- The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III).
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, as amended by Title IV) including the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Florida Division of Blind Services.

Consistent with multi-partner efforts focused on implementation of Florida's transformational workforce legislation in 2021, the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act, and Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan, Florida's Combined State Plan includes the following Combined State Plan partner programs (per WIOA sec. 103(a)(1) and (2)):

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (under 42 U.S.C. § 601 et seq.). (Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)).
- Employment and training programs in the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** authorized under Section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2015(d)(4)). (DCF).
- **Work programs under Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act** of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2015(o)). (Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) and DCF).
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers** program authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. § 2271 et seq.). (FloridaCommerce).
- **Jobs for Veterans State Grants** program authorized under 38 U.S.C. § 4100 et. seq. (FloridaCommerce).
- **Unemployment Insurance (UI)** programs, known as Reemployment Assistance (RA) in Florida, (UI Federal-State programs administered under state unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable federal law). (FloridaCommerce).
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3056 et seq.) and updated by the OAA Reauthorization Act of 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-144. (Florida Department of Elder Affairs).
- Employment and training activities carried out under the **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG**) Act (42 U.S.C. § 9901 et seq.). (FloridaCommerce).

The Florida Workforce Development System continues building on WIOA core and combined partnerships including collaboration with the REACH Office, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida College System, Florida Chamber of Commerce, The Able Trust, Florida Economic Development Association, and other stakeholders. Florida will collaborate with organizations to identify opportunities for partnerships and system updates. This approach allows Florida to be deliberate and thorough in its strategic planning efforts across programs.

## (b) INTRODUCTION

Florida's workforce system has long been committed to helping Floridians achieve economic independence — helping a job seeker identify and enter an in-demand career pathway, providing opportunities for an employee to access training and certification opportunities that grow their skills, and working side-by-side with businesses of all sizes to provide support so they can thrive. In 2019, Governor DeSantis furthered that commitment by challenging the Florida workforce system to be number one in workforce education by 2030.

The clearest demonstration of the Governor's dedication to improving outcomes across Florida's workforce system is the unique collaboration happening across workforce, economic development, education, state agencies, and partners. Steps are being taken to transform and elevate Florida's workforce system, uniting all entities that have a role to play in the system, aligning on shared objectives, and coordinating operations and services around a common goal of ensuring economic self-sufficiency of its residents.

Since 2021, Florida has passed several pieces of legislation to advance system transformation statewide. The REACH Act was unanimously approved by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Governor DeSantis in 2021. The REACH Act addresses the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation among state businesses and education. It demands customer-focused improvements to reimagine and modernize complementary, but often siloed, systems for education, workforce development, and public assistance directly affecting the state's talent pipeline through both policy and performance.

In 2023, Senate Bill 240 positioned Florida to help people with barriers to education and employment become self-sufficient through enhanced access to jobs and career pathways that offer sustainable economic prosperity.

The Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan is a key example of the system transformation empowered by both the REACH Act and Senate Bill 240. The plan is focused around three pillars — Alignment and Consolidation, System-wide Improvements, and Regional Planning Implementation — that will increase collaboration among economic, educational, and governmental agencies; enhance services to customers to be consistent across the state; use resources more effectively and strengthen the state's economy by supporting regional economies.

Additionally, initiatives like Hope Florida, spearheaded by First Lady Casey DeSantis, connect partners such as DCF, FloridaCommerce, and CareerSource Florida to ensure the state's most vulnerable residents receive the support needed to find and retain meaningful employment.

Florida's 2024 WIOA Combined Plan is another example of this unification. In addition to demonstrating compliance, Florida's workforce system and its partners will articulate a collective vision with well-defined quantitative and qualitative goals, speaking not as differentiated partners but as a cohesive workforce development system.

This approach better reflects our emphasis on access, alignment, and accountability. These priorities come to life, respectively, as we ensure ease and efficiency for Floridians seeking

services, increase collaboration among ourselves as partners, and provide greater accountability and transparency to stakeholders.

In implementing the WIOA Combined Plan, CareerSource Florida and its partners in education and workforce development continue to improve alignment, consistency, and outcomes. The following reflects pride in our systemwide approach to workforce development and education in Florida. Through our individual and combined efforts, we are working to ensure all Floridians have opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency.

As required by WIOA and its commitment to providing a consumer-first workforce system, Florida continues seeking opportunities to improve outcomes, grow partnerships, and enhance overall customer service. States and local workforce development boards 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 WIOA Act, §676.135).

Florida's first WIOA Combined 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.
- Enabling universal access: Through a one-stop delivery system, every Floridian will have access to employment services.
- Promoting increased accountability: The state, localities, and training providers will be held accountable for their performance.

Florida's unemployment rate decreased 0.2% to 2.4% over the most recent program year, marking the 32nd consecutive month in which Florida's unemployment rate remained lower than the national rate. Florida's labor force also showed consistent growth during the year, increasing by 2.4% and adding 257,000 individuals. Private sector employment increased 3.6%, adding 296,100 jobs over the year which continued a trend of 27 consecutive months of outpacing the national rate.

As the Governor's principal workforce policy and investment board, CareerSource Florida, in collaboration with its network of 24 local workforce development boards and 100 career centers, continues to connect employers with qualified, skilled talent and Floridians with employment and career development opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. During the year, the CareerSource Florida network assisted 63,855 job seekers in securing employment, including 3,763 veterans.

Subsequent sections of this four-year plan address in more detail key workforce system initiatives undertaken and milestones achieved since the submission of Florida's most recent Two-Year Modification in early 2022 — including workforce system letter grades, the work of the Credentials Review Committee, and the cross-partner Hope Florida initiative. These efforts connect to Florida's Workforce System Transformation Plan and reflect Florida's keen focus on strengthening access, alignment, and accountability across the state's entire workforce system.

The Governor’s priorities and those of the state workforce development board are reflected in this combined plan.

## SECTION II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

**The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system.**

**The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth.**

**Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term "populations," these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 3.**

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

**Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, youth, and others that the State may identify.**

**(a) <u>Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis</u>. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.**

**(1) <u>Economic and Workforce Analysis</u>**

**(A) *Economic Analysis*. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—**

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

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

(iii) **Employers' Employment Needs with regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide**

**an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.**

Florida's economic and workforce analysis describes labor market information for Florida's economic, industry, and occupational profiles as they pertain to employment and workforce development.

Part A: Economic Analysis provides an overview of Florida's economy, including existing demand industry sectors and occupations, emerging demand industry sectors, and occupations and employers' needs.

Part B: Workforce Analysis is a detailed analysis of Florida's workforce, including data on employment and unemployment, labor market trends, education, and skill levels of the workforce and a comparison of economic and workforce analytical conclusions. This section includes existing demand and projected trends in industries and occupations.

**Industry** is the type of activity conducted at a person's place of work. **Occupation** is the kind of work a person does. Each worker is part of an industry *and* an occupation. It is important to consider that occupations often cut across industries. For example, maids and housekeepers can be found in accommodation and food service industries, healthcare and social assistance, and administrative and support services, among other industries.

## (A) Economic Analysis

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

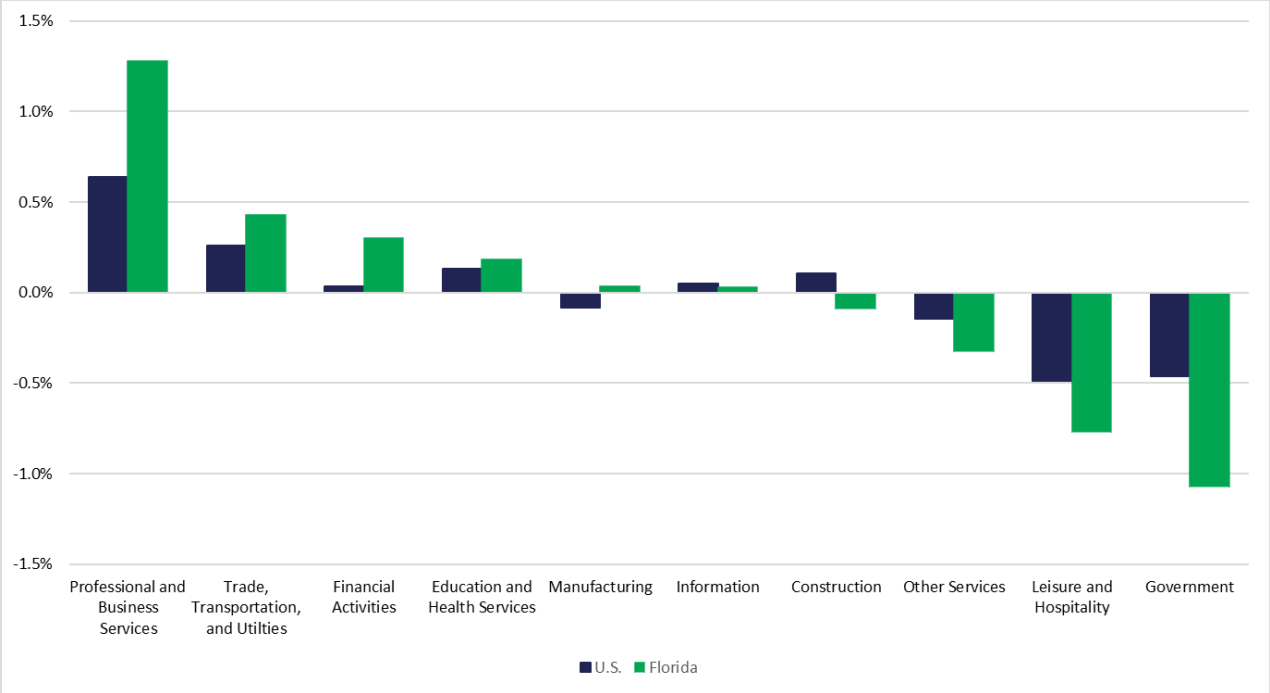
**Nonagricultural Employment by Industry**

As of July 2023, the industry supersectors employing the most workers were primarily service-providing industries. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities had the largest share of employment (1,984,300 jobs), followed by Professional and Business Services (1,644,800 jobs), Education and Health services (1,486,500 jobs), and Leisure and Hospitality (1,306,200 jobs). Education and Health Services (+6.4%) and Leisure and Hospitality (+4.2%) were the fastest-growing major industries over the year.

In July 2023, Florida had the third-fastest year-over-year growth rate (+3.2%) in total nonagricultural employment among all 50 states, trailing only Nevada (+3.8%) and Texas (+3.3%).

From February 2020 to July 2023, Florida's employment, as a share of total nonagricultural employment, has been shifting more toward Professional and Business Services (+1.3%); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+0.4%); and Financial Activities (+0.3%). Employment has been shifting away from Government (-1.1%); Leisure and Hospitality (-0.8%); and Other Services (-0.3%).

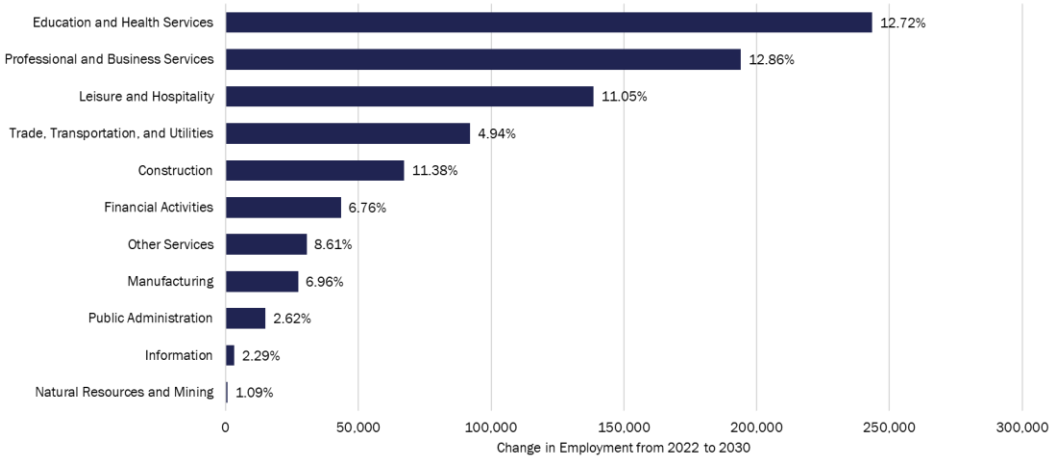
**Figure 2.01**
**Change in Industry Composition – Total Nonagricultural Employment, Seasonally Adjusted – Florida and United States; February 2020 – July 2023**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, November 2023.*

The industry supersectors projected to add the most jobs by 2030 are Education and Health Services (+243,380; +12.72%), Professional and Business Services (+193,910; +12.86%), and Leisure and Hospitality (+138,434; +11.05%).

**Figure 2.02**
**Florida Projected Employment Growth by Industry Supersector**



*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

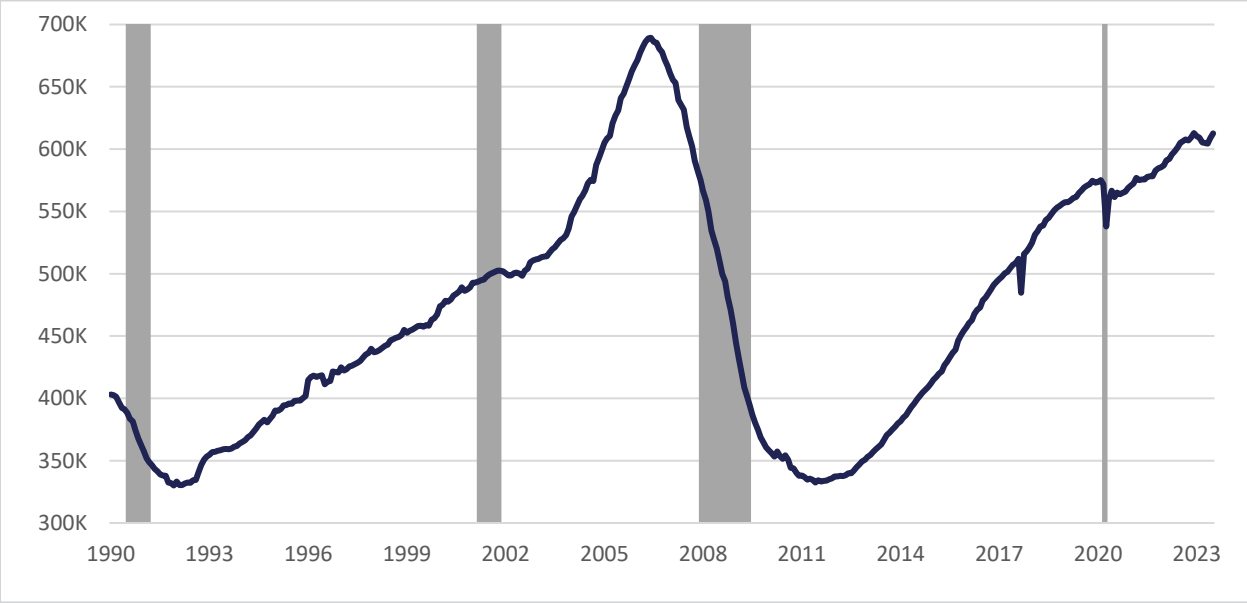
**Industry Detail**

The Industry Detail section shows employment in the major industry sectors over time. The analyses depict impacts of recessions on 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 in the aftermath of the housing bubble collapse. Construction employment peaked in June 2006 at 689,400 jobs and is currently at 612,700 jobs (a decrease of 76,700 jobs). At the low point during this decline, Construction employment was 332,500 (June 2011). Since June 2011, 280,200 jobs in the industry have been recovered.

**Figure 2.03**
**Florida Construction Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

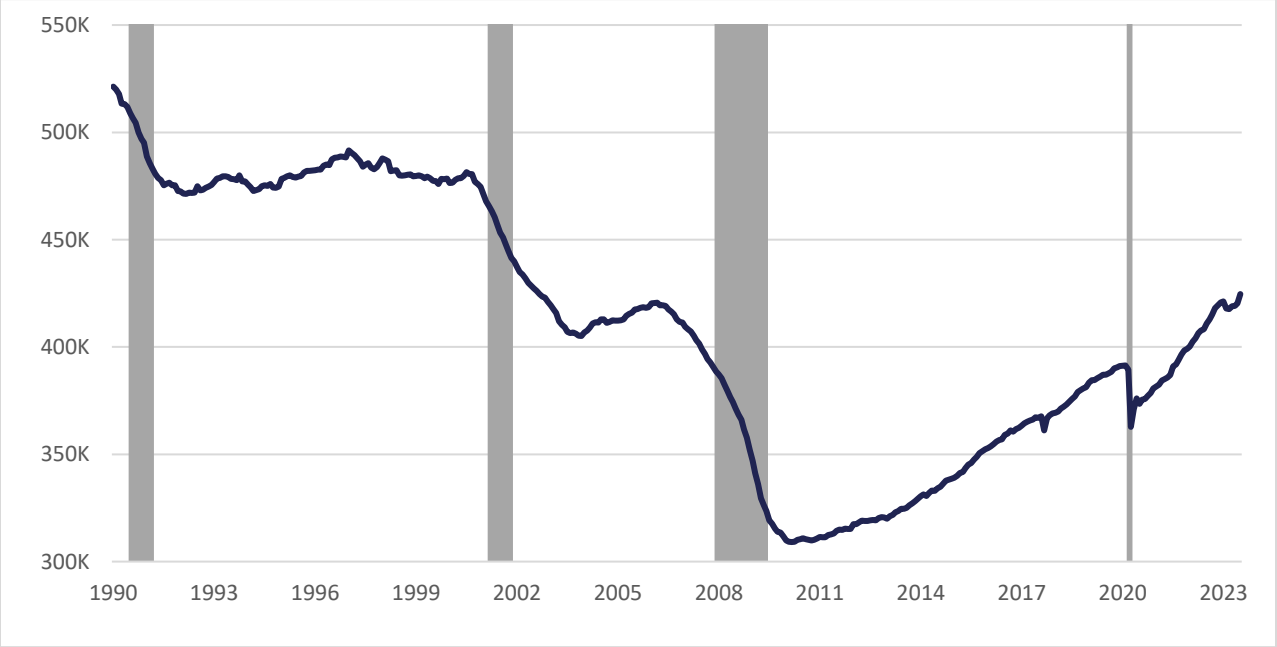
Since the end of the Great Recession, Construction employment was trending upward until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Construction employment was 575,100 in February 2020. Florida lost 37,300 Construction jobs from February to April 2020 and has since gained back more than the total jobs lost. As of July 2023, employment in this sector was 612,700, which is 37,600 more jobs than in February 2020 (+6.5%).

Changes in Construction employment during past recessions have generally been greater in Florida than in the U.S., however Florida Construction employment during the pandemic remained more stable than it did across the rest of the nation. Construction is particularly important as a share of employment in Southwest Florida and in particular the region served by local workforce development area 24 (LWDA).

**Manufacturing**
Manufacturing employment had generally been in decline since the 1980s; however, since the low in March 2010 (309,100 employed), the number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward. Florida lost 28,600 Manufacturing jobs from February to April 2020 and has since gained back more than the total jobs lost.

From the low in 2010 until the beginning of the pandemic in February 2020, this industry gained 82,300 jobs, for an annualized growth rate of 2.4% during this period. This industry's employment was 424,600 in July 2023, which is 61,800 more jobs than the pandemic low point in April 2020 (362,800 jobs). The annualized growth rate since the pandemic low point has been +5.4%, meaning that the upward trend before the pandemic seems to have accelerated post-pandemic. As of July 2023, this industry's employment was 424,600, which is 33,200 (+8.5%) more jobs than the pre-pandemic level in February 2020.

**Figure 2.04**
**Florida Manufacturing Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

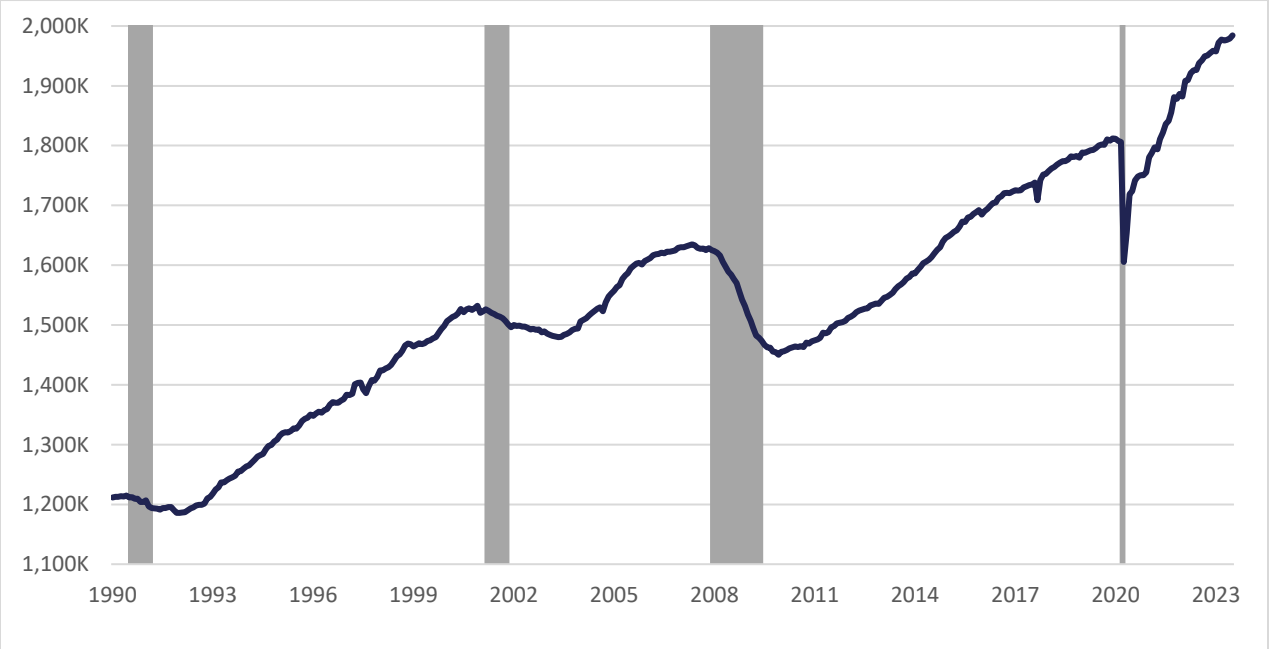
Florida's pre-pandemic growth in Manufacturing employment tended to be faster than the nation, and the pandemic had less of an effect on the sector in Florida than it did nationwide. Manufacturing accounts for a particularly large share of employment in the North Florida (LWDA 6) and Brevard (LWDA 13) regions.

**Trade, Transportation, and Utilities**
The strength of this industry reflects the positive impact of tourism and population growth on the Florida economy.

Since the end of the Great Recession, employment in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

(TTU) had been trending upward until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. TTU industry employment was 1,807,800 in February 2020. Florida lost 202,100 jobs in the sector from February to April 2020 and has since gained back more than the total jobs lost. From January 2018 to January 2019 the year-over-year (YoY) growth rate was 1.8% and from January 2019-2020 the YoY growth rate was 1.3%. This upward trend from before the pandemic seems to have accelerated as the January 2022-2023 YoY growth rate was 4.0%. This industry's employment was 1,984,300 in July 2023, representing 176,500 more jobs than in February 2020 (+9.8%) and an all-time high.

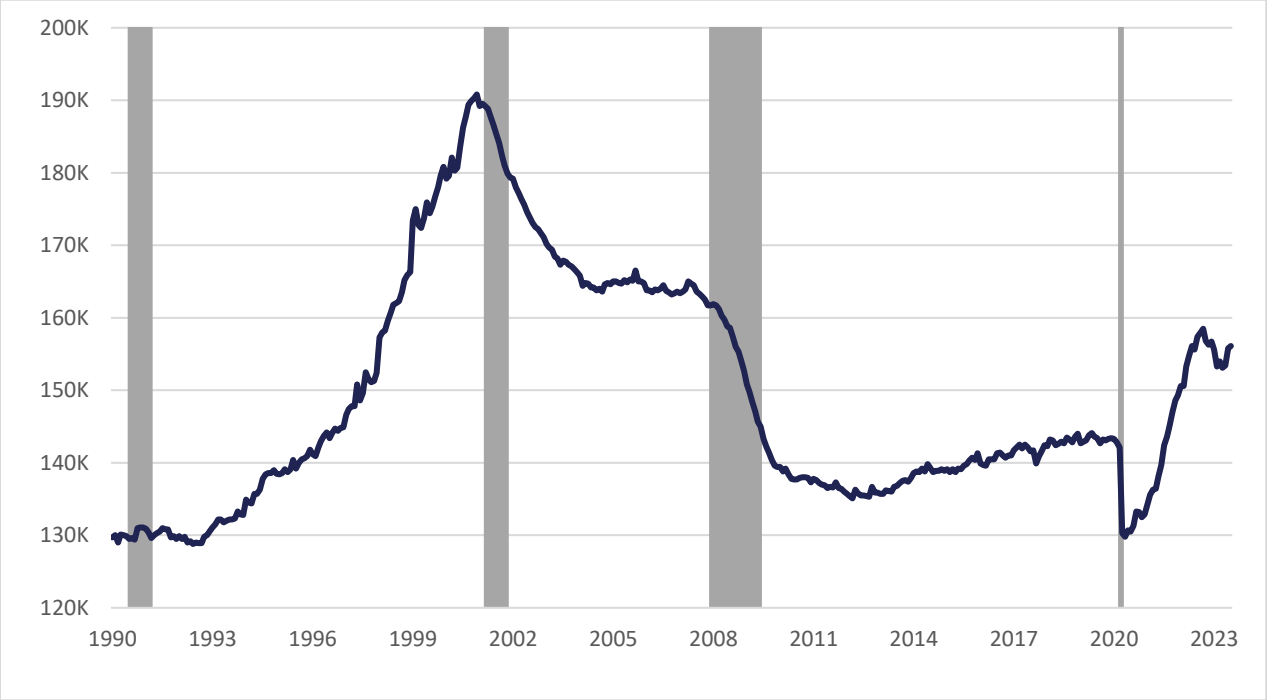
**Figure 2.05**
**Florida Trade, Transportation and Utilities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

**Information**
Florida experienced large declines in Information sector employment from 2001 to 2004 after the end of the tech bubble, and from 2007 to 2010 following the collapse of the housing bubble. Industry employment remained relatively stable from the low point after the Great Recession to the pandemic. Since the pandemic, Information industry employment has been trending upward. As of July 2023, the industry employment was 156,100.

**Figure 2.06**
**Florida Information Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

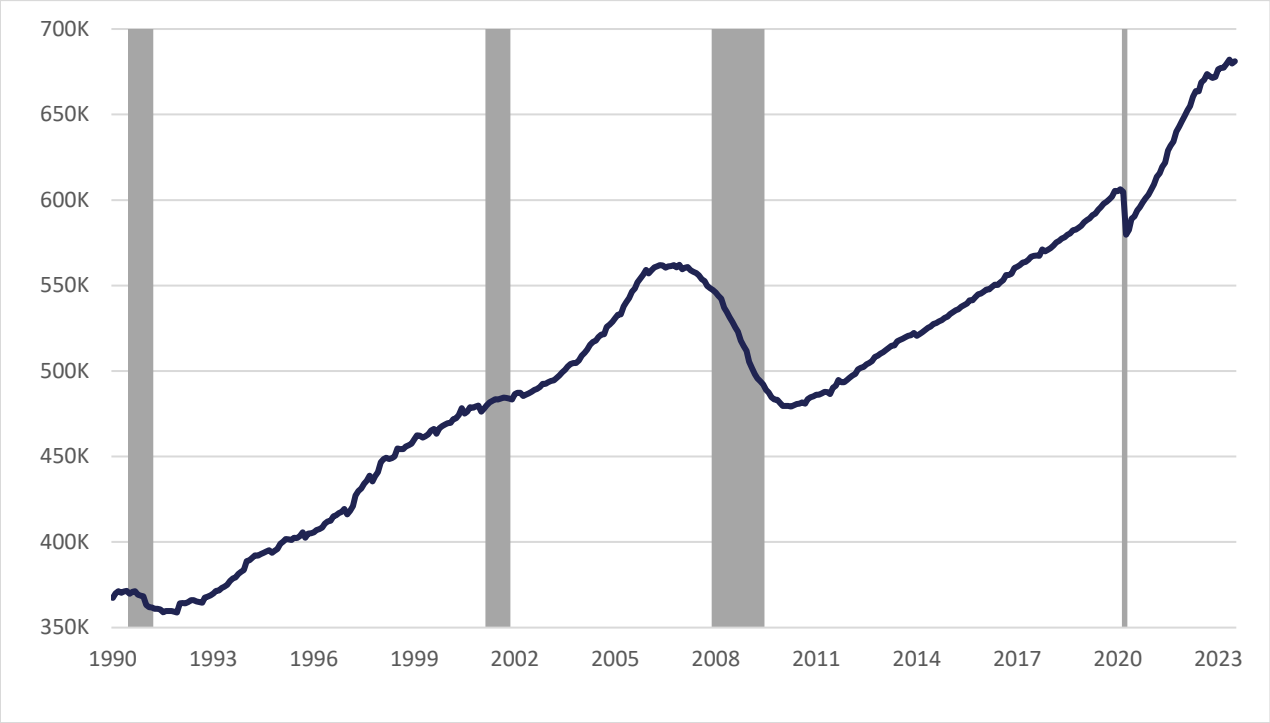
In February 2020, the employment was 142,800. Florida lost 12,500 Information jobs from February to April 2020 and has since gained back more than the total jobs lost. As of July 2023, the employment was 156,100, which is 13,300 more jobs than February 2020 (+9.3%).

Florida's rate of growth in Information employment has generally mirrored or run slightly below the nationwide rate. However, Florida's post-pandemic YoY growth rate from September 2021 to October 2022 was 11.0% on average, which was 2.7 percentage points higher than the US average rate of 8.3%, before it returned to relative normal growth. Information employment is broadly distributed around the state, although mostly concentrated in metropolitan areas.

**Financial Activities**
Financial Activities employment in Florida previously peaked at 562,100 jobs in December

2006 and experienced a rapid decline to 479,200 jobs in April 2010 during the Great Recession. Since that low point, employment in this sector had been trending upward with an average yearly growth rate of 2.7% during this period until February 2020, when employment was 606,200.

**Figure 2.07**
**Florida Financial Activities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

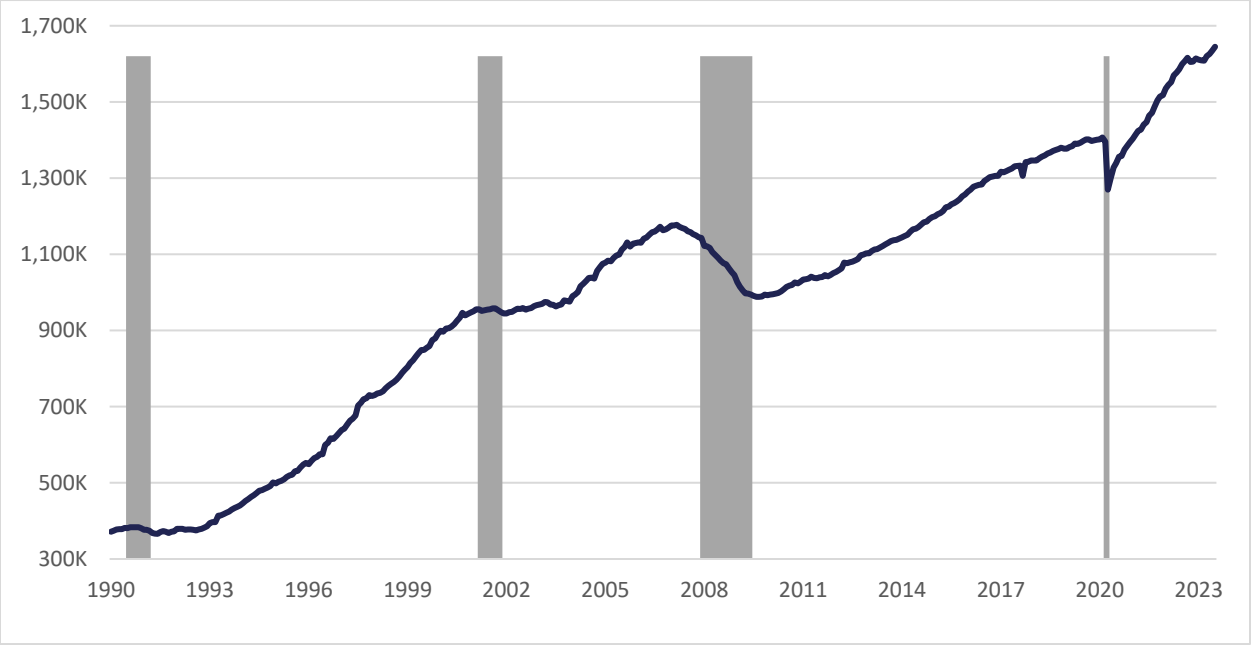
Florida lost 26,400 jobs in this industry between February and April 2020 and has since gained back more than the total jobs lost. In May 2023, this industry reached a new all-time high in employment with 682,100 and as of July 2023, the employment was 681,200, which is 75,000 more jobs than February 2020 (+12.4%).

The Financial Activities sector in Florida has historically grown more rapidly than in the U.S. as a whole. This pattern has only intensified in the post-pandemic period: since January 2021, the average yearly growth rate for Florida has been 5.0% compared to only 1.9% for the U.S. as a whole. Financial Activities jobs are a particularly significant share of employment in the Tampa Bay (LWDA 15) region, and to a lesser extent in the Northeast Florida (LWDA 8) region.

***Professional and Business Services***

Florida's Professional and Business Services industry has been growing steadily for the past 30 years, except for a decline during the Great Recession, when it bottomed out at 988,600 jobs in September 2009. Since the end of the Great Recession, the jobs in this sector had returned to their upward trend until March 2020.

**Figure 2.08**
**Florida Professional and Business Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

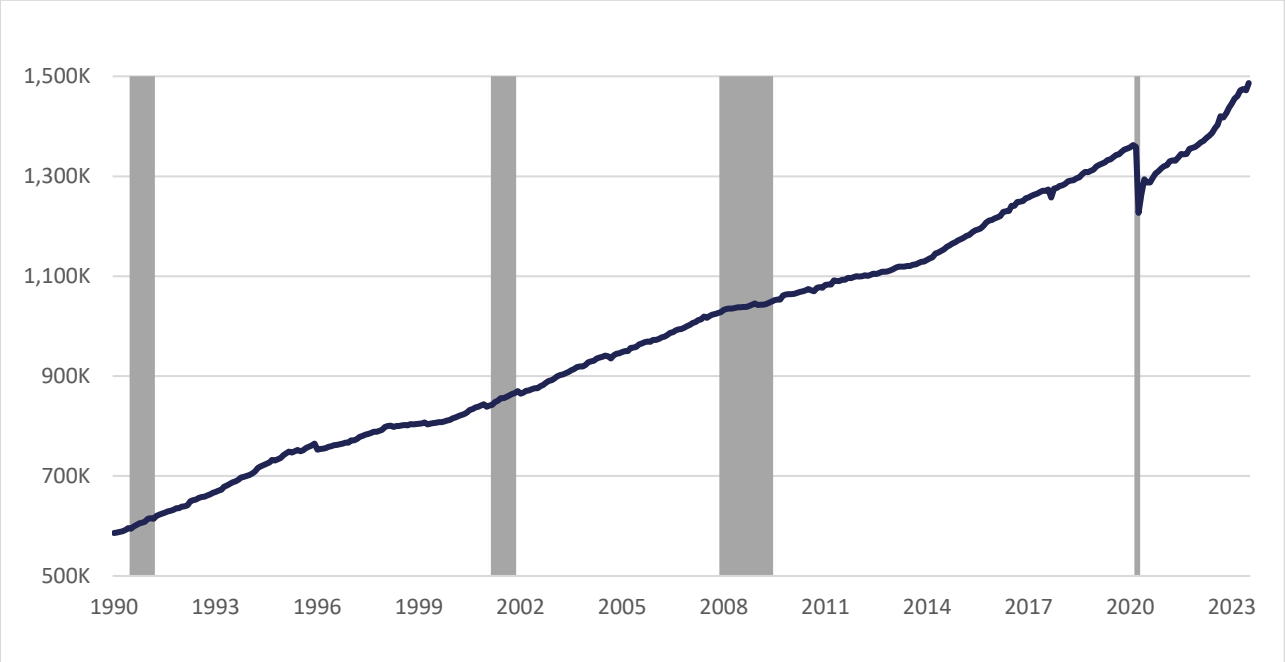
In February 2020, the employment in this sector was 1,406,400. Florida lost 136,500 jobs in this industry from February to April 2020. This industry has since gained back more than the total jobs lost and has continued its upward trend. As of July 2023, the employment was 1,644,800, which is 238,400 more jobs than February 2020 and a new all-time high (+17%).

Florida's rate of growth in Professional and Business Services employment has generally mirrored or run slightly above the nationwide rate. Professional and Business Services employment is broadly distributed around the state, although mostly concentrated in metropolitan areas, especially in central and south Florida.

**Education and Health Services**

Florida did not experience declines in Education and Health Services employment in recent recessions, except the COVID-19 recession. Employment in this sector has been growing steadily, although the rate of job growth did slow during the Great Recession, with notable accelerations in 2014 and 2023.

**Figure 2.09**
**Florida Education and Health Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

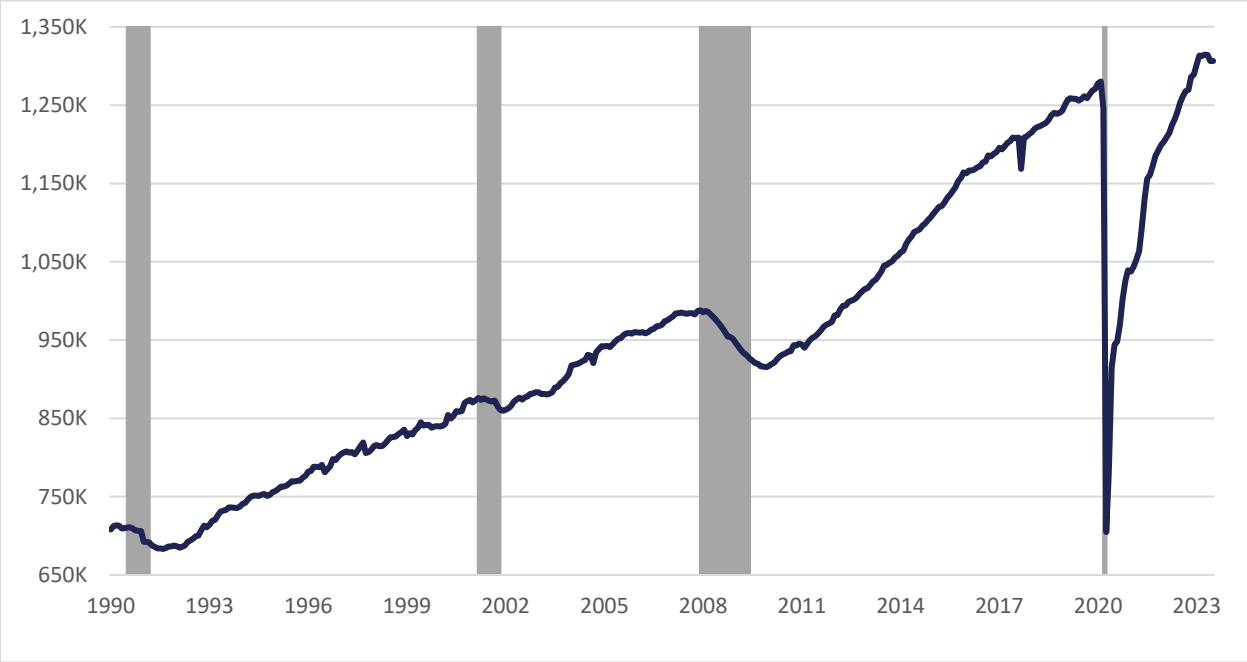
Education and Health Services employment was slower to recover from the pandemic than most other industries. Employment was 1,362,400 in February 2020 and the industry lost 135,700 jobs from February to April 2020. Florida gained all of these jobs back by January 2022 and has since continued to grow with an employment of 1,486,500 in July 2023 (+9.1% since February 2020), a new all-time high.

Florida's rate of growth in Education and Health Services employment has generally trended with the national rate. Education and Health Services jobs are a particularly large share of employment in the North Central Florida (LWDA 9), Chipola (LWDA 3), and Pasco Hernando (LWDA 16) regions.

**Leisure and Hospitality**

Leisure and Hospitality employment in Florida experienced a significant decrease during the Great Recession, reaching a low of 915,200 employed in December 2009.

**Figure 2.10**
**Florida Leisure and Hospitality Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

Since the end of the Great Recession, Leisure and Hospitality employment had been trending upward at an accelerating rate until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leisure and Hospitality suffered the greatest job loss of any industry during the pandemic and was slower to recover than other industries.

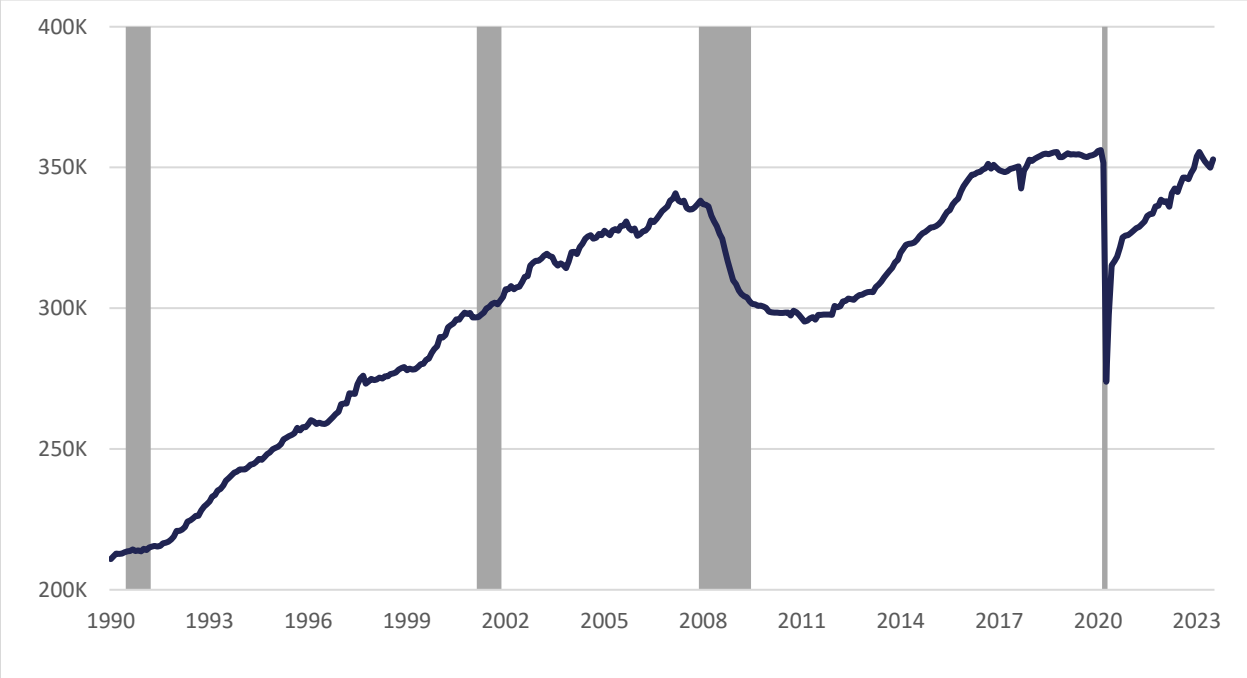
The employment in this sector was 1,280,300 in February 2020. Florida lost 575,500 (-55%) Leisure and Hospitality jobs from February to April 2020 and did not gain these jobs back until November 2022. It has since continued to grow, reaching an all-time high in employment in April 2023 with 1,314,600 jobs. As of July 2023, the employment in this industry was 1,306,200, which is 25,900 more jobs than February 2020 (+2.0%).

Historically, Florida's rate of growth in Leisure and Hospitality employment has closely mirrored the nationwide rate. Industry job loss in Florida due to the pandemic was slightly less than the nation, as Florida lost 45.0% of employment compared to 48.6% of employment nationwide. However, Florida's rate of recovery in this sector has lagged the nationwide rate.

Leisure and Hospitality constitute a disproportionately large share of total employment in the Okaloosa Walton (LWDA 2), Gulf Coast (LWDA 4), and Central Florida (LWDA 12) regions.

**Other Services**
The Other Services sector comprises establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided 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 during the Great Recession and did not start to recover until 2012.

**Figure 2.11**
**Florida Other Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Economic Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

The number of jobs in this sector had been trending upward again until March 2020. Other Services employment was 356,200 in February 2020. Florida lost 82,300 jobs from this sector from February to April 2020 (-23.1%). This industry has yet to gain back all these lost jobs. The peak post-pandemic employment was 355,500 in February 2023, when the industry had recovered 99.8% of the jobs lost during the pandemic. Since then, the industry has stayed relatively constant with 352,900 employments in July 2023.

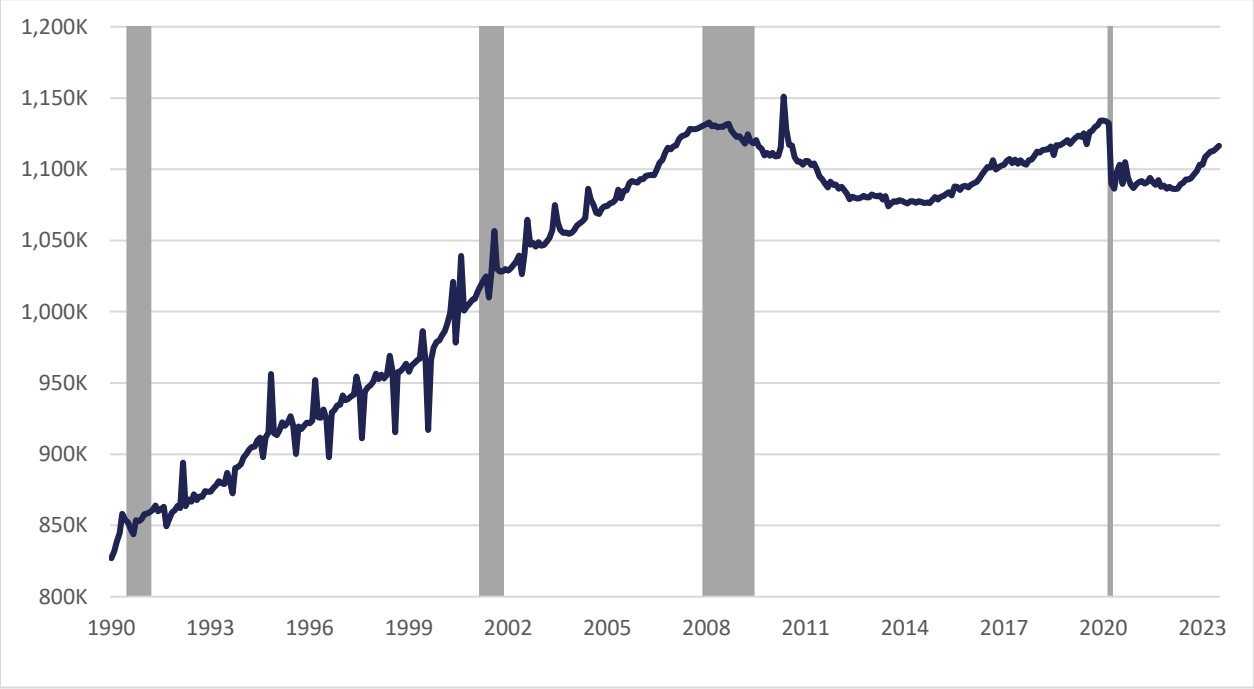
Aside from the trough in the years after the Great Recession, Florida's rate of growth in Other Services had historically tended to run above the nationwide rate, although this trend ended around 2017.

Other Services jobs are more concentrated as a share of employment in the Research Coast (LWDA 20) region and, to a lesser degree, in the Palm Beach County (LWDA 21) region.

**Government**

Florida experienced losses in total Government employment from 2008 to 2014. Since 2014, the number of jobs in this sector had been trending upward and nearly returned to 2008 levels just before the COVID-19 pandemic started. Although, at the state government level, it is important to note that Florida operates a lean state government apparatus with the lowest number of state government employees per capita in the nation, reflecting a policy decision rather than an economic indicator.

**Figure 2.12**
**Florida Government Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**




*Source: Florida Department of Economic Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER), Current Employment Statistics, August 2023.*

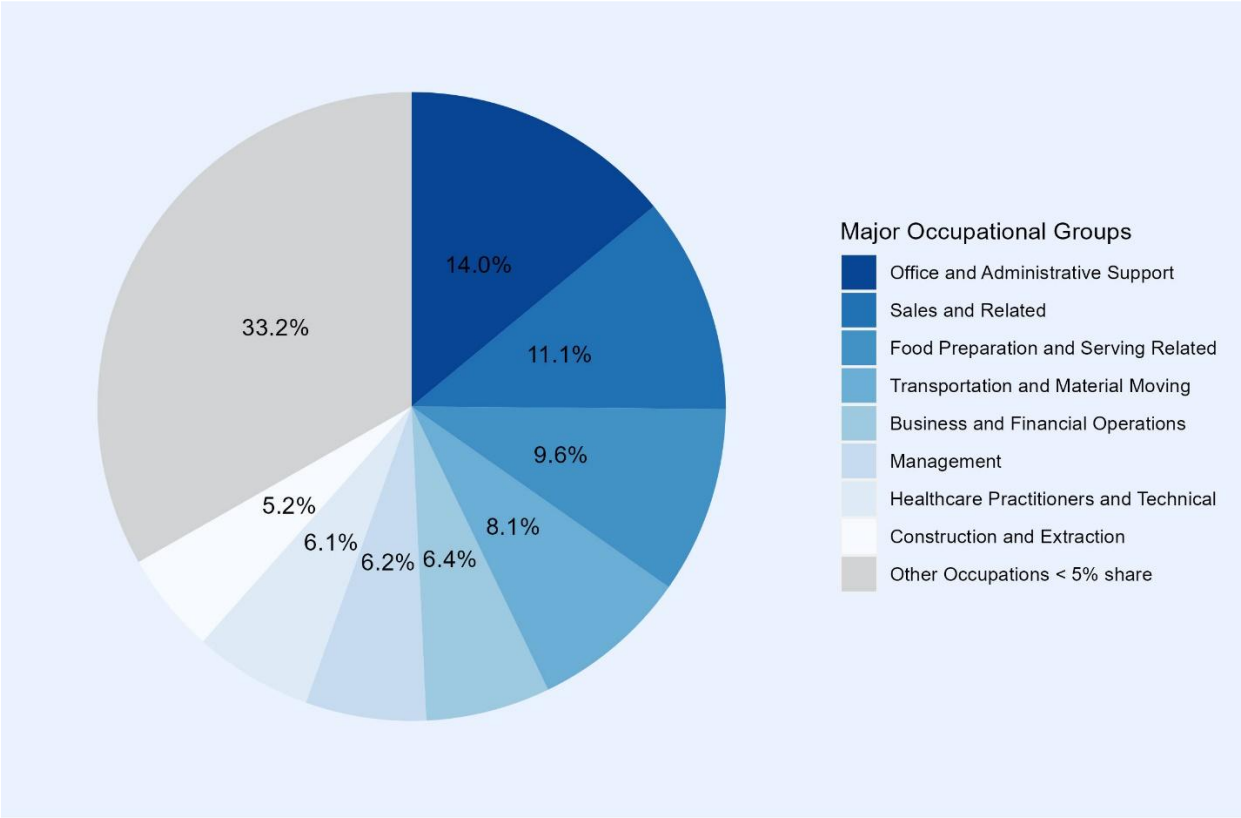
The employment in this sector was 1,133,800 in February 2020. Florida lost 43,800 Government jobs from February to April 2020. However, employment in this sector continued to decline until April 2021. As of July 2023, the employment in this industry was 1,116,400, which is 17,400 fewer jobs than February 2020 employment.

**Occupational Groups**
Occupational Groups represent 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 1,388,581 jobs (14.0% of total jobs), Sales and Related (1,108,693 jobs, 11.1%) and Food Preparation and Serving Related (960,376 jobs, 9.6%) occupations.

The "Other Occupations < 5% share" group is the sum of every other occupational group that did not have at least 5% distribution of employment in Florida. Only the eight largest major occupational groups are shown in the figure below.

**Figure 2.13**
**Percent Distribution of Employment in Florida by Major Occupational Group**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Occupational Groups by LWDA**
The following figures display local area employment by major Occupational Group. Local occupational variation results from the diversity of economic focus and industry mix of Florida's geographic areas.

Figure 2.12 lists each Occupational Group with the local workforce development area in which that group has the highest concentration.

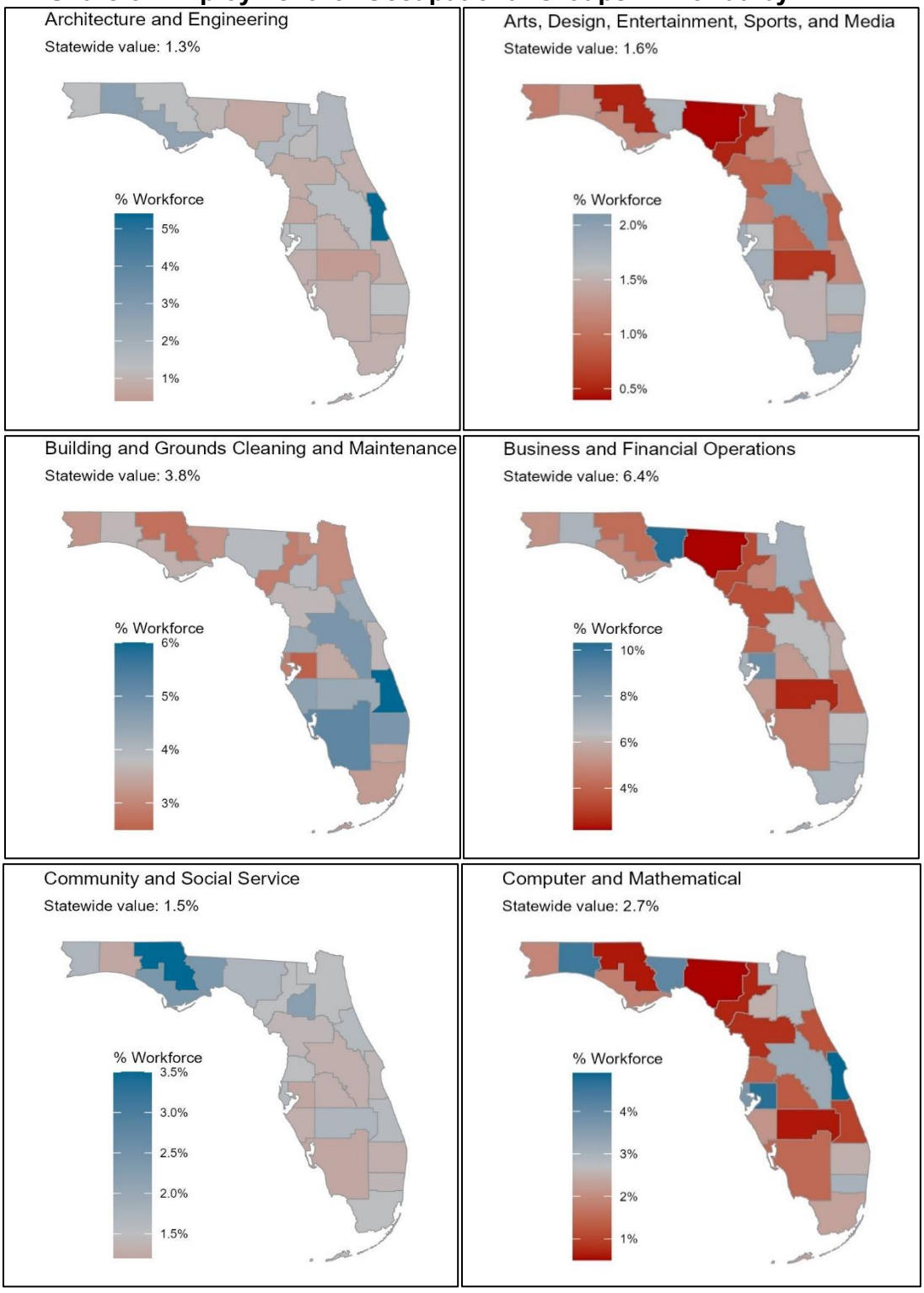
**Figure 2.14**
**Local Workforce Area with Largest Share of Employment, by Occupational Group**

| Occupational Group | Local Workforce Development Area | Share of Employment |
|---|---|---|
| Architecture and Engineering | LWDA 13 | 5.4% |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media | LWDA 12 | 2.1% |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | LWDA 20 | 6.0% |
| Business and Financial Operations | LWDA 5 | 10.3% |
| Community and Social Service | LWDA 3 | 3.5% |
| Computer and Mathematical | LWDA 13 | 4.9% |
| Construction and Extraction | LWDA 24 | 9.1% |
| Education, Training, and Library | LWDA 9 | 11.4% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | LWDA 19 | 4.7% |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related | LWDA 2 | 12.6% |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical | LWDA 9 | 10.2% |
| Healthcare Support | LWDA 19 | 4.9% |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair | LWDA 6 | 6.2% |
| Legal | LWDA 5 | 2.0% |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science | LWDA 9 | 1.8% |
| Management | LWDA 6 | 13.1% |
| Office and Administrative Support | LWDA 15 | 15.5% |
| Personal Care and Service | LWDA 18 | 3.7% |
| Production | LWDA 6 | 7.9% |
| Protective Service | LWDA 3 | 7.1% |
| Sales and Related | LWDA 2 | 13.5% |
| Transportation and Material Moving | LWDA 17 | 15.7% |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

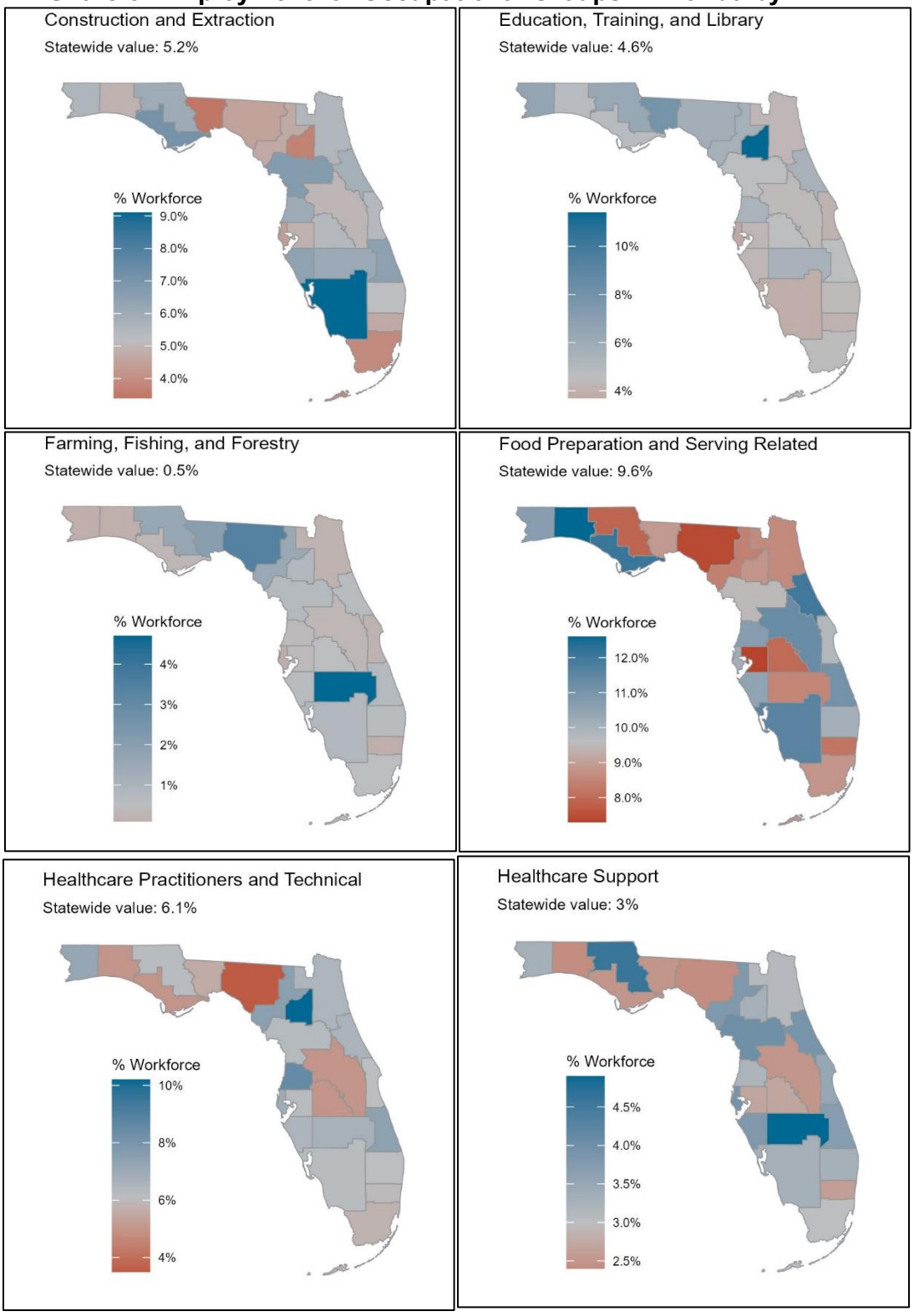
The maps in Figure 2.15 show the percent distribution of employment by major occupational group for all workforce areas in Florida. The color indicates the workforce region's share of occupational employment relative to the statewide concentration, with blue indicating a share greater than statewide, red indicating a share less than statewide, and grey indicating a share similar to the statewide concentration. (In other words, when a local workforce area is highlighted in blue, that means the occupation is unusually concentrated in that area, and if it is red, that area has a low concentration of that occupation).

**Figure 2.15**
**Share of Employment for Occupational Groups in Florida by LWDA**



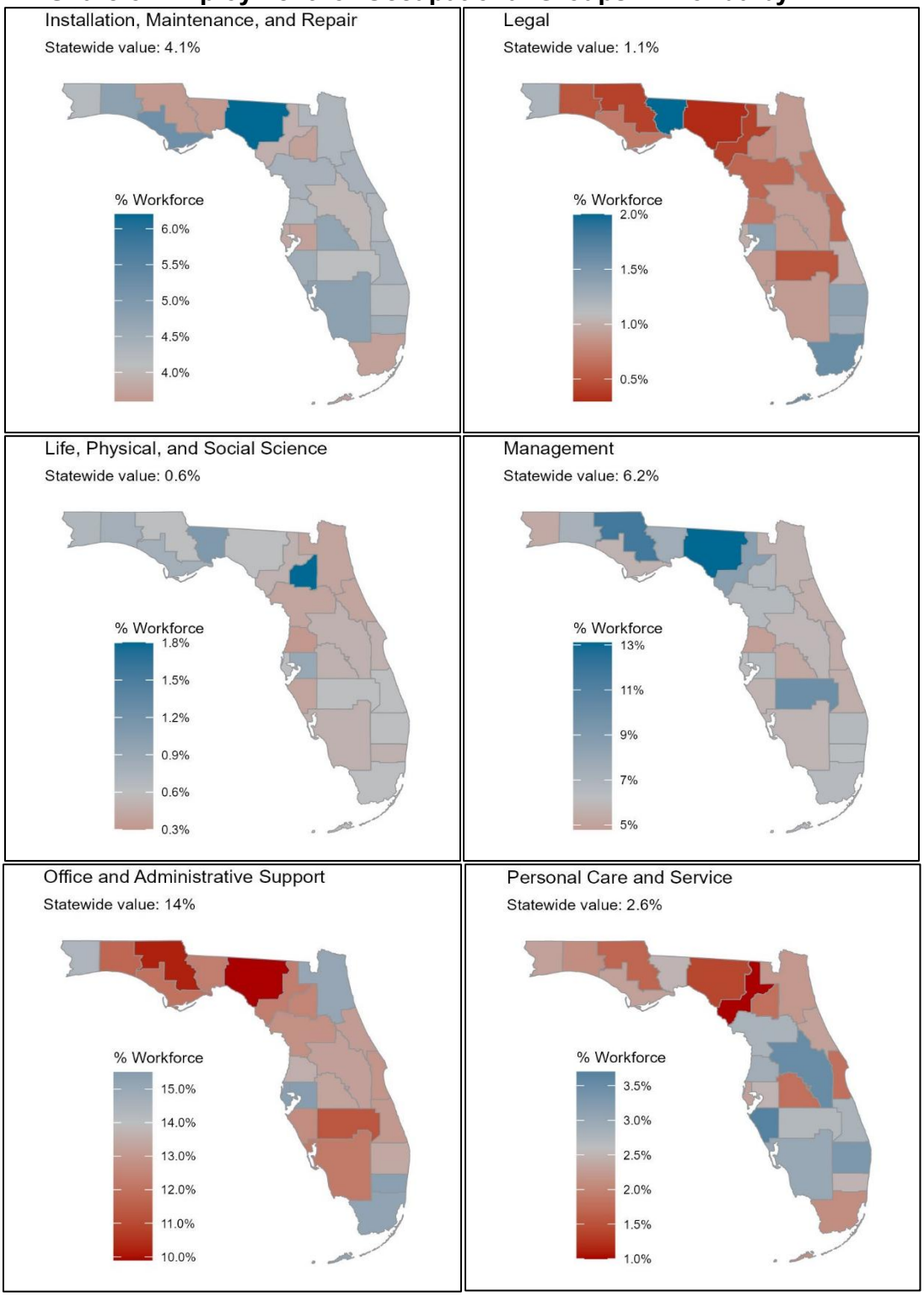

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 2.15 (continued)**
**Share of Employment for Occupational Groups in Florida by LWDA**



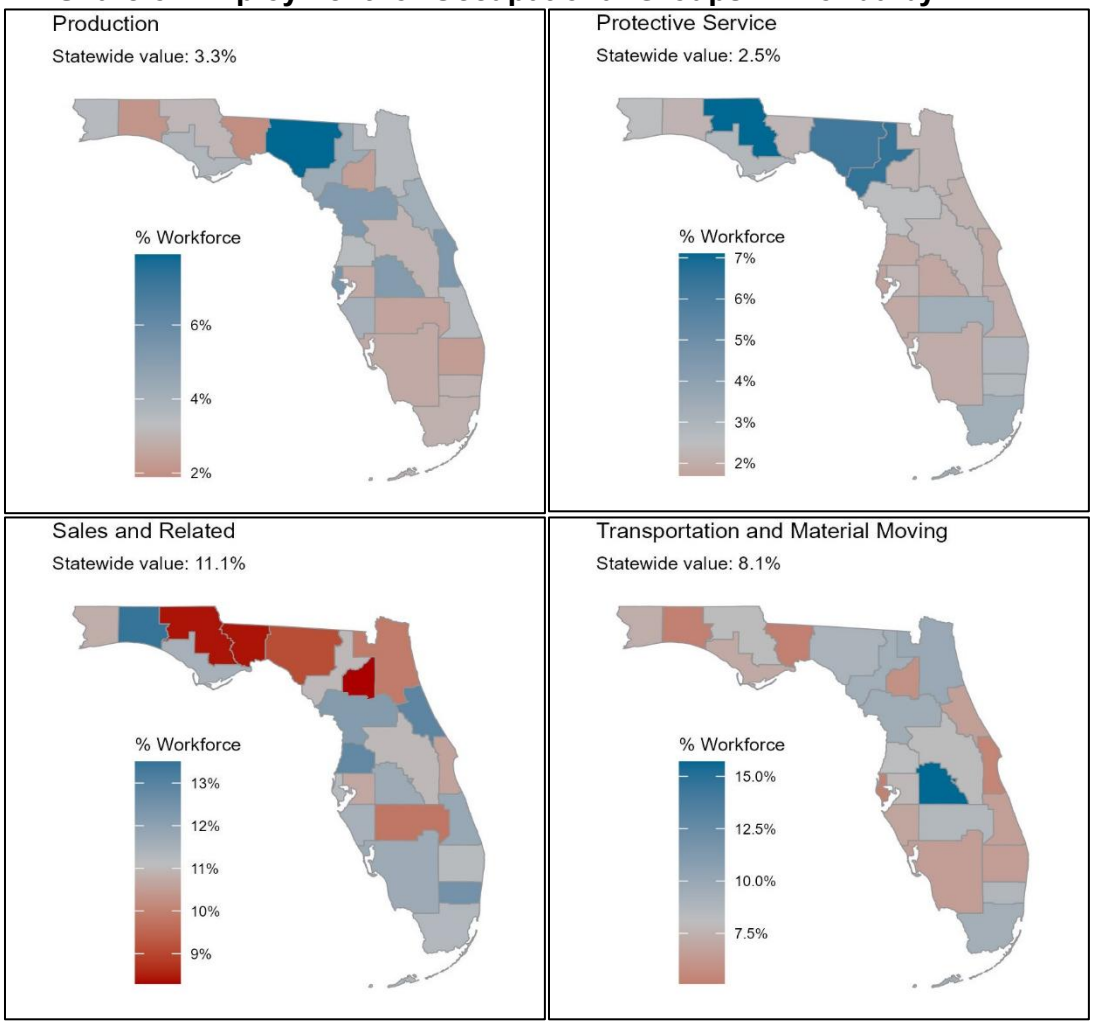

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 2.15 (continued)**
**Share of Employment for Occupational Groups in Florida by LWDA**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 2.15 (continued)**
**Share of Employment for Occupational Groups in Florida by LWDA**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Detailed 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, projected job openings are calculated using the 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.

The top five existing demand occupations for Florida statewide are related to Customer Service and Hospitality. Fast Food and Counter Workers is the top existing demand occupation with 449,810 projected total job openings between 2022 and 2030. Registered Nurses as well as General and Operations Managers are the only top existing demand occupations that require a degree beyond high school, based on criteria from the O*NET Education, Training, and Experience data.

Figure 2.16 displays the top 15 existing demand occupations (based on 2022-2030 total job openings) for Florida statewide.

**Figure 2.16**
**Top 15 Existing Demand Occupations in Florida**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-30 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings | 2022 Median Hourly Wage | 2022 Entry Wage | 2022 Experienced Wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35-3023 | Fast Food and Counter Workers | 241,499 | 273,660 | 32,161 | 13.3% | 449,810 | $12.28 | $10.62 | $13.30 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 312,884 | 322,743 | 9,859 | 3.2% | 362,022 | $14.03 | $11.32 | $18.13 |
| 35-3031 | Waiters and Waitresses | 198,790 | 215,329 | 16,539 | 8.3% | 335,957 | $13.79 | $10.27 | $18.65 |
| 41-2011 | Cashiers | 223,807 | 221,904 | -1,903 | -0.9% | 320,453 | $12.74 | $10.82 | $13.94 |
| 43-4051 | Customer Service Representatives | 271,886 | 280,721 | 8,835 | 3.2% | 286,575 | $17.61 | $13.67 | $21.16 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 163,034 | 175,557 | 12,523 | 7.7% | 221,718 | $15.87 | $13.10 | $17.56 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | 214,649 | 218,028 | 3,379 | 1.6% | 200,455 | $17.86 | $13.12 | $22.46 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 162,499 | 179,705 | 17,206 | 10.6% | 196,206 | $15.45 | $12.92 | $18.66 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 118,986 | 147,046 | 28,060 | 23.6% | 181,763 | $16.08 | $13.19 | $17.85 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 121,314 | 132,478 | 11,164 | 9.2% | 145,674 | $13.34 | $11.15 | $15.44 |
| 37-3011 | Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers | 114,705 | 128,285 | 13,580 | 11.8% | 138,730 | $15.54 | $13.35 | $17.48 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 154,799 | 171,598 | 16,799 | 10.9% | 123,818 | $42.90 | $23.02 | $70.24 |
| 43-6014 | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | 135,721 | 132,173 | -3,548 | -2.6% | 110,811 | $18.38 | $13.83 | $22.06 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 193,041 | 216,636 | 23,595 | 12.2% | 108,546 | $37.36 | $28.87 | $43.19 |
| 37-2012 | Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 86,291 | 95,910 | 9,619 | 11.1% | 106,018 | $13.69 | $11.51 | $15.21 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

The Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) also identifies existing demand occupations for the state and each LWDA in the state in published Demand Occupation Lists. These annual publications identify occupations that exhibit high growth and wages. Occupations must pass three criteria to make it on the Demand Occupation List. They must:

- Be linked to a postsecondary, associate's, or bachelor's degree
- Have entry and average wages above an employment cost and price level adjusted Florida wage
- Have above a given threshold of annual job openings in conjunction with positive projected employment growth.

**Figure 2.17**
**2023-2024 Statewide Demand Occupation List**

| Occupation Title | Annual Percent Growth | Annual Openings | 2021 Hourly Entry Wage | 2021 Hourly Mean Wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accountants and Auditors | 1.43 | 9,327 | $21.86 | $36.69 |
| Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians | 1.28 | 1,424 | $19.87 | $31.28 |
| Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers | 1.19 | 665 | $63.62 | $111.83 |
| Architectural and Civil Drafters | 1.36 | 831 | $18.87 | $26.84 |
| Architectural and Engineering Managers | 1.76 | 723 | $46.08 | $70.33 |
| Audio and Video Technicians | 2.49 | 1,013 | $14.84 | $24.05 |
| Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics | 0.33 | 5,289 | $13.91 | $21.79 |
| Biological Technicians | 1.89 | 566 | $14.82 | $20.84 |
| Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | 0.22 | 12,179 | $13.86 | $20.40 |
| Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists | 1.26 | 1,594 | $18.05 | $25.08 |
| Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity | 0.73 | 1,327 | $14.27 | $20.76 |
| Business Teachers, Postsecondary | 2.23 | 525 | $23.69 | $45.70 |
| Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians | 1.55 | 517 | $14.20 | $24.33 |
| Cargo and Freight Agents | 1.39 | 1,118 | $15.36 | $22.67 |
| Carpenters | 0.99 | 6,762 | $15.60 | $21.14 |
| Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers | 1.41 | 1,658 | $14.09 | $19.20 |
| Chefs and Head Cooks | 1.48 | 1,972 | $16.30 | $28.29 |
| Civil Engineers | 1.67 | 1,642 | $27.52 | $45.22 |
| Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators | 0.10 | 2,094 | $20.39 | $31.45 |
| Clergy | 1.03 | 1,825 | $15.27 | $24.58 |
| Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians | 1.40 | 1,891 | $15.26 | $25.13 |
| Commercial Pilots | 1.34 | 746 | $27.66 | $52.69 |
| Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other | 1.56 | 546 | $15.25 | $21.18 |
| Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists | 1.47 | 554 | $19.06 | $28.75 |
| Compliance Officers | 1.15 | 2,499 | $18.12 | $31.63 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Computer and Information Systems Managers | 1.82 | 2,248 | $44.67 | $70.34 |
| Computer Network Architects | 1.53 | 685 | $32.80 | $53.64 |
| Computer Network Support Specialists | 1.44 | 887 | $21.01 | $32.57 |
| Computer Systems Analysts | 1.45 | 2,943 | $27.96 | $44.58 |
| Computer User Support Specialists | 1.73 | 4,532 | $15.75 | $24.95 |
| Construction and Building Inspectors | 1.06 | 1,468 | $19.06 | $30.12 |
| Construction Managers | 1.64 | 3,377 | $28.74 | $49.89 |
| Cost Estimators | 0.90 | 1,377 | $19.13 | $31.18 |
| Dental Assistants | 1.87 | 3,421 | $15.87 | $19.63 |
| Dental Hygienists | 1.87 | 1,153 | $29.19 | $35.18 |
| Diagnostic Medical Sonographers | 2.45 | 614 | $26.98 | $34.27 |
| Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers | 1.10 | 788 | $14.00 | $19.61 |
| Education Administrators, Postsecondary | 1.42 | 1,111 | $33.25 | $46.05 |
| Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians | 1.42 | 782 | $19.14 | $29.33 |
| Electrical Engineers | 1.97 | 656 | $28.99 | $45.32 |
| Electricians | 1.51 | 5,999 | $16.86 | $23.60 |
| Electronics Engineers, Except Computer | 1.69 | 519 | $35.33 | $50.30 |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 1.21 | 6,265 | $21.08 | $29.57 |
| Engineers, All Other | 1.32 | 693 | $26.74 | $49.99 |
| Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers | 0.10 | 5,002 | $22.53 | $44.56 |
| Financial Managers | 2.28 | 3,661 | $34.98 | $66.29 |
| Firefighters | 0.63 | 1,626 | $16.59 | $25.71 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers | 1.35 | 6,420 | $21.04 | $31.74 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers | 1.83 | 2,885 | $13.88 | $19.74 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Landscaping, Lawn Service, and Groundskeeping Workers | 1.74 | 1,982 | $16.38 | $23.81 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers | 1.22 | 3,401 | $20.64 | $31.26 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers | 0.04 | 2,634 | $23.51 | $43.82 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers | 0.48 | 11,899 | $18.86 | $29.35 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers | 1.09 | 2,870 | $18.77 | $29.79 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers | 0.02 | 10,845 | $14.19 | $22.39 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors | 1.46 | 4,152 | $16.95 | $26.27 |
| Food Service Managers | 0.59 | 3,684 | $19.55 | $35.82 |
| General and Operations Managers | 1.36 | 15,477 | $21.26 | $47.51 |
| Glaziers | 2.24 | 869 | $15.29 | $20.39 |
| Graphic Designers | 0.70 | 1,716 | $16.87 | $25.83 |
| Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers | 1.16 | 4,213 | $15.77 | $22.52 |
| Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 0.98 | 13,002 | $14.92 | $21.62 |
| Human Resources Managers | 1.35 | 766 | $34.83 | $56.98 |
| Human Resources Specialists | 1.35 | 5,002 | $18.49 | $31.42 |
| Industrial Engineers | 2.36 | 1,025 | $30.14 | $44.86 |
| Industrial Machinery Mechanics | 2.15 | 1,828 | $18.12 | $26.07 |
| Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators | 1.83 | 4,759 | $14.88 | $19.30 |
| Information Security Analysts | 4.14 | 1,047 | $30.80 | $49.44 |
| Insurance Sales Agents | 1.06 | 5,238 | $14.47 | $28.19 |
| Interpreters and Translators | 3.15 | 522 | $13.67 | $24.63 |
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 1.20 | 979 | $19.71 | $28.39 |
| Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses | 1.57 | 3,969 | $18.96 | $23.01 |
| Loan Officers | 0.19 | 1,467 | $17.27 | $35.86 |
| Logisticians | 1.47 | 932 | $20.00 | $33.32 |
| Machinists | 1.36 | 1,125 | $15.46 | $22.14 |
| Management Analysts | 1.85 | 8,036 | $22.17 | $41.63 |
| Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 2.73 | 6,860 | $18.28 | $32.99 |
| Marketing Managers | 1.54 | 1,463 | $36.91 | $72.48 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mechanical Engineers | 1.75 | 711 | $27.76 | $43.30 |
| Medical Assistants | 2.34 | 9,263 | $13.72 | $17.06 |
| Medical Equipment Repairers | 1.49 | 569 | $15.53 | $24.55 |
| Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | 1.50 | 5,104 | $13.53 | $17.21 |
| Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners | 1.80 | 1,150 | $15.27 | $25.39 |
| Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 1.22 | 2,908 | $20.31 | $28.98 |
| Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines | 1.10 | 937 | $17.19 | $24.11 |
| Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians | 1.12 | 507 | $15.78 | $24.18 |
| Network and Computer Systems Administrators | 1.34 | 1,592 | $24.60 | $39.34 |
| Occupational Therapy Assistants | 3.36 | 588 | $24.74 | $31.43 |
| Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators | 0.96 | 2,869 | $15.72 | $21.27 |
| Painters, Construction and Maintenance | 0.95 | 3,163 | $14.28 | $18.62 |
| Paralegals and Legal Assistants | 1.80 | 4,961 | $17.89 | $25.93 |
| Personal Financial Advisors | 0.57 | 1,939 | $20.04 | $50.42 |
| Pest Control Workers | 1.36 | 1,557 | $13.66 | $18.60 |
| Pharmacy Technicians | 0.96 | 2,629 | $13.75 | $17.33 |
| Phlebotomists | 2.29 | 1,214 | $13.78 | $17.17 |
| Physical Therapist Assistants | 3.39 | 1,330 | $22.28 | $31.22 |
| Physician Assistants | 3.99 | 837 | $28.97 | $50.39 |
| Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters | 1.10 | 3,524 | $16.60 | $23.13 |
| Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers | 0.60 | 3,358 | $22.46 | $31.88 |
| Postsecondary Teachers, All Other | 1.47 | 2,167 | $19.75 | $33.81 |
| Producers and Directors | 1.81 | 774 | $18.61 | $34.98 |
| Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers | 1.09 | 3,497 | $17.33 | $32.01 |
| Public Relations Specialists | 1.40 | 1,596 | $17.13 | $30.57 |
| Radiologic Technologists and Technicians | 1.39 | 1,359 | $20.96 | $28.64 |
| Registered Nurses | 1.53 | 13,568 | $26.50 | $34.62 |
| Respiratory Therapists | 3.03 | 742 | $24.46 | $29.37 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roofers | 2.35 | 3,616 | $14.17 | $19.63 |
| Sales Managers | 1.37 | 2,575 | $30.43 | $61.04 |
| Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products | 0.83 | 9,474 | $16.02 | $32.58 |
| Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products | 1.05 | 2,619 | $21.11 | $43.77 |
| Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 1.22 | 3,890 | $21.75 | $30.83 |
| Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents | 0.49 | 3,393 | $18.80 | $37.75 |
| Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers | 2.00 | 687 | $16.23 | $22.90 |
| Sheet Metal Workers | 1.43 | 1,016 | $15.24 | $21.68 |
| Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School | 1.22 | 615 | $19.78 | $30.63 |
| Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors | 2.37 | 2,200 | $15.52 | $24.04 |
| Surgical Technologists | 1.63 | 755 | $17.60 | $23.10 |
| Surveying and Mapping Technicians | 1.65 | 717 | $14.73 | $20.52 |
| Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers | 1.41 | 2,320 | $16.05 | $25.27 |
| Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers | 1.31 | 814 | $16.56 | $22.57 |
| Tile and Stone Setters | 2.06 | 777 | $14.53 | $20.23 |
| Training and Development Specialists | 1.58 | 2,558 | $17.25 | $29.87 |
| Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers | 1.45 | 757 | $28.08 | $49.75 |
| Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers | 1.35 | 1,917 | $15.86 | $21.31 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, 2023-2024 Demand Occupation List.*

The 2021 Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act established a Labor Market Estimating Conference within the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. The Conference meets regularly to provide long-term strategic direction regarding at-risk areas of Florida's labor market. Occupational areas of concern and critical occupation

groups of concern are identified by comparing supply and demand over a 10-year forecast that considers only existing economic structures and identifies foundational imbalances that would persist without intervention.

The Conference identified 101 occupational areas of concern for the state that are represented by educational attainment in the report linked here. In the most recent convening, the conference identified Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations as critical occupational groups of concern (June 2023).

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

**Projected Changes in Occupational Demand**

Occupational employment projections tables for all Florida geographic areas can be found on the FloridaCommerce website (https://floridajobs.org/labor-market-information) and on the Florida Insight website (https://floridajobs.org/economic-data).

**Emerging Demand Industries**
Emerging industries are new or small industries with high projected employment growth. The emerging industries listed below reflect the four-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries with the fastest projected growth rates over the next eight years for industries with less than the average employment level. Notably, Trade, Transportation and Utilities industries occupy two of the five top positions and five of the top 20 positions on the list of emerging industries. The complete list of the fastest-growing industries is in Figure 2.18.

**Figure 2.18**
**Top Emerging Industries**

| Sector | Code | Industry Title | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Total Change | 2022 – 2030 Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5615 | Travel Arrangement and Reservation Services | 21,146 | 29,814 | 8,668 | 40.99% |
| **Financial Activities** | 5321 | Automotive Equipment Rental and Leasing | 15,664 | 20,470 | 4,806 | 30.68% |
| **Financial Activities** | 5331 | Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except | 1,942 | 2,473 | 531 | 27.34% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Copyrighters) | | | | |
| **Manufacturing** | 3212 | Veneer, Plywood, and Engineered Wood Product Manufacturing | 4,816 | 6,054 | 1,238 | 25.71% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6219 | Other Ambulatory Health Care Services | 18,159 | 22,706 | 4,547 | 25.04% |
| **Other Services** | 8112 | Electronic and Precision Equipment Repair and Maintenance | 8,716 | 10,816 | 2,100 | 24.09% |
| **Trade, Transportation and Utilities** | 4831 | Deep Sea, Coastal, and Great Lakes Water Transportation | 14,241 | 17,569 | 3,328 | 23.37% |
| **Information** | 5121 | Motion Picture and Video Industries | 12,266 | 15,084 | 2,818 | 22.97% |
| **Leisure and Hospitality** | 7113 | Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events | 10,195 | 12,493 | 2,298 | 22.54% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6117 | Educational Support Services | 9,170 | 11,111 | 1,941 | 21.17% |
| **Leisure and Hospitality** | 7121 | Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions | 8,115 | 9,830 | 1,715 | 21.13% |
| **Manufacturing** | 3254 | Pharmaceutical and Medicine | 10,389 | 12,500 | 2,111 | 20.32% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Manufacturing | | | | |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5417 | Scientific Research and Development Services | 25,226 | 30,274 | 5,048 | 20.01% |
| **Manufacturing** | 3361 | Motor Vehicle Manufacturing | 1,652 | 1,975 | 323 | 19.55% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5619 | Other Support Services | 13,759 | 16,439 | 2,680 | 19.48% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6116 | Other Schools and Instruction | 24,649 | 29,443 | 4,794 | 19.45% |
| **Trade, Transportation and Utilities** | 4854 | School and Employee Bus Transportation | 1,677 | 2,000 | 323 | 19.26% |
| **Manufacturing** | 3336 | Engine, Turbine, and Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing | 2,529 | 3,015 | 486 | 19.22% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6223 | Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals | 16,297 | 19,229 | 2,932 | 17.99% |
| **Construction** | 2373 | Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction | 24,568 | 28,957 | 4,389 | 17.86% |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Aviation**
As of 2022, the aviation sector (composed of subsectors including passenger and freight air transportation, airport operations and support services, and flight training) has added more than 28,000 jobs statewide since reaching a low point in 2010, an increase of 54%. The aviation sector added 11,533 jobs in 2022 alone, an increase of 15% over 2021 levels. The average annual wage of employees in the aviation sector was $80,522 in 2022, compared to the statewide average of $63,811.

The occupations expected to add the most jobs in the aviation sector that require postsecondary training are Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians; Airline pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers; Career and Technical Education Teachers; and Avionics Technicians.

**Aerospace**
As of 2022, the aerospace sector (composed of subsectors including aircraft and aircraft parts manufacturing, search and navigation instrument manufacturing, missile and space vehicle manufacturing, and satellite communications) has added more than 10,000 jobs statewide since reaching a low point in 2014, an increase of 39%. Florida's aviation sector added 2,453 jobs in 2022 alone, an increase of 6% over 2021 levels. The average annual wage of employees in the aerospace sector was $110,825 in 2022, compared to the statewide average of $63,811.

The occupations expected to add the most jobs in the aerospace sector that require postsecondary training are Industrial Engineers; Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians; Software Developers; Mechanical Engineers; and Aerospace Engineers.

**Emerging Occupations**
Emerging occupations comprise (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 statisticians, information security analysts, and physician assistants.

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 and technological innovation.

The Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupational group is projected to account for five of the top 20 emerging occupations (Physician Assistants, Veterinary Technologists and Technicians, Respiratory Therapists, Veterinarians, Genetic Counselors).

Figure 2.19 shows the top 20 emerging occupations for Florida statewide. This list is based on the 2022-2030 projected job growth rate for occupations with less than average employment at the occupational level.

**Figure 2.19**
**Top 20 Emerging Occupations in Florida**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings | 2022 Median Wage | 2022 Entry Wage | 2022 Experienced Wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15-2041 | Statisticians | 1,488 | 2,075 | 587 | 39.4% | 1,588 | $35.00 | $21.61 | $49.64 |
| 15-1212 | Information Security Analysts | 8,469 | 11,271 | 2,802 | 33.1% | 8,383 | $51.17 | $34.11 | $63.62 |
| 29-1071 | Physician Assistants | 8,066 | 10,639 | 2,573 | 31.9% | 6,692 | $52.48 | $31.91 | $64.04 |
| 15-2098 | Data Scientists and Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other | 2,864 | 3,764 | 900 | 31.4% | 2,763 | - | - | - |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Assistants | 7,909 | 10,052 | 2,143 | 27.1% | 10,642 | $30.94 | $24.26 | $35.62 |
| 31-2011 | Occupational Therapy Assistants | 3,396 | 4,308 | 912 | 26.9% | 4,702 | $31.31 | $26.39 | $35.25 |
| 39-1013 | First-Line Supervisors of Gambling Services Workers | 1,069 | 1,354 | 285 | 26.7% | 1,311 | $27.71 | $19.38 | $31.94 |
| 39-3011 | Gaming Dealers | 4,802 | 6,076 | 1,274 | 26.5% | 7,559 | $12.35 | $10.61 | $20.08 |
| 25-1071 | Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary | 11,611 | 14,614 | 3,003 | 25.9% | 12,597 | $38.45 | $25.60 | $54.93 |
| 27-4032 | Film and Video Editors | 1,558 | 1,959 | 401 | 25.7% | 1,720 | $23.48 | $18.08 | $30.86 |
| 27-3091 | Interpreters and Translators | 3,826 | 4,789 | 963 | 25.2% | 4,182 | $22.50 | $15.35 | $31.29 |
| 25-1072 | Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary | 4,634 | 5,792 | 1,158 | 25.0% | 4,972 | $37.08 | $26.13 | $44.75 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29-2056 | Veterinary Technologists and Technicians | 11,022 | 13,752 | 2,730 | 24.8% | 9,693 | $17.69 | $14.21 | $20.34 |
| 31-9096 | Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers | 6,097 | 7,600 | 1,503 | 24.7% | 10,240 | $16.16 | $13.11 | $17.35 |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists | 8,993 | 11,172 | 2,179 | 24.2% | 5,939 | $31.50 | $26.99 | $36.06 |
| 29-1131 | Veterinarians | 5,472 | 6,791 | 1,319 | 24.1% | 2,862 | $50.42 | $34.02 | $66.21 |
| 47-3016 | Helpers--Roofers | 1,313 | 1,625 | 312 | 23.8% | 1,686 | $17.65 | $14.75 | $18.77 |
| 15-1221 | Computer and Information Research Scientists | 1,360 | 1,682 | 322 | 23.7% | 1,151 | $55.09 | $40.86 | $74.70 |
| 15-2031 | Operations Research Analysts | 6,159 | 7,597 | 1,438 | 23.3% | 5,020 | $36.09 | $21.01 | $47.59 |
| 17-3021 | Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technicians | 1,887 | 2,319 | 432 | 22.9% | 1,973 | $37.28 | $23.47 | $44.61 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

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

**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 legal authority to work in an occupation. Possession of a certificate or license usually commands a wage premium, generally ranging from 15% to 35% in Florida. Figure 2.20 displays median weekly earnings for full-time workers over age 25, with and without certifications.

Among all Floridians in this group, 27.1% have a certificate or license, with median weekly earnings of $1,008. This is 30% higher than the same measure for those without a certification ($774). That difference is reported in the table as the "wage premium." The wage premium from certificates and licenses tends to be higher among older workers, and lower among female or Black workers.

**Figure 2.20**
**Florida Weekly Earnings with Certificates or Licenses (Ages 25 and above)**

| | | Median Weekly Earnings for Full-time Wage & Salary Workers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % With Certificate or License | Without Certificate or License | With Certificate or License | Wage Premium |
| Total Employed (over 25) | 27.1% | $774 | $1,008 | 30% |
| Age | | | | |
| 25 - 34 | 23.0% | $694 | $859 | 24% |
| 35 - 44 | 28.7% | $814 | $1,010 | 24% |
| 45 - 54 | 29.5% | $802 | $1,085 | 35% |
| 55 - 64 | 26.9% | $859 | $1,094 | 27% |
| 65 + | 27.9% | $757 | $1,245 | 64% |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 24.6% | $839 | $1,132 | 35% |
| Female | 30.0% | $708 | $917 | 30% |
| Education | | | | |
| Male (non-Degree) | 15.8% | $730 | $858 | 18% |
| Male (Degree) | 34.0% | $1,155 | $1,378 | 19% |
| Female (non-Degree) | 16.8% | $599 | $666 | 11% |
| Female (Degree) | 41.2% | $905 | $1,045 | 15% |
| Race | | | | |
| White | 27.4% | $806 | $1,056 | 31% |
| Black or African American | 25.7% | $657 | $755 | 15% |
| Asian | 28.7% | $944 | $1,144 | 21% |
| Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity | 22.3% | $677 | $934 | 38% |

*Source: LMI Institute, State Certifications and Licenses Data Tables, 2019.*

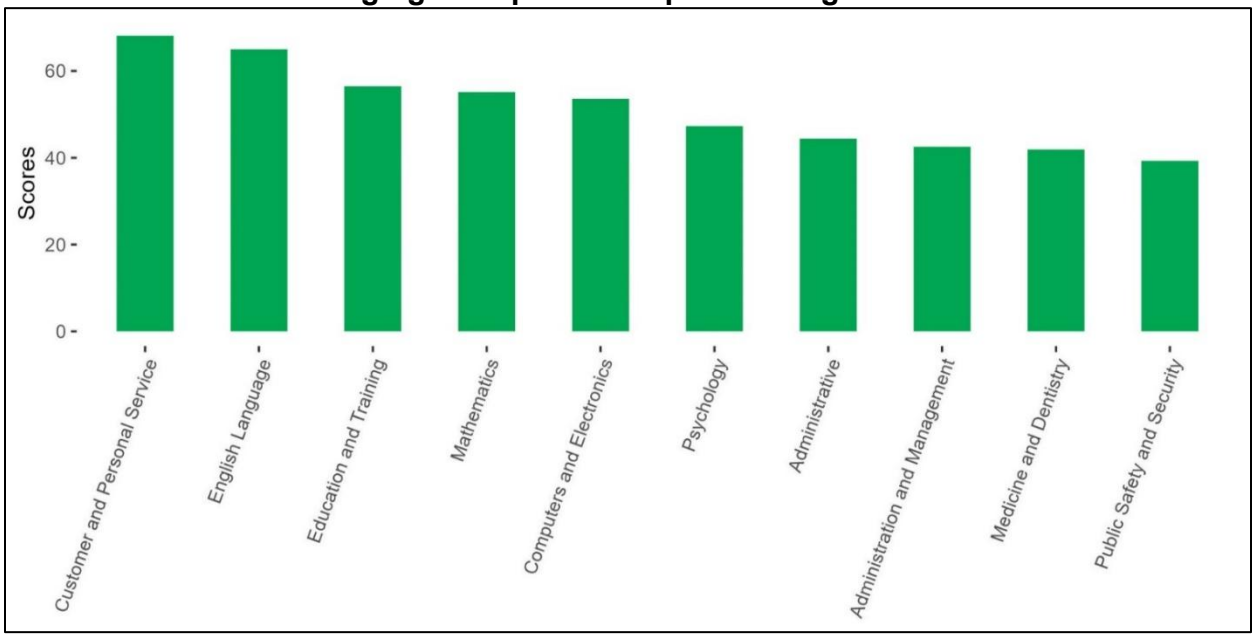
The needs of employers with respect to knowledge and technology skills are also available for each occupation in the labor market by the Occupational Information Network (O*Net) system (see https://www.onetonline.org/). By using the content in the O*NET database, it is possible to analyze the knowledge and technology skills needed 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 knowledge topics were matched to the relevant occupational groups. The level and importance scores were added together and standardized to a 100-point scale. Technology requirements that are often included in employer job postings are referred to as hot technologies. These are added across the relevant occupational groups to show the top ten most frequently mentioned hot technologies used to measure technology skills.

The highest knowledge scores for emerging occupations are Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Education and Training, Mathematics, and Computers and Electronics (Figure 2.21). Over half of the top emerging occupations list software for Office suites, spreadsheets, presentations, word processing, and electronic mail as hot technology skills (Figure 2.22).

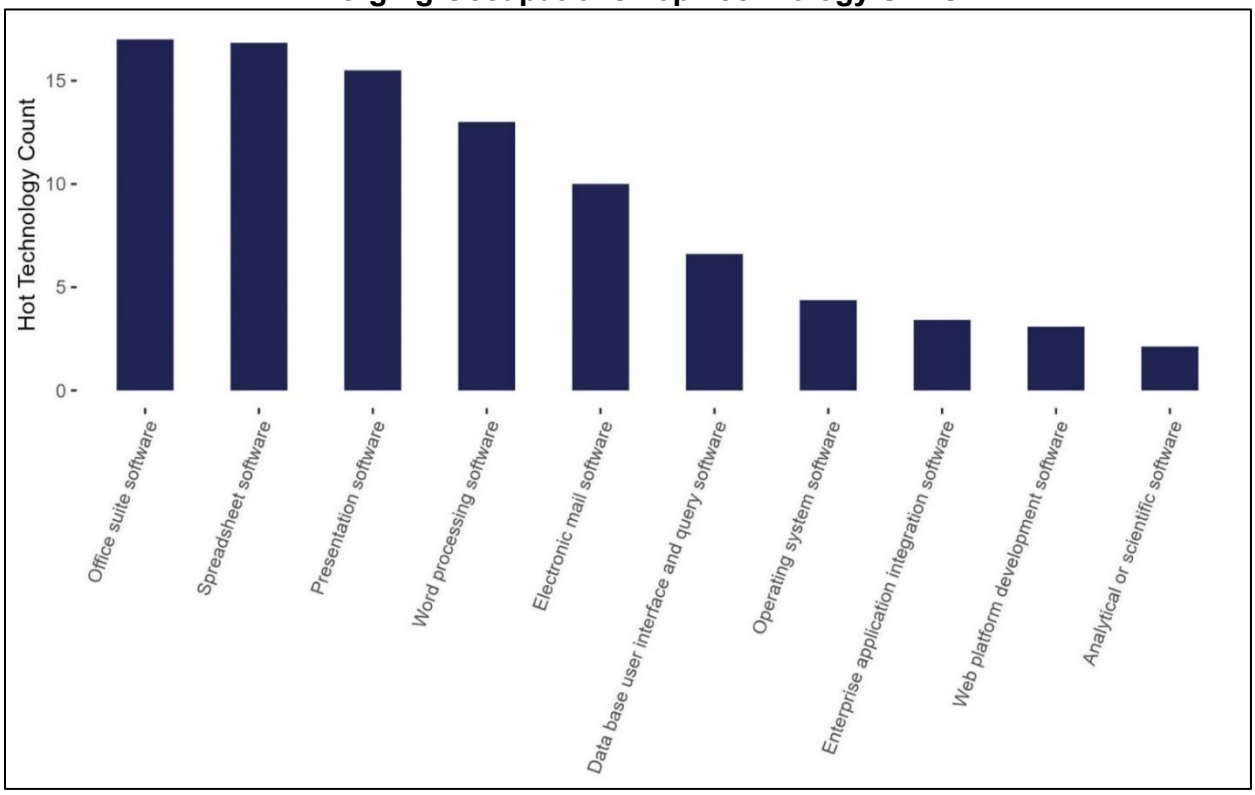
According to O*NET Education, Training, and Experience data, four of the top 20 emerging occupations require an associate degree (Physical Therapist Assistants, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Film and Video Editors, and Respiratory Therapists), two require a Bachelor's degree (Information Security Analysts and Interpreters and Translators), and six require a Master's degree (Statisticians, Physician Assistants, Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary, Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary, Veterinarians, and Genetic Counselors).

**Figure 2.21**
**Emerging Occupations Top Knowledge Scores**




*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

**Figure 2.22**
**Emerging Occupations Top Technology Skills**

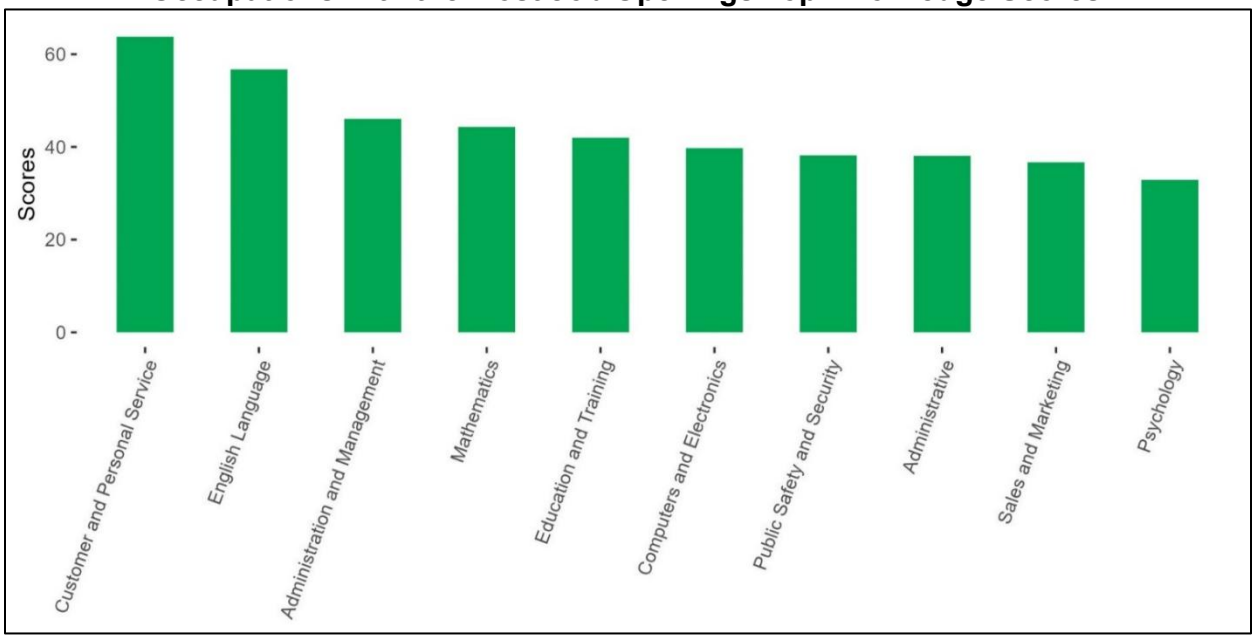



*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

According to O*Net Education, Training, and Experience, five of the top 20 occupations that will gain the most new job openings from 2022 to 2030 require the majority to have a bachelor's degree or higher: Registered Nurses, General and Operations Managers, Marketing Research Analysts, Management Analysts, and Accountants and Auditors.

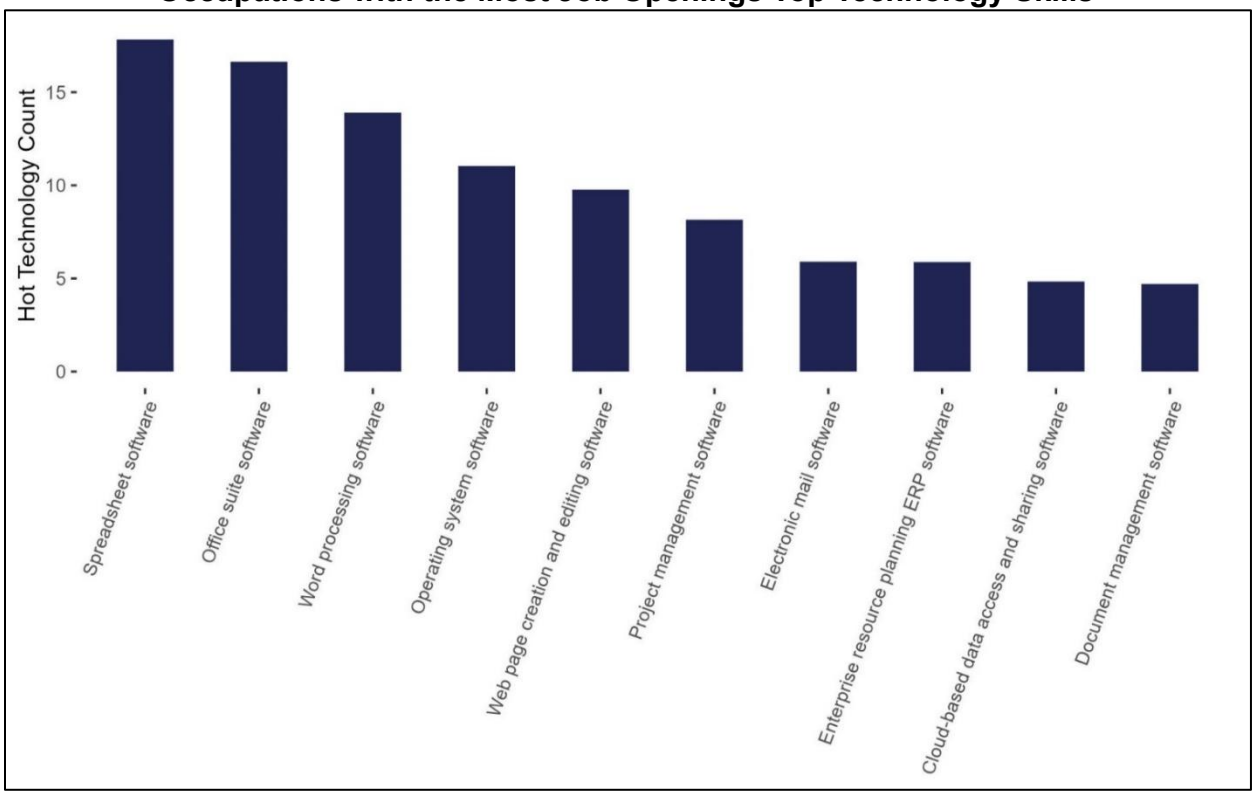
The highest knowledge scores for the occupations projected to have the most new job openings from 2022-2030 are Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Administration and Management, Mathematics, and Education and Training. More than 15 of the 20 occupations have spreadsheet and Office suite software as hot technologies.

**Figure 2.23**
**Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Knowledge Scores**




*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

**Figure 2.24**
**Occupations with the Most Job Openings Top Technology Skills**

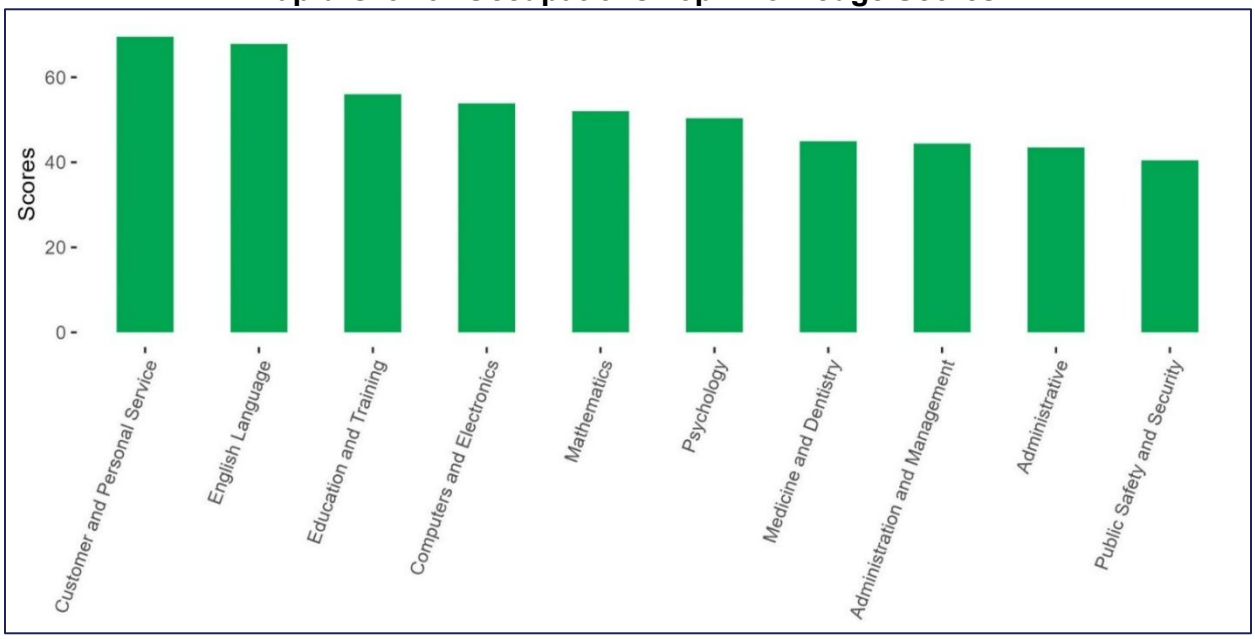


*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

According to O*Net Education, Training, and Experience, ten of the top 20 fastest-growing occupations from 2022 to 2030 require the majority to have a bachelor's degree or higher: Nurse Practitioners, Information Security Analysts, Physician Assistants, Postsecondary Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Veterinarians, Operations Research Analysts, Market Research Analysts, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Diagnostic Medical Sonographers.

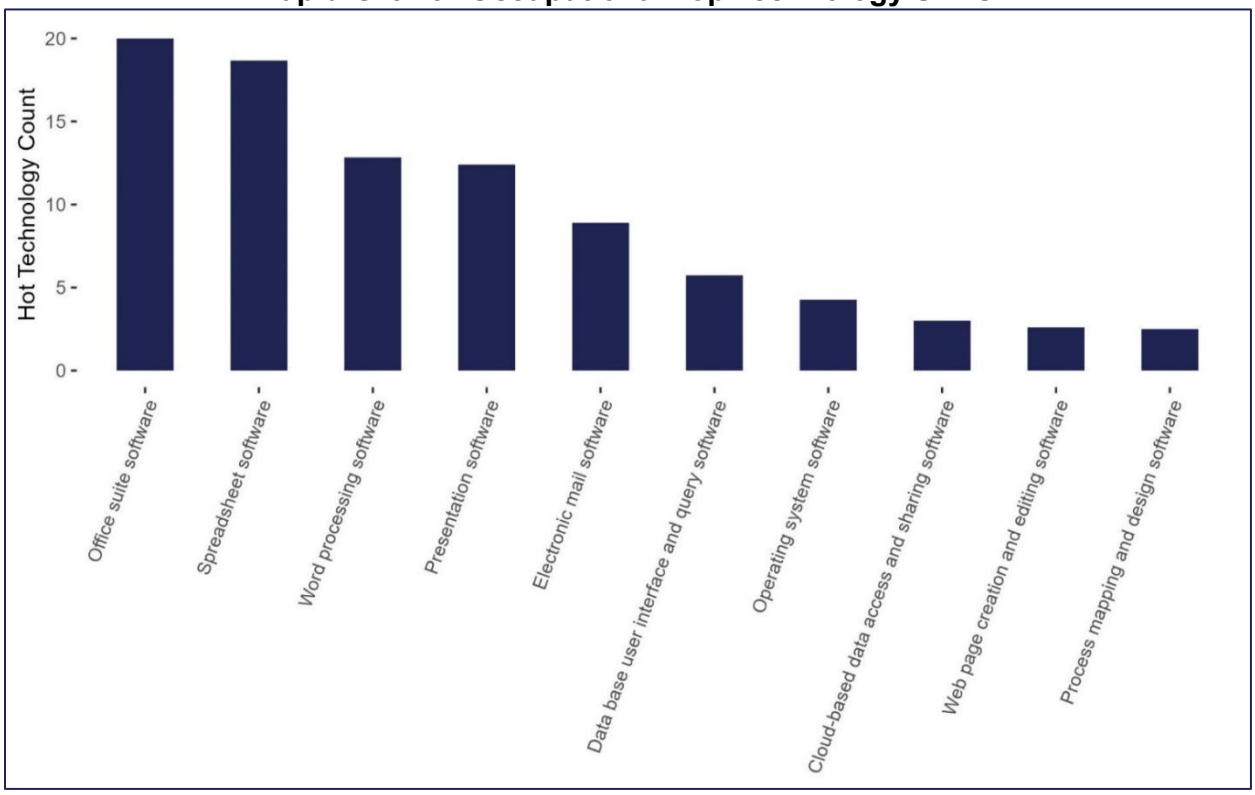
The highest knowledge scores for occupations projected to grow the fastest between 2022 and 2030 are Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Education and Training, Computers and Electronics, and Mathematics (Figure 2.25). More than 15 of the 20 occupations have Office suite and spreadsheet software as hot technologies (Figure 2.26).

**Figure 2.25**
**Rapid Growth Occupations Top Knowledge Scores**




*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

**Figure 2.26**
**Rapid Growth Occupational Top Technology Skills**




*Source: O*NET and Florida Department of Commerce, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

**(B) Workforce Analysis.**

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

**(i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.**

**(ii) Labor Market Trends. Provide and analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.**

**(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the Workforce.**

**(iv) Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion. Describe areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and**

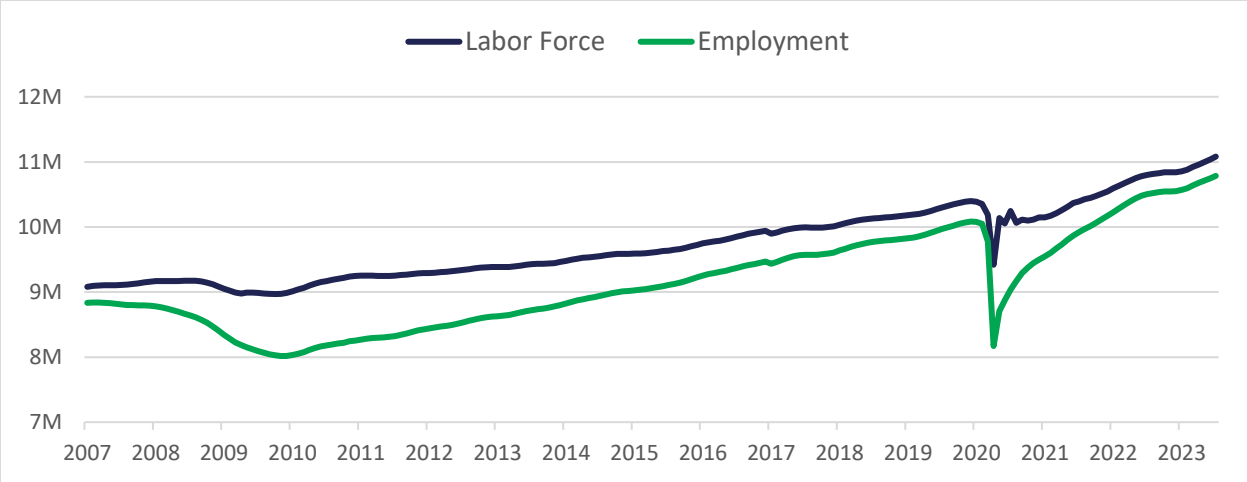
**skills needs identified in the economy compared to the assets available in the labor force in the state.**

**(i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates and trends in the state.**

**Labor Force and Population**

The labor force counts the number of residents who are either currently working or actively seeking and available to work, while employment counts only the number of those who are currently working. The labor force participation rate measures the number of people in the labor force as a percentage of all individuals potentially available for work.

**Figure 2.27**
**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 Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

During the Great Recession (the global economic downturn from 2007 to 2009 associated with the housing bubble collapse and resulting financial crisis), Florida's labor force decreased to a low of 8,969,000 in October 2009. Employment reached its low at 8,016,000 in November 2009. Since then, both labor force and total employment increased steadily until the start of the pandemic after February 2020.

Between February and April 2020, employment declined by 1,878,000. The labor force (including both employed and unemployed workers) declined by 936,000 in the same period, as many of those who lost employment left the labor force entirely.

Since then, both measures have been increasing. In June 2021, Florida's labor force surpassed the pre-pandemic labor force of February 2020. As of July 2023, there were 11,081,000 people in the labor force, with 10,785,000 of them employed.

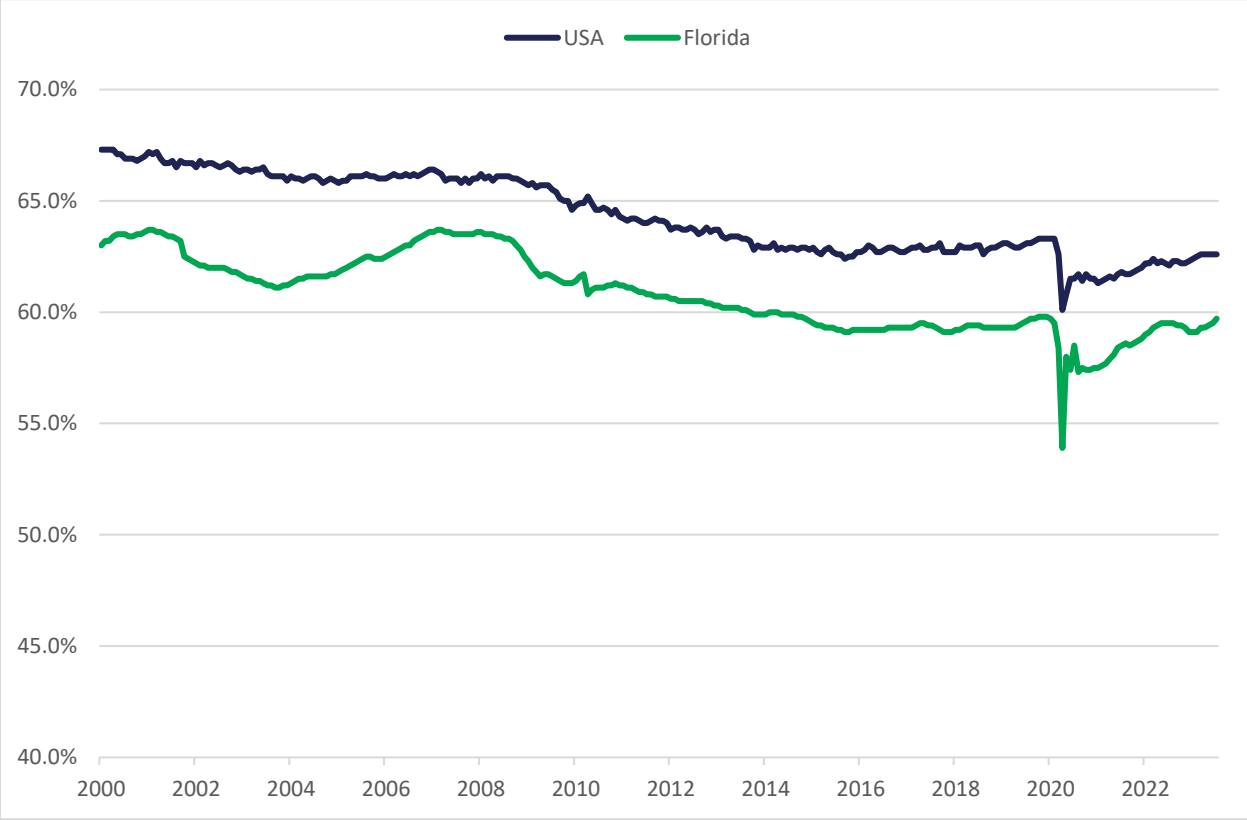
**Labor Force Participation**

The labor force participation rate is an estimate of the proportion of people in an economy who are contributing to its labor supply. It is calculated as the number of people ages 16

and over who are employed or actively seeking employment divided by the total noninstitutionalized, civilian working-age population.

As seen in Figure 2.28, both Florida and national labor force participation rates have been declining for decades, and notably, Florida's participation rate has always been below the national rate. This is due to persistent differences in demographic composition between Florida and the nation. Florida has an older average population than the United States and a greater proportion of Florida's residents are retirees, who are by definition not included in the labor force. In Florida, the all-time high labor force participation rate of 63.7% was recorded in March 2007, while the national all-time high of 67.3% was recorded in April 2000.

**Figure 2.28**
**Labor Force Participation Rate (Seasonally Adjusted)**




*Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

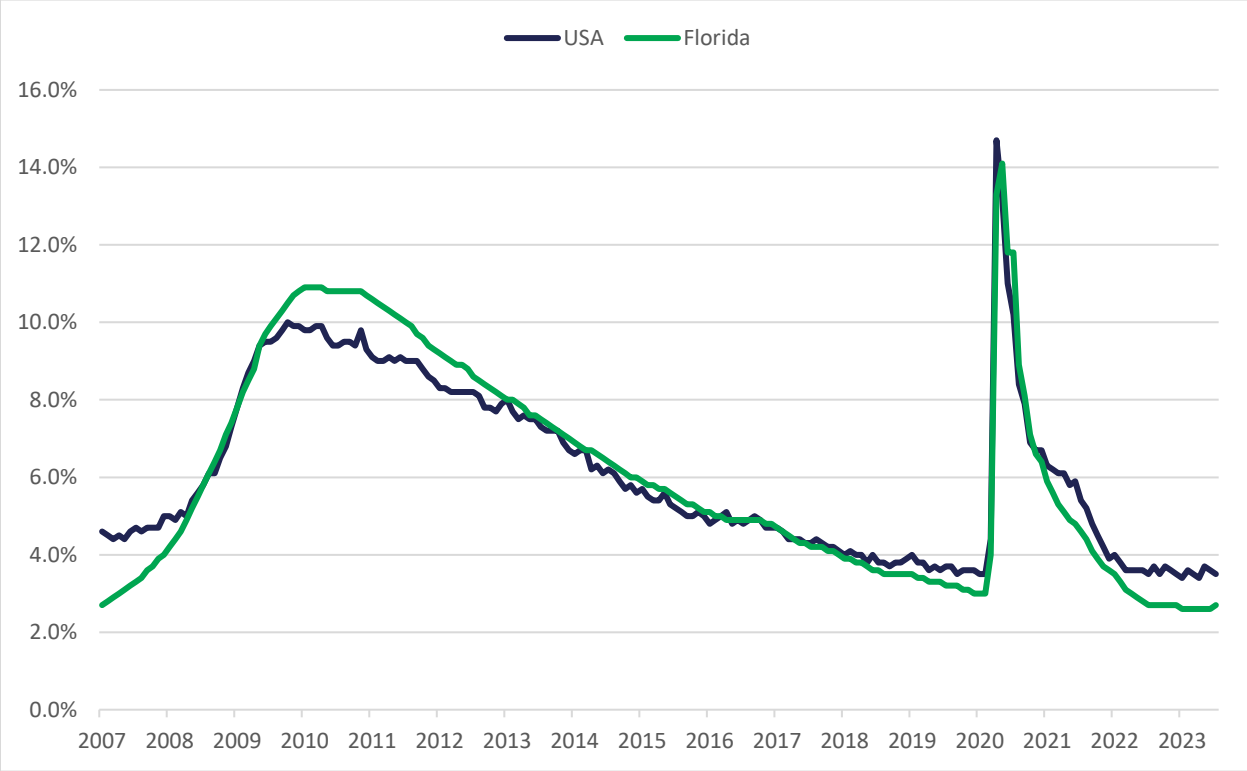
In February 2020, the state and national labor force participation rates were 59.5% and 63.3%, respectively. From February 2020 to April 2020, Florida's labor force participation rate declined by 5.6 percentage points, much greater than the national decline of 3.2 percentage points.

However, Florida recovered more quickly. By May 2022, Florida's rate had returned to 59.5% (the same rate as February 2020), whereas the national rate was 62.3% (1.0 percentage point lower than February 2020). As of July 2023, Florida's rate was 59.7% (0.2

percentage points higher than February 2020) and the national rate was 62.6% (0.7 percentage points lower than February 2020).

**Unemployment**
The unemployment rate is the share of the labor force that is jobless and actively seeking work, expressed as a percentage of the total labor force.

**Figure 2.29**
**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 Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, August 2023.*

During the Great Recession, Florida's unemployment rate reached a peak of 10.9% in April 2010, when there were 989,000 unemployed persons in the state. From the start of the Great Recession until 2017, the state unemployment rate trended slightly higher than the national rate (Figure 2.29). This relationship reversed in 2018, when Florida's unemployment rate fell below the national rate and remained there until May 2020. For 111 months, from the end of the Great Recession to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the YoY percent change in unemployment was negative in every month.

The February 2020 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.0%. Between February 2020 and May 2020, Florida's unemployment increased by 1,126,000 and the unemployment rate reached a new peak at 14.1%. (At the same time, the national unemployment rate peaked at 14.7% in April 2020). Florida's unemployment rate increased from a post-2008 low to a record high in just three months. In November 2020, Florida's unemployment rate (6.6%) fell back below the national rate (6.7%) and has remained there

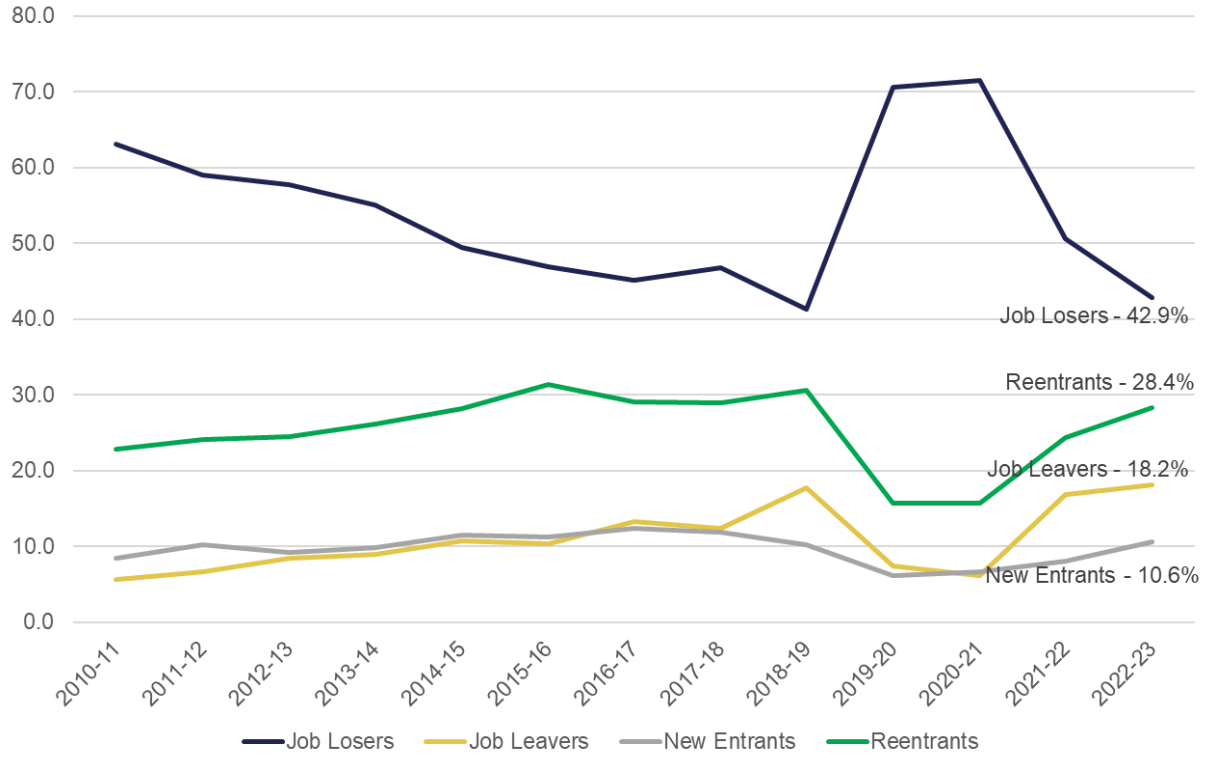
since. In July 2023, Florida's unemployment rate was 2.7%, while the national unemployment rate was 3.5%.

**Reasons for Unemployment**

Unemployed individuals can be categorized into one of four reasons for unemployment: job losers, job leavers, re-entrants, and new entrants. Job losers are people on temporary layoff, people who completed a temporary job, or people whose employment ended involuntarily. Job leavers are unemployed because they voluntarily left their job and started looking for new employment. Re-entrants have past work experience but were not in the labor force for a period of time before searching for work. New entrants are looking for their first job with no previous work experience.

Two of the most common reasons for unemployment are job losers and re-entrants. In the Program Year (PY) 2022-2023, job leavers increased as a share of total unemployment to the highest level in recent history. (Figure 2.30).

**Figure 2.30**
**Unemployed Persons by Reason for Unemployment**
**As a Percentage of Total Unemployment in Florida**




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

CareerSource Florida engages with business and education stakeholders to understand talent needs of Florida's industries, help businesses find qualified workers and build talent pipelines for diverse industry sectors. CareerSource Florida's business-led board approves policies and initiatives that promote greater employability for job seekers and those with

barriers to employment through upskilling, work-based training, and increased credential attainment. These initiatives facilitate access to education, training, and meaningful employment, while also aiding businesses in identifying, developing and retaining employees through high-impact support.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors appoints the Credentials Review Committee, which identifies the most in-demand credentials for inclusion in a Master Credentials List for the State Board of Education. The list directs the use of federal and state funds for workforce education and training programs.

Strategic Initiatives are described in Section II(b) and Section II(c). Specific strategic policies can be obtained on the CareerSource Florida Website. Administrative and operational policies can be obtained on the FloridaCommerce Website.

**Demographic Impacts**

Figures 2.31 and 2.32 compare changes in labor force participation and unemployment rates on an annual basis between 2021 and 2022 (latest data available) by age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

The age groups with the highest annual unemployment rates in 2022 were 16- to 19-year-olds and 20- to 24-year-olds (among both men and women). Unemployment among women ages 20-24 decreased by 3.9 percentage points, the largest decrease of any age group. The unemployment rate for women overall in 2022 was 2.8% compared to 2.9% for men.

**Figure 2.31**
**Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender**

| Labor Force Participation Rate | | | | Unemployment Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021 | 2022 | Difference | 2021 | 2022 | Difference |
| **Female** | | | | | | |
| Age 16+ | 52.60% | 54.50% | 1.90% | 4.60% | 2.80% | -1.80% |
| Age 16-19 | 31.30% | 33.20% | 1.90% | 11.90% | 13.80% | 1.90% |
| Age 20-24 | 66.70% | 67.90% | 1.20% | 7.80% | 3.90% | -3.90% |
| Age 25-34 | 75.50% | 74.50% | -1.00% | 4.40% | 3.20% | -1.20% |
| Age 35-44 | 73.20% | 74.90% | 1.70% | 4.30% | 2.40% | -1.90% |
| Age 45-54 | 73.60% | 76.00% | 2.40% | 4.20% | 2.00% | -2.20% |
| Age 55-64 | 58.40% | 59.10% | 0.70% | 4.10% | 2.30% | -1.80% |
| Age 65+ | 13.60% | 15.40% | 1.80% | 3.90% | 1.40% | -2.50% |
| **Male** | | | | | | |
| Age 16+ | 64.50% | 64.70% | 0.20% | 4.40% | 2.90% | -1.50% |
| Age 16-19 | 29.30% | 29.30% | 0.00% | 13.10% | 12.40% | -0.70% |
| Age 20-24 | 74.50% | 73.70% | -0.80% | 6.20% | 6.60% | 0.40% |
| Age 25-34 | 88.60% | 88.00% | -0.60% | 5.30% | 3.50% | -1.80% |
| Age 35-44 | 89.50% | 88.60% | -0.90% | 4.30% | 2.10% | -2.20% |
| Age 45-54 | 83.90% | 85.60% | 1.70% | 3.50% | 1.70% | -1.80% |
| Age 55-64 | 69.80% | 70.40% | 0.60% | 3.30% | 1.80% | -1.50% |
| Age 65+ | 20.90% | 21.90% | 1.00% | 3.10% | 2.30% | -0.80% |

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research.*

The 2022 annual unemployment rate among African Americans was 3.7%, followed by Hispanics at 2.7%, and Whites at 2.1% (Figure 2.32). Unemployment decreased by 2.5 percentage points for African Americans from 2021 to 2022, the largest decrease among the three groups. Youth unemployment (categorized as ages 16-19) decreased for African Americans and Hispanics but increased for Whites. African American youth unemployment was 16.4%, followed by 16.1% among Hispanics, and 9.8% among Whites.

**Figure 2.32**
**Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates by Age and Race/Ethnicity**

| | Labor Force Participation Rate | | | Unemployment Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021 | 2022 | Difference | 2021 | 2022 | Difference |
| **Hispanic** | | | | | | |
| Age 16-19 | 30.20% | 28.20% | -2.00% | 17.30% | 16.10% | -1.20% |
| Age 20+ | 66.10% | 67.30% | -1.20% | 5.10% | 2.70% | -2.40% |
| **Black** | | | | | | |
| Age 16-19 | 26.70% | 34.70% | 8.00% | 18.50% | 16.40% | -2.10% |
| Age 20+ | 64.20% | 65.80% | 1.60% | 6.20% | 3.70% | -2.50% |
| **White** | | | | | | |
| Age 16-19 | 34.00% | 33.10% | -0.90% | 6.90% | 9.80% | 3.00% |
| Age 20+ | 55.10% | 56.30% | 1.20% | 3.40% | 2.10% | -1.30% |

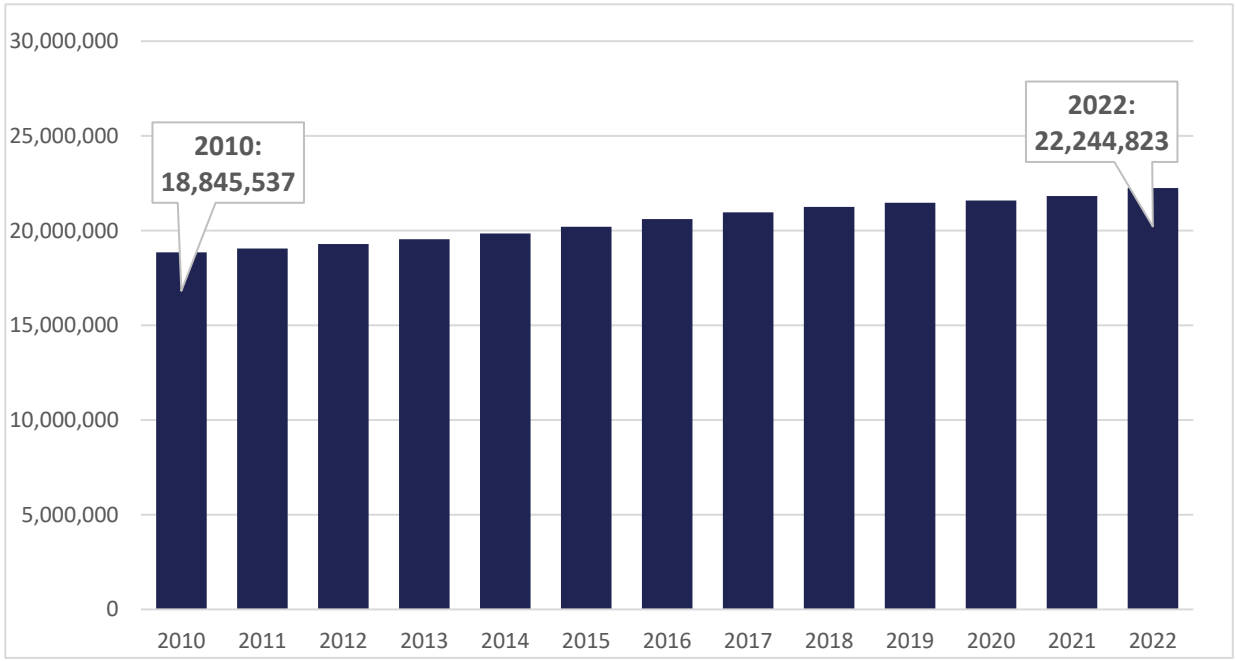
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Prepared by the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research.*

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

**Total Population**

Florida's population has increased every year since 2010, a factor contributing to increases in both total demand for labor and labor supply over time. As of 2022, Florida's population had grown to 22,244,823 people.

**Figure 2.33**
**Florida – Total Population**

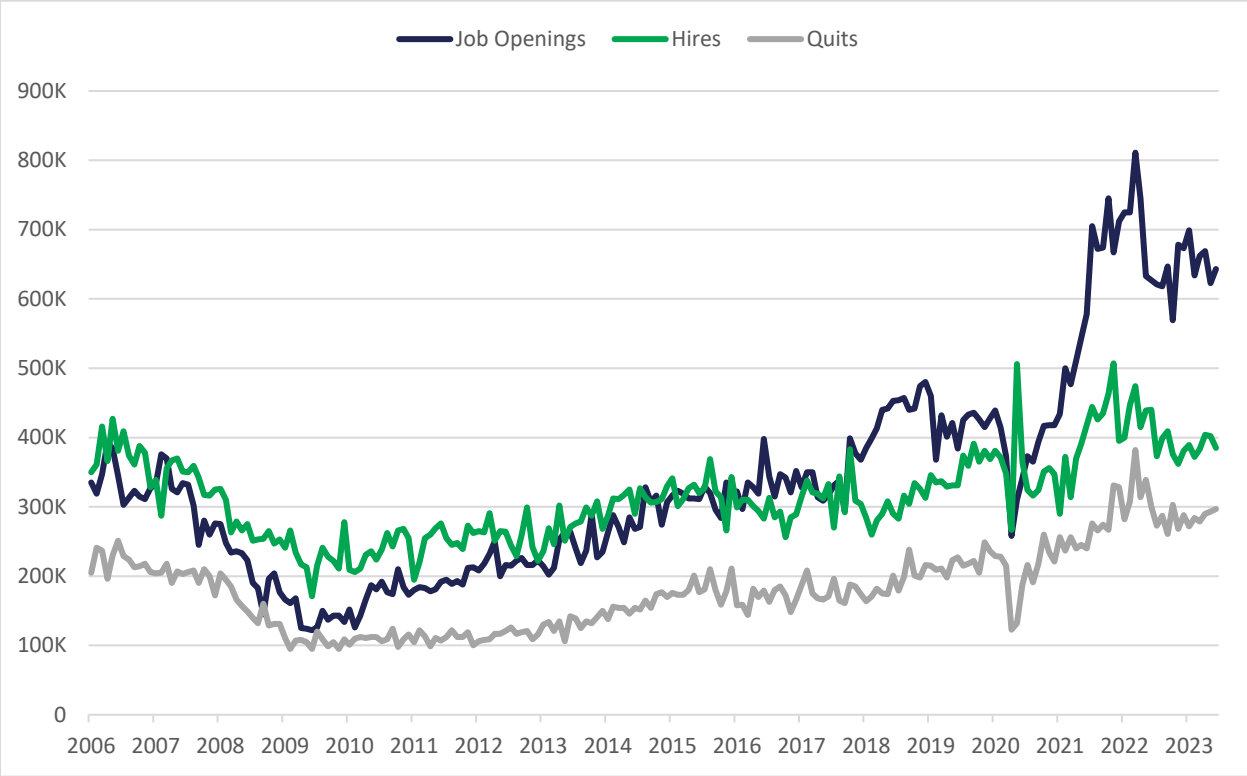



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau.*

### (ii) Labor Market Trends

Total job openings in Florida (which include all open/advertised positions) reached their lowest recent level in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic recession. After the recession, the number of job openings in Florida reached an all-time high in March 2022 (811,000). Job openings remain elevated, at 643,000 openings in June 2023 (Figure 2.34).

**Figure 2.34**
**Florida Job Openings, Hires, and Quits (Seasonally Adjusted)**




*Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS Experimental State Estimates, August 2023.*

Monthly hires (all additions to employment payroll) have been more volatile since the pandemic, fluctuating between a rehiring spike at 506,000 hires in May 2020 and a low of 290,000 hires in January 2021. Florida employers filled an estimated 385,000 jobs in June 2023.

Monthly job quits (voluntary separations) reached a seven-year low of 123,000 in April 2020, but then surged to an all-time high of 382,000 in March 2022. Since then, monthly job quits have tapered off with 297,000 monthly quits in June 2023. Monthly quits are still at a higher level than pre-pandemic levels, which suggests that workers have an optimistic view of their alternative job prospects, while the elevated levels of openings, hires, and quits indicate generally high turnover in the post-pandemic labor market as employers continue to reopen and prospective workers return to the labor force.

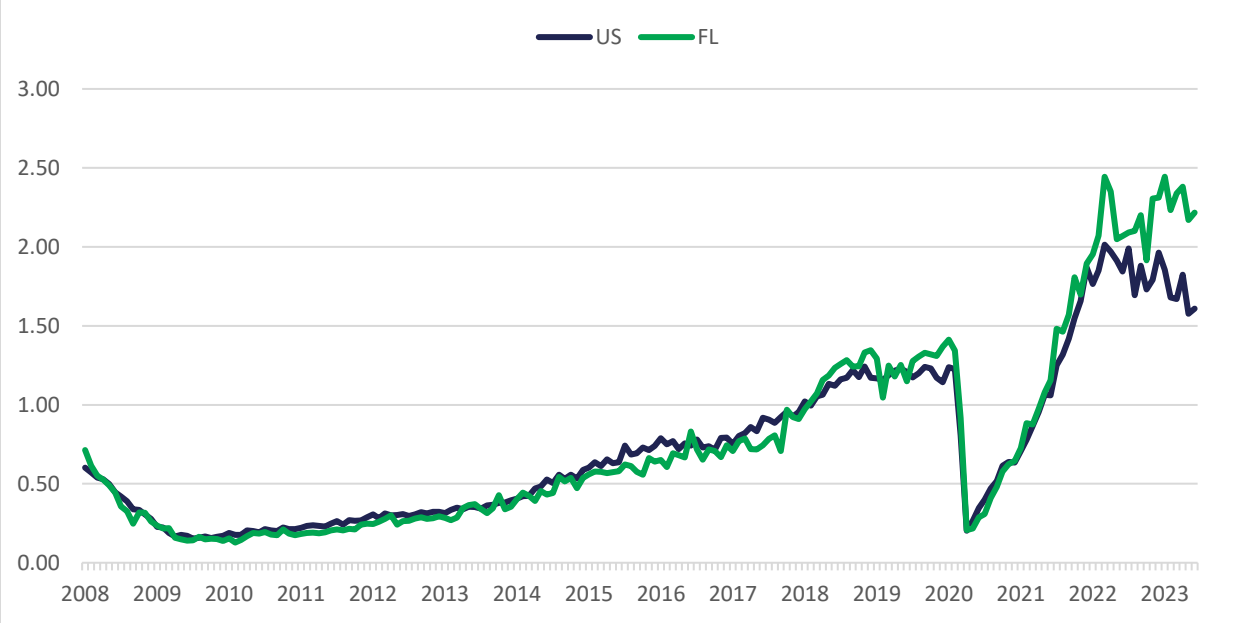
**Labor Supply and Demand**

Elevated job openings indicate high ongoing demand for workers. However, this does not in itself indicate whether demand is outpacing supply. As people who left the labor force during the pandemic continue to return to the labor force, the supply of available job seekers has also been replenishing.

One metric is to compare demand (the number of unfilled jobs) to supply (the number of active job seekers). When a region's economy enters a period of expansion, the number of unemployed people tends to fall while openings tend to increase, causing the number of job openings per job seeker to rise.

The number of job openings per job seeker had been rising since the end of the Great Recession, indicating a steadily tightening labor market. In February 2020, just before the pandemic, there were 1.34 job openings per unemployed Floridian (Figure 2.35). In April 2020, the measure reached a 9-year low of 0.21 openings per job seeker. In July 2021, it returned to pre-pandemic levels, with 1.48 openings per job seeker, and has since been increasing, with 2.22 openings per job seeker as of June 2023.

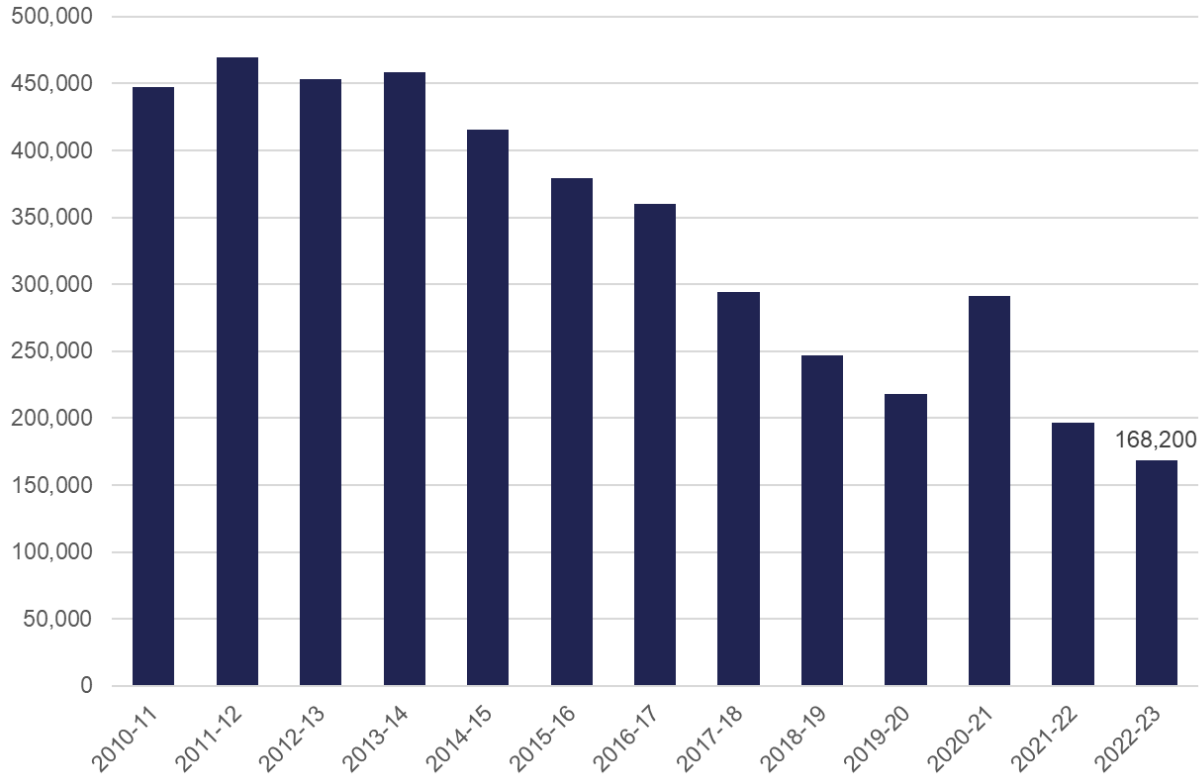
**Figure 2.35**
**Job Openings per Job Seeker (Seasonally Adjusted)**




*Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS Experimental State Estimates, August 2023. Analysis by Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research.*

Another metric to consider for the labor supply is labor underutilization. One example of labor underutilization is that workers in the labor force are available to work full-time but can find only part-time work. In the PY 2022-2023, approximately 168,200 Florida workers were working part-time for economic reasons, the lowest since 2007 (Figure 2.36).

**Figure 2.36**
**Individuals Working Part-Time for Economic Reasons**




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

**(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.**

### Educational Attainment

Many occupations have an educational requirement for employment. In 2021, 89.0% of Floridians aged 25 or older had at least a high school diploma or an equivalent, while 31.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 2.37).

**Figure 2.37**
**Florida Education Levels (Ages 25 and Above)**

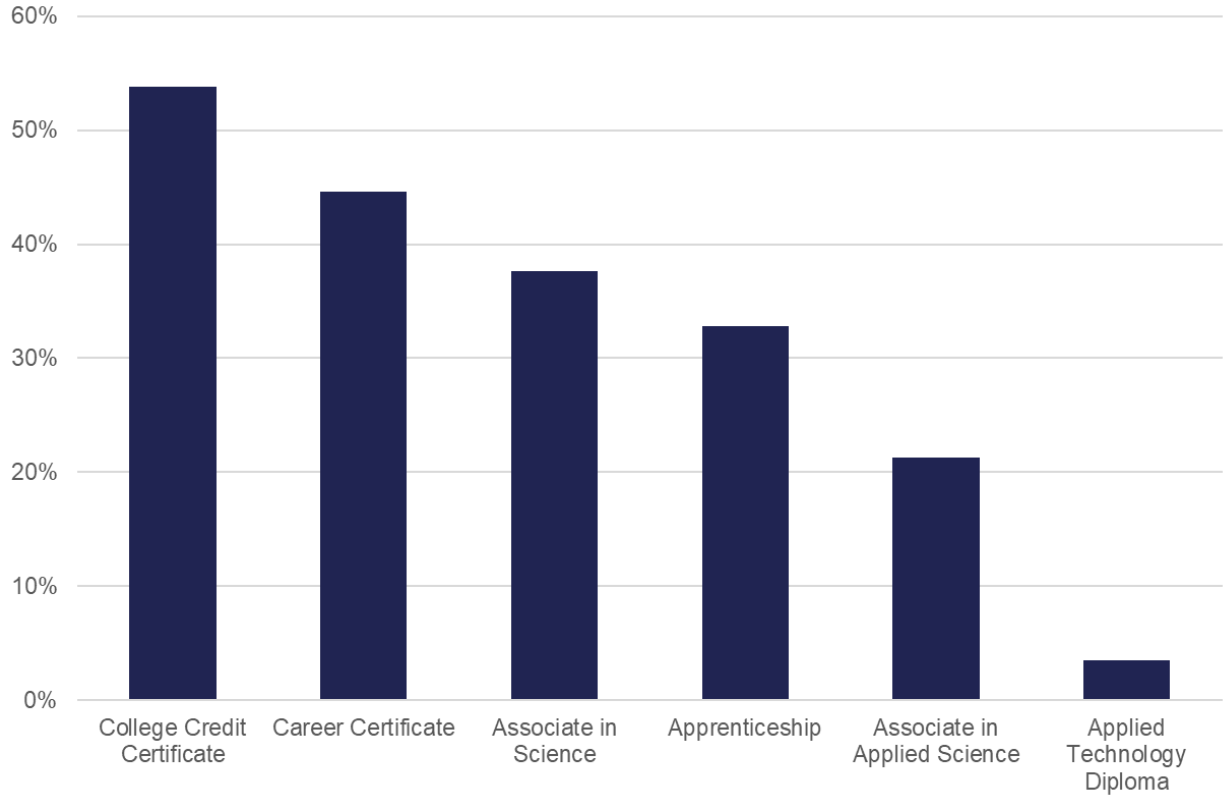
| Less Than High School Graduate | High School Graduate and Equivalency | Some College or Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Graduate or Professional Degree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,682,505 | 4,282,929 | 4,543,900 | 3,038,293 | 1,801,663 |
| 11.0% | 27.9% | 29.6% | 19.8% | 11.7% |

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.*

The Master Credentials List (MCL), required by the REACH Act, is a comprehensive list of state-approved degree and non-degree credentials of value that prepare Floridians for in-demand occupations. It serves as a public and transparent inventory of state-approved credentials of value, directs the use of federal and state funds for workforce education and training programs that lead to approved credentials of value, and guides workforce education and training programs by informing the public of the credentials that have value in the current or future job market.

Many occupations can be linked to credentials found on the MCL. From the 2030 Employment Projections, 54% of 2030 jobs are linked to college credit certificates on the MCL and 45% are linked to career certificates (Figure 2.38). Some occupations are linked to multiple credentials and multiple occupations.

**Figure 2.38**
**Percent of 2030 Jobs Linked to Current Credentials of Value**



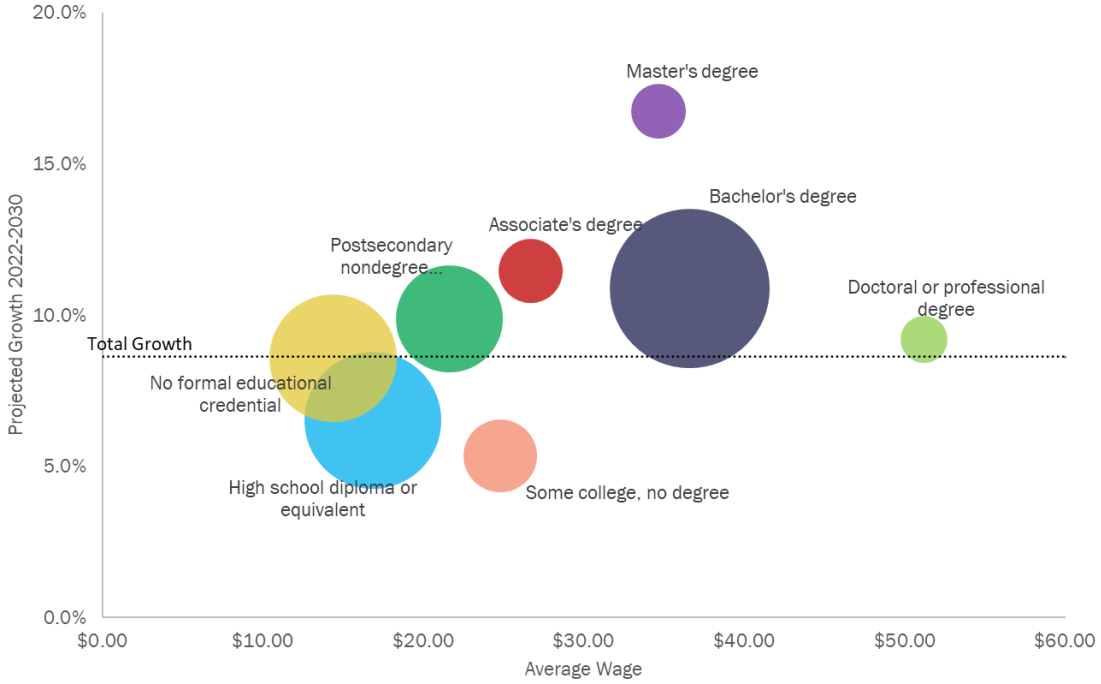

*Source: Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) and 2022-2023 Employment Projections. CareerSource Florida, 2023-2024 Master Credential List.*

**Projected Changes in Educational Demand**

Variation in growth rates across occupations are likely to lead to changes in the distribution of educational qualifications demanded by Florida's employers. Figure 2.39 below shows the projected growth in the number of jobs requiring each given level of educational attainment. The size of each circle reflects total current employment in each category. Circles centered below the "Total Growth" line indicate that the category is projected to grow more slowly than employment as a whole and therefore shrink as a share of labor demand. Those above the line are projected to grow faster than overall employment, increasing as a share of labor demand.

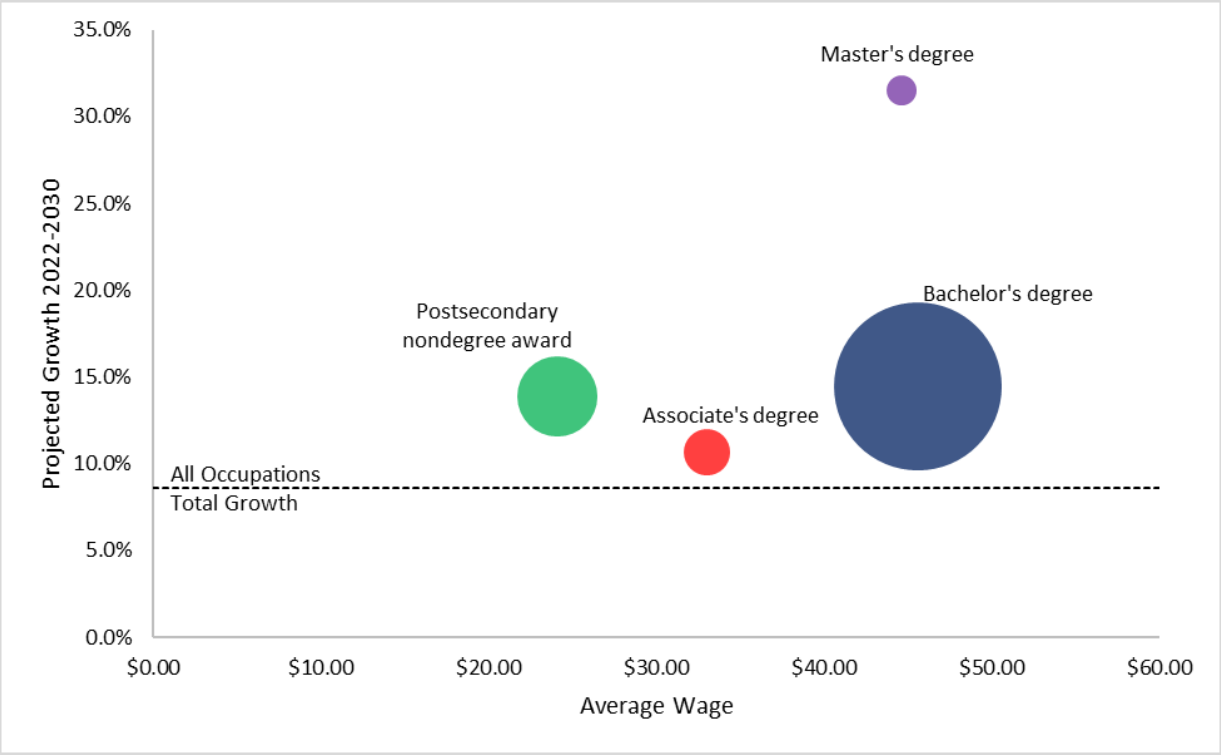
The projected shift in Florida's educational demand is leaning toward higher education: The greatest rates of increase are in jobs requiring advanced (graduate or professional) degrees and in jobs requiring a bachelor's degree. Note that this analysis assumes that the educational requirements for any given occupation will not change over the time period modeled.

**Figure 2.39**
**Projected Growth in Labor Demand by Level of Education, 2022-2030**



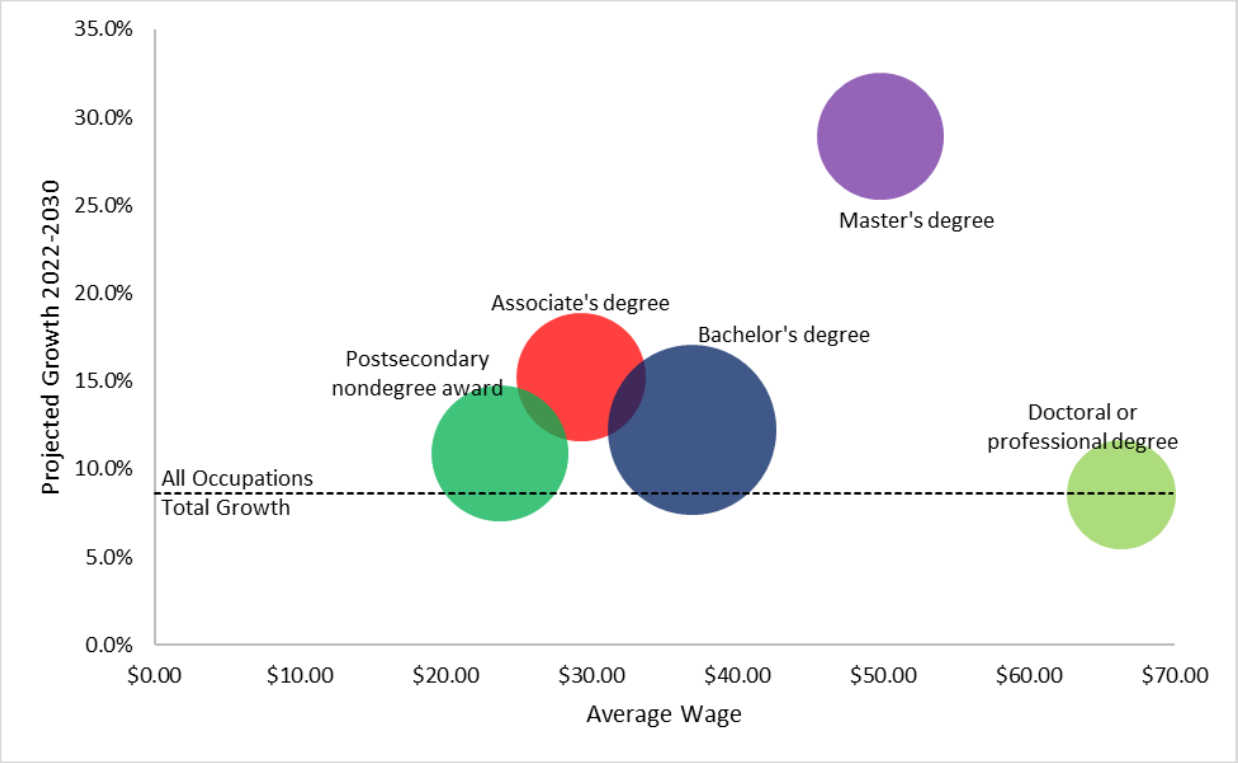

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 2.39.b**
**Projected Growth in Labor Demand by Level of Education, 2022-2030**
**15-0000 Computer and Mathematical Occupations**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 2.39.c**
**Projected Growth in Labor Demand by Level of Education, 2022-2030**
**29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**(iv) Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion. Describe areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and skills needs identified in the economy compared to the assets available in the labor force in the state.**

**Individuals with Barriers to Employment**

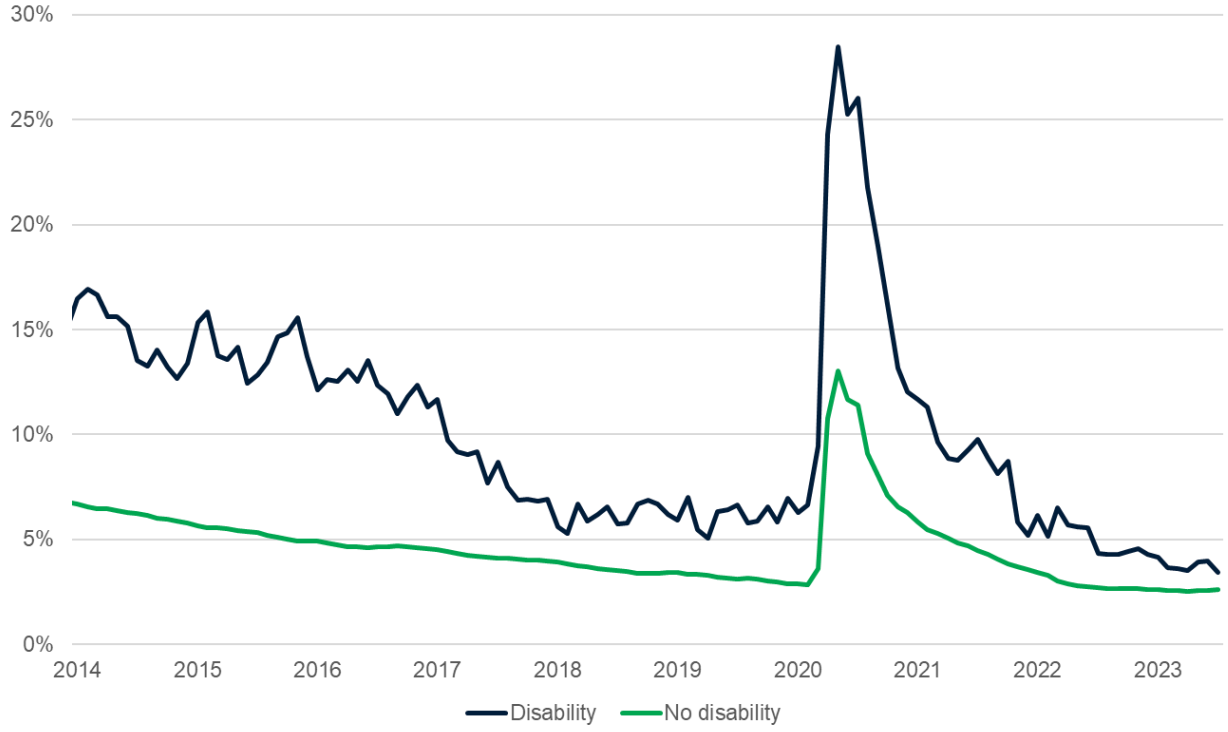
**Individuals with Disabilities**

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for 2022, approximately 10.3% (1.33 million) of Florida's total civilian noninstitutional population between the ages of 18 and 64 (12.92 million) has a disability.

Many persons with disabilities who reside in Florida are not in the labor force (705,329 not in the labor force; 626,916 in the labor force). The employment rate of people with disabilities in the above population was 42.8% in 2022. The estimated Florida unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 9.0% in 2022, compared to 9.3% for the same population in the U.S. as a whole, and 3.6% for Floridians with no disability. The Florida unemployment rate for persons with a disability decreased 4.1 percentage points from 2021 to 2022, while unemployment among those with no disability decreased 1.5 percentage points during that period.

According to the 2022 Census, there are 249,711 visually impaired persons in Florida, which is 1.9% of the total population. Individuals who are blind or visually impaired have an unemployment rate of 6.9% according to the ACS, compared to 7.8% nationwide. However, only 56.4% of the visually impaired population residing in Florida participated in the labor force in 2022 (Figure 2.40).

**Figure 2.40**
**Unemployment Rate by Disability Status in Florida**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Experimental Data Series Utilizing Current Population Survey Data.*

**Veterans**

Florida has the second largest population of veterans in the nation, with almost 1.4 million veterans (8.0% of the state's adult population), according to the 2022 population survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans comprise 5.9% of Florida's 2022 annual average of employed civilian labor force aged 18 years and over.

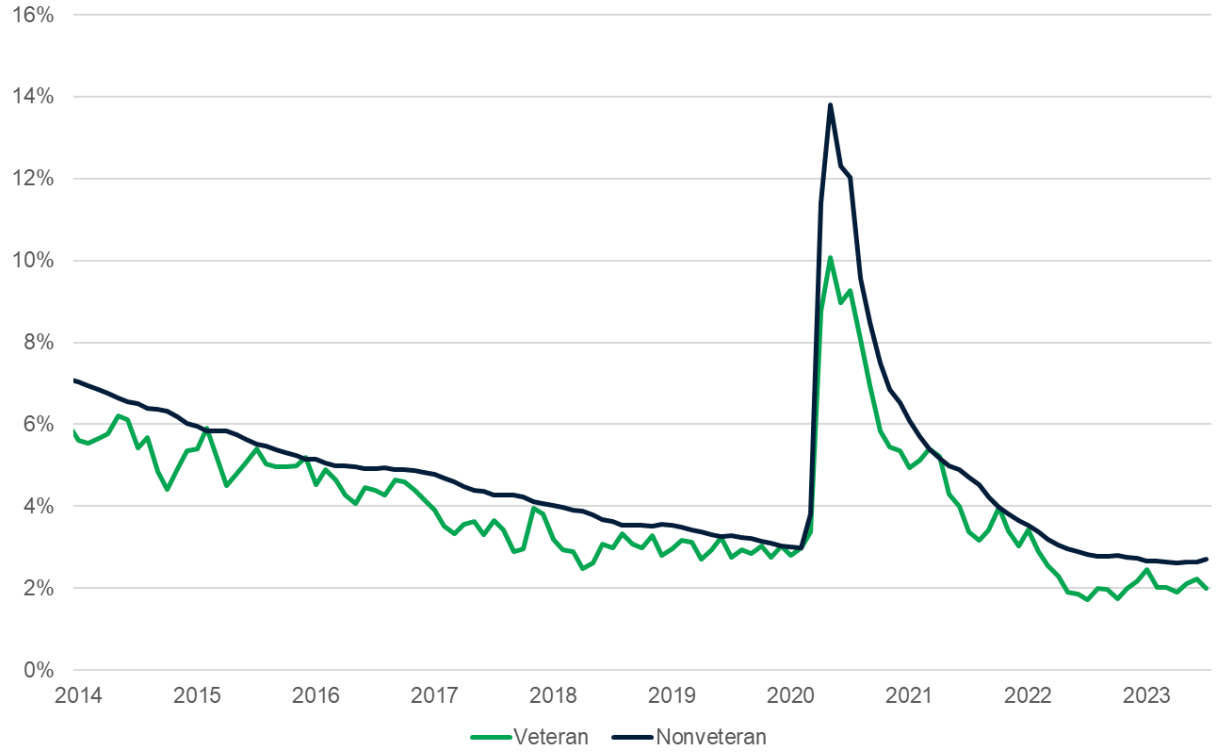
The post 9/11 GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation & Education Chapter 31 educational programs and the Transition Assistance Program provide veterans additional opportunities, which improve and enhance the accreditation process for recently separated veterans in a variety of career fields. In addition, fees are waived for military personnel and their spouses for more than 20 professions such as health profession licenses. These waivers amount to thousands of dollars in savings for veterans. Recent state legislation allows military service to stand in lieu of experience or education for state jobs.

The inherent skills veterans develop during their military service, including leadership, a strong work ethic, teamwork, integrity, problem solving, technical skills, loyalty, and a desire

to succeed make them desirable to employers of any industry.

Nationally, veteran unemployment rates (non-seasonally adjusted) have trended lower than those of civilians. In 2022, the national unemployment rate for veterans was 2.8%. The employment outlook for Florida's veterans is expected to be above that of their civilian counterparts.

**Figure 2.41**
**Unemployment Rate by Veteran Status in Florida**




*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Experimental Data Series Utilizing Current Population Survey Data.*

**Individuals Who Lack Education**
In 2019, Florida established the Sail to 60 goal to increase the percentage of working age Floridians with a high-value post-secondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60% by 2030. Florida saw some of the largest increases in unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic in youth and those with less than a high school diploma, with both populations exceeding 12% unemployment and females aged 16-19 experiencing 22.8% unemployment.

**Individuals Living in Poverty**
In 2019, 12.7% (2.7 million) Floridians were in poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau, a rate higher than the national poverty rate of 12.3% at that time. As of 2022, the poverty rate in Florida has returned to 12.7% (2.8 million people) compared to 13.1% in 2021. However, it is still higher than the 2022 national poverty rate of 12.6%. Meanwhile, 17.2% (290,794) of youth and people 18 to 24 years old were in poverty in Florida, which is lower than the national rate of 18.8% (5,268,484).

## Areas of Opportunity

### High Growth Industries

High growth industries are those projected to gain the most jobs in total, regardless of the current size of the industry. Figure 2.42 displays the top 20 4-digit NAICS industries by projected job gain, 2022-2030. Education and Health Services occupy eight of the top 20 positions and Professional and Business Services occupy seven.

**Figure 2.42**
**Industries Gaining the Most Total Jobs**

| Sector | Code | Industry Title | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-30 Total Change | 2022-30 Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Leisure and Hospitality** | 7225 | Restaurants and Other Eating Places | 768,869 | 846,550 | 77,681 | 10.10% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6221 | General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 350,931 | 394,230 | 43,299 | 12.34% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5415 | Computer Systems Design and Related Services | 123,181 | 160,703 | 37,522 | 30.46% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6111 | Elementary and Secondary Schools | 408,307 | 444,433 | 36,126 | 8.85% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5416 | Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services | 146,362 | 181,192 | 34,830 | 23.80% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6211 | Offices of Physicians | 244,421 | 275,813 | 31,392 | 12.84% |
| **Leisure and Hospitality** | 7211 | Traveler Accommodation | 176,020 | 207,252 | 31,232 | 17.74% |
| **Trade, Transportation and Utilities** | 4931 | Warehousing and Storage | 94,956 | 117,905 | 22,949 | 24.17% |
| **Construction** | 2381 | Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors | 95,474 | 118,000 | 22,526 | 23.59% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6113 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 154,785 | 175,533 | 20,748 | 13.40% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Construction** | 2382 | Building Equipment Contractors | 173,006 | 188,983 | 15,977 | 9.23% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5617 | Services to Buildings and Dwellings | 188,182 | 202,976 | 14,794 | 7.86% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5413 | Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services | 99,833 | 114,257 | 14,424 | 14.45% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5419 | Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 63,421 | 77,132 | 13,711 | 21.62% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6241 | Individual and Family Services | 61,569 | 74,794 | 13,225 | 21.48% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5511 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | 118,736 | 131,795 | 13,059 | 11.00% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6233 | Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly | 60,362 | 72,868 | 12,506 | 20.72% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6216 | Home Health Care Services | 77,517 | 89,668 | 12,151 | 15.68% |
| **Education and Health Services** | 6214 | Outpatient Care Centers | 59,450 | 71,431 | 11,981 | 20.15% |
| **Professional and Business Services** | 5412 | Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services | 81,932 | 93,629 | 11,697 | 14.28% |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

### Growing Occupations

The top occupations in the state's labor market can be represented in different ways. Figure 2.43 shows the level of change (2022–2030) and Figure 2.44 shows percent change over the timeframe of the latest occupational projections (2022–2030). A compilation of knowledge and technology skills across these rankings is 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. Fast Food and Counter Workers (32,161 new jobs), Restaurant Cooks (28,060 new jobs), and Waiters and

Waitresses (16,539 new jobs) are employed in tourism-related industries. Registered Nurses (23,595 new jobs) and Medical Assistants (11,571 new jobs) are Healthcare occupations. Many of the top occupations with the most new jobs are commonly found across many different industries. These include General and Operations Managers (16,799 new jobs), Janitors and Cleaners (11,164 new jobs), and Customer Service Representatives (8,835 new jobs).

**Figure 2.43**
**Occupations Projected to Gain the Most New Jobs in Florida**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35-3023 | Fast Food and Counter Workers | 241,499 | 273,660 | 32,161 | 13.3% | 449,810 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 118,986 | 147,046 | 28,060 | 23.6% | 181,763 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 193,041 | 216,636 | 23,595 | 12.2% | 108.546 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 162,499 | 179,705 | 17,206 | 10.6% | 196,206 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 154,799 | 171,598 | 16,799 | 10.9% | 123,818 |
| 35-3031 | Waiters and Waitresses | 198,790 | 215,329 | 16,539 | 8.3% | 335,957 |
| 15-1256 | Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts | 88,048 | 102,969 | 14,921 | 16.9% | 70,110 |
| 37-3011 | Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers | 114,705 | 128,285 | 13,580 | 11.8% | 138,730 |
| 49-9071 | Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 113,117 | 126,159 | 13,042 | 11.5% | 102,607 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 163,034 | 175,557 | 12,523 | 7.7% | 221,718 |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistants | 61,744 | 73,315 | 11,571 | 18.7% | 74,109 |
| 47-2061 | Construction Laborers | 103,458 | 115,018 | 11,560 | 11.2% | 96,408 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaner | 121,314 | 132,478 | 11,164 | 9.2% | 145,674 |
| 13-1161 | Marketing Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 50,961 | 62,078 | 11,117 | 21.8% | 54,882 |
| 31-1131 | Nursing Assistants | 82,332 | 93,026 | 10,694 | 13.0% | 95,315 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13-1111 | Management Analysts | 69,989 | 80,337 | 10,348 | 14.8% | 64,285 |
| 41-3091 | Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel | 87,527 | 97,737 | 10,210 | 11.7% | 93,979 |
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | 87,627 | 97,677 | 10,050 | 11.5% | 74,618 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 312,884 | 322,743 | 9,859 | 3.2% | 362,022 |
| 13-1198 | Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 124,918 | 134,771 | 9,853 | 7.89% | 84,883 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Fastest-Growing Occupations**

Nine 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 Nurse Practitioners (14,477 jobs in 2022, +49.9% growth). The Cooks, Restaurant occupation is the largest on the top 20 list with 118,986 jobs in 2022. Some occupations that fall under professional, scientific, and technical services include Informational Security Analysts (8,469 jobs in 2022, +33.1% growth), Operations Research Analysts (6,159 jobs in 2022, +23.3% growth), and Market Research Analysts (50,961 jobs in 2022, +21.8% growth).

**Figure 2.44**
**Fastest-Growing Occupations in Florida (Minimum 4,000 Jobs in 2022)**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29-1171 | Nurse Practitioners | 14,477 | 21,699 | 7,222 | 49.9% | 14,778 |
| 15-1212 | Information Security Analysts | 8,469 | 11,271 | 2,802 | 33.1% | 8,383 |
| 29-1071 | Physician Assistants | 8,066 | 10,639 | 2,573 | 31.9% | 6,692 |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Assistants | 7,909 | 10,052 | 2,143 | 27.1% | 10,642 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39-3011 | Gaming Dealers | 4,802 | 6,076 | 1,274 | 26.5% | 7,559 |
| 25-1071 | Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary | 11,611 | 14,614 | 3,003 | 25.9% | 12,597 |
| 25-1072 | Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary | 4,634 | 5,792 | 1,158 | 25.0% | 4,972 |
| 29-2056 | Veterinary Technologists and Technicians | 11,022 | 13,752 | 2,730 | 24.8% | 9,693 |
| 31-9096 | Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers | 6,097 | 7,600 | 1,503 | 24.7% | 10,240 |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists | 8,993 | 11,172 | 2,179 | 24.2% | 5,939 |
| 29-1131 | Veterinarians | 5,472 | 6,791 | 1,319 | 24.1% | 2,862 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 118,986 | 147,046 | 28,060 | 23.6% | 181,763 |
| 15-2031 | Operations Research Analysts | 6,159 | 7,597 | 1,438 | 23.3% | 5,020 |
| 13-1161 | Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 50,961 | 62,078 | 11,117 | 21.8% | 54,882 |
| 39-2021 | Nonfarm Animal Caretakers | 20,116 | 24,335 | 4,219 | 21.0% | 30,388 |
| 29-1127 | Speech-Language Pathologists | 9,458 | 11,433 | 1,975 | 20.9% | 6,914 |
| 53-2031 | Flight Attendants | 11,785 | 14,202 | 2,417 | 20.5% | 15,137 |
| 27-4011 | Audio and Video Equipment Technicians | 7,561 | 9,069 | 1,508 | 19.9% | 8,107 |
| 39-5092 | Manicurists and Pedicurists | 5,721 | 6,857 | 1,136 | 19.9% | 6,354 |
| 29-2032 | Diagnostic Medical Sonographers | 6,032 | 7,215 | 1,183 | 19.6% | 4,906 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Declining or Slow-Growth Occupations**

Many declining or slow-growth occupations are being replaced by technological advancement or slowed by the pandemic. For example, the list includes Door-to-Door Sales Worker and Teller occupations as well as Typist and Packaging occupations (Figure 2.45). According to O*Net Education, Training, and Experience, none of the top 20 declining or slow-growth occupations from 2022 to 2030 typically require a bachelor's degree or higher. Fourteen out of the top 20 declining or slow-growth occupations need only a high school diploma or equivalent.

**Figure 2.45**
**Declining or Slow-Growth Occupations in Florida**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43-9022 | Word Processors and Typists | 1,388 | 1,029 | -359 | -25.9% | 746 |
| 43-9021 | Data Entry Keyers | 12,403 | 10,416 | -1,987 | -16.0% | 7,860 |
| 43-2011 | Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service | 4,957 | 4,257 | -700 | -14.1% | 3,361 |
| 43-6012 | Legal Secretaries | 11,269 | 9,739 | -1,530 | -13.6% | 7,438 |
| 41-9091 | Door-to-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related Workers | 3,083 | 2,724 | -359 | -11.6% | 2,590 |
| 31-9095 | Pharmacy Aides | 1,856 | 1,643 | -213 | -11.5% | 1,593 |
| 43-6011 | Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistant | 25,629 | 22,762 | -2,867 | -11.2% | 17,791 |
| 41-9041 | Telemarketers | 13,703 | 12,551 | -1,152 | -8.4% | 14,422 |
| 43-3071 | Tellers | 25,081 | 23,031 | -2,050 | -8.2% | 17,860 |
| 43-4071 | File Clerks | 8,880 | 8,222 | -658 | -7.4% | 7,270 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51-8013 | Power Plant Operators | 1,201 | 1,118 | -83 | -6.9% | 781 |
| 35-2011 | Cooks, Fast Food | 30,444 | 28,358 | -2,086 | -6.9% | 31,887 |
| 51-9061 | Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers | 21,267 | 19,952 | -1,315 | -6.2% | 18,107 |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers and Jailers | 24,863 | 23,397 | -1,466 | -5.9% | 16,240 |
| 43-5041 | Meter Readers, Utilities | 1,517 | 1,429 | -88 | -5.8% | 773 |
| 27-1027 | Set and Exhibit Designers | 1,542 | 1,461 | -81 | -5.3% | 1,000 |
| 43-9071 | Office Machine Operators, Except Computer | 1,890 | 1,791 | -99 | -5.2% | 1,550 |
| 27-1029 | Designers, All Other | 1,691 | 1,607 | -84 | -5.0% | 1,104 |
| 43-4151 | Order Clerks | 8,776 | 8,405 | -371 | -4.2% | 6,862 |
| 53-7064 | Packers and Packagers, Hand | 35,087 | 33,681 | -1,406 | -4.0% | 36,537 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Areas of Opportunity**

Accurate identification of areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and skills needs in Florida's economy relies on a strong, systematic understanding of current distribution of workforce assets. Consistent with Florida's transition to a WIOA Combined Plan, there is increased mutual awareness across core and combined partners of labor market information, activities and resources relevant to the wider partner group. For example, the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education recently evaluated assets arrayed across the Florida College System.

Section 445.007(15), Florida Statutes, requires each local workforce development board to create an education and industry consortium composed of representatives of educational entities and businesses in the designated workforce service delivery area. CareerSource Florida surveyed local workforce development boards and education institutions to determine what ongoing local activities existed and obtained information and recommendations from local education and industry stakeholders about the availability of education, employment,

and training opportunities available to businesses and job seekers in local workforce development areas. A workgroup was convened to develop a collaborative strategic policy that meets statutory requirements and aligns all relevant federal, state, and local laws and policies. The purpose of these consortia is to enhance each local workforce development board's ability to obtain local, community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs and to provide that information to local workforce development boards to inform programs, services, and partnerships in each service delivery area. This approach ensures local workforce development boards are informed about the current workforce and talent needs of their targeted industries and existing educational and training offerings currently available. This approach also affords businesses the opportunity to closely collaborate with workforce and education stakeholders to eliminate barriers and identify innovative talent pipeline opportunities, such as work-based learning experiences, internships, preapprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, on-the-job training, customized training, Incumbent Worker Training, and other training opportunities.

Based on recommendations of the workgroup, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a strategic policy on Education and Industry Consortiums that requires LWDBs to appoint education and industry consortiums comprised of local leaders who provide independent information from stakeholders in their local area. LWDBs shall consider this information in creating strategies and WIOA local plans that describe efforts to provide educational and workforce opportunities to businesses and job seekers with the goal of aligning educational programming with industry needs at the local level.

CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2023-09.19.A.2 00 Education and Industry Consortiums can be viewed online. Links to LWDB Education and Industry Consortia quarterly reports can be obtained on CareerSource Florida's website at https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/.

Finally, the Florida Credentials Review Committee appointed by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors is made up of industry and other stakeholders responsible for identifying the most in-demand credentials for inclusion in a Master Credentials List for the State Board of Education. Working with the Florida Council of 100, a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of business leaders committed to promoting economic growth and improving the quality of life for Floridians, the Committee is working to identify emerging industries and the need for credentials specific to those industries for inclusion on the Florida Master Credentials List. Combined with labor market data, and business intelligence, this work will inform the workforce development system's goal to diversify industry sectors and build skilled talent pipelines that enhance Florida's productivity and competitiveness

**(2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above.**

**This must include an analysis of—**

**(A)** ***The State's Workforce Development Activities*. Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required[1] and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[2]**

**(B)** ***The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities*. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.**

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

### (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 – **CareerSource Florida**; **FloridaCommerce**; and the **Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) 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.

The addition of executive agencies and divisions in the combined planning process positions Florida's workforce development system to strongly align partner initiatives, while also revealing opportunities to coordinate cross-partner performance objectives, leverage efficiencies and economies, and minimize duplication and gaps in multi-partner efforts aimed at creating stronger customer outcomes. Agency and other partners incorporated into the 2024-2028 WIOA Four-Year Plan include:

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – Florida Department of Children and Families).**
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) – Florida Department of Children and Families**
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) – FloridaCommerce**
- **Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) – FloridaCommerce**
- **Unemployment Insurance (UI) known as Reemployment Assistance (RA) – FloridaCommerce**
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (Florida Department of Elder Affairs (FDOEA)).**
- **Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) – FloridaCommerce**
- **National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) – FloridaCommerce**

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

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

- **Able Trust – Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Career Centers**
Florida's career centers are designed to deliver and provide access to services for employers seeking qualified workers and training for new and existing employees and job seekers. This includes providing services and access to technology to individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment.

Florida's comprehensive career centers provide expanded services and access to core and combined partner programs either through colocation of partners or linkages to partner services. Florida's career centers are positioned to provide services to all individuals, including veterans, TANF recipients, SNAP recipients, and persons with disabilities. In some cases, required partners are collocated within the career center to provide direct services. When not collocated, career centers implement referral systems with partner organizations to ensure that all individuals may be served based on individual needs.

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

Several local workforce development boards (LWDBs) deploy mobile career centers to provide services to Florida's businesses, job seekers and workers and support community events such as re-entry fairs and job fairs. This provides assistance in areas with limited access to key resources. Emphasis is placed on providing services directly at employer sites and direct service delivery in rural communities through mobile career centers. Mobile career centers are also deployed in disaster recovery events to set up mobile one-stop service centers alongside other agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Association and Department of Children and Families.

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 and existing employees. All LWDBs employ dedicated business services teams who partner closely with external business relations teams. Business services teams are organized by industry sector to implement sector strategies. LWDBs also partner closely with economic development partners to provide business services. Examples include CareerSource Broward partnering with the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Alliance to have shared positions and CareerSource Northeast Florida partnering with JaxUSA, which convenes industry partners and collaborates on career pathway alignment.

Career centers throughout Florida leverage remote and virtual career services utilizing a variety of tools such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Career EDGE. These platforms allow the CareerSource Florida network to not only continue to ensure uninterrupted and enhanced service delivery but also enhance the level of service by meeting the job seeker where it is most convenient. As businesses and job seekers adapt to a new service landscape in every industry, the state board will continue its support of enhanced technology and other opportunities and initiatives that bring services directly to the customer. Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) are executed to ensure that each partner in the workforce system contributes to the shared costs needed to operate local CareerSource Florida centers.

**Communications Tools**
Florida's statewide communications and outreach plan aligns with CareerSource Florida's corporate goals:

- communicate the CareerSource Florida network's vision to implement strategies and policies that strengthen service 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.

The Florida Workforce System emphasizes digital communication and social media engagement. CareerSource Florida is currently reaching individuals with barriers to employment through its statewide outreach campaign, *Today*. The campaign message focuses on seizing opportunities to find meaningful employment, from resume and job search assistance to training for a new career – all services offered by Florida's 24 LWDBs and 100 career centers. The campaign encourages individuals to connect directly with their LWDB to receive customized services.

**Apprentice Florida**
Apprentice Florida is an outreach campaign launched in 2019 on behalf of the partnership that includes CareerSource Florida, FDOE, and FloridaCommerce. The partnership seeks to expand Registered Apprenticeships to create a fortified talent pipeline in targeted sectors, driving economic development across the state. The Apprentice Florida website features tools and resources in multiple formats designed to help employers, education providers, and job seekers learn more about the many benefits of the apprenticeship model and find assistance to begin the process of developing a Registered Apprenticeship. Other easy-to-share resources include video tutorials, downloadable partner toolkits for businesses, education and workforce boards, and apprenticeship marketing materials.

Outreach campaigns target employers throughout the state using owned and earned media channels, as well as paid channels. Campaign messaging for this past year included a series of creative ads providing facts and statistics about Registered Apprenticeship. A quarterly Apprentice Florida newsletter highlights Registered Apprenticeship programs throughout the state as well as news and information about the CareerSource Florida network's apprenticeship expansion efforts. Apprenticeship Accelerators bring the benefits of Registered Apprenticeships to various regions in the state and highlight specific industry sectors to provide employers with a more in-depth description of apprenticeships.

**Get There/Future of Work Campaigns:**
The Future of Work outreach campaign was developed and funded by FDOE and the Florida Chamber of Commerce in partnership with CareerSource Florida. The purpose of the initiative is two-fold:

- To expose middle and high school students to in-demand, high-wage careers available through career and technical education
- To ensure businesses are aware of the work stakeholders are doing to build the talent pipeline to meet their future needs.

Future of Work is a sub-campaign of the Get There outreach campaign, funded by FDOE to raise awareness among high school students and young adults about career possibilities facilitated by Career and Technical Education (CTE) curriculum including professional credentialing programs.

The two campaigns are actively working to amplify their message among students, parents, and businesses. These initiatives aim to highlight CTE as a timely and cost-effective route to kickstart a career with lucrative earning potential. By uniting these campaigns and leveraging FDOE's innovative new Xello tool, an interactive virtual platform, the department can enhance efforts to raise awareness among specific audiences through LWDBs. This tool empowers students to explore post-secondary training opportunities, formulate plans, and evaluate options for skills development. By incorporating the Xello tool, LWDBs could increase awareness about the wide variety of career options and pathways available to high school students.

**Target Audience Research**
CareerSource Florida conducted research with more than 175 businesses across Florida to better understand how the network can benefit them and to learn more about hiring needs. The research also gauged employers' willingness to hire and work with individuals who have significant employment barriers, such as lack of childcare or transportation. This research revealed 80% of employers would be likely to hire these individuals.

Additionally, the research showed these businesses are hiring more than in recent years and placing a greater emphasis on training. Businesses are looking for job candidates with the right skill set and 80% are engaged with their local educational institutions to ensure a strong talent pipeline.

The data from this research will inform communications and outreach plans to identify and reach populations who can benefit most from the services provided by Florida's workforce system.

**Partnership with FDOE**
Beginning in the PY 2022-23, CareerSource Florida and FDOE partnered to provide strategic customer-focused collaborative outreach and public information services related to the Department's CTE courses, postsecondary credentials, and work-based learning programs, as well as the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) and the WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy Program.

**VR Communications**
VR provides all publications in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, large and traditional print, and remediates PDF documents and fillable forms for use with screen readers and zoom text. Alternative formats such as Braille can be provided upon request. Additionally, the Division is expanding the use of QR codes on print media to facilitate access to Section 508-compliant digital versions of multi-page print documents. When needed, VR also supports the provision of American Sign Language interpreters and transcription support services to further support communication with all stakeholders.

For businesses interested in how to recruit, hire, and retain individuals with disabilities, VR expanded its social media reach and resources tailored to employers. Included in the expansion is a revised LinkedIn page as well as a business-focused website used to collect the contact

information of interested employers and pair them with the appropriate business relations representatives.

**FDBS Communications**
FDBS uses screen reader/magnification software, such as JAWS and ZoomText, and text size/text contrast toggle controls to make the Division's website accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Prospective clients can complete online applications in English and Spanish. Clients can request printed materials in large print and Braille.

Through a partnership with CareerSource Florida and other workforce entities, FDBS contracts with Moore, a private communications firm, to support a comprehensive statewide communications plan — consisting of social media, radio, and print ads — to increase outreach to underserved populations and boost awareness of services. This partnership aims to engage businesses to open doors to the talent pipeline of blind and visually impaired individuals.

**Employ Florida: Online Workforce Services and Virtual Career Center**
Florida's workforce system provides quality customer service to businesses and job seekers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Employ Florida website www.employflorida.com is Florida's virtual job-matching tool providing access at no charge to employment opportunities, resume building and other services. Employ Florida connects employers with talent and provides comprehensive job listings for job seekers looking to grow in their careers.

Launched in 2005, Employ Florida gives businesses access to thousands of current resumes; recruiting and hiring resources; information on training options; and links to labor market information at the state and local levels. Job seekers can search Employ Florida for listings added by businesses and career centers, as well as opportunities posted on external job and corporate websites. Employers and job seekers can access information and assistance with workforce services statewide by calling the toll-free Customer Information Center staffed by FloridaCommerce.

Employ Florida is consistently upgraded to maintain relevance and enhance existing technology. Micro-portals powered by Employ Florida provide specialized and targeted job matching to add value for employers and job seekers with specific interests and needs. CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce, in collaboration with LWDBs and other partners, maintain dedicated entry points with customized job search information and resources including web portals for veterans, job seekers age 50 or older, job seekers interested in green jobs, individuals with disabilities, recent college graduates, and those impacted by specific events such as natural disasters and hurricanes.

**Florida Abilities Work Portal**
The Florida Abilities Work web portal is a comprehensive online resource designed to meet the needs of qualified job seekers with disabilities and Florida employers looking to hire them. The portal was developed in response to the formation of the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities with input from partners including the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), VR, FDBS, and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. This micro-portal, housed on the Employ Florida website, features a unique logo identifying the portal for the disability community and mobile application for ease of access. A help desk and hotline are staffed by VR.

The Florida Abilities Work micro-portal provides links to local career centers and state and community partner resources including the APD Resource Directory, the Able Trust, the Brain Injury Association of Florida, the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST), the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Florida Disabilities Council and the Florida Independent Living Council. While these councils, organizations, and agencies are not direct contributors to Florida's WIOA Combined Plan, most have partnerships or work directly with the core and combined partners. This improves and ensures enhanced access to benefits and services for Floridians with disabilities and those who wish to employ them.

**Education and Training Activities for Adult Education**
Florida's adult education system encompasses a variety of instructional programs designed to equip adults with the essential skills required to become productive workers and engaged citizens. The primary program areas include Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult High School, GED® Preparation, Academic Skills Building, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These programs place a strong emphasis on fundamental skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, and English language proficiency. Furthermore, adult education programs facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for adult learners to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. With a focus on Integrated Education and Training (IET), adults can follow an accelerated path to acquire the academic and occupational skills essential to transition to high-skill, high-wage careers.

Adult education programs served 145,932 in 2018-19; 130,105 in 2019-20; 81,445 in 2020-21; 106,563 in 2021-22; and 131,060 in 2022-23. The state of Florida has aligned its content standards for adult education with FDOE K-12 Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) academic standards.

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

Adult education programs collaborate with LWDBs to determine local high-wage, high-demand careers when developing career pathways. Each adult education provider submits an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) annually to FDOE. This MOU aligns with the requirements outlined in 34CFR §463.500 and WIOA, Subtitle B, Chapter 1 §121(c)(2).

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 participate in Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) trainings available throughout the year. Many career centers provide representatives directly to the adult education facility to provide counseling and other services related to awareness of workforce resources. Sharing cross-referral outcomes is a priority of DCAE to support the goals of WIOA and increase student access and achievement.

**VR Workforce Development Activities**

As Florida's employment landscape evolves, VR's focus remains on improving employment outcomes and independence for Floridians with disabilities. VR's current workforce development activities have resulted in participant outcomes that surpass the state's negotiated target in the indicator for Measurable Skills Gains, a key performance measure. The Division prioritizes relationships, collaboration, and best practices to increase in-demand career opportunities for individuals with disabilities, as evidenced by the over 800 business partners who have been assisted by VR in finding the talent they need. The Division serves thousands of Floridians by assisting them to explore, train for, and enter in-demand careers.

Vocational Rehabilitation engages in workforce development activities by providing services for adults and eligible youth ages 14 to 21 aligned with improving employment outcomes. This includes vocational and other assessments to assist job seekers in defining and aligning goals with identified employment outcomes. Medical and psychological services, if needed, are available to meet participant goals identified on an employment plan. VR assists job seekers in obtaining educational or job readiness training to prepare for meaningful employment. This training includes but is not limited to job search, placement, coaching, supported employment and self-employment services are available. Interpretive, assistive and rehabilitation technology services are also available to support Floridians with disabilities seeking employment. VR maintains a vast network of partners that provide employment services statewide and supports efforts to increase the quality, quantity and variety of services offered.

VR's Business Relations Program seeks to build, improve, and sustain partnerships with Florida businesses and industry through effective services driven by the needs of employers. Strong partnerships are necessary for competitive integrated employment (CIE) and career exploration opportunities for VR customers. Efforts are underway to further develop and customize services to employers, create strategic partnerships that support workforce needs, and establish an employment-focused culture within the rehabilitation process.

Activities for youth and students with disabilities are designed to assist in developing a concept of work, navigating the community, and obtaining work experience during high school. Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) 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 (OJT).

Support services available to eligible students and 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, those who require repetition to acquire skills, and participants who 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.

In PY 22-23, the workforce development services provided through VR have had a significant impact. For example:

- For every $1.00 spent on VR services, $10.48 is returned to the Florida economy.
- 16,136 students with disabilities received Pre-ETS, a 20% increase over last year.
- 76 schools are providing work-based learning experiences, and 4,410 students with disabilities received work-based learning experiences, a 29% increase over pre-pandemic levels.
- 1,087 students received workplace readiness training, a 7% increase over pre-pandemic levels.
- VR continues to lead the nation with 37 Project SEARCH providers across the state.
- 646 students with disabilities received Instruction in Self-Advocacy. Median earnings for VR customers continue to increase each year.
- The VR Measurable Skill Gain rate was 36.6%, surpassing the negotiated rate by almost 8%.

**FDBS Workforce Development Activities**
FDBS' workforce development activities are consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws. Programs under the FDBS 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. Participating in combined planning provides more opportunities for FDBS and all partner agencies to address the unique needs of job seekers with visual impairments. FDBS offers Pre-ETS 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 promote movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, CIE, continuing and adult education, adult services, or independent living. Students and youth are given the tools necessary to prepare for employment consistent with their unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

Activities for adults served through the employment program assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired to gain, maintain, advance in, or retain employment. Individuals may receive education, vocational training, orientation and mobility, and transportation. Clients may receive training to use assistive technology or other equipment necessary for success. Employment Placement Specialists (EPSs) aid clients in writing resumes, searching for jobs, job coaching, and placement. Adults seeking to become entrepreneurs receive support with their self-employment goal via financial/training assistance or the Business Enterprise Program.

**Employment and Training Activities for TANF Recipients**
Employment and Training Activities for TANF recipients is a multi-agency initiative to help recipients gain skills for long-term self-sufficiency. This requires strategic planning to ensure recipients can access the various services available across the relevant agencies. The Florida Legislature appropriates TANF funds to FloridaCommerce and charges the Department with providing administrative and programmatic guidance for the merged workforce and TANF/Welfare Transition (WT) program support delivery system.

Section 445.024 of Florida Statutes contains Florida's work activity requirements that ensure work-eligible adults and minor heads of household who receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) (funded by TANF) are engaged in work in accordance with Section 407 of the Social Security Act as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Florida's LWDBs provide direct workforce services to TANF recipients through Florida's WT program. The LWDBs are responsible for

implementing the state's workforce programs, including WT and other TANF non-assistance programs.

LWDBs offer the following categories of work activities, individually or in combination, to ensure TCA recipients satisfy their work requirements:

- Unsubsidized employment.
- Subsidized private sector employment.
- Subsidized public sector employment.
- OJT.
- Community service programs.
- Work experience.
- Job search and job readiness assistance.
- Vocational educational training.
- Job skills training related to employment.
- Education related to employment.
- Satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a graduate equivalency diploma

WIOA services are made available to TCA recipients as needed; however, there is an opportunity to expand WIOA services for TCA recipients. By allowing TANF benefit recipients to pre-certify for WIOA training services without having to physically visit a career center, participants are connected to training opportunities that will lead to employment at self-sustaining wages.

**Employment and Training Activities for SNAP Employment and Training Recipients**
Florida's SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program is administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF executes an interagency agreement with FloridaCommerce for the delivery of E&T services through Florida's workforce development system. As part of the interagency agreement, DCF identifies Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) and mandatory work participants between the ages of 18 and 59 and refers these individuals to FloridaCommerce for participation in the SNAP E&T program.

Florida's SNAP E&T program is operated statewide and is mandatory to ABAWDs and individuals ages 18-59 who are subject to general work requirements to assist them in gaining skills, training, and/or work experience that will increase their ability to directly move into employment. The following SNAP E&T program components are made available to ABAWDs and mandatory work participants through Florida's LWDBs:

- Supervised job search.
- Job search training.
- Work experience.
- Education.
- Vocational training.
- Job retention services.

Other services include work services available under the WIOA and TAA programs.

**TAA for Workers**
Pursuant to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015, the TAA for Workers program assists workers who have been laid off or whose jobs have been threatened (e.g., reduced hours or reduced wages) because of foreign trade or competition. The worker group must be certified as eligible for TAA by the U.S Department of Labor. The TAA program provides resources to help trade-affected workers find suitable employment. The program provides training resulting in marketable skills and/or credentials, employment and case management services, income support for trade-affected workers enrolled in training, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and wage subsidies for reemployed trade-affected workers over the age of 50.

As directed by the State Trade Program, local TAA coordinators provide comprehensive and specialized assessments, labor market information, pre-vocational training, individual and group career counseling, networking workshops, interview coaching, resume writing assistance, and computer literacy assistance. Rapid reemployment into suitable employment is the preferred approach. When appropriate, local TAA coordinators screen, prepare, and approve workers for training to ensure successful competition of the training program. Local TAA coordinators ensure the training is feasible, realistic, achievable, and time-bound and approve training only for demand occupations.

The State Trade Program provides TAA employer services including informational sessions and Trade Act petition navigation and filing assistance and serves as the liaison between the employer and the U.S. Department of Labor. The State Trade Program hosts TAA workgroups for local staff, provides training and public outreach, manages online guidance and content, reviews performance data, and reconciles the program's local expenditures and financial data for federal reporting.

TAA is now under the Sunset Provision and Reversion 2021. Currently, United States Department of Labor (USDOL) is not certifying any petitions until the Act is reauthorized. However, workers affected by a previously certified petition remain eligible for TAA services.

During the Plan period, the Florida TAA Program will update Administrative Policy #114 to reflect federal changes and revisions and collaborate with required partners to enhance the TAA program operationally. Additionally, the TAA program will engage laid-off workers from existing certified petitions to ensure that they are aware of the services available to them through the TAA program.

**JVSG**
Providing resources and expertise to veterans is a hallmark of Florida's workforce development plan. To that end, Florida's JVSG program provides priority to all veterans and eligible spouses and creates opportunities for them to obtain meaningful and successful careers. Services provided by Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff maximize employment opportunities to veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) through comprehensive services and referrals to community partners to address those barriers. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) are fully integrated members of the local business services team. LVER staff promote the hiring of veterans to employers, industry associations, and business groups, facilitate employer training, plan and participate in career fairs, and conduct job development contacts on behalf of veterans with employers. The JVSG plan for 2024-2027 is included separately.

**National Dislocated Worker Grants**
Florida has been involved in one or more FEMA-declared disaster(s) for each of the last four years and is likely to have similar experiences during the planning period. The state workforce development system will continue its efforts to prepare and respond to national emergencies and other disasters through:

- Coordination with state and federal partners (e.g., FEMA, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, Florida Division of Emergency Management, various state agencies, Volunteer Florida), non-governmental agencies (e.g., members of the Feeding Florida network, members of the Florida Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters and local governmental agencies.
- Joint Rapid Response and grant activities to address immediate and ongoing needs of business owners, laid-off workers and job seekers, and community recovery
- Ongoing capacity building for the workforce development system that includes peer-to-peer learning opportunities and presentations from internal and external subject matter experts
- Use of temporary disaster-relief positions to assist with humanitarian, as well as clean-up and restoration needs
- Strategic use of career and training activities to help the talent pipeline recover from the disaster.

**Unemployment Insurance Programs (FloridaCommerce)**

**Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant**
The RESEA program was launched in Florida in 2016 pursuant to the federal change that replaced the Reemployment Assessment (REA) program with the RESEA program. In partnership with CareerSource Florida, the Reemployment Assistance (RA) program housed under FloridaCommerce provides temporary financial assistance to eligible workers during periods of unemployment. The RESEA program is designed to address the reemployment needs of RA claimants.

Individuals filing RA claims may be selected to participate in the state's RESEA program which provides specific intensive services to these populations and helps detect and prevent erroneous RA payments. The RESEA program uses a one-on-one intensive appointment process and participants are made aware of and referred to a variety of available reemployment services. If selected for participation, claimants are notified via U.S. mail of a mandatory appointment at their local career center.

Each RESEA participant receives:

- **Orientation** — An orientation about the career center’s services.
- **Initial Assessment** — A one-on-one interview with a career center job counselor that provides an initial analysis of the claimant's strengths, weaknesses, barriers, employment history, education, etc.
- **Labor Market Information** — An analysis of the labor market that is unique to the claimant's desired occupation and location, experiences, and skills. The aim is for the claimant to recognize trends in their desired occupation and determine whether it is worth pursuing based on growth or decline in that area, or if it would be better to seek training for another field with a better occupational outlook.

- **Employability Development Plan (EDP)** — An Employability Development Plan developed jointly by career center staff and the claimant.
- **Work Search Activities** — Claimants are referred to any additional activities relevant to the results of their initial assessments such as counseling, resume writing, job search workshop, referrals to education, and/or training.
- 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.

**RA Claims Processing Responsibility:**
Every RESEA session is required to include a one-on-one assessment of the claimant's continuing RA Eligibility Review Process (ERP). This assessment typically includes confirming employment status and a review of the claimant's work search activities. In Florida, the ERP is done separately from the orientation:

- Orientation is done in the career centers.
- The ERP is done by RA staff.
- Currently, the ERP process is assigned to RA staff as a workflow item from the system to the staff member.
- Staff contacts claimant via phone or email to go over the ERP questionnaire.
- If staff are unable to reach the customer, staff gives the claimant 48 hours to respond.
- If no response from the claimant after 48 hours, the issue is determined ineligible.
- If and when the claimant calls back, then the issue can be redetermined.

**RA Assistance Adjudication Responsibility**
When a RESEA participant fails to report as scheduled for their initial appointment, the process below occurs:

- Review the reason for the participant's failure to report to the career center. 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.
- LWDB staff enter the information on the "failure to report" on claimant's record in the Employ Florida (EF) RESEA application.
- An issue denoting the "No Show" will also prompt a Reporting Requirements - Failure to Report Eligibility Review issue to be posted in the Issue Summary in Reconnect.
- The claimant is sent a fact-finding questionnaire to determine why the claimant failed to report.
- If the fact-finding questionnaire uploaded to the claim by the claimant contains incomplete information, the adjudicator must contact the claimant by telephone to conduct a fact-finding interview to obtain the missing information or to resolve any conflicts in the claimant's statement.
- Reasonable attempts criteria must be met when contacting the claimant.
- The law does not provide the department with the authority to give claimants "good cause" for failure to report for reemployment services when they are not otherwise exempt from the work registration requirement. However, if the claimant asserts that they

were never notified of the scheduled appointment, there is no issue, and the claim should be released for payment.
- If the claimant does not report for the RESEA interview, the claimant will be held ineligible to receive benefits for the week in which such failure occurred.
- The claimant must also be questioned thoroughly to determine if an able and availability (A & A) issue exists. If it does, the appropriate issue must be added, and a nonmonetary determination will be issued on the claim in addition to the failure to report for the RESEA determination.

**SCSEP (FDOEA)**
SCSEP is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. SCSEP provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. The program provides training in part-time community service assignments and assists program participants in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

Title V, Section 503 of the Older Americans Act requires the Governor, or the highest government official in each state, to submit a state plan. The plan must include a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service training and other authorized activities. The SCSEP 2020-2023 plan was submitted as an independent document. By joining in the Florida Workforce System's 2024-2028 WIOA Combined Plan, SCSEP partners with WIOA core and other combined partners to achieve the goals of the workforce development system and the statutory obligations of SCSEP.

SCSEP's role in Florida continues to grow. Florida has the highest population percentage of residents ages 65 or older in the nation: Of the estimated 900 people moving to Florida daily, more than half are over 60. Currently, there are approximately 5.5 million residents 60 and over. By the year 2030, Florida will see that number increase to 7.4 million. Florida has the potential for exponentially larger numbers of older individuals who are low-income seniors with poor employment prospects that need skills training and experience to successfully enter or re-enter the workforce in Florida. SCSEP continues to be a lifeline for many Floridians who feel they do not have many employment and training options available to them as they advance in age.

SCSEP relieves financial strains placed on social services agencies including those who are partners in the WIOA Combined Plan. SCSEP plays an important role in the vitality and health of the senior population by supporting civic engagement and social participation, providing communication and information, and promoting healthy aging.

Both the process of planning for and the implementation of SCSEP services in the state are included in the SCSEP Program Specific Requirements. Eligible individuals and employment opportunities are distributed throughout the state.

**CSBG (FloridaCommerce)**
The CSBG Program Model State Plan serves as Florida's application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for CSBG funding and as a guide for the allocation of program funds. These funds assist more than 450,000 individuals across the state, leveraging funds from federal, state, local and private funding sources. The CSBG program is administered by FloridaCommerce, which has primary responsibility for the state's community assistance programs. FloridaCommerce is uniquely positioned to deliver eligible activities under the program in coordination with other state and local partners including the WIOA core and combined planning partners.

The CSBG program provides a wide variety of services designed at the local level to meet specific community needs. These funds provide emergency financial assistance for education, nutrition, housing, health care, and employment. The funds are also used to provide long-term strategies for the state's disadvantaged citizens and low-income communities to achieve higher levels of self-sufficiency and may offer supportive services such as payments for tuition, books, literacy classes, job readiness preparation, child day care, transportation assistance, job counseling, job placement, and training services. The program may help elderly citizens continue to live in their homes by providing meals, housekeeping services, rent, mortgage assistance, medicine, and transportation assistance.

Through a network of designated local governments and nonprofit CSBG eligible entities called Community Action Agencies, low-income Floridians are provided with assistance to become more self-sufficient, achieve their potential through stronger family and other supportive services, contribute to their communities, and improve the conditions in which they live.

The CSBG program contributes to the state's economy and to the well-being of low-income residents. By alleviating causes and conditions of poverty, individuals and families are enabled to create healthy, thriving communities.

During times of natural disaster recovery, CSBG funding can be used to alleviate the effects of the disaster to assist with temporary housing, emergency food, and utility restoration.

CSBG customers are often job seekers and those in need of services provided by WIOA core and combined partners. Working together in a combined plan helps CSBG and WIOA core and combined partners achieve the goals of the Workforce Development System as described in this plan and in the program-specific requirements for CSBG.

**The Able Trust**

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c)(3) public charity established by the Florida Legislature in 1990 as a direct support organization for **VR**. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities with opportunities for successful employment. The Able Trust assists community organizations throughout the state to help thousands of Floridians with disabilities enter the workforce. The Able Trust accomplishes this through actions supporting its three major strategic priorities of research, outreach, and capacity building.

Able Trust’s third key strategic priority of capacity building is enhanced through grant and contract oversight for multiple initiatives throughout the state. Those initiatives include youth programs that provide career development and transition services to many students with disabilities annually, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school. The Able Trust High School High Tech provides high school students with disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to in-demand careers. Additionally, Able Trust is a key partner in the VR's Arts to CIE (ArtCIE) initiative. The initiative will create an innovative model that assists individuals with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum wage employment to move toward CIE outcomes in the field of Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation.

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 and FDOE reviews and provides for approval, as required.

### (B) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

The implementation of the REACH Act strengthens partnerships among workforce and education entities and creates systems and structures that ensure the statewide workforce system provides quality customer service to employers and job seekers. The REACH Act supports the Governor's goal that Florida will be number one in the nation for workforce education, which is a primary goal of this combined workforce development plan.

Florida employers face challenges in meeting their talent needs as the number of job openings continues to exceed the number of job seekers to fill those positions. Areas of opportunity exist in continuing to bridge the skills gap through training and skill-building efforts. Additionally, while Florida continues to benefit from net population growth due to individuals relocating to Florida, opportunities are present to increase engagement in the labor force among populations with barriers to employment.

The 2021 REACH Act and 2023's Senate Bill 240 position Florida to help people with barriers to education and employment become self-sufficient through enhanced access to good jobs and career pathways that offer economic opportunity. The REACH Act addresses one of the primary challenges of Florida's workforce system by bringing together stronger alignment at the state level. Under the guidance of the newly created REACH Office within the Executive Office of the Governor, workforce partners at the FDOE, FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida, DCF, and others are working to align and coordinate efforts toward addressing the larger workforce challenges in Florida.

The REACH Act charged CareerSource Florida with reducing the number of LWDBs in the state. Analysis conducted during PY 2022 identified numerous opportunities for alignment and consolidation and resulted in a comprehensive Workforce System Transformation Plan that included the reduction of LWDBs from 24 to 21, exploration and implementation of system-wide improvements to create consistency in delivery throughout the state, and the establishment of regional planning areas to better align LWDAs to address economic development needs throughout the state. When implemented, the Workforce System Transformation Plan will advance alignment and consolidation of LWDBs; enhance customer consistency and better leverage public funds; and better support workforce system alignment with education and economic development, optimizing opportunities for regional growth.

The REACH Act also required the chartering of a Credentials Review Committee, which established a definition for credentials of value, created a framework of quality and identifies non-degree and degree credentials of value to develop a Master Credentials List (MCL) for Florida. This Master Credentials List includes all of the credentials available in the state that are aligned to in-demand occupations at middle- to high-wages. It is incumbent upon Florida's core and combined workforce partners to continue finding ways to braid and coordinate funding opportunities that assist Florida's job seekers and employers. This MCL directs federal and state funding toward the most needed credentials in the state and provides a transparent list of credentials that changes with the labor market dynamics in the state.

Due to the absence of in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) customers, Florida requested and was granted three waivers during the 2022-2023 PY by the US Department of Labor's (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The state requested to waive the requirement that the state and local areas expend 75% of the Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula funds on OSY. As a result, Florida was permitted to lower the state and local youth formula funds expenditure requirement to 50% for OSY. This waiver will allow the state and local areas to develop strategies that address challenges of at-risk youth whether in school or out and will help address student retention, engagement, and immediate transition to post-secondary education, meaningful employment, and/or the military. The strategic goals associated with this waiver include:

- Addressing the talent pipeline shortages faced by many employers by ensuring the State's youth have the skills and preparation needed to enter the workforce and become contributing members of the local and state economy.
- Allowing local areas to serve OSY and ISY in a way that best meets the needs of the local workforce area according to populations, resources, and other labor market factors.
- Expanding opportunities at the local level for recruitment and enrollment of at-risk ISY who could benefit from the services of the workforce system.
- Allowing the State to spend its federal WIOA resources with more flexibility.

The ETA also approved Florida's request for a waiver that would allow Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to be used for ISY, ages 16-21. This waiver request will increase the connection between education and training by providing work-based learning opportunities that include work experiences and will increase access to workforce services for ISY. The State expects to achieve the following outcomes because of the waiver:

- Improve the LWDBs and youth service providers' ability to respond to the workforce needs of ISY.
- Increase the number of youths who utilize an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized post-secondary credential.
- Increase access to, and engagement of, ISY in need of post-secondary education, training, and support to succeed in the labor market and meet current high-growth industry demand in the State through the acquisition of portable credentials, college credit, and a degree.
- Increase the number of prepared youth candidates who are ready to work.

Florida submitted a request to the USDOL for a waiver allowing the State to develop different criteria than required by statute for the reallocation of recaptured funds among local workforce areas. The approved waiver supports the State's goal of ensuring that funds are effectively managed and used for maximum service provision and program performance.

By submission of this combined plan, Florida is requesting extension of these waivers through the duration of this plan. Current data tracked is below:

**Figure 2.46**
**WIOA Youth Participants**

| PY | Measure | Total OSY Youth Participants (%) | Total ISY Youth Participants (%) | Total Youth Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2021** | Total Youth Participants | 4,302 (78.7%) | 1,167 (21.3%) | 5,469 |
| **2022** | Total Youth Participants | 4,322 (83%) | 881 (16.9%) | 5,203 |

| PY | Program | New OSY Youth Participants | New ISY Youth Participants | Total New Youth Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2021** | New Youth Participants | 2,363 | 347 | 2,710 |
| **2022** | New Youth Participants | 2,604 | 421 | 3,025 |

Removing barriers to alignment and coordination among workforce programs is a primary focus for the workforce system. Implementation of the REACH Act requires FloridaCommerce, in coordination with FDOE and DCF, to implement a consumer-first workforce system which effectively combines or aligns data systems among WIOA partners. To avoid redundancy, increase efficiencies and eliminate duplication of customer entry, this consumer-first workforce system integrates information from FloridaCommerce, FDOE, VR, FDBS, and DCF. Additional opportunities for alignment of systems, language, and goals continue to be sought and are reflected throughout this combined plan.

In support of Florida's primary focus of removing barriers to alignment and coordination among workforce programs, in 2023, VR replaced a majority of its legacy case management and vendor systems with a new system, Aware. VR will continue to refine the Aware system, including portions specific to data collection and analysis, to allow for enhanced review and reporting of its work to agency partners. This work will better align efforts and increase responsiveness, transparency, and accountability for all VR partners.

### (C) State Workforce Development Capacity

Florida is well-positioned to deliver exceptional workforce development services to businesses and job seekers. Enhanced collaboration and communication with core and combined partners and policy-specific working groups are a primary focus as partners collectively build capacity and target specific goals and performance outcomes.

Florida's workforce development boards and 100 career centers statewide currently provide services under WIOA titles I and III; SNAP E&T; TANF; UI; TAA; and JVSG. Many local workforce boards also collocate with partners from WIOA titles II and IV; and SCSEP. This

model results in a statewide consistency of services available within the CareerSource Florida network.

Services are also available to Florida's citizens and businesses through affiliate sites or specialized career centers in areas strategically located within other community partners' facilities such as local chambers, libraries, and community-based organizations. Several LWDBs deploy mobile career centers and other remote services to engage Florida's businesses, workers, and job seekers to support special events including community events, disaster recovery efforts and employer onsite hiring events.

Local boards consistently strive to develop innovative methods for delivery of services to job seekers and employers in their local areas. Reducing the number of workforce development boards, expanding regional partnerships, and combined planning all provide opportunities to standardize access to services, streamline customer service delivery, enhance existing partnerships, and develop new relationships with stakeholders with shared goals.

Adult education programs in Florida are offered by school districts, Florida state colleges, and community-based organizations. Across the state, 62 agencies provide adult education services in their local areas, which include main sites and satellite programs throughout the community. Local eligible providers of adult education collaborate with their LWDB and community stakeholders to establish strategic goals and partnerships that enhance local workforce employment and educational attainment.

VR currently has 884 agency employee positions in 96 units (offices) throughout Florida; 20% of those are private contracted offices, opened to increase VR's service capacity and ensure continuity of services. Factors such as staff turnover and Order of Selection (OOS) waitlists have a limited effect on participant service capacity. VR leadership uses data projection models to monitor trends and guide decision-making regarding fiscal, caseload and waitlist performance.

VR currently contracts with 413 fee-for service employment service providers to support the provision of options for VR participants. VR also has several standard contractual agreements with other entities throughout the state to provide additional supports and services. 48% of VR expenditures are on employment services and SE. Another 15% of expenditures are focused on Pre-ETS youth services, per federal requirements. VR maintains memorandums of agreement with multiple agencies and entities around the state, including core and combined partners, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated services are provided for job seekers with disabilities, including youth with disabilities ages 14-21.

FDBS has 290 employees housed between 10 district offices, five satellite offices and headquarters. Staff work together throughout the state to coordinate, implement, and track workforce development activities across multiple programs. FDBS conducts ongoing assessments of training needs to ensure compliance with federal and state mandates. FDBS coordinates with core and combined partners and maintains memorandums of agreement with CareerSource Florida centers around the state to deliver comprehensive and coordinated services to job-seeking individuals who are visually impaired. FDBS has long-established relationships and executed contracts with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) that provide direct vocational rehabilitation, transition, SE, and rehabilitation engineering services to clients. FDBS implements workforce development activities using existing staff and CRPs as

outlined in Section X: Program Specific Requirements For Core Programs – Florida Division of Blind Services.

**TANF (Department of Children and Families)**
Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise is a specific initiative funded by the Governor's WIOA Set-Aside and is intended to strengthen the coordination between DCF and Florida's LWDBs to better assist eligible Floridians with overcoming barriers to education, training, and employment. Under the Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise initiative, a referral process involving regional DCF offices and LWDBs will be developed, and specialized services and programming will be available to help Hope Florida program participants find jobs, enroll in training and launch new career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. LWDBs will also be able to refer potential clients in need of immediate support to address barriers and challenges not related to employment, to DCF to access resources that are beyond the allowability of WIOA funding.

DCF employs Hope Navigators throughout the state, as part of the Hope Florida initiative, to deliver client-centered prevention to help public benefit customers in establishing goals and identifying barriers related to the achievement of self-sufficiency. The Navigators assist customers in navigating the state's network of non-profits, faith-based programs, and government programs and refer to applicable services. Hope Navigators team up with customers to provide assessment that identifies goals and barriers, care coordination, and follow-up services. The model also serves public benefit customers statewide, children aging out of foster care, pregnant mothers contending with substance use disorders, parents who need assistance, and families in need of services.

**SNAP E&T**
DCF and FloridaCommerce are working in partnership to explore the expansion of the SNAP third-party partnership program. This opportunity includes partnering with providers, such as community-based organizations, workforce development providers, and community colleges to deliver SNAP E&T services. These providers then use non-federal funding for allowable services and supports, which are eligible for a 50% reimbursement through the state's SNAP E&T program. A benefit of this model is the ability to expand the program's reach and improve program outcomes by partnering with existing high-quality providers that serve their community.

**TAA**
The TAA Program has established partnerships with internal and external partners. Our partners assist with building the capacity of the program while increasing efficiency and optimizing the abilities of an affected jobseeker and enhances our effectiveness in assisting employers and businesses.

Collectively and continuously engaging our partners affords the TAA program additional opportunities to increase and improve programmatic elements and outreach efforts to serve participants of the TAA program using a more holistic approach. The TAA Program plans to expand our partnerships with stakeholders to better enhance the program.

**JVSGs**
The JVSG Program continually establishes direct partnerships with a diverse group of organizations with the ability to positively impact the employability of veterans. It is essential that JVSG staff assist other workforce development providers in increasing their ability to recognize and respond to the employment and training needs of veterans. The JVSG program

accomplishes this through training career center staff and service delivery system partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues. The JVSG program is operated out of the CareerSource Florida network of career centers.

**UI (FloridaCommerce)**
The RESEA program was launched in Florida in 2016 pursuant to the federal change that replaced the Reemployment Assessment (REA) program with the RESEA program. In partnership with CareerSource Florida, the RA program housed under FloridaCommerce provides temporary financial assistance to eligible workers during periods of unemployment. The RESEA program is designed to address the reemployment needs of RA claimants.

Individuals filing RA claims may be selected to participate in the state's RESEA program, which provides specific intensive services to these populations and helps detect and prevent erroneous RA payments. The RESEA program uses a one-on-one intensive appointment process and participants are made aware of and referred to a variety of available reemployment services. If selected for participation, claimants are notified via U.S. mail of a mandatory appointment at their local career center and provided these services:

Each RESEA participant receives:

- **Orientation -** An orientation about the career center's services.
- **Initial Assessment -** A one-on-one interview with a career center job counselor that provides an initial analysis of the claimant's strengths, weaknesses, barriers, employment history, education, etc.
- **Labor Market Information -** An analysis of the labor market that is unique to the claimant's desired occupation and location, experiences, and skills. The aim is for the claimant to recognize trends in their desired occupation and determine whether it is worth pursuing based on growth or decline in that area, or if it would be better to seek training for another field with a better occupational outlook.
- **Employability Development Plan (EDP) -** An Employability Development Plan developed jointly by career center staff and the claimant
- **Work Search Activities -** Claimants are referred to any additional activities relevant to the results of their initial assessments such as counseling, resume writing, job search workshop, referrals to education and/or training.
- 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.

**RA Claims Processing Responsibility:**
Every RESEA session is required to include a one-on-one assessment of the claimants' continuing UI Eligibility Review Process (ERP). This assessment typically includes confirming employment status and a review of the claimant's work search activities. In Florida, the ERP is done separately from the orientation:

- Orientation is done in the career centers.
- The ERP is done by RA staff.
- Currently, the ERP process is assigned to RA staff as a workflow item from the system to the staff member.

- Staff contacts claimant via phone or email to go over the ERP questionnaire.
- If staff are unable to reach the customer, staff gives the claimant 48 hours to respond.
- If no response from the claimant after 48 hours, the issue is determined ineligible.
- If and when the claimant calls back, then the issue can be redetermined.

**RA Adjudication Responsibility:**
When a RESEA participant fails to report as scheduled for their initial appointment.

- 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.
- LWDB staff enter the information on the "failure to report" on claimant's record in the Employ Florida RESEA application.
- An issue denoting the "No Show" will also prompt **a Reporting Requirements - Failure to Report Eligibility Review** issue to be posted in the Issue Summary in Reconnect.
- The claimant is sent a fact-finding questionnaire to determine why the claimant failed to report.
    - If the fact-finding questionnaire uploaded to the claim by the claimant contains incomplete information, the adjudicator must contact the claimant by telephone to conduct a fact-finding interview to obtain the missing information or to resolve any conflicts in the claimant's statement.
- Reasonable attempts criteria must be met when contacting the claimant.
- The law does not provide the department with the authority to give claimants "good cause" for failure to report for reemployment services when they are not otherwise exempt from the work registration requirement. However, if the claimant asserts that they were never notified of the scheduled appointment, there is no issue, and the claim should be released for payment.
- If the claimant does not report for the RESEA interview, the claimant will be held ineligible to receive benefits for the week in which such failure occurred.
- The claimant must also be questioned thoroughly to determine if an able and availability (A & A) issue exists. If an able and A & A issue exists, the appropriate issue must be added, and a nonmonetary determination will be issued on the claim in addition to the failure to report for the RESEA determination.

**SCSEP (FDOEA)**
SCSEP within FDOEA has established meaningful and beneficial partnerships through the development of an MOU between SCSEP and CareerSource Florida; the purpose, roles, and responsibilities as it relates to coordinating and performing activities and services are outlined. A well-defined scope of work is established for the duration of the agreement, and options for executing amendments, oversight and support, assurances, and dispute resolution are addressed in the MOU. Participants are required to sign up at the local career center. SCSEP Project Directors often serve on local workforce boards and play an active role in expressing the goals of SCSEP and steps that would contribute to the success of participants.

SCSEP services are maximized when partnerships are developed with other job training initiatives that may be available in the state. Some current activities to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives are as follows:

- Acquiring and analyzing labor market statistics.
- Acquiring and analyzing data on growing industries and occupations.
- Acquiring and analyzing employment projections.
- Providing training and employment referrals.
- Organizing and participating in meetings on potential training programs, and
- Co-enrollment in training activities for individuals who meet program qualifications. (20 CFR 641.140)

SCSEP desires to expand partnerships with required and core partners. Sharing and analyzing data will help determine the counties in Florida with the most need. SCSEP can also identify potential partner organizations within those counties working toward the same goal as SCSEP including but not limited to, Area Agencies on Aging, CareerSource Florida, and other not for profit or government organizations.

SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system where one-stop centers provide SCSEP use of equipment, furniture, computers, and meeting spaces. The required IFA between CareerSource Florida and SCSEP allows these partnerships to continue, even with budgetary constraints.

**CSBG (FloridaCommerce)**
CSBG provides federal funds to designated local governments and nonprofit agencies called community action agencies, also known as local agency providers, to assist eligible income-qualified households with attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. The agencies may provide a variety of antipoverty services such as emergency health, food, housing, day care, transportation assistance, housing counseling, placement and training services, and homeless prevention programs.

Of the CSBG program funds, 90% are allocated to the state's existing network of community action agencies. This is a formula-based grant and is not competitive.

FloridaCommerce is the state administrator for CSBG, and FloridaCommerce's roles include:

- Applying for funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Distributing funding in the form of grants to local agency providers, which are either nonprofit agencies or local governments.
- Monitoring local agency providers to ensure that they administer the funding in compliance with state and federal laws and rules.
- Providing technical assistance to local agency providers to help them comply with state and federal requirements.

Services are provided in each county through local Community Action agencies and other partners receiving CSBG funding. A list of each provider can be found here.

More information about CSBG can be obtained on FloridaCommerce's Website.

**FL WINS**
FL WINS is a technology solution to build a "no wrong door" approach individuals seeking to engage with Florida's workforce system. The system is currently in year two of development and has the three distinct elements:

1. A **customer portal** to enable Floridians to more easily obtain the support they need by offering multiple points of entry to apply for services and receive information.
2. A **common intake form** to reduce duplicative information being entered by agency staff and Floridians requesting services and refer them to services targeted to meet their needs.
3. A **data hub** to help the agencies better serve Floridians by providing a comprehensive overview and greater availability to link them with the services they may need.

Current partners included in this project include FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida and the local workforce development boards, Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Education's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Blind Services.

Answers to frequently asked questions about the FL WINS Workforce System Integration effort can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

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

**(1) Vision. Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.**

Florida seeks to be number one in workforce education and talent development by 2030, fulfilling a commitment to current and future businesses that Florida is focused on building economic prosperity for all Floridians.

- Florida defines the larger workforce development ecosystem to include businesses, education, and economic development entities, along with providers of human services.
- Florida's workforce development system is market-driven and results-oriented, focused on providing services that are customer centered, high quality, and relevant to the labor market to Florida businesses and job seekers.
- Florida aligns goals and strategies across all core and combined partners to ensure resources are maximized toward positively impacting services to Florida businesses and job seekers.

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

**(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment[3] and other populations.[4]**

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

Florida's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of Florida businesses include:

- Developing a comprehensive education, employment, and training ecosystem that includes contributions from industry stakeholders and core and combined partners that streamlines access to high-quality workforce services and increases prosperity for employers and workers.
- Working collaboratively with core and combined partners to expand Florida's labor force to meet employer demand while identifying and addressing barriers for opportunity populations.
- Reducing duplication of services and maximizing efficient use of human and financial resources to serve Florida businesses and job seekers through aligning and expanding partnerships that leverage and braid funding and coordinate programming to improve outcomes and accountability.
- Reducing welfare dependency and increasing economic self-sufficiency for Floridians by focusing on community collaboration between workforce, education, industry, and other partners to break down community silos and maximize the effectiveness of workforce development efforts.
- Diversifying Florida's industry sectors of focus through enhanced, focused engagement with business and education stakeholders to build talent pipelines and enhance Florida's productivity and competitiveness.

**(3) Performance Goals. Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)**

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 entering the program (e.g., work

[3] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 3514); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the TANF Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

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

history, work experience, educational/occupational skills attainment, literacy levels, disability status, etc.). The core measures include:

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

Negotiated levels of performance are reviewed and approved by the core program senior leadership, the state workforce investment board, and 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.

**Additional Performance Goals**

Combined and core partners have collaborated and in addition to the WIOA performance goals addressed in this section, have agreed to focus on the following statewide goals that impact the larger workforce development system in the state:

- Increase state labor force participation to 63%.
- Ensure 60% of Floridians aged 25-70 have a credential of value by 2030.
- Median wages greater to or equal to 75% of the median hourly wage in Florida.
- By 2030, increase the statewide 2nd quarter after exit employment rate by 10% for each of the following populations:
  - Individuals 55 years and older.
  - Youth.
  - Individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits.
  - Individuals without a HS Diploma or in ESL.
  - Individuals with disabilities.
- Total of 7,000 newly registered apprentices annually by 2030.
- 450 registered apprenticeship programs by 2030.
- 110 registered pre-apprenticeship programs by 2030.
- Increase percentage of 12th grade secondary CTE concentrators to 25% of total enrollment.
- Build talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries of focus by assisting 1,000 individuals to earn credentials that directly support the sector.

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

Florida will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in relation to the strategic vision and goals through a variety of approaches. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, including representation of all WIOA core partners and other key stakeholders including combined partners, meets regularly throughout the year with an agenda tied to fully implementing the vision and the goals, strategies and operations described in this plan. These meetings include updates for key strategic initiatives and projects, presentation of best practices demonstrating progress in meeting goals, updates from core partners and other stakeholders, performance reports, and identification of board-led initiatives to further improve performance. Core partners provide performance data to the state workforce investment board. Performance is assessed in relation to state and local targets. Elements of the REACH Act are addressed during these regularly scheduled partner meetings.

A new system of assigning letter grades for LWDBs was implemented during PY 2022. The grades consider federal WIOA performance measures, increased earnings for participants, reduction in participants on public assistance programs, business penetration, and individuals in work-related training programs. Extra credit is provided for serving individuals on public assistance or co-enrolled in WIOA Title II and IV programs. Performance on letter grades is updated quarterly and reviewed with the state board of directors.

Gaps in performance are addressed at both the state and 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.

The move to a combined plan with additional, shared performance targets will necessitate the development of additional performance tracking measures, taking into account participants in all programs and monitoring performance against these self-derived targets. The state plans to develop the necessary dashboards during year one of the plan and report on progress quarterly.

Assessment of overall effectiveness is considered by the state workforce investment board in preparing for annual planning and the state unified plan. Regular interagency meetings of the WIOA core and combined partner programs address aspects of plan implementation and successful strategies for continuous improvement. These meetings include leadership and subject matter experts from each of the combined partners.

(**c**) **State Strategy. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above.**

**Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).**

**(1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).**

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

**Strategies to Align Core and Combined Partner Programs**

**The REACH Act**

The REACH Act was unanimously approved by the Florida Legislature and signed into law in 2021. The REACH Act addresses the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation among state businesses and education communities while improving training within and access to a more integrated workforce and education system. The REACH Act establishes a comprehensive blueprint for the state's talent development ecosystem. It demands customer-focused improvements to reimagine and modernize complementary, but often siloed, systems for education, workforce development, and public assistance directly affecting the state's talent pipeline through both policy and performance.

The REACH Act establishes the REACH Office within the Executive Office of the Governor to facilitate coordination and alignment of entities that contribute to the state's talent pipeline system through education, training, and support services. Among the state workforce development entities and agencies recognized in the REACH Act are: CareerSource Florida, local workforce development boards, one-stop career centers, FloridaCommerce, Florida Department of Education, and Florida Department of Children and Families.

In the case of the state workforce system – the CareerSource Florida network – the REACH Act directs:

- A reduction in the current number of LWDBs to:
    1. Eliminate multiple layers of administrative entities to improve coordination of the workforce development system.
    2. Establish consistent eligibility standards across the state to improve the accountability of workforce-related programs.
    3. Provide greater flexibility in allocating resources to maximize the funds directed to training and business services.

Strategies described in this section align the WIOA core and combined programs to fully integrate customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals of WIOA and the

REACH Act. These strategies and initiatives strengthen workforce development activities and address weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

Collaborative work currently underway includes:

- Coordination by the REACH Office with the Department of Education, Florida Commerce, and CareerSource Florida to:
    - Expand apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and other work-based learning models.
    - Streamline efforts to recruit and onboard new apprentices, pre-apprentices, students, and employers interested in work-based learning opportunities, including, but not limited to, conducting outreach with business leaders, local governments, and education providers.
    - Ensure eligible apprenticeship sponsors include educational institutions, local workforce development boards, community, or faith-based organizations and associations.

- Creation of an education and industry consortium of representatives from educational entities and businesses in the designated service delivery area for each local workforce development board.
    - Consortium members are appointed by the local workforce development board chair.
    - Each local consortium provides quarterly reports on educational programs and industry needs. Local workforce development boards consider these reports to determine the most effective ways to grow, retain, and attract talent to the service delivery area.

- Submission of recommendations by the Florida Talent Development Council on best practices for collaboration among school boards, local workforce development boards, and local businesses and business groups to facilitate work-based learning opportunities for middle and high school students. The council, administered by FloridaCommerce, provided a report on workforce-based learning opportunities to the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2023.

**State Implementation Team**
A State Plan Implementation Team, including professional team members from all core and combined programs and the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Office at the Executive Office of the Governor, meet monthly to discuss each core and combined program's critical issues, challenges, and accomplishments related to implementation of the state workforce development plan and performance goals. This includes discussion of program structures, purpose, customer base, and contributions that could improve the statewide system. The State Plan Implementation Team uses the WIOA Combined Plan as an ongoing opportunity to review and update coordination with state plan programs.

**Policy Development**
CareerSource Florida is the Governor's designated organization responsible for workforce policy and investment. CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce work together to equip local workforce development boards with policy guidance and WIOA local planning instructions. CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, WIOA core partners, the Governor, or Legislature may originate issues and needs for evaluation. Changes in federal or state law, regulations, or rules

may require development of or updates to strategic or administrative policies or workforce guidance.

The Policy Development Framework adopted by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors in 2021 guides the development of CareerSource Florida network strategic and administrative policies that impact local workforce development boards and stakeholders. Additional staff, board members, core or required partners, representatives from local workforce development boards (LWDBs), and other subject matter experts may assist in various stages of policy development and efforts to align policies with program development and implementation.

CareerSource Florida Strategic Policies can be viewed on the CareerSource Florida website. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policies can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

**Cross-Agency Leadership Group**
A cross-agency leadership group meets weekly to focus on implementation of the REACH Act. This workgroup consists of agency leaders from the Governor's REACH Office, Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Career and Adult Education and State University System divisions, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), CareerSource Florida, and FloridaCommerce. This group identifies challenges and opportunities to eliminate barriers to collaboration, leverages resources across agencies, and reviews and reports on current implementation efforts.

**WIOA Partners**
Regular interagency meetings of the WIOA Core and Combined Partner programs address aspects of plan implementation. These meetings include leadership and subject matter experts from the FDOE's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Blind Services; the Florida College System; FloridaCommerce; and CareerSource Florida. This group revisits state plan strategies and obtains data-driven information about program performance. A workgroup of subject matter experts from the core and combined partners is formed to address the federal Information Collection Request (ICR) requirements for the State Plan and creates instructions for local plans. This workgroup identifies opportunities to continuously improve the quality of the statewide workforce development plan and the process for managing the plan.

**WIOA Local Plans**
As required by WIOA, LWDBs submit local plans to the state in partnership with the chief local elected official. CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce solicit input from FDOE's Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Division of Blind Services (FDBS) to develop requirements governing the submission of local plans. As required by the REACH act, FloridaCommerce distributes local planning instructions codified the state's policy governing the submission of local plans through an administrative rule. These instructions provide direction for creating local plans, which serve as four-year and two-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and support the state's vision and operational goals.

Local elected officials, LWDB board members, core program partners, and mandatory one-stop partners are integral to the planning process. Each plan addresses how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs of VR, FDBS, DCAE, and combined partners including DCF's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T programs, adult and community education, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA),

Unemployment Insurance (UI), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

Under WIOA and consistent with the Uniform Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), LWDBs, with the agreement of the chief elected official(s), are required to develop and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with required partners on the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local service delivery area. Each LWDB must include an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) in the MOU with required partners. The IFA details how infrastructure costs for the one-stop delivery system will be funded and shared locally.

**LWDB Leadership Calls**
FloridaCommerce facilitates a monthly call of leadership and subject matter experts representing FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida, Executive Directors, and/or staff of LWDBs and other partners as determined appropriate. The call serves as a forum to facilitate the identification of areas of opportunity to improve transparency and accountability; obtain input to assist with decision-making; and to provide updates on federal and state initiatives, policy changes, performance/data reporting, and budget/finance concerns.

**WIOA Core and Combined Program Leadership Team**
The WIOA Core and Combined Program Leadership Team is composed of WIOA Partner Program Directors and subject matter experts including staff who represent CareerSource Florida; FloridaCommerce's Division of Workforce Services and the Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support; the REACH Office, FDOE's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, VR, FDBS, and Florida Colleges and Universities and combined planning partners including the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, and JVSG. The WIOA Core and Combined Program Leadership Team:

- Receive and consider recommendations from the WIOA State Plan Implementation Team and provide leadership for WIOA implementation.
- Discuss issues, challenges, and opportunities 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 workgroups to research strategies and implement action as needed.
- Arrange for resource support as needed.
- Prepare and deliver key information and recommendations for implementation, strategy development, and performance management to the Governor, agency heads, legislators, the state workforce investment board, and federal Departments of Labor and Education.

**WIOA State Plan Implementation Team Membership**
The WIOA State Plan Implementation Team includes Planning Directors and Program Leadership and subject matter experts for WIOA partner programs engage in coordinated projects designed to continue implementing and enhancing the workforce system within the WIOA framework.

More information about inter-agency teams and workgroups who collaborate to align strategies and implement programs is detailed in **Section IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.**

**Workforce System Transformation**
Directed by the REACH Act, approved by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors and affirmed by the Governor, the three-pillar Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan advances alignment and consolidation of LWDBs; requires system-wide improvements for enhanced customer consistency and better leveraging of public funds; and guides regional planning to support workforce system alignment with education and economic development and optimize opportunities for regional economic growth.

**Pillar I – Alignment and Consolidation**
In May 2023, the Governor affirmed the recommendation provided by the CareerSource Florida board of Directors to realign and consolidate 10 LWDAs as outlined in the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan. These changes will affect 27 counties.

Significant local actions have been taken to ensure Florida has transitioned to 21 LWDAs and boards. This includes:

- New local governance determined and in place across impacted boards.
- Interlocal agreements, consortiums, and new organizational structures that may reflect 501(c)(3) filings to establish nonprofits or other administrative structures such as governmental entities.
- Operational transitions for all impacted boards.

**Pillar II – Systemwide Improvements**
The Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan provides an unprecedented opportunity to combine strategic LWDB alignment changes with statewide and state-level improvements in policy and operations.

These system-wide improvements will enhance consistency and coordination between LWDBs and state workforce partners, including CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, and the FDOE. Consistency system-wide will help streamline experiences for job seekers, workers, and businesses, allowing a more agile workforce system to better adapt to changing marketplace and consumer expectations.

Significant improvements in policies, processes, technology, and tools are made and ongoing in alignment with the workforce system's commitment to continuous improvement. These enhancements, applied operationally across Florida's workforce development system, include, but are not limited to, standardized contracts, processes, and cost savings achieved through leveraging state buying power.

**Pillar III – Regional Planning**
The WIOA encourages the development of regional plans to align workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers. The goal of regional planning is to develop, align, and integrate strategies and resources to support regional economic growth.

As part of Florida's Workforce System Transformation Plan implementation, regional planning areas are developed to include a minimum of two contiguous LWDAs, ensuring increased collaboration and productivity.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a strategic policy in September 2023, implementing the requirements for regional planning areas.

As of the submission of this plan, the state board has received two requests for designation as regional planning areas:

- CareerSource Escarosa (LWDB 1), CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (LWDB 2), CareerSource Chipola (LWDB 3), and CareerSource Gulf Coast (LWDB 4).
- CareerSource Research Coast (LWDB 20) and CareerSource Palm Beach (LWDB 21).

Beginning in PY 2024, designated Regional Planning Areas will be required to submit an addendum to their local plan outlining their regional strategies. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors passed a Regional Planning Area Strategic Policy that requires all local workforce areas to be part of a Regional Planning Area to align workforce strategies to address the needs of shared industry sectors, employers, and significant populations of job seekers; address common labor shortages and worker skills gaps with aligned service strategies; and realize system efficiencies through reducing resource costs (monetary, time, or other).

WIOA local plans and regional planning area strategies must align with federal and state law, CareerSource Florida strategic and administrative policies and Florida's WIOA Statewide Plan. While the state board awaits additional requests for designation, the remaining LWDAs remain designated as regional planning areas that correspond to their individual designated LWDA.

More information about the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan can be viewed on CareerSource Florida's website.

**Identifying Credentials of Value**
The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors appointed an 18-member Credentials Review Committee for the state of Florida. This committee includes the Chancellors of DCAE, K-12 Education, State University System, and State College System along with agency representatives from FloridaCommerce and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, private education representatives, industry representatives, and members of urban and rural LWDBs. The Committee developed a definition for Credentials of Value ensuring that credentials are linked to occupations in demand and occupations that meet defined wage criteria. This Framework of Quality is used to evaluate all credentials offered in the state of Florida to create a Master Credentials List (MCL). The Master Credentials List (MCL), required by the REACH Act, is a comprehensive list of state-approved degree and non-degree credentials of value that prepare Floridians for in-demand occupations. It serves as a public and transparent inventory of state-approved credentials of value, directs the use of federal and state funds for workforce education and training programs that lead to approved credentials of value, and guides workforce education and training programs by informing the public of the credentials that have value in the current or future job market.

The Committee meets quarterly to review applications for credentials and approve additions to the MCL. On an annual basis, the MCL is reevaluated using current labor market data, thus ensuring that the list changes with the changing labor market and remains current. Biannually, the Committee is charged with reviewing the Framework of Quality and adjusting as needed.

The MCL is intended to direct federal and state funding toward the credentials most needed by Florida businesses. Currently, credentials on the list are eligible for WIOA funding for training;

the state's Career and Professional Education funding; state level Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grants; and FDOE's Open Door Grant.

**Delivering Talent to Florida's Targeted Industry Sectors**
The business support and services available through the CareerSource Florida network positions Florida to respond to immediate and long-term talent needs of Florida's targeted industry sectors. Florida delivers a seamless, externally focused talent delivery system for Florida's targeted industry sectors. Using state, local and partner resources, the CareerSource Florida network helps to ensure that proactive talent supply and training strategies are implemented for Florida's targeted industry sectors.

Examples of services include recruitment, hiring, training, and the development of career pathways including the use of registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning experiences to satisfy the current and future talent needs.

It is widely known that skilled talent is often the primary driver of whether companies move and/or expand. Florida's talent pipeline is consistently ranked among the best in the nation. Florida is home to the nation's third-largest workforce, totaling more than 10.8 million workers. The excellent skills of the Florida workforce can be credited to the collaboration between Florida's workforce system, business and industry, and Florida's education partners to develop responsive workforce training programs. The CareerSource Florida network and the business community work closely with state's 12 public universities, six major medical schools, numerous private colleges and universities, and the K-12 public school system to build and implement training solutions responsive to the needs of Florida's targeted industries.

This collaboration is important to leverage funding from all agencies to develop targeted talent pipelines. Florida works to ensure that funding from WIOA, the Governor's Job Growth Grant Fund, the FDOE's Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant, and others can be braided appropriately to reduce duplication and coordinate efforts across partners.

**Education and Industry Consortium**
The REACH Act requires LWDB chairs to appoint Education and Industry Consortium for each local workforce area. Consortium members must represent public and private sector education providers from the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary sectors. Industry representatives must be representative of the focused sectors for the area and the largest employers in the area. Representatives must be leaders of their respective organizations.

The Consortium are required to meet quarterly and discuss the talent needs of the businesses and the related programs offered by education. Reports from the meeting are to be shared with the LWDB. This strategy ensures that industry and education leaders in all Florida communities are engaging and informing the LWDB strategies for talent development.

**Business Services Alignment**
To enhance effectiveness in meeting Florida's business and industry talent needs, CareerSource Florida's Business and Workforce Development Team combined with the Strategic Policy and Performance Team to form a unified Workforce Program Development Team. This unifies team members around board-led initiatives impacting workforce, education, economic development, and how performance indicators provide insight into strategic and operational policy effectiveness. Supported by the growth of a robust economy, thriving infrastructure and top-ranked labor force, Florida's major industries of focus include:

- Aviation and Aerospace.
- Financial and Professional Services.
- Corporate Headquarters.
- IT.
- Life Sciences.
- Logistics Distribution.
- Manufacturing.

This structure helps the CareerSource Florida network expand its business intelligence of specific industries and align statewide efforts with local economic development programs and partnerships focused on key industry sectors with career opportunities for median and high-wage jobs and economic diversification.

Florida continues its Career Pathways approach by implementing a suite of strategic and administrative policies led by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors and implementation of local policies and WIOA plans. These strategies include the implementation of policies focused on TOLs, Sector Strategies, work-based training including apprenticeships, and a Comprehensive Employment, Education and Training Policy. Career Pathways developed within targeted sectors enable individuals to secure meaningful employment within specific industries or occupational sectors with long-term opportunities for education, upskilling, and career advancement in each sector. Regional partnerships with education, training, and support services help individuals at all skill levels grow in their careers while supplying qualified workers and valuable talent to businesses in key industries.

**Strengthening Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways**
WIOA requires sector partnerships as a strategy under federal statute. The law defines both state-level and local-level responsibilities. Chapter 445.004(10), Florida Statutes requires state workforce development strategy to include efforts that enlist business, education, and community support for students to achieve long-term career goals. Led by CareerSource Florida, the Workforce Development System collaborates with education partners to 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 in-demand jobs with better wages. This strategy helps attract and expand job-creating businesses offering high-paying, high-demand occupations. 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. Development of sector strategies and career pathways is a component of Florida's WIOA Combined Plan and state workforce development strategy.

Evidence from states employing this approach shows that sector strategies 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 success of CareerSource Florida's board-led Sector Strategy Strategic Policy, CareerSource Florida developed and implemented a Sector Strategies Toolkit to assist LWDBs with a range of activities to help them develop industry-driven workforce goals, action plans and policies and to enhance business and job seeker services. The Sector Strategy policy can be viewed online. The Sector Strategy toolkit can be viewed at https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/sector-strategies/.

In alignment with Sector Strategies, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) is a strategic workforce development approach aimed at addressing the skills gap and labor shortages in various industries. TPM emphasizes close collaboration between employers, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations to align training and education programs with the specific needs of employers. This approach involves building partnerships known as "employer collaboratives" where industry leaders define the competencies and skills required for in-demand jobs, ensuring that educational institutions can tailor programs accordingly. TPM encourages data-driven decision-making, tracking workforce needs in real-time, and fostering a demand-driven system that helps businesses access a skilled and responsive talent pool. Nine members of the CareerSource Florida network completed the training and received a TPM Academy Certificate of Completion.

CareerSource Florida continues its focus on sector strategies, sector partnerships, and TPM as proven methods of reinforcing talent pipelines to support regional economies. LWDBs implement a mixture of effective sector strategies including industry sector rounds, regional forums, and other industry-led approaches to better inform both workforce and education about industry's existing and future talent needs. These efforts often lead to industry-based solutions meeting the needs of multiple businesses within a sector, versus a single solution for an individual employer.

**Career Pathways**

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

Career Pathways is an important focus of Florida's REACH Act requiring workforce agencies to collaborate with business and industry leaders to create a state-approved list of credentials to align training with workforce demands. Job tracks in high-demand fields will be supported by a new Open Door Workforce Grant Program, which received a $35 million appropriation.

**Statewide Targeted Industry Sectors**

**Advanced Manufacturing**
Florida is home to more than 25,000 manufacturing companies, which accounts for more than $58 billion in output to the state's economy. As one of the nation's leaders in medical manufacturing, Florida ranks No. 3 in total medical technology employment, with nearly 24,000 Florida jobs. The state is No. 7 in total revenue generated in the sector with $6.09 billion.

In September 2023, manufacturing had 422,800 jobs in Florida, an increase of 7,700 jobs over the year. All 24 LWDBs in Florida identified manufacturing as a targeted industry sector in their two-year plan.

Strategies to strengthen Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways in Manufacturing include continuous collaboration with FloridaMakes, the state's Manufacturing Extension Partnership. CareerSource Florida holds a position as an ex-officio member of the FloridaMakes Board of Directors and participates in monthly Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Leadership Council (AMWLC) meetings, which is represented by manufacturers from each of the 13 regional manufacturing associations. Through this membership, CareerSource Florida encourages and enables close partnerships with LWDBs and regional manufacturing associations. As a result, all regional manufacturing associations partner and receive support from the network of LWDBs. Examples include supporting manufacturing job fairs, manufacturing bootcamps, and registered apprenticeship expansion.

As a result of this important collaboration and partnership, the AMWLC established a first ever statewide online registered "Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Program" resulting in earning the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council Certified Production Technician Certification. Building on the success of this apprenticeship, FloridaMakes has now added the Quality Control Technician and Production Technologist Associate apprenticeship programs. CSF also serves on the FloridaMakes Apprenticeship Committee ensuring the program's health and stability.

LWDBs created and/or partnered with other entities to develop and expand manufacturing registered apprenticeships in local areas. CareerSource Research Coast partnered with Indian River State College, Valencia College, and Paradigm Precision to develop an Industrial Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship program. Local economic development organizations like JAX USA and CareerSource Northeast Florida partner to develop clear pathways in targeted sectors through their Earn-Up Initiative.

**Trade and Logistics**
Florida's Trade and Logistics sector boasts over 61 establishments and is growing with over 700,000 employees. Over the next five years, Florida will invest approximately $3.3 billion in capital improvements to its seaports. About 26% of those funds will be allocated to berth rehabilitation and repairs, about 20% each to cruise and cargo terminals, and 9% to channel and harbor deepening. Companies like Amazon, Chewy, Fed Ex Ground, AutoZone, and Publix are all experiencing substantial growth in Florida, leading to the need for greater sector partnerships and career pathway development. Coke Florida, Anheuser-Busch, Publix, and the Association of Supply Chain Management are working with the CareerSource Florida network and partners to implement strategies and solutions to meet their growing workforce talent needs.

CareerSource Florida facilitates calls with these employers and multiple workforce development boards across regions, bringing together a single point of contact with the goal of developing a Total Talent Solution. To respond to this growing demand, Florida's regional development boards work closely with business and education stakeholders to engage in or sponsor the development of registered apprenticeship programs in this important sector. CareerSource Research Coast sponsored a Distribution and Logistics Technician in partnership with CVS, Indian River State College, and Valencia College. CareerSource South Florida partnered with the District Board of Trustees of Miami Dade College to develop a Transportation and Logistics Specialists registered apprenticeship program serving the talent needs of multiple south Florida companies.

Additional partnerships have been created with local economic development organizations like JAX USA and CareerSource Northeast Florida to develop clear career pathways in targeted sectors through their Earn-Up Initiative. An exemplary model of their Trade and Logistics Pathway can be viewed at https://earnup.org/.

**Healthcare and Life Sciences Sector Strategies**
New survey data from the Florida Hospital Association reveals positive trends in nurse turnover and vacancy rates across the state. Nursing vacancies and turnover rates are both down by 38%, with Florida hospitals leading the nation in reducing these rates. Despite these gains, Florida still faces a severe shortage of healthcare professionals, projected to reach a shortage of nearly 60,000 nurses by 2035.

As Florida's population continues to grow rapidly, ensuring an adequate healthcare workforce is essential. Policy makers, education institutions, and the workforce system will need to work closely with hospitals and other healthcare facilities to establish long-term solutions for the state's healthcare workforce challenges.

All of Florida's LWDBs have prioritized the healthcare sector within their WIOA strategic plans. This strategic focus involves the appointment of dedicated healthcare sector business consultants and the establishment of healthcare workforce consortiums, fostering collaboration among employers, educators, workforce boards, and community partners. CareerSource Florida collaborates closely with statewide healthcare organizations, including the Florida Center for Nursing, the Florida Hospital Association, the Florida Senior Living Association, and the Florida Health Care Association, facilitating connections between their member employers and the CareerSource Florida network resources. Moreover, CareerSource Florida actively engages with these organizations by delivering presentations at association meetings and conducting regular virtual presentations for their members.

Creating healthcare career pathways is essential for addressing workforce shortages, nurturing skill development, promoting career advancement, enhancing job satisfaction, elevating patient care quality, driving economic growth, and ensuring long-term workforce planning, an adequately scaled up workforce, and professional development. These pathways attract and train individuals for critical healthcare roles, cultivating a skilled workforce capable of delivering exceptional patient care while fostering economic growth and meeting long-term demands.

In partnership with the nonprofit organization Dwyer Workforce Development, CareerSource Brevard County and CareerSource Palm Beach County are enabling job seekers to embark on life-transforming careers in the senior healthcare industry. This includes offering individuals the

opportunity to receive no-cost training to become CNAs and providing scholarships to support career advancement to LPN, RN, and various healthcare roles, ensuring access to thriving opportunities within the healthcare job market.

**Aviation/Aerospace**
The resurgence of Florida's Aerospace Industry, particularly with the Space Coast being a major vehicle assembly and launch hub, demonstrates how integral workforce development is to the success of this targeted industry. Florida has long been the world's premier gateway to space and is uniquely positioned to support this vital industry.

The Aviation and Aerospace industry cluster had 2,777 establishments in 2022 with employment of 130,198. Employment was up 14,007 jobs (+12.1%) from 2021. Aviation and aerospace employment reached a low of 78,999 jobs in 2004 and has gained 51,199 jobs (+64.8%) since then. Florida's aviation/aerospace industry continues to be among the state's primary target industries for growth.

Florida's aviation and defense has $9.5 billion in exports, with nearly 126,000+ Floridians working in Florida's aviation and aerospace industries. Veterans play an influential role in the success of this industry where Florida is home to over 67,000 active-duty personnel, 32,000 civilian personnel, more than 10,000 annual military separatees, and nearly 1.4 million veterans.

CareerSource Florida has a long history of convening industry and education partners, and its sector strategies approach is a proven method to strengthen talent pipelines that support regional economies. These strategic partnerships offer opportunities to share relevant data and develop targeted initiatives resulting in successful traditional and online training, apprenticeships, and innovative work-based learning strategies for career pathways.

The Aerospace Consortium includes Space Florida, the aerospace economic development agency of the state of Florida; the Economic Development Commission Florida's Space Coast, the economic development agency for Brevard County; and industry partners such as SpaceX, Lockheed Martin, Embraer, Northrup Grumman, and L3Harris. The Consortium's long history of shaping sector-based education, training and credentialing programs is critical to Florida's goals in this sector.

Governor Ron DeSantis announced nearly $30 million in strategic investments made in Florida to develop a sustainable pipeline of job-ready candidates in aviation, aerospace, defense, manufacturing, and IT/cybersecurity. The geographic focus for these efforts includes the state's Eastern seaboard from Flagler to Martin counties through creation of the Florida Atlantic Workforce Alliance. Of the $30 million, the Governor's CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $9 million of WIOA funding. The Alliance unites and aligns workforce development, education, economic development, and employers to collectively boost the technical workforce to meet growing industry demands in these sectors. This group of stakeholders includes three LWDBs — CareerSource Brevard, CareerSource Flagler Volusia, and CareerSource Research Coast — as well as CareerSource Florida, FDOE, FloridaCommerce, Enterprise Florida, Space Florida, and education partners including Eastern Florida State College, Daytona State College, and Indian River State College.

**Information Technology (IT)**
As the nation's third-largest tech industry, more than 43,000 high-tech companies are in Florida, employing more than 313,000 Floridians. Florida ranks number four for high-tech employment in

the US. Throughout Florida, multiple technology associations focus on increasing employment in this industry. LWDBs increase exposure into IT-related activities.

CareerSource Florida's collaboration with LWDBs, partners, and other employer-led groups remains important in upskilling talent in the technology industry. Led by the REACH Office in the Executive Office of the Governor and the Credentials Review Committee, the Workforce Development System will continue identifying and increasing access to in-demand credentials of value in this industry. WIOA core and combined partners will target opportunity populations through activities such as apprenticeships and other work-based training opportunities.

The 2022 Fortinet Cybersecurity Skills Gap Global Research Report indicates that 78% of decision-makers find it challenging to locate trained or certified individuals for cybersecurity positions. In Florida, 22,000 cybersecurity jobs are unfilled, with an expected 31% growth rate in the digital security field by 2029. Florida is actively implementing strategies to address the growing demand for a digital security workforce. Registered Apprenticeships are one solution in Florida. Through a FDOE-supported Pathways for Career Opportunities Grant (PCOG) and Clark University's USDOL H1-B Program grant entitled Tech Quest Apprenticeship, CommunityHealth IT (CommHIT) is helping address Florida's rural and small/mid-sized business digital security workforce shortages. CommHIT's workforce development programs fall under its FDOE-registered Technology & Health Apprenticeship Program (THAP). Through THAP, CommHIT developed two entry-level digital security apprentice occupations that allow smaller businesses to shore up their digital security on a budget, while giving employees a chance to "earn while they learn."

CareerSource South Florida, in collaboration with The Carrie Meek Foundation, New Horizons Learning Centers, and YMCA of South Florida, launched a Women in IT 16-week Boot Camp, which prepares women for industry-recognized IT credentials. CareerSource Research Coast sponsored three registered apprenticeship programs in IT. These work-based training and apprenticeship opportunities help local employers build a larger, skilled, and adequately skilled up talent pipeline in technology.

VR is currently partnering with Brevard Achievement Center's LaunchIT program, an instructional program designed to help individuals with disabilities acquire the skills to pursue a career in IT.

**Fintech & Corporate Headquarters**

Another major industry sector of focus in Florida is financial services, financial technology (or fintech), insurance, and corporate headquarters. Florida is home to the third-largest cluster of insurance and banking companies in the United States. As of 2022, there were over 188,000 business establishments in the state in this sector employing nearly 1.3 million employees with an average wage of $102,388.

Recognizable institutions in the Fintech industry that call Florida home include Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation, USAA, Citigroup, Navy Federal Credit Union, Blackstone, Deutsche Bank, Fidelity, Raymond James, Paysafe, and others. Many of these firms have established large operations in Florida to take advantage of the state's global connectivity, especially to Latin America. Degree production of this sector included 39,582 awards ranging from certificates to bachelor's and postgraduate degrees.

To further develop the talent pipeline for this sector, Gov. Ron DeSantis awarded more than $3.6 million through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund to Florida State College at Jacksonville and St. Johns River State College in February 2020 to create the Northeast Florida Fintech Initiative. This initiative represents a partnership between both colleges, regional schools, nonprofits, and numerous financial services companies to provide new financial technology training and certification opportunities.

**Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities**

Registered apprenticeships present a proven talent development solution for employers, ensuring their ability to secure and retain highly qualified workers, thereby enhancing their competitiveness within their respective industries. And registered apprenticeships, being responsive to industry demand, enable the creation of innovative programs that culminate in high-wage, in-demand occupations. These programs offer apprentices the unique opportunity to both learn and earn simultaneously, providing advanced skills and knowledge while forging a well-defined career pathway. Apprentices embark on well-compensated careers, commencing with an average starting salary exceeding $35,000 and culminating in an average exit salary surpassing $53,000. Across diverse industries in Florida, including aviation, aerospace, manufacturing, healthcare, and IT, there has been a notable 14% increase in the total number of active apprentices and pre-apprentices, with 5,005 new active apprentices registered.

Regionally, workforce boards actively facilitate the expansion of registered apprenticeship programs by delivering education, resources, and funding support. These local boards leverage the WIOA to offer financial backing for apprentices' related instruction, OJT, and supportive services, thus assisting apprentices in overcoming any barriers to program completion.

The state strategy is to ensure that all LWDBs utilize apprenticeships as a talent development strategy, support apprenticeships with WIOA funding, and work locally to expand apprenticeships by partnering with business and education entities. The state board revised its strategic policy governing apprenticeships and established state goals for expansion.

Apprentice Florida is a statewide education and communications initiative designed to promote and support registered apprenticeships within Florida. Registered apprenticeships are a structured form of workforce training in which individuals, known as apprentices, receive OJT and related classroom instruction while earning wages. Apprentice Florida’s website contains valuable information and resources for both employers and apprentices, including video tutorials, in-depth guides on how to build and launch an apprenticeship program, and how to reach state apprenticeship experts. The Apprentice Florida initiative also includes social media and communications to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships, geared specifically over the years to help employers understand and utilize the tried-and-true model of registered apprenticeship to build their talent pipeline. The goal of Apprentice Florida is to support the growth of registered apprenticeships to meet the state's workforce needs and provide opportunities for individuals to gain valuable skills and enter rewarding career pathways.

FDBS works with DCAE to review and select appropriate apprenticeship models — with the strategic plan goal of increasing participation in apprenticeship programs by 100. The new Web Accessibility Specialist registered apprenticeship program at the Career, Technology, and Training Center is the first of its kind in the nation sponsored by an agency that serves individuals with visual impairments. The program started in October 2023 with three participants with plans to expand after initial implementation. FDBS serves as the sponsor and employer in a

competency-based program that will lead to a recognized credential as a Web Accessibility Specialist.

**Apprenticeship Navigator Initiative**
To build capacity and improve awareness, apprenticeship navigators are located at all 24 LWDBs. The apprenticeship navigator training program provides regular training topics and a repository of accessible tools and resources within a virtual team platform that provides a forum for ongoing support. Additionally, navigators meet monthly to learn about existing registered apprenticeship programs, discuss expansion initiatives, identify process delivery improvements, and review outreach/communications mechanisms.

Apprenticeship navigators and their local boards focus on promoting the growth of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and expand programs across diverse industries, including healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, aviation, aerospace, and other emerging industries. Navigators partner with FDOE Apprenticeship Training Representatives to create new apprenticeship programs and connect employers or apprentices to existing programs.

Apprenticeship navigators assist career services teams by introducing apprenticeships to underrepresented groups and populations with prominent levels of unemployment, including youth, individuals with disabilities, children aging out of foster care, justice-involved, and other populations facing barriers to employment. Navigators also ensure that apprentices and employers receive comprehensive WIOA support, including using WIOA funding for related instruction, on-the-job learning, and supportive services for apprentices.

**Workforce Policy Development**

**Strategic Policies**
CareerSource Florida advances strategic policies that connect employers with qualified, skilled talent and Floridians with employment and career development opportunities. These strategic policies are high-level principles or directional statements that inform or clarify federal and state legislative policy or workforce system strategies. Strategic policies direct decision-making at the program level and may result in the development of administrative policies.

**IWT Policy:**
The Florida Legislature created the IWT program to implement the state's Workforce Investment Act (WIA). IWT provides grant funding for training of existing (incumbent) employees of a Florida business. Florida law originally required a private-sector entity to administer the state-level grant program. While private sector grant administrators performed contracted duties satisfactorily, this law was changed to allow CareerSource Florida to administer the IWT program. This allowed for unified coordination of the IWT and Quick Response Training (QRT) programs by eliminating unnecessary administration impeding the process.

When workers lack needed training and businesses experience skill gaps, the company's ability to compete, expand, and retain workers can be compromised. Florida's IWT Program, funded by WIOA and administered by CareerSource Florida, addresses such needs. The IWT Program was created for the purpose of providing grant funding for continuing education and training of incumbent employees at existing Florida businesses. The program will provide reimbursement grants to businesses that pay for preapproved, direct training-related costs. Currently, companies may receive a reimbursement rate up to 50% or 75%.

The REACH Act established new priority considerations including prioritizing training that leads to credentials on the state's MCL and including non-profit hospitals as eligible grantees.

**Local Area Targeted Occupations List (TOL) Process Policy:**
A TOL process promotes alignment, economic growth, and efficiency among local boards within the CareerSource Florida network. This process creates flexibility in occupational targeting and incorporates immediate business and industry feedback to complement labor market information.

Impacting all 24 LWDBs, this policy promotes greater strategic business and industry involvement in resource allocation, targeting training funds for workers needing improved employment and earning opportunities, and efficiently serves employers in industry sectors lacking skilled workers. Each local board may add or delete occupations to its current TOL based on the demand of local employers. This process, and revised Local Area TOLs, do not require approval by CareerSource Florida. This Local Area TOL Process policy seeks to:

- Align with target industries or infrastructure industries' training needs as identified by the number of trainees per local area in targeted categories.
- Increase the number of individuals in training that leads to job placement.
- Provide opportunities to obtain credentials or degrees earned because of training.
- Make readily available and transparent access to information on training (including levels of training subsidies).
- Improve business and job seeker customer satisfaction – as measured through surveys.

TOLs identify occupations targeted for growth that offer wages with incomes enabling economic self-sufficiency. Upon action by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, the TOL approval process was transferred to local boards for the identification and selection of occupations relevant to local areas. With occupations identified and listed for their area, local boards can direct training resources for occupations in demand to assist job seekers as well as local area workers seeking better employment and higher-earning opportunities. This policy allows TOLs to be compiled by each local board for its local area. The improved TOL process enhances collaboration between each local board and its stakeholders, resulting in a skilled workforce responsive to industry talent needs.

This policy will be reviewed with new requirements in the REACH Act including the establishment of a process developed by the Credentials Review Committee whereby credentials and programs will be assessed based on local demand needs.

**Sector Strategy Policy:**
This policy lays out the State of Florida's strategic vision for effective sector strategies. LWDBs are required to include their approach to establishing, implementing, and sustaining effective sector strategies in their local workforce development plans. This policy lays out the State of Florida's strategic vision for effective sector strategies that, as outlined in the following strategic framework are:

- Driven by high-quality data.
- Founded on a shared, regional vision.
- Directed by industry.

- Lead to strategic alignment.
- Transform how services (job seeker/worker and employer) are delivered.
- Measured, improved and sustained.

This policy applies to CareerSource Florida and all 24 LWDBs. It requires LWDBs to include their approach to establishing, implementing, and sustaining effective sector strategies in their local workforce development plans.

**Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion:**
The WIOA requires states to implement a statewide Rapid Response Program with activities that assist employers and job seekers adversely affected by a mass layoff, permanent closure, natural disaster, or any other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation. The Florida Rapid Response Program focused priorities include ensuring that businesses and affected job seekers maximize services and programs provided at the local area career center.

There are 24 local Rapid Response Coordinators, one in each of the LWDBs throughout Florida. Rapid Response Coordinators work with employers to prevent or minimize the impacts of layoffs on workers, businesses, and communities by ensuring job seekers and local area businesses are educated on services and programs readily available to them during these occurrences.

Up to 25% of Florida's WIOA dislocated worker allotment is reserved for rapid response activities. Funds are used for state level activities and distributed to LWDBs to provide direct services to local businesses. A balance is retained for emergency situations. Rapid response services are provided when there is an announcement or notification of a permanent closure regardless of the number of affected employees, a mass layoff affecting 50 or more workers, a mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster, or when a petition is filed pursuant to the Trade Act.

Program staff conduct research on any Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) and potential businesses that may be laying off employees; they also provide an analysis that includes reasons for the layoff, which may include industry trends. WARN notices are forwarded to the affected LWDBs and other required partners. Employers are screened to make certain services offered are specific to the employer's specific situation.

Rapid Response Coordinators assist job seekers by providing various services and support that include applying for unemployment assistance, providing on-site informational sessions (when permitted), referrals to career services, focused workshops, job referrals, training opportunities, and other services.

FloridaCommerce deploys two mobile career centers during emergencies that offer services to job seekers and employers.

To ensure that local area coordinators are set up for success, the State Rapid Response team convenes monthly guided technical assistance Teams meetings to discuss challenges and promising practices, while providing peer-to-peer support. Onboarding sessions for newly employed coordinators are scheduled for orientation and training by the State Rapid Response team for three to six months after employment to ensure a clear understanding of the program.

Rapid Response Coordinators are provided a tool (EconoVue Platform) to assist with layoff aversion strategies and accelerate business engagement. The EconoVue tool empowers local

staff with a comprehensive view of economic and industry-related trends in their areas and provides real-time, actionable business information for use by state and local workforce development partners. With this application, staff and local area coordinators may prioritize layoff aversion activities to identify businesses with high financial stress and inform them of resources available through FloridaCommerce and local area career centers. In response to mass layoffs, the platform allows staff to identify potential employment opportunities with other similar businesses.

For this planning period, the State Rapid Response Program will work to provide proficient and effective services to job seekers and employers by implementing the following:

- **Automation of the WARN Process**
  Automating the WARN process will afford employers autonomy and increase the number of WARNs received. By implementing this process, the Florida Rapid Response Program hopes to decrease errors, increase speed of delivery, reduce service costs, and simplify the business process of adding WARNs into the Reemployment and Emergency Assistance Coordination Team (REACT) system.

- **Redesign of Rapid Response page on FloridaDisaster.Biz**
  Implementing a redesign of this page will afford the opportunity to create a user-friendly environment and a platform of a one-stop shopping center for businesses during their times of need or natural disaster.

- **Collaborative efforts and discussions with CareerSource Florida and other key stakeholders**
  Consistently meet and engage other local, federal, and community partners to ensure a holistic approach is exercised during natural disasters and during mass job dislocations.

- **Rapid Response/Disaster Recovery meeting(s)**
  Convene meeting(s) of partners to discuss initiatives and strategies that may be used during a natural disaster and how disaster recovery dislocated worker grants can complement Rapid Response activities both with employers and job seekers.

- **Development of statewide policies and procedures**
  Rapid Response Layoff Aversion policy which reviews and discusses different strategies for engaging businesses proactively during the business cycle.

**Comprehensive Employment, Education, and Training**
Florida's WIOA Combined Plan outlines strategic guidance on delivering services under WIOA, the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act and the REACH Act. This includes developing strategies to create a seamless customer-focused career center network that integrates service delivery across all programs to make it easier for workers to access the services they need to obtain skills and employment. The REACH Act required and the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a Comprehensive Employment, Education and Training Strategic Policy requiring that workforce-related programs be responsive to business and industry needs by providing recruitment, hiring, and training to satisfy Florida employers' current and future talent needs. Local strategies should align with state board strategic guidance, local labor market data, and industry sector and local business needs. A collaborative approach including industry, education, and workforce partners should ensure the efficient use of resources.

This policy designates that LWDBs shall leverage all allowable tools and resources in their authority to:

- Assist Floridians in securing employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency and reduces the need for public assistance.
- Provide opportunities for Floridians to develop skills intended to meet the present and future needs of Florida employers.
- Ensure that workforce-related programs — including those programs operated, delivered, or enabled, in whole or in part, by a state or local entity using federal funds or state appropriations to offer incentives, funding, support, or guidance for any of the purposes below — are responsive to present and future business and industry needs.
- Prioritize evidence-based, results-driven solutions to improve outcomes of workforce programs for Floridians and Florida businesses.
- Develop collaborative partnerships that leverage multiple sources of funding to provide services to all customers seeking assistance, especially Florida's vulnerable populations.
- Identify barriers to coordinate and align workforce-related programs and develop solutions to remove such barriers.

**Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF)**
For Floridians receiving public assistance, taking a job with higher wages may result in reduced benefits for their family. As CareerSource Florida's mission includes helping Floridians achieve self-sufficiency through education, training, and the provision of wraparound services, it is imperative that career counselors guide job seekers by supporting and sustaining their efforts to understand and address the short-term hurdles caused by changes to benefits through a structured, systematic action plan that promotes steady client engagement and growth toward longer-term economic prosperity.

CareerSource Florida and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta developed the Florida CLIFF Dashboard. This informational tool allows one-stop center staff to assist Floridians in visualizing how returning to work or upskilling to a higher-paying occupation could impact their future earnings and public benefits as their household progresses along the path to self-sufficiency. In early 2023, based on learning and feedback from a pilot conducted across roughly one-third of the state's LWDBs, the Federal Reserve Bank developed CLIFF Snapshot to provide information to clients seeking a basic level of financial stability sufficient to engage in longer-term planning about educational and career goals.

Implementation of these tools enhances case management, career planning, and coordinated and targeted services. LWDBs are required to develop strategies to implement the CLIFF Tool Suite and place them in their WIOA four-year plans, per a strategic policy approved by the state board in June 2023. The information provided by the CLIFF Suite of Tools can inform the efforts of core and combined partners to provide quality career planning services to support client progress toward self-sufficiency.

**Regional Planning Areas**
Pillar III of Florida's Workforce System Transformation Plan requires regional planning to further promote workforce system alignment with education and economic development and optimize opportunities for regional growth. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a Regional Planning Areas Strategic Policy identifying regional planning areas are made up of two or more LWDAs to improve workforce system alignment within larger economic development areas to support economic mobility, growth, and prosperity.

The intended goals of establishing Regional Planning Areas across neighboring LWDAs include but are not limited to:

- Aligning workforce strategies to address the needs of shared industry sectors, employers, and significant populations of job seekers.
- Addressing common labor shortages and worker skills gaps with aligned service strategies.
- Realizing system efficiencies through reducing resource costs (monetary, time, or other).

Beyond establishing formal Regional Planning Areas as defined in the policy, LWDAs are encouraged to engage in other partnership opportunities with the broader CareerSource Florida network that achieves these goals.

Florida aims to have all LWDAs designated in a Regional Planning Area by July 2025.

**Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services**
The REACH Act and the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan direct the state workforce development board to develop a plan for specific system-wide improvements for consistency, improved customer experience and efficiencies to include, but not be limited to, technology, administration, fiscal considerations, procurement/contracts, and programmatic policies. In an effort to minimize duplication and maximize efficient use of resources directed to training and business services, CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services Strategic Policy.

Standardization of tools and resources across the CareerSource Florida network ensures the unified brand identity of Florida's workforce system includes a cohesive and consistent customer and staff experience throughout the state. The benefits of creating a uniform experience for job seekers and businesses include but are not limited to:

- Ease of expansion of partnership relationships with partner agencies, community-based organizations, businesses, and other partners that work across multiple LWDAs.
- Structured and predictable delivery models that allow targeted performance, analysis, troubleshooting and diagnosis, and implementation of continuous improvement models.
- Improved consistency in performance and compliance monitoring.

**Administrative Policies**
CareerSource Florida administrative policies and operational guidance are developed by the FloridaCommerce Bureau of One Stop and Program Support in consultation with the CareerSource Florida professional team using best practices from the Policy Development Framework. Administrative policies and operational guidance include business rules, requirements, processes, and responsibilities that expand, explain, or further specify federal and state legislative policy as well as board approved strategic policy.

Administrative policies and operational guidance are developed and revised using best practices defined in the Policy Development Framework. Administrative policies and operational guidance are binding on the workforce system and are subject to audit and monitoring by FloridaCommerce.

Administrative policies and operational guidance are reviewed by the CareerSource Florida professional team, which determines if these policies require approval by the state workforce development board. The state workforce development board is notified of all administrative policies issued.

Workforce guidance is information that explains a legislative, strategic, or administrative policy. Guidance may include best practices, supporting information, recommendations, technical assistance Letters, memoranda, communiques, desk aids, resource guides, and other resources. Workforce guidance is reviewed and issued by FloridaCommerce and may include consultation with the CareerSource Florida professional team.

**Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL)**
In 2023, CareerSource Florida updated its ETPL Requirements Administrative Policy. This policy provides guidance to LWDBs about the ETPL and related federal and state requirements, performance standards, data reporting, and procedures for determining initial and continued eligibility of training providers and programs of study. This policy specifically addresses procedures for registered apprenticeship programs and out-of-local-area and out-of-state providers to be added to the statewide ETPL.

The policy also introduces the Eligible Training Provider Portal, which is managed by FloridaCommerce and maintained in the state's online labor exchange and case management system. The ETPL portal is the platform used to maintain ETPLs and record consumer information, including, but not limited to, cost and performance information for each approved program of study. The ETPL portal is the mechanism used by FloridaCommerce to manage the ETPL process, and by LWDBs and training providers to apply for initial eligibility and re-apply for continued eligibility. The ETPL portal supports WIOA participants in making informed choices about ETPs and programs of study and allows FloridaCommerce to disseminate state and local ETPLs to employers, training providers, workforce staff, One-Stop career center partners, and the public, including individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

**Youth Eligibility**
WIOA outlines a broad vision for youth that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage federal, state, and local resources to support eligible youth. WIOA also promotes career pathways, increased attainment of recognized credentials and post-secondary certificates or degrees for eligible youth. WIOA shifts the primary focus of Title I Youth formula programs to support the educational and career success of OSY. A minimum of 75% of WIOA Youth funds is required to be spent on OSY. This expenditure requirement applies to LWDA funds and funds reserved by the Governor.

CareerSource Florida updated its Youth Program Eligibility Administrative Policy to comply with changes to Florida Law and provide WIOA Youth Program eligibility requirements to LWDBs and Youth program service providers.

**Youth Service Provider Selection**
One responsibility of LWDBs is to select providers of youth workforce services through competitive grants or contracts. LWDBs have the option of directly providing some or all youth

workforce services rather than awarding grants or contracts for these services. LWDBs are encouraged to award grants or contracts to youth service providers when local areas have access to experienced and effective youth service providers.

To comply with federal guidance and Florida Law, CareerSource Florida implemented a Youth Service Provider Selection Administrative Policy to provide LWDBs with the criteria for awarding grants and contracts for youth workforce services under WIOA. This policy outlines procurement requirements that govern the youth service provider selection process.

**Work-Based Learning and Work-Based Training for Adults and Dislocated Workers**
CareerSource Florida's Work-Based Learning and Work-Based Training for Adults and Dislocated Workers policy was originally implemented in 2019 and updated to repeal and supersede Federal Guidance OSPS 89- Employed and IWT. The purpose of this policy is to provide LWDBs with the requirements for implementing work-based learning programs, which include work-based learning activities including OJT, customized training, IWT, registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, transitional jobs, work experience, and internships. These learning and training opportunities are critical to Florida's goal to be No. 1 in the Nation for Workforce Education and registered apprenticeship programs.

**Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Eligibility**
Adult and Dislocated Worker programs provide training and employment services to eligible participants. Adult services are provided to job seekers who are at least 18 years old to help them succeed in the labor market. Dislocated worker services are provided to workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own to help them obtain quality employment in in-demand industries. To comply with federal guidance and Florida law, CareerSource Florida implemented an Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Eligibility Administrative Policy to provide the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program eligibility requirements to LWDBs and program service providers.

**Enhancing Performance Measurement**
Florida's 2021 REACH Act is a comprehensive blueprint for enhancing access, alignment, and accountability across the state's workforce development system, which spans Florida's workforce, education, and public assistance programs. With a focus on improved accountability, the law charges the Governor's REACH Office with developing criteria for determining letter grades for LWDBs. The law charges CareerSource Florida to assign letter grades to all LWDBs and publicly release them annually.

In November 2021, the REACH Office collaborated with a stakeholder group of experts, including leaders from CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, FDOE, and LWDBs, to develop the letter grading system. Letter grades are calculated based on performance outcomes collected by FloridaCommerce, DCF, and FDOE. Through this interagency collaboration, baseline letter grades were calculated for PY 2021-2022, for informational purposes only, using data and performance prior to the development of the methodology. The methodology was then finalized and the CareerSource Florida Analytics website is updated regularly to include quarterly data updates to inform program development and service delivery. The first official letter grades were released following the close of program year 2022-2023 and will be released annually by Oct. 15 as required by Florida statute.

The letter grade metrics include existing accountability measures for the federal workforce system along with new, statutorily defined measures focused on each LWDB's impact on the

long-term self-sufficiency of participants. Additional measures capturing services to Florida businesses and upskilling of participants through training are also included. In the spirit of continuous improvement, these metrics are tracked and analyzed on a continuous basis and are adjusted, as needed, to reflect evolving economic conditions and state priorities.

**Expansion of IET Programs for Adult Education**

In Florida, 15 of the 17 career clusters are supported by IET programs. The top five career clusters engaging IET students are Health Science, Business Management & Administration, Education & Training, Architecture & Construction, and IT.

In 2022-23, 58 out of 62 agencies offered IET programs to learners. The 2023-2024 school year saw an increase in IET programs to learners as all agencies now offer at least one IET program.

During the 2021-22 school year, 1,548 IET students participated in IET programs across Florida. The 2022-23 school year saw a 78% participation increase in IET programs with 2,765 adult learners benefiting from this educational model in 109 IET programs. Most of these programs also lead to an industry certification on the MCL.

The number of IET registered pre-apprenticeship programs has shown substantial growth, increasing from 7 to 23, a 228% surge since the 2021-22 school year. These programs cater to the following industries: Architecture & Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation, Distribution & Logistics; and IT. This expansion is a direct result of effective collaboration between adult education providers and employers.

DCAE is committed to supporting IET program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation through technical assistance and professional development opportunities. Agencies can tailor IET programs to meet current workforce demands and prepare learners for future employment needs. To demonstrate this commitment, a Program Director of IET was hired to oversee the quality and compliance of IET Programs, offer technical assistance, and research guidelines. Additionally, the Program Director’s role contributes to identifying and disseminating effective practices, aligns with progress in monitoring and evaluation, and ensures that results are utilized for program improvement.

**Providing Quality Services to People with Disabilities**

Recognizing the unique challenges that 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 helps link employers to 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.

The FDBS requires CRPs to hire certified staff to work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. All CRPs must go through a registration and approval process that includes a review of the vendor’s qualifications to promote quality services. Moreover, CRPs are required to be certified through either the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired or CARF® International.

Other key employment initiatives to assist Floridians with disabilities include:

- Employment First Florida
- The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program
- Ticket to Work
- SNAP and TANF Recipients
- Hope Florida
- Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE)

**Employment First Florida**
Seven of Florida's state agencies and nonprofit organizations — CareerSource Florida, the APD, FloridaCommerce, FDOE (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), VR, and FDBS), the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, RESPECT of Florida, and DCF (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.

In the fall of 2019, a new five-year Employment First Interagency Collaborative agreement was signed by 11 state agencies and organizations including:

- The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, which is committed to advocating and promoting programs, practices, and innovative initiatives that enhance the independence, productivity, inclusion, and self-determination of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life.
- The Florida APD, which works with local communities and private providers to support people who have developmental disabilities and their families in living, learning, and working in their communities.
- The Arc of Florida, which works with local, state, and national partners and advocates for people with intellectual disabilities, autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, Prader Willi syndrome and other developmental disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of their community.
- FDBS, which helps individuals who are visually impaired achieve their goals and live their lives with as much independence and self-direction as possible.
- The BEESS, whose mission is to provide students with special needs services and opportunities for personal and professional growth through collaboration of families, professionals, and communities.
- CareerSource Florida, the statewide workforce policy and investment board that engages with local businesses to learn more about and hire people with disabilities.
- FloridaCommerce, which administers state and federal programs and initiatives to help visitors, citizens, businesses, and communities achieve economic independence.
- The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, which works to ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons.
- DCF, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office, which is responsible for the oversight of a statewide system of care for the prevention, treatment, and recovery of children and adults with serious mental illnesses or substance abuse disorders.

- VR, which helps people with disabilities overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining, or returning to employment.
- The Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, a statewide, professional industry association that provides advocacy, information, and networking for individuals with disabilities and the community agencies that service them.

More Information about Employment First can be obtained on the website for the Florida Development Disabilities Council at https://www.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 disabilities and to assisting organizations that support the disability community. 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 FloridaCommerce's website at https://floridajobs.org/unique-abilities-partner-program.

**Ticket to Work**
15 Florida LWDBs are designated as Employment Networks (ENs) by the Social Security Administration (SSA), 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. The program is free and voluntary for participants.

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

In FY22-23 the VR Ticket to Work Program was reimbursed $20.6 million from the SSA. VR also collaborated with Rehabilitation Service Administration (USDOE) and five other state VR agencies to develop a new cost formula for the claim reimbursement process to align with current RSA reporting and data requirements. The SSA-approved new cost formula is now being used nationally. VR also provides additional supports under the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) and the Partnership Plus Program.

FDBS uses the VR Cost Reimbursement Program, which allows the Division to file claims with SSA for repayment of direct costs and administrative fees. Reimbursements reflect costs associated with assisting SSA beneficiaries through gainful employment at earnings above Substantial Gainful Activity level. FDBS uses the beneficiary's ticket assignment as one factor to determine if there is a valid claim to submit for reimbursement. Florida uses the assigned tickets from the Ticket to Work program to increase returns from the cost reimbursement program. Totals reached $3,054,368 for State Fiscal Year 2022-23 and $2,716,088 for Federal Fiscal Year 2022-23. This represents the highest total in Social Security reimbursement dollars of record.

**SNAP and TANF Recipients**

In addition to the consumer-first workforce system that FloridaCommerce will implement in coordination with FDOE and DCF, the state's strategy also includes implementing the following elements of the REACH Act related to TANF and SNAP recipients:

- Coordinate and facilitate an MOU between FloridaCommerce and DCF to permit SNAP and TANF clients to pre-certify for WIOA training services without having to physically visit a career center.
- FloridaCommerce and DCF will measure the performance of workforce-related programs and services for participants who receive benefits pursuant to family self-sufficiency programs under Chapter 414, Florida Statutes, and WT participants.
- FloridaCommerce will consult with LWDBs to develop annual performance reports that analyze participants' transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency, including, but not limited to, program outcomes, cost-effectiveness, return on investment, co-enrollment in these programs, and the impact of time limits, sanctions, and other welfare reform measures.

**Hope Florida**

The top five barriers for Floridians experiencing a crisis in providing for their immediate needs and implementing long-term goals for prosperity and economic self-sufficiency include homelessness or imminent risk of being homeless; food shortages; pending disconnection of utilities; mental health or substance abuse; and unmet medication or medical care needs. Hope Florida is an initiative that offers a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty and promoting economic mobility. It utilizes Hope Navigators to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity, economic self-sufficiency and hope by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits, and government entities including DCF and the Florida Workforce System. The goal is to break down traditional community silos, maximize support, and uncover opportunities.

Referrals to Hope Florida can come from a variety of sources including local and state workforce development stakeholders. No matter how referrals are made, Floridians are connected to Hope Navigators, who help individuals identify their unique and immediate barriers to prosperity, develop long-term goals, map out a strategic plan, and work to ensure all sectors of the community are a key part of the solution. One of the main steps in this process is establishing stable employment, which involves assistance from the CareerSource Florida network. Additionally, Hope Navigators help identify and organize opportunities for Floridians who wish to help their neighbors by partnering through and by connecting community members, including Florida seniors, with volunteer options. Individuals looking to give help can establish a CarePortal profile online to respond to unmet needs within their community and receive real-time alerts from Hope Navigators about opportunities to assist Hope Florida recipients with their unique needs.

Businesses can sign up through CareerSource Florida or CarePortal to provide information about job opportunities that consider a person's unique needs and skills. Whether by offering flexible work hours for mothers to-be or OJT, employers can support the Hope Florida mission and workforce through tailored opportunities. Nonprofits, charitable organizations, and those in the private sector can contribute to the Hope Florida Fund to provide financial resources to deserving local non-profit organizations that support their communities.

**Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE):**

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an internationally recognized model of Supported Employment for people with serious mental illness. Approximately 35% of VR participants currently have a primary disability category of mental health. The focus of Florida's ASPIRE project is on helping those with behavioral health conditions find gainful employment. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. The model emphasizes a collaborative approach between the mental health system and VR. VR counselors and employment specialists are integrated with the individual's mental health treatment team to promote success with the individual's employment goals.

IPS is recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as an evidence-based practice. In 2021, Florida applied for and was selected to participate in the ASPIRE initiative under USDOL. The initiative aims to assist states in aligning their policies and practices in support of CIE for people with mental health conditions. Florida has continued participation in the ASPIRE initiative in 2022-2023 and has focused on building sustainability for IPS. The initiative is expected to conclude in July 2024. CareerSource Florida participates in bi-weekly ASPIRE implementation team meetings and quarterly steering committee meetings. CareerSource Florida is currently working with ASPIRE partners to seek grant funds to expand this IPS initiative in Florida. Since 2021, Florida has expanded capacity to provide IPS at four new sites and has hired a full-time IPS State Trainer to assist new sites with implementation of the model. Outcome data from the initial expansion indicate that, as of June 2023, 50% of participants are competitively employed and/or attending a credit-bearing educational program. Participants who are employed earn a median wage of $15/hour and work an average of 32 hours per week.

### (3) Strategies to Align Core Programs

The REACH Act set forth to fully realize the vision of WIOA and establishes key strategies and initiatives designed to strengthen partnerships among workforce stakeholders, increase accountability for the workforce system as a whole, and improve access to the workforce system and alignment of the system to the needs of employers.

**Strengthening Partnerships and Coordination**
The REACH Act establishes a new REACH Office in the Executive Office of the Governor to coordinate the efforts of workforce stakeholders CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, DOE, and DCF, and ensure collaboration and alignment of initiatives. Furthermore, the law added representation from FDBS, in addition to VR, along with representation from DCF to the state workforce development board.

The REACH Act and Florida Workforce System Transformation provide enhanced opportunities to unite core and combined partners around the strategic and additional goals described in this plan. Partners share costs, funding and grant opportunities, data and information, and training standards that promote greater communication, transparency, accountability, and coordination of services across education and workforce partners, businesses, and vendors. Increased efficiencies and accountability achieved under WIOA guidelines and combined planning foster strategies to avoid duplication of services and improve simplified access to quality customer services for businesses, job seekers, veterans, seniors, and individuals with SBE.

**Increased Accountability and Transparency**

The REACH Act codified into Florida law a number of programs, initiatives, and requirements to increase the accountability for workforce programs both to the state and to the consumer.

**LWDB Letter Grades**
Under the REACH Act, the Governor's REACH Office developed criteria for an annual LWDB letter grading system. The metrics that comprise the letter grades include the WIOA Primary Indicators for Performance and state statutorily defined measures focused on each LWDB's impact on the long-term self-sufficiency of participants, with a focus on the reduction in long-term public assistance and the percentage of participants whose wages were higher after program completion. Baseline letter grades were calculated for PY 2021-2022 and the first official letter grades were assigned and published for PY 2022-2023 by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the letter grade metrics are tracked and analyzed on a continuous basis and are adjusted to reflect evolving economic conditions and state priorities.

**Eligible Training Provider List State Strategy**
FloridaCommerce is responsible for establishing minimum criteria a training provider must achieve for completion, earnings, and employment rates of eligible participants. Once criteria are established, training providers will be required to meet at least two of the minimum criteria for subsequent eligibility. In 2023, FloridaCommerce began the process to establish administrative rules for managing the ETPL to allow for access and accountability of education providers.

The REACH Act additionally calls for education programs to utilize outcome-based funding and shift from enrollments and certificates earned to outcomes such as placements and wages.

**Improved Access and Alignment**
The REACH Act establishes a No Wrong Door Strategy ensuring that Floridians have access to all the assistance and resources available from the various workforce programs no matter where they enter the system – workforce, education, public assistance, etc. Additionally, the REACH Act aims to ensure that Florida's workforce system is aligned to the needs of Florida's businesses and economy.

**Consumer-First Workforce System**
The state must develop a consumer-first workforce system that improves coordination among required one-stop partners. The system must include a common intake for all customers and allow for shared case management. A feasibility study was commissioned by FloridaCommerce in Summer 2021 and the results will guide future work toward this strategy.

**Labor Market Estimating Conference**
The REACH Act establishes a new Labor Market Estimating Conference that develops official information with respect to real-time supply and demand in Florida's statewide, regional, and local labor markets. All state agencies are required to not only provide the Labor Market Estimating Conference with any required data, but also utilize the information developed for any decision-making requiring labor market information.

**Credentials Review Committee**
Chapter 14.36(2)(a), Florida Statutes, defines "credential" as an apprenticeship certificate, industry certification, license, advanced technical certificate, college credit certificate, career

certificate, applied technology diploma, associate in applied science degree, associate degree in science, Bachelor of Applied Science, and Bachelor of Science. Under the REACH Act, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors appoints a Credentials Review Committee comprised of private and public sector leaders in business, workforce development, education, and government. The Committee is tasked with establishing a definition for "credential of value" and identifying nondegree and degree credentials of value for approval by the Florida Workforce Development Board and delivery to the State Board of Education for inclusion on a Master Credentials List (MCL) for the state of Florida. These credentials include registered apprenticeship programs; industry certifications, agricultural occupations certifications; licenses; advanced technical certificates; college credit certificates; career certificates; applied technology diplomas; associate degrees; baccalaureate degrees; and graduate degrees.

The Credentials Review Committee created a Framework of Quality that aligns with workforce accountability requirements for use of federal funds and designated a process for stakeholders including those in workforce, education, and industry to submit credentials for inclusion on the MCL. Information about the Florida Credentials Review Committee, its accomplishments and the Framework of Quality and the MCL can be found online.

**Open Door Grant**
The REACH Act creates a new grant to increase access to select education programs. This grant will pay up to two-thirds of the cost of a program when the student completes the program and earns the associated credential. Eligible programs must lead to credentials on the state's MCL.

**Hope Florida**
DCF employs Hope Navigators throughout the state, as part of the Hope Florida initiative, to deliver client-centered prevention to help public benefit customers in establishing goals and identifying barriers toward the achievement of self-sufficiency. The Navigators assist customers in navigating the state's network of non-profits, faith-based programs, and government programs, and refer them to applicable services. Hope Navigators team up with customers to provide assessment that identifies goals and barriers, care coordination, and follow-up services. The model also serves public benefit customers statewide, children aging out of foster care, pregnant mothers contending with substance use disorders, parents who need assistance, and families in need of services.

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise is a specific initiative funded by the Governor's WIOA Set-Aside and is intended to strengthen the coordination between DCF and Florida's LWDBs to better assist eligible Floridians with overcoming barriers to education, training, and employment. Under the Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise initiative, a referral process involving regional DCF offices and LWDBs will be developed and specialized services and programming will be available to help Hope Florida program participants find jobs, enroll in training and launch new career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. LWDBs will also be able to refer potential clients in need of immediate support to address barriers and challenges not related to employment, to DCF to access resources that are beyond the allowability of WIOA funding.

## SECTION III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

**(a) State Strategy Implementation.**

**The Unified or Combined State Plan must include –**

**State Board Functions.**

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

**State Board**

Florida's workforce system is led by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, comprised of business and government leaders appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the leadership of the Florida Legislature. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors is charged with guiding workforce development for the state of Florida. The state board, required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is supported directly by CareerSource Florida, Inc., a nonprofit organization 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 Floridians with employment and career development opportunities to achieve economic prosperity and employers with qualified, skilled talent.

Collectively, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors provides policy direction for talent development programs administered and overseen by the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), the designated state workforce agency responsible for workforce policy implementation and the state's administrative and fiscal entity for workforce development programs and funds. FloridaCommerce 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.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors includes the Governor and, currently, 35 members appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders. The state board includes leaders in business and industry, government including leadership of WIOA core partners, health and human services including the Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), 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 the state board and the state's entire workforce development system is vital to achieving the Governor's priorities for helping Floridians obtain access to quality services including employment, education and training, and establishing Florida as a top job-creating state.

Advancing Florida's goal to be No. 1 in the nation in workforce education by 2030, the Florida Legislature unanimously approved and the workforce development system implemented the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act. The REACH Act directs Florida's education and workforce development system to strengthen coordination and collaboration among state and local workforce partners, increase accountability and transparency of the

workforce system, and improve both access to and alignment of the workforce system to job seekers and businesses. The state workforce development board plays a critical role in strengthening Florida's business climate by implementing the REACH Act and helping to ensure Florida's workforce and education programs align with the needs of business through its roles of defining the workforce development plan for the state, establishing funding priorities through the Governor's set-aside, and developing the strategic policies for the workforce development system.

Policy development is one of the primary strategies utilized by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors to guide the efforts of the workforce system throughout the state. In direct coordination with FloridaCommerce, the state board works to ensure compliance with federal and state laws; provide clear expectations regarding ethical conduct, transparency, and quality customer service; and improve service delivery for Florida's job seekers and businesses. The state board also provides oversight in the governance of LWDBs. It is the Florida Workforce Development Board's policy that the state and LWDBs conduct business in an ethical and open manner. The state and local workforce development boards 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.

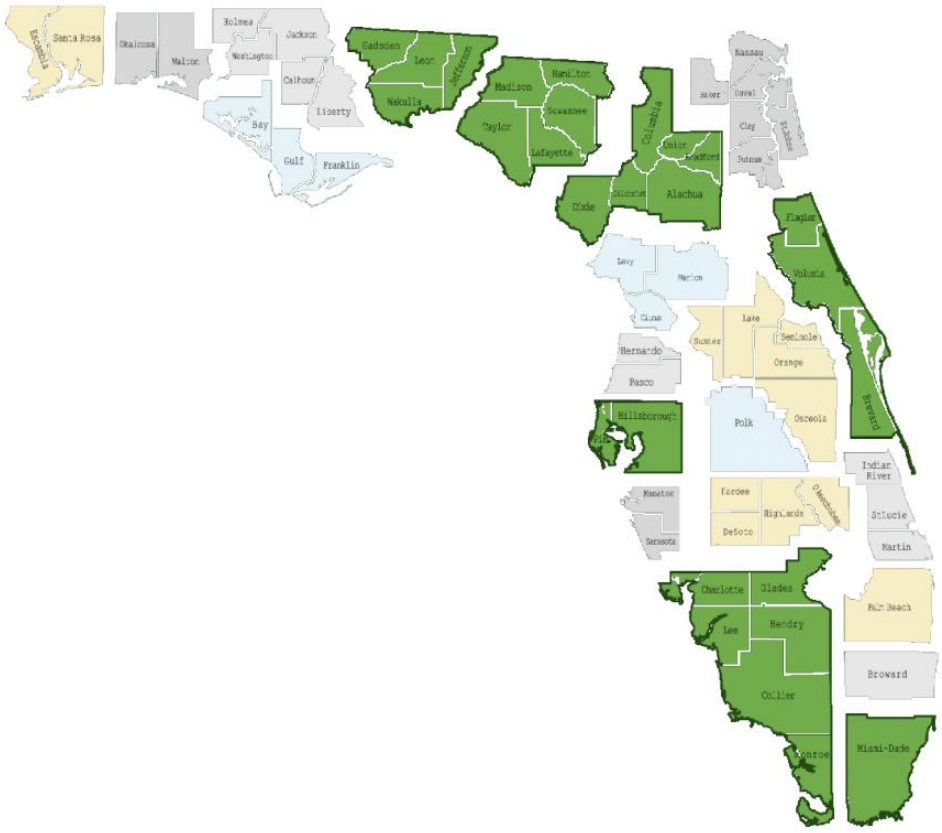
Strategic policies are located on the CareerSource Florida's Policies and Initiatives web page.

Administrative policies are located on FloridaCommerce's Policies and Guidance webpage.

In 2023, the Florida State Workforce Development Board approved the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan, which reduced the number of LWDBs from 24 to 21. The Governor approved this plan and by July 1, 2024, 21 new workforce areas will be designated for the state of Florida. Alignment and consolidation actions include the following:

- Realign Jefferson County with CareerSource Capital Region.
- Realign CareerSource North Florida as a five-county region serving Madison,
- Taylor, Lafayette, Hamilton and Suwannee counties.
- Consolidate CareerSource North Central Florida and CareerSource Florida Crown.
- Consolidate CareerSource Flagler Volusia and CareerSource Brevard.
- Consolidate CareerSource Tampa Bay and CareerSource Pinellas.
- Realign Monroe County with CareerSource Southwest Florida.
- Realign CareerSource South Florida as a single-county area serving Miami-Dade County.

**Figure 3.01**
**Re-Alignment and Consolidation Map**
**of Florida LWDBs**




This reduction and realignment of workforce areas in the state brings stronger alignment of state labor sheds; commuting patterns; and economic development areas.

**Governance Structure**
The governance structure, through which the state board conducts its work, consists of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, two councils – the Strategic Policy and Performance Council and the Finance Council, an Executive Committee composed of council chairs and board leaders appointed by the state board chair.

The Chair of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors may appoint committees to fulfill the state board's responsibilities. Under the REACH Act, Chapter 445.004, Florida Statutes requires the state workforce development board to appoint a Credentials Review Committee as described below.

**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 for present and future business and industry needs and complement the initiatives of FloridaCommerce, the state's economic development organization. Consistent with CareerSource Florida's strategic goals, priority is

given to addressing workforce needs for businesses in the state's target and infrastructure industries.

In 2021, the state board approved a Statewide Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy clarifying the policy making authority of the board and FloridaCommerce with the state board focusing on strategic policies and FloridaCommerce given authority to develop administrative policies to support the board strategies.

The CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy and Performance Council includes 12 board members with relevant experience or expertise in the subject area of the council and serves as an important driver for strategic policies. 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 reviews performance for the CareerSource Florida network as directed by the chair of the board of directors.

The Strategic Policy and Performance Council meets in conjunction with the regular quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. Additional meetings, including informational meetings, held in person or electronically, may be conducted at the request of the chair of the board of directors or the council chairperson.

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

**Finance Council**
CareerSource Florida's Finance Council includes 10 board members with 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 satisfactorily. 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 meets in conjunction with the regular quarterly meetings of the board of directors. Additional meetings, including informational meetings, held in person or electronically, may be conducted at the request of the chair of the board of directors or the council chairperson.

Recommendations of the Finance Council are considered for approval by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors.

**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 of directors and at least six additional board members selected by the chair, 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 chair 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.
- Reviews policy and performance recommendations prior to board consideration.

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

**Credentials Review Committee**
Under the REACH Act, Chapter 445.004(4)(h)(1), Florida Statutes requires the state workforce development board to appoint a Credentials Review Committee to identify nondegree and degree credentials of value for approval by the state board of directors and for inclusion in a Master Credentials List (MCL). Such credentials must include registered apprenticeship programs, industry certifications, licenses, advanced technical certificates, college credit certificates, career certificates, applied technology diplomas, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees and graduate degrees.

Most of the 18 members on the Credentials Review Committee are appointed by statute. Those members who are not designated by statute are appointed by the Chair and Executive Committee of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors from a list of appropriate nominees and volunteers. The Chair and Executive Committee solicit nominees and volunteers from the Executive Office of the Governor, the REACH Office, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, FloridaCommerce, LWDBs, Florida Department of Education (FDOE), the Division of Public Schools, the Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE), the Florida College System (FCS), the State University System (SUS), independent education organizations, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), industry associations, and Florida businesses. Efforts are taken to intentionally ensure not only geographic representation throughout the state, but also industry sector representation to appropriately represent Florida's business community.

The following graphic outlines CareerSource Florida Board Governance.

**Figure 3.02**
**CareerSource Florida Board Governance**

The state board is committed to leveraging its resources and those of its WIOA core and combined 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 FloridaCommerce, LWDBs, and other partners vital to workforce services delivery.

Regular meetings between FloridaCommerce, the CareerSource Florida staff and the leadership of LWDBs provide a forum to discuss strategic issues and to identify policy objectives and best practices for service delivery.

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

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

## REACH Act

On June 24, 2021, the Governor signed the landmark REACH Act modifying Section 14.36, Florida Statutes. The REACH Act addresses the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation among state businesses and education communities while improving training for access to a more integrated workforce and education system for all Floridians.

The REACH Act established the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help within the Executive Office of the Governor whose purpose is to facilitate alignment and coordination of entities responsible for the state's workforce development system. The head of the office is the Director of the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help and is appointed by the Governor.

The REACH Office has the following duties, as outlined in statute:

- Serve as the advisor to the Governor on matters related to the state's workforce development system.
- Establish criteria and goals for workforce development and increased access to the state's workforce development system.
- Provide strategies to align and improve efficiency in the state's workforce development system and the delivery of workforce related programs.
- Coordinate state and federal workforce related programs, plans, resources, and activities provided by CareerSource Florida, Inc., FloridaCommerce, and FDOE.
- Oversee the Workforce Development Information System described in Section 1008.40, Florida Statutes to verify the validity of data collected and monitor compliance of workforce related programs and education and training programs with applicable federal and state requirements as authorized by federal and state law.
- Serve on the Credentials Review Committee established in Section 445.004, Florida Statutes to identify nondegree and degree credentials of value and facilitate the collection of data necessary to conduct committee work.
- Coordinate and facilitate a MOU for data sharing agreements of the state's workforce performance data among state agencies and align, to the greatest extent possible, performance measures adopted under Sections 445.004 and 1008.43, Florida Statutes.
- Develop the criteria for assigning a letter grade for each LWDB under Sections 445.004, Florida Statutes.
- Streamline the clinical placement process and increase clinical placement opportunities for students, hospitals, and other clinical sites by administering, directly or through a contract, a web-based centralized clinical placement system for use by all nursing education programs subject to the requirements in Section 464.019, Florida Statutes.
- Direct the objectives of the Florida Talent Development Council established in Section 1004.015, Florida Statutes.

## CareerSource Florida

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors includes representation of WIOA's core programs within the FloridaCommerce; FDOE Divisions of DCAE, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and Florida Division of Blind Services (FDBS); and WIOA combined planning partner, DCF.

As staff to the state board of directors, CareerSource Florida will:

- Establish regular meetings with core and combined partners, in collaboration with the REACH Office at the Executive Office of the Governor, to:
    - Provide regular reports on state goals, individual partner initiatives, and implementation of the REACH Act.
    - Identify challenges and opportunities to eliminate barriers to collaboration, leverage resources across agencies, and review and report on ongoing implementation efforts.
    - Explore collaboration opportunities with core and combined planning partners and stakeholders to develop new jointly funded initiatives and engage in coordinated projects designed to continue implementing and enhancing the workforce system within the WIOA framework.
- Lead efforts to create a State Plan Dashboard to track outcomes against the performance goals documented in this plan.
- Lead statewide efforts for three-pillar plan for workforce system transformation to include:
    - Alignment and consolidation of workforce development areas reducing the number of LWDBs from 24 to 21 and designating of new workforce development areas.
    - System-wide improvements including organizational and structural changes, streamlined user experiences and modernized processes and technologies.
    - Regional planning to develop WIOA planning regions that combine two or more LWDBs and areas to align workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers.
- Support the Credentials Review Committee required under the REACH Act and recommend credentials of value that meet the established Framework of Quality for inclusion on the statewide MCL.
- Support apprenticeship expansion efforts through the network of Apprenticeship Navigators.
- Continue to seek policy improvements that will expand access to and impact of WIOA dollars for job seekers and businesses.
- Expand the utilization of the state's suite of Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster tools both within the CareerSource Florida network and among core and combined partners.
- Leverage the Governor's 15% set aside funding to identify opportunities for joint funding collaborations to meet the goals of this plan.
- Regularly review the state's funding allocation formula to ensure it is aligned to the state strategies.

Current initiatives funded by the state board include:

**Hope Florida**
Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise strengthens coordination between DCF and Florida's LWDBs to better assist eligible Floridians with overcoming barriers to education, training, and employment. Under the Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise initiative, a referral process involving regional DCF offices and LWDBs will be developed, and specialized services and programming made available using these funds to help Hope Florida program participants find jobs, enroll in training, and launch new career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency and

economic prosperity. LWDBs can also refer potential clients in need of immediate support to DCF to address barriers and challenges not related to employment to access resources that are beyond the allowability of WIOA funding.

**Florida Healthcare Training Initiative (FHTI)**
FHTI is a specialized program under WIOA that enhances healthcare training opportunities and fosters a skilled healthcare workforce in Florida. FHTI recognizes the critical role of well-trained healthcare professionals in delivering quality healthcare services and aims to provide accessible and comprehensive training programs to individuals seeking healthcare careers.

A key goal of the FHTI pilot is to assess the impact of fully leveraging the flexibilities allowable within WIOA to remove barriers to enrollment and increase both the type and length of services to increase credential attainment in healthcare, along with initial employment and employment retention for one year.

The objectives of this initiative include:

- Promote High-Quality Training: FHTI will promote high-quality healthcare training programs aligned with industry standards and best practices. These programs will cover a range of healthcare occupations including nursing, medical coding, medical assisting, pharmacy technicians and laboratory technicians. Training curricula will emphasize both theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for employment.
- Expand Access and Minimize Eligibility Requirements: FHTI will prioritize accessibility by fully utilizing the flexibilities allowed in WIOA through minimizing eligibility requirements and expanding available services. The goal is to increase access and opportunities to enroll in healthcare training programs and attain employment. The initiative will focus on expanding pathways for healthcare careers.
- Supportive Services: FHTI will establish a robust system of supportive services to address participants' needs throughout their training journey. These services may include career counseling, academic advising, mentorship programs, transportation assistance, childcare support, and access to affordable healthcare. The goal is to provide innovative, individualized, and allowable wraparound support that enables participants to focus on training and successful attainment of a credential as well as employment by continuing supportive services throughout the participants' first year of employment in healthcare.
- Employer Engagement and Work-Based Learning: FHTI will foster partnerships with healthcare employers, industry associations, and healthcare education providers to develop work-based learning opportunities. These may include apprenticeships, internships, and clinical rotations, allowing participants to gain practical experience, develop professional networks, and increase their employability in the healthcare field.
- Data-Driven Approach: FHTI will use data to drive decision making and continuously evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the initiative. By monitoring participant outcomes, program performance and labor market trends, FHTI will be able to make informed adjustments to training programs, supportive services, and partnerships to maximize the impact on and achieve positive employment outcomes for participants.

**Supporting Aviation, Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing through a Comprehensive Sector Strategy Approach**
The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $9 million to support talent pipeline development in aviation, aerospace, defense manufacturing, and IT/cybersecurity. Funds were awarded to three LWDBs on Florida's Space Coast in support of the new Florida Atlantic

Workforce Alliance. This allocation represented close to 1/3 of an over $27 million investment in the industry sector leveraging funds from FloridaCommerce's Job Growth Grant Fund and the FDOE's Cybersecurity and IT Training Grant and Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant. A total of 164 participants have been served to date with 150 receiving training services and 50 employed.

**Supporting Working Parents**
In Program Year (PY) 2022 – 2023 WIOA funding was distributed to two LWDBs to identify coordinators to work with agency partners in directly assisting single pregnant women job seekers with securing employment and training with an emphasis on work-based learning models. The CareerSource Board of Directors authorized the award of $1 million to CareerSource Central Florida and CareerSource Broward to assist single pregnant women, as well as mothers of children ages 5 and younger, in engaging in a career pathway that leads to self-sufficiency. To date, 146 participants have been served with 67 receiving training services and 26 participants employed.

**Support System Improvements and REACH Act Implementation**
The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors allocated $3 million to support implementation of the REACH Act focusing on modernizing alignment of LWDBs to better support service excellence across the entire CareerSource Florida network. This investment produced comprehensive reports generated from stakeholder interviews, labor market analysis, and in-depth research into Florida's existing 24 LWDBs. The research ultimately informed the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan approved by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors in February 2023.

**Apprenticeship Navigators**
The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $1.5 million to fund dedicated Apprenticeship Navigators at each LWDB. Apprenticeship Navigators create and implement outreach plans to educate employers, job seekers, and other stakeholders about the benefits of registered apprenticeship programs. They support regional Apprenticeship Accelerator events, collaborate with employers to develop apprenticeship standards, and work closely with Apprenticeship Training Representatives from FDOE to expand apprenticeship programs throughout the state.

Apprenticeship Navigators are also responsible for connecting job seekers with apprenticeship opportunities and supporting employers and apprentices utilizing various funding mechanisms including Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Occupational Skills Training, and Supportive Services provided through WIOA.

**IWT Program**
IWT grants provide funding for customized, skills upgrade training for existing employees of for-profit businesses and not-for-profit hospitals in the state. Through these grants, employers can establish career pathways for their existing employees to higher-level positions while addressing talent gaps. CareerSource Florida implemented a new priority evaluation for grant applications to align with the REACH Act. Priorities include training linked to credentials on Florida's MCL and allowing hospitals to provide opportunities for employees to acquire new or improved skills. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $3 million for PY 2022 – 2023. CareerSource Florida awarded 87 IWT grants totaling $2.1 million to help companies train and retain more than 1,634 full-time employees. Industries served by IWT grants include Manufacturing, Professional Services, Insurance, Healthcare, Trade and Logistics, Construction and many others. Trainees' wages increased more than 13% on average within 15 months of completing grant-supported training.

**Quick Response Training (QRT) Program**
The state of Florida appropriated $7.5 million for the state QRT Program. Available to new and expanding companies, this nationally recognized grant program provides funds to create specialized training specifically for new hires in high-skill industries. During PY 2022 – 2023, the program awarded 24 QRT grants to businesses in a range of industries including Trade and Logistics, Manufacturing, Professional Services and Life Sciences. More than 2,200 workers are projected to be trained using these grants.

**Rapid Response Activities and Layoff Aversion**
The state-approved allocation for rapid response/dislocated worker assistance consists of funds allocated for rapid response activities with a balance set aside as emergency reserve. FloridaCommerce distributes and manages WIOA statewide rapid response funds. Each PY, up to 25% of Florida's WIOA dislocated worker allotment is reserved for rapid response activities including layoff aversion.

The State Rapid Response Program office conducts statewide rapid response activities and monitors rapid response activities provided by the LWDBs. When employers submit layoff and business closing notices under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, FloridaCommerce staff distributes the WARN notices and associated background information to the affected LWDB and other appropriate economic development and workforce partners.

Rapid response services are provided when there is an announcement or notification of a permanent closure regardless of the number of affected employees, a mass layoff affecting 50 or more workers, a mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster, or when a petition is filed pursuant to the Trade Act. The State Rapid Response Program screens employers adversely affected by the influence of foreign trade and competition to facilitate Trade Act petitions. To support rapid response and layoff aversion activities, the state subscribed to EconoVue, a business intelligence data platform which provides real-time, actionable business information for use by state and local workforce development partners. For PY 2022 – 2023, a total of 163 WARN notices were processed affecting 8,906 workers.

Local rapid response teams include rapid response coordinators working with a combination of business development representatives, local Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) coordinators, VR business outreach specialists, WIOA case managers, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), and representatives from DCF. Florida's decentralized model for providing rapid response services facilitates immediate and, when possible, on-site sessions that provide direct linkage of adversely impacted workers to their local career centers.

In support of rapid response activities, FloridaCommerce's mobile career centers can be deployed across the state to participate in job fairs. Mobile career centers offer a full array of employment, reemployment and employer services. In 2022, the State Rapid Response Program assisted adversely affected workers in 13 local workforce development areas (LWDAs).

By accessing the EconoVue platform, program staff and LWDBs have the ability to assess the material change within business operations and prioritize layoff aversion activities to businesses with high financial stress and provide information about available programs and resources. In response to mass layoffs, the platform allows staff to identify comparable opportunities for reemployment with local businesses and in surrounding counties.

**Rural Initiatives**
Florida identified 29 counties and five cities in three additional counties as Rural Areas of Opportunity. These counties and cities face economic challenges unique to rural communities. Accordingly, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors designated supplementary allocations for LWDBs identified as rural boards to further support operations. The $2 million allocated to this category fund critical workforce development needs in Florida's rural communities.

Core and Combined Partners commit to:

- Ensuring representation at the regularly scheduled partner meetings scheduled by CareerSource Florida in collaboration with the REACH Office at the Executive Office of the Governor.
- Provide regular data reporting to assist in the creation of the State Plan Dashboard.
- Work to identify barriers to partnership and collaboration and duplication of services and implement solutions to remove barriers and duplication of services.

Currently funded initiatives related to the goals and strategies in this plan include:

**FloridaCommerce**

**FL WINS**
The FL WINS program is an innovative, consumer-first workforce development system that seeks to provide Floridians with improved access to workforce programs and services through interoperable systems and shared integrated data. FloridaCommerce recently completed a feasibility study that provides a roadmap for program establishment, technical integration, and enhanced business process integration. The FL WINS program will implement a "no wrong door strategy" and the below components in an online app that streamlines the process for accessing workforce services:

- Customer Portal – Enhances the customer experience through a single shared account that provides a common access point to update personal information, view program information, and submit common intake applications.
- Common Intake Form – Provides intake capabilities for applicable programs across the Workforce Partners.
- Data Integration – Enables the sharing of data between existing agency systems of record to enhance the user experience, orchestrates the data flow among systems, and enables robust data analytics.

These initiatives will take place over three to five years and set a foundation for enhanced coordination and service delivery for Floridians.

Answers to frequently asked questions about the FL WINS Workforce System Integration effort can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

**The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband**
The FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband works with local and state government agencies, community organizations, and private businesses to increase the availability and effectiveness of broadband internet throughout the state, specifically in small and rural communities. Through

these partnerships, the Office of Broadband encourages investment in grant funding opportunities for the broadband program that focus on the expansion of broadband.

The Florida Broadband Act of 2021 directed the Office of Broadband within FloridaCommerce to:

- Develop a map of broadband Internet service availability throughout the state.
- Review and verify public input regarding transmission speeds and availability of broadband Internet services throughout the state.
- Develop, market, and promote broadband Internet services in the state.
- Create a strategic plan to increase the use of broadband Internet services in the state.
- Build and facilitate Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs) or partnerships.
- Participate in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proceedings that are related to the geographic availability and deployment of broadband Internet in Florida.
- Establish the Broadband Opportunity Program and rules for the program to award grants to applicants who seek to expand broadband Internet to unserved areas, subject to appropriations (§ 288.9961(4), Fla. Stat.).

The Florida Legislature directed the Office of Broadband to develop a strategic plan to guide the State of Florida in broadband Internet expansion and improvement. Under the leadership of the Governor, the Department has undertaken this task with coordination, input, participation, and support from partners and Floridians across the state.

The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

In July 2023, the Governor announced more than $247 million through the Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Program. Connecting more than 59,000 unserved and underserved businesses, homes, farms, and anchor institutions like hospitals and libraries to high-speed Internet. Infrastructure deployment through 63 strategic projects in 43 Florida counties ensures that Florida residents have reliable and efficient access to workforce, education, and health monitoring opportunities for generations to come.

In September 2023, FloridaCommerce hosted the inaugural Florida Broadband Summit. This event brought together more than 300 broadband industry professionals, local government officials, workforce and economic development professionals, and community organizations to share information and discuss the expansion and adoption of broadband across the state and how these services impact Florida's economy.

More information about the Office of Broadband, its accomplishments, and ongoing efforts to expand high-speed internet service in Florida can be viewed on the FloridaCommerce website.

**Reemployment Assistance (RA) Modernization**

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Governor and Florida Legislature directed and provided funding for FloridaCommerce to undertake a sustainable, continuous modernization effort of the RA Claims and Benefits Information System to implement immediate system performance and functional improvement needs while positioning FloridaCommerce with an integrated, modular, cloud-based system that is secure, scalable, and sustainable.

The primary goals for the RA Modernization Program are:

- Provide a system that is efficient, scalable, and meets the needs of providing RA benefits to protect workers employed in Florida who lose their job through no fault of their own.
- Enhance services provided to Floridians to access better career and workforce training opportunities and achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Achieve RA national prominence, as measured through the federal core measures, program integrity measures, and standards required by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL).
- Improve access to the delivery of RA benefits.
- Sharpen the RA program's focus on outcomes and accountability.
- Provide a system capable of responding rapidly to changes in law and economic conditions.
- Reduce cyber security risk and potential for fraud.
- Improve information flow with claimants, employers, and Third-Party Administrators (TPA) to provide quicker resolutions.
- Improve the RA program quality, accountability, performance, and integrity.
- Leverage new technologies to improve claimants, employers, and TPAs' overall experience with the RA Program, including reducing the amount of time it takes to file a claim for benefits.
- Improve efficiencies and effectiveness in managing claim workload and being better equipped to handle unexpected spikes in the number of claims that may result from emergencies, disasters, or economic factors.
- Eliminate manual, error-prone, labor-intensive processes.
- Enhance system usability, including accessibility.
- Reduce maintenance and support time and costs.
- Incorporate technical standards sufficient to develop modern technologies.
- Seamlessly integrate with other internal/external information technology (IT) assets.
- Modernize real-time and batch interfaces and all other systems exchanging data with the RA program.

The RA Modernization Program includes approximately 20 projects which are grouped into the following categories: infrastructure, software, data and analytics, and security. These initiatives address the immediate need to improve performance and usability of the RA Claims and Benefits Information System while also establishing the architectural framework and processes necessary to implement future business process and technology changes efficiently and effectively.

These initiatives take place over two years and set a solid foundation for ongoing modernization efforts to further improve the delivery of RA services to Floridians and coordination with workforce partners to empower Floridians through career development activities.

More information about the RA Modernization Program can be found on FloridaCommerce's website.

**Florida Job Growth Grant Fund**
Chapter 288, Florida Statutes establishes the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund within FloridaCommerce to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and

enhancing workforce training across the state. FloridaCommerce may identify projects, solicit proposals, and make funding recommendations to the Governor to approve state or local public infrastructure projects to promote:

- Economic recovery in specific regions of this state.
- Economic diversification or economic enhancement in a targeted industry.

The Governor chooses recommendations to meet the demand for workforce or infrastructure needs in the community to which they are awarded.

The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund awarded 20 projects in fiscal year 2021 – 2022 and 18 projects in fiscal year 2022 – 2023. Information about submitted proposals, awarded proposals and other announcements may be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

**Florida Department of Education**

**Division of Career and Adult Education**

**Regionalization Efforts**
In the 2023 – 2026 competitive grant application cycle, DCAE provided eligible adult education providers with the opportunity to submit either individual or collective grant proposals. This cycle introduced collective grant applications as a new initiative, enabling providers to collaboratively develop, implement, and enhance adult education and literacy activities while aligning them with the workforce and educational needs of their local areas.

Collaborative partnership development yields many benefits by optimizing resource utilization, combining financial assets, instructional materials, and specialized personnel. This expansion enriches the educational experience for adults and results in more adaptive and comprehensive program design, addressing a broader spectrum of educational needs and service delivery.

Additionally, these partnerships lead to improved outreach, streamlined administrative processes, and an overall enhancement of adult education program quality, accountability, and sustainability.

**Individual Education and Training (IET) Expansion**
In Florida, 15 of the 17 career clusters are supported by IET programs. The top 5 career clusters engaging IET students are Health Science, Business Management & Administration, Education & Training, Architecture & Construction, and IT.

As of the 2023-2024 school year, all Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grant recipients offer IET programs. In 2022 – 23, 58 out of 62 agencies offered IET programs to learners.

During the 2021 – 22 school year, 1,548 IET students participated in IET programs across Florida. The 2022 – 23 school year saw a 78% participation increase in IET programs with 2,765 adult learners benefiting from this educational model in 109 IET programs. Most of these programs also lead to an industry certification on the MCL.

The number of IET registered pre-apprenticeship programs has shown substantial growth, increasing from 7 to 23, a 228% surge since the 2021 – 22 school year. These programs cater to the following industries: Architecture & Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation,

Distribution & Logistics; and IT. This expansion is a direct result of effective collaboration between adult education providers and employers.

DCAE is committed to supporting IET program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation through technical assistance and professional development opportunities. Agencies can tailor IET programs to meet current workforce demands and prepare learners for future employment needs.

**Vocational Rehabilitation**
VR launched a new case management system, Aware (Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting), on August 28, 2023. Aware is a consolidated system that replaces more than 10 individual legacy systems. An industry standard case management system designed for state vocational rehabilitation agencies, Aware is used by more than 40 VR agencies in the United States. It is designed to collect and track information to ensure compliance and increase efficiency through reduction of paper-based processes. This system will allow VR to streamline internal processes to improve effective and efficient VR services to consumers.

VR has partnered or developed several programs that support strategies articulated in Section II:

- The Able Trust High School High Tech (HSHT) provides high school students with disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to in-demand careers. HSHT links youth to a broad range of academic, career development and experiential resources and experiences that will enable them to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce. HSHT programs are located in 45 sites across Florida.
- The Adults with Disabilities (AWD) grant serves individuals with the most significant disabilities who are not yet ready to enter the workforce but could benefit from pre-employment related services. FDVR serves as the monitoring agency overseeing the AWD grant programs verifying appropriate use of funds and evidence of return on investment of state funding in these programs. FDVR has been overseeing the AWD Grants for more than 18 years with 23 sites across Florida.
- VR currently contracts with nearly 100 service providers that provide Career Camps during four sessions of the school year (fall, spring, summer, and winter). The Career Camps provide pre-employment transition services (ETS) to youth with disabilities and potentially eligible youth.
- VR supports alternative training plans, like Agribusiness, a program that aids farmers, ranchers, other agricultural workers and farm family members with a disability, and LaunchIT, an instructional program designed to help individuals with disabilities acquire the skills to pursue a career in IT, to increase participation of Floridians with disabilities in employment in a wide variety of business sectors.
- VR has been awarded $13.1 million to realize the Florida Arts to Competitive Integrated Employment (ArtCIE) initiative. The initiative will create an innovative model that assists Floridians with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum wage employment to move toward competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes in the field of Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. ArtCIE will offer opportunities to at least 1,000 individuals with disabilities; create a dual customer career exploration model with innovations in peer mentoring, work experience, virtual reality modules, and business

engagement; and provide training for sheltered workshops and other subminimum wage providers, individuals, families, school personnel and employers. The award is part of the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) demonstration project with fourteen state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

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

Activities identified in Section A are aligned with WIOA combined programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners to avoid duplication. These activities are described below.

**Enhancing Partner Collaboration**
From the onset of WIOA through last year's submission under WIOA, a unified plan approach was selected for the plans and two-year modifications. Florida has built on the collaboration of the WIOA Core Leader Team and smaller workgroups by involving other programs organizations and stakeholders as needed. The 2024 – 2028 Combined Plan enhances partner collaboration to include WIOA core partners CareerSource Florida; FloridaCommerce; FDOE VR, DBS and DCAE; and combined partners including the FCS, DCF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and TAA programs; Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Program; Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program; Florida Department of Elder Affairs (FDOEA), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP); Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program and the state Housing and Urban Development Program.

Improved communication, regular workforce system updates, and identifying increased opportunities for partnerships has helped align WIOA core and required partners around the concept of a flexible and streamlined state and local-driven system of workforce development services and programs that enhance service delivery, leverage available resources to help job seekers overcome barriers, and achieve economic self-sufficiency and mobility. Enhanced partner collaboration has laid the foundation for combined or closer planning with all partners.

**Partnership Between State Apprenticeship Agency and CareerSource Florida**
The State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) and CareerSource Florida (CSF) meet regularly to plan collaborative efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeships across the state, which include active engagement between the SAA Apprenticeship Training Representatives and CSF Apprenticeship Navigators, as well as planning outreach and communication efforts, Apprenticeship Accelerator events and group training sessions. It is common for team members from both offices to co-present at meetings, trainings and industry conferences. Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs) from the SAA are responsible for the development, registration, monitoring and servicing of registered apprenticeship programs. CSF Apprenticeship Navigators are responsible for promoting apprenticeships to employers and job seekers, educating employers about the benefits of apprenticeships, assisting with the recruitment of apprentices and supporting apprentices by using WIOA funding to support the apprentice's related instruction, on the job training and supportive services. CareerSource Florida and the SAA support collaborative interagency working relationships between Apprenticeship Navigators and ATRs and have excelled in this area so much that our

Apprenticeship Navigators and ATR's have served as national experts by presenting to audiences across the country about how they successfully work together to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and TANF**
FloridaCommerce has a longstanding relationship with DCF in the administration of the SNAP employment and training (E&T) and TANF/WT programs. DCF refers SNAP and TANF recipients to FloridaCommerce to comply with work activity requirements and to receive services provided by the workforce system. Services include access to job preparation, training, and other support services designed to assist customers with obtaining employment. Employment and training services, including WIOA and other core partner services, are available to TANF and SNAP recipients in local career centers.

DCF and FloridaCommerce collaborate on the development of the SNAP E&T state plan and the TANF state plan to ensure the appropriate inclusion in, and coordination with, the state's workforce development system regarding service provision to SNAP and TANF recipients.

**CLIFF Dashboard**
CareerSource Florida partnered with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to develop a Florida-specific CLIFF Dashboard that helps users understand their potential earnings from paid employment while also mapping the timing and size of reductions in public assistance needed as individuals progress along in-demand career pathways toward self-sufficiency.

Consistent with the objectives of WIOA and the State Workforce Development Plan, CareerSource Florida developed the CLIFF tool to allow one-stop center staff and partners to assist Floridians in visualizing how returning to work or upskilling to a higher-paying occupation could impact their future earnings and public benefits as their household progresses along the path to self-sufficiency. CareerSource Florida developed a strategic policy requiring LWDBs to develop strategies and policies that provide simplified and expanded access to employment, education and training services. Usage of the CLIFF Tool Suite shall be written into each local board's four-year plan and reflected in each board's operating policies. Successful implementation is monitored by FloridaCommerce.

CareerSource Florida partners with its WIOA combined planning partner, DCF, to engage DCF staff in the use of the CLIFF Dashboard.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance Program**
The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA) is currently being sunset and existing participants will continue to be served. TAA services are currently delivered within the American Job Center and participants have access to all partner programs.

**Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program**
The Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JVSG) and WIOA are two federally funded programs that support veterans and individuals seeking employment, respectively. By combining planning and collaboration efforts between these two grants, several operations can be enhanced including:

- Targeted Outreach: By aligning efforts, JVSG and WIOA can conduct joint outreach campaigns to reach a broader audience of veterans and job seekers. This can include

coordinating marketing materials, utilizing shared databases, and leveraging each other's networks to ensure maximum outreach and engagement.

- Comprehensive Assessment: Both grants involve assessing individuals' skills, needs, and employment barriers. JVSG and WIOA can develop a unified assessment process that captures all relevant information, avoiding duplication and streamlining the overall assessment process. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of veterans' and job seekers' needs and enable tailored services and support.
- Integrated Case Management: JVSG and WIOA can facilitate integrated case management services that involves sharing information and collaborating on individual employment plans, ensuring that veterans and job seekers receive seamless support across both programs. By avoiding duplication and enhancing communication, this approach can lead to more efficient and effective service delivery.
- Expanded Training Opportunities: JVSG and WIOA can collaborate to provide a wider range of training opportunities for veterans and job seekers. By pooling resources and expertise, they can jointly develop training programs that address the specific needs of veterans while also meeting the broader workforce demands identified by WIOA. This can result in more targeted and relevant training options for individuals, increasing their chances of finding sustainable employment.
- Employer Engagement: Both grants aim to connect individuals with job opportunities. By coordinating employer outreach strategies, JVSG and WIOA can leverage their respective networks and resources to establish stronger connections with employers. This collaboration can lead to increased job placement opportunities for veterans and job seekers as well as foster ongoing relationships with employers to ensure long-term success in the workforce.

Overall, combined planning between JVSG and WIOA will result in a more coordinated and efficient approach to supporting veterans and job seekers. By leveraging strengths, sharing resources, and aligning their operations, these grant programs can enhance their impact and provide comprehensive tailored services to individuals seeking employment opportunities.

**Unemployment Insurance**

**Bureau of Reemployment Assistance**

The Bureau of RA is one of three bureaus within FloridaCommerce that support the Division of Workforce Services. The program, including the activities of the RA Appeals Commission, operates as a federal/state partnership. The administrative framework is established in federal law, and state law governs program operations. States are responsible for determining program eligibility and providing funds to cover RA benefit payments while the federal government is responsible for providing states with funds to administer the program.

The RA Claims and Benefits Information System (Reconnect) provides a one-stop shop for information regarding unemployment benefits. The system is designed for both claimants and employers to file a claim, whereby claimants use the system to receive information about their application and employers use the system to provide information about claimants. Recognizing Florida's rich diversity, the system is available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Haitian-Creole, and provides options for the visually impaired.

RA units include:

- The Customer Support Unit is responsible for handling telephone calls from claimants and employers regarding the RA claim process, identity authentication, and the filing of

an initial claim. Within the Customer Support Unit, the Operations Performance Unit tracks quality and performance to ensure world-class service for its customers.

- The Claims Processing Unit is responsible for processing claims filed for temporary wage replacement benefits. The Unit also authenticates claims to prevent and detect fraudulent activity, detect, and collect overpayments, and evaluate quality and performance to ensure a first-class customer experience.
- The Adjudication Unit reviews processed claims filed for temporary wage replacement benefits to issue a determination regarding benefit qualification or eligibility, as outlined in both State and Federal law. Through meticulous fact-finding and proactive outreach to claimants and employers, accurate and timely issue resolution and determinations are made.
- The Appeals Unit conducts fair and impartial hearings to resolve challenges with reemployment determinations regarding benefit qualification or eligibility. The unit assesses evidence presented, interprets the law, and makes decisions to affirm, reverse, or modify RA determinations. The Appeals unit also conducts hearings to address unresolved petitions filed by employers with the Department of Revenue involving protests of liability, assessments, reimbursements, and tax rates.
- The Quality Assurance Unit provides insight and monitors the quality of the RA program's performance, reporting, workload volumes, and statistical data for each core process within the Bureau. The unit also continually develops the RA Claims and Benefits Information System (Reconnect), manages, and coordinates all federal and state audits and emergency management activities in the Bureau, including disaster unemployment assistance.

Planning between the RA program and the WIOA core and other combined partners will result in a more coordinated and efficient approach to assisting RA claimants in returning to work sooner, reduction of RA benefit duration through improved employment outcomes, establishment of Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment as entry point to the workforce system and promotes alignment with the vision of WIOA.

**SCSEP**

SCSEP provides community service and job training to Florida's older Americans. FDEA is responsible for state-level administration of SCSEP and contracts with local entities such as AARP Foundation. The National Caucus & Center on Black Aged and National Urban League receive direct funding from USDOL for the provision of employment and training services for older Americans. These entities partner with the LWDBs through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and IFAs to ensure SCSEP's presence in the workforce system and at local career centers.

With the transition from unified to combined planning, representatives of FDEA, SCSEP attend monthly WIOA Core Partner Leadership Meetings.

**CSBG**

CSBG is administratively housed in FloridaCommerce. CSBG operates under a consolidated plan pursuant to federal requirements. This consolidated plan provides the framework for a planning process to identify housing, homeless, community and economic development needs, and resources for meeting those needs. The plan process provides an opportunity for citizens, nonprofit organizations, or other interested parties to help define priorities for addressing local and statewide community needs and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting identified needs. The Consolidated Plan describes needs, goals, and objectives of the agencies responsible for the

administration of certain federally funded programs administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The consolidated plan process allows core partners and stakeholders to exchange information on goals and objectives relating to housing, community development and social services and facilitates a consolidated approach to meeting those needs. Each affected agency and other interested parties gain insight into the structure and activities of several federally funded programs that have a direct benefit on local communities and the state.

CSBG provides federal funds to designated local governments and non-profit agencies called Community Action Agencies (CAA) to assist eligible low-income households in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Local CAAs partner with LWDBs for the provision of services. These partnerships and alignment of resources are addressed via MOUs and IFAs locally. The agencies may provide a variety of self-sufficiency services such as emergency health, food, housing, day care, transportation assistance; housing counseling; financial management assistance; nutrition programs including federal surplus food distribution, community gardening projects, food banks, job counseling, placement and training services, and homeless prevention programs.

The goals of the CSBG Program align with WIOA goals to:

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

Representatives of the CSBG Program are invited to WIOA Core Partner Leadership Meetings.

**Partnering with State Colleges**
The FCS supports, strengthens and expands efforts by its post-secondary institutions to deepen the region's talent pool in targeted sectors.

The FCS consists of 28 state colleges focused on serving residents in all counties in Florida. Through the dedication of credentialed faculty and college personnel and partnerships with a variety of businesses and industries, the FCS provides all Floridians with open access to an affordable, high-quality education and opportunity for the career they are seeking. It is also an expectation established by the Florida Legislature that each college provide outreach to underserved populations, a key component of access. FCS is committed to employing strategies that ensure students are prepared for college, leading to a four-year degree or employment whether still in high school, first-time enrolled, returning adult, military, non-credit or transfer student.

Dual enrollment, distance learning courses, degrees and a variety of short-term, high demand credential programs offer students flexible access to higher education, providing students with multiple options to achieve their career goals and for employers to have access to the talent

they need to succeed. Additionally, FCS is the primary point of access to higher education for Floridians who seek to upskill within their trade or profession through certified training programs and apprenticeships. Such commitment to open access continues to be an important reason that Florida's students choose FCS institutions to pursue academics and training for successful careers.

The mission of the Office of Articulation is to facilitate the effective and efficient progression and transfer of students through Florida's K – 20 education system. Through the work of the Articulation Coordinating Committee, a K – 20 advisory body appointed by the Commissioner of Education, the office coordinates ways to help students move easily from institution to institution and from one level of education to the next.

FDBS continues to seek opportunities to broaden collaboration and resource alignment through its partnerships with state colleges. FDBS contracts with the Florida State College at Jacksonville to provide Pre-ETS, Transition, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. FDBS works closely with Daytona State College for training of Business Enterprise Program trainees and for the COMPTIA certification program for the blind. Florida State University (FSU) students visit during the fall and spring semesters to learn about the programs and services offered by the Division. Future efforts will focus on expanding outreach to other state colleges for a more robust partnership with the FCS, including opportunities for expanding apprenticeship participation for blind and visually impaired consumers.

**Partnering with Florida Universities**
Florida's SUS and Board of Governors partners with CareerSource Florida through representation on the Credentials Review Committee. The SUS consults with FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida and other partners on the development of their Programs of Strategic Emphasis. These programs are identified by their connection to key economic indicators in the state and address critical talent needs for the state.

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

FDBS is reviewing opportunities to develop or revive credential programs. One program under review seeks to reinstate a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Certification and master's program. If funds are available, FDBS plans to coordinate with the SUS member and partially fund the program by supporting the salary for the instructor and partial tuition for ten students each year in hopes of creating opportunities for internships with FDBS, local education agencies (LEAs), and service providers.

The Florida State University's (FSU) Visual Disabilities Program began offering coursework designed to prepare general and special educators who are, or would like to be, working with students in Florida who have visual impairments. FSU offers this certificate program in two segments through online content delivery and field experiences that will include hands-on practice working with students who have visual impairments. FDBS presents programs & current projects to FSU students - creating collaboration and an opportunity for internships with FDBS, LEAs, and our service providers.

***Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.*** **Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality,**

**customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.**

Florida emphasizes integrated service delivery to improve 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. The structure of Florida's workforce system allows for seamless coordination, alignment, and provision of services among workforce programs.

**Service Delivery Model**
WIOA Combined Planning Partners including TANF, SNAP E&T, TAA and JVSG and their program-specific strategies and operations are administered through FloridaCommerce and the LWDBs that directly provide related services to individuals. This allows for a collaborative service delivery model that supports coordination, co-enrollment and greater collaboration across programs that align with participant needs. Core and required partners that are not administered directly through FloridaCommerce and the local boards including Career and Technical Education programs and SCSEP maintain strong, collaborative partnerships through MOUs that support colocation and referrals among partners, and communication with the broader workforce system on shared goals, performance, and accountability.

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. Advancements in technology and the standardization of shared tools and services provide opportunities for career centers to enhance service delivery by leveraging tools such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Premier Virtual, and others. Aligning service delivery to the ever-changing needs of businesses and job seekers remains a key operational strategy especially in rural and other communities experiencing ongoing barriers to transportation and quality broadband access.

**Support Services**
LWDBs develop local operating policies (LOPs) and procedures on how they will provide support services to eligible jobseekers. The LOPs align with the state workforce development plan to ensure coordination with combined partner entities to eliminate or avoid duplication of resources and services, and to establish limits on the amount and duration of such services.

**Stakeholder Involvement**
Florida requires LWDBs to seek broad stakeholder involvement in the development of their local plans. Local elected officials, local workforce development boards, core program partners and mandatory one-stop partners are an integral part of the planning process. Each plan addresses how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs such as VR, FDBS, and DCAE and combined planning partners.

Additionally, Florida has two state rehabilitation councils, consistent with both state and federal requirements Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 361.16 - 361.17 and Florida Statute 413.405. VR's Florida Rehabilitation Council and FDBS's Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind consist of volunteer stakeholders who apply and are appointed by Florida's Governor to advise on matters specific to the employment of Floridians with disabilities. Both councils have

statutory requirements that specify CareerSource Florida and other agency partners in its membership to increase alignment of use of stakeholder input across the state system.

**Local Plans**
Local plans are required to align with the strategic goals and policies outlined in this state plan, as well as specific local plan instructions as further described in Section IV. of this plan.

Each plan is based on current and projected needs of the local workforce investment system, with an increased emphasis on coordination and collaboration at all levels to ensure a seamless system for employers and job seekers, including veterans, SNAP recipients, TANF recipients, seniors seeking employment, individuals with disabilities and customers in rural areas. Local plans identify the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of the local area.

Local plans include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of services provided to address identified needs. LWDBs provide a comprehensive view of the system wide needs of the LWDA.

**Regional Planning Area Plans**
Beginning in PY 2024 – 2025, designated Regional Planning Areas will be required to submit an addendum to their local plan outlining their regional strategies, consistent with Pillar 3 of the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors passed a Regional Planning Area Strategic Policy that requires all local workforce areas to be part of a Regional Planning Area that:

- Aligns workforce strategies to address the needs of shared industry sectors, employers, and significant populations of job seekers.
- Addresses common labor shortages and worker skills gaps with aligned service strategies.
- Realizes system efficiencies through reducing resource costs (monetary, time or other).

**FDBS**
FDBS assists individuals in pursuing their goals as detailed in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by using supported employment (SE) resources selected to produce the best results for the individual. The Employment Placement Specialists (EPS) and counselors refer job seekers to online tools, such as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), Employ Florida, National Employment Team, 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 FDBS, VR, and CareerSource Florida when companies have job openings and are looking to fill positions with a qualified person with a disability.

The Division evaluates the effectiveness of its job placement services and makes needed improvements. The Statewide Business Consultant completes the Employment Outcomes Report monthly to track how many individuals find gainful employment and how long it takes to assist individuals in obtaining employment. Counselors actively involve clients and families as appropriate in assessment, planning, and decision-making throughout the service delivery process. Clients utilize the consumer portal of the Aware case management system to maintain consistent communication with their counselors.

Community providers undergo onsite reviews with an emphasis on customer service, adherence to state policies, compliance with federal regulations, case documentation, IPE signatures, timeliness of eligibility determination, activities tied to the IPE, and authorization approvals.

**VR**

VR counselors assist eligible individuals, or participants, in pursuing their goals as detailed in their IPE. Through a multitude of strategies and resources, including SE, VR seeks to produce the best employment outcomes for participants.

The consumer portal within the Aware case management system assists counselors in maintaining consistent communication with consumers. Counselors actively involve participants and families as appropriate throughout the service delivery process. VR continues to support increased training and education of its counseling staff, including the attainment of advanced degrees including those in fields of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, education, business administration, management and public administration. Additionally, support is provided for attainment of certifications in areas like certified public managers, Florida Certified Contract Manager (FCCM), Florida Professional Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other recognized professional certifications.

VR counseling and provider staff refer job seekers to online tools, such as the TAP, Employ Florida, National Employment Team, and Ability Works to assist individuals in finding and applying for jobs.

VR regularly reviews data as an integral part of monitoring for performance and compliance indicators, which includes conducting targeted and routine case reviews as part of a tiered system of continuous improvement designed to increase accountability and alignment throughout the system. Community providers undergo desktop as well as onsite reviews to ensure adherence to agency and state policies and compliance with federal regulations.

The Division employs strategies that streamline internal processes to provide effective and efficient services to consumers. The Aware system also contains data analytics tools designed to support VR goals in data-based improvement efforts throughout the system.

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

Florida's Workforce Development System includes the CareerSource Florida Network comprised of CareerSource Florida, 24 local workforce development boards, in service to local elected officials, and WIOA core partners, the Florida Department of Commerce, the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Florida Division of Blind Services. Florida's Workforce Development System also includes WIOA Combined Planning partners, the Department of Elder Affairs, Senior Community Services Employment Program, and the Florida Department of Children and Families, (TANF E&T and SNAP E&T Programs).

Combined planning partners and required partners also include programs authorized under Title I of WIOA; Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans State Grants Programs; Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block grant program; Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development; programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws; programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007. Local workforce development boards execute agreements with all combined and required partners.

Other Florida workforce development partners include the Florida College System and the Able Trust.

The CareerSource Florida network offers businesses in Florida or relocating to Florida a completely integrated talent support solution using the state's employee recruitment, retention and training services. CareerSource Florida offers employers state-level training grants targeting new-to- Florida businesses, expanding businesses, and businesses that want to upskill their existing workforce. Florida's local workforce development boards offer a full array of recruitment, hiring, and training services through their Business Services teams, which often consist of business services leads, Wagner-Peyser, LVER, and DVOP staff. The CareerSource Florida Network also coordinates strategic business services through a combined approach via partnerships on events and services such as co-hosting job fairs, summer youth experiences, and recruitment and career exploration events. Together, the CareerSource Florida network and partners provide a talent solution that best meets the needs of business. As a component of its focus on continuous improvement, CareerSource Florida works to enhance employer satisfaction and measure effectiveness of employer outreach programs by working with private communications firms and experts to deploy business surveys targeting feedback from Florida businesses on special statewide initiatives and gaining specific information from those businesses that have used our network, heard of our network but never used, and never heard nor used our network.

CareerSource Florida collaborates with industry associations, economic development partners, LWDB 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 business stakeholders. Utilizing a uniform system enables Florida's LWDBs to work together to enhance customer and business services. WIOA partners participate in conversations about using Salesforce in their business outreach activities.

CareerSource Florida provides sector strategy training and assistance to LWDBs on strategies, promotion of services and sharing of best practices to industry groups by collaborating with core partners at the local level to meet business talent development needs. Monthly training is provided to LWDB Apprenticeship Navigators and their entire teams so they will better understand how Registered Apprenticeships can be used as a talent development strategy. Additional training is provided to the LWDB's through work-based learning trainings, workforce development summits and webinars.

CareerSource Florida will also begin to lead quarterly business engagement meetings with Florida partner agencies that directly engage with businesses. These meetings will be used to

share information on the latest business-focused initiatives to keep each agency informed, increase collaboration, and leveraging existing efforts and resources.

Coordination and alignment between services and partners are created through activities at the local level using a Sector Strategies/Talent Pipeline Management approach such as industry sector rounds, State of Talent, Claim your Future and other strategic initiatives throughout the state. Core partners also serve on local workforce development boards where their expertise is used to guide sector strategy approaches for business industry groups that leads to talent solutions.

All partners play a role in coordination, alignment, and Provision of Services. VR 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.

FDBS expanded business relationships with employers at the local level to identify and maximize competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for adults and students. The Division works in partnership with chambers of commerce across the state to support the ongoing development of disability-owned businesses. Each district holds membership with one or more chambers of commerce. Business consultants work with employers statewide to develop and strengthen collaboration by creating partnerships that lead to employment opportunities for blind/visually impaired individuals. EPSs 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.

DBS employment staff complete the Employment Outcomes Professionals II (EOP) training and meet weekly to discuss labor market information, work experience opportunities, internships, and the hiring needs of employers. This training provides staff with marketing and sales skills directly relating to real job development. Staff use these skills to build long-term relationships with businesses via outreach and rapid engagement with employers. Florida will work to coordinate employers' services across all WIOA program partners to leverage expertise and prevent duplication.

Florida is increasing collaboration between employer services to leverage expertise and prevent duplication, coordinating services across all WIOA program partners.

***Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers.*** **Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.**

**Florida Talent Development Council**
The Florida Talent Development Council, directed by the Governor's REACH Office, is tasked with creating a strategic plan to ensure 60% of working-age Floridians hold a high value

postsecondary credential by 2030. The Council includes legislative, business, workforce development and postsecondary education leaders.

The Florida Talent Development Council is charged by Florida statute to develop a strategic plan that must, at a minimum:

- 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 increasing access and participation 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% 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 FCS 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 Florida Talent Development Council's 2023 Updated Strategic Plan can be viewed online.

**Blending Academics with Career and Technical Education**
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 current and future careers. Collaborations such as Able Trust's High School High Tech, Project SEARCH, Career Camps, Work-Based Learning Experiences, and Postsecondary Education programs engage eligible VR participants 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 are designed to support eligible VR participants in becoming and staying engaged.

FDBS offers technical/vocational training programs at the Career, Technology, and Training Center (CTTC), a brick and mortar, residential training facility where individuals with visual impairments learn to lead productive, self-sufficient lives. The Assistive Technology Program (ATP) launched in November 2021 and clients may participate online or stay on campus. The ATP is for students with a current job offer or college acceptance to gain technology skills required to go to work/school. The new Web Accessibility Specialist Registered Apprenticeship program is the first of its kind in the nation sponsored by an agency that services individuals with visual impairments. The first apprentice started in fall 2023, with plans to add more participants after initial implementation. FDBS serves as the sponsor and employer in this

competency-based program that leads to a recognized credential as a Web Accessibility Specialist for those who complete the program successfully.

DCAE coordinates with state and local education agencies and officials to collaboratively offer increased Career and Technical Education through IET programs and activities in adult education classrooms. An IET program blends a range of education and training services to build learners' foundational, employability and occupational skills. IET Programs provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce training for a specific occupation. This allows IET Programs to contextualize basic skills instruction, offer simulations, net sequential skill gains, achieve accelerated outcomes, offer work-based learning opportunities and work experience, and put students on a career pathway leading to family-sustaining wages.

**Collaborating with Florida's Universities and Colleges**

CareerSource Florida partnered with the FDOE DCAE to identify short-term, high value credential programs to launch a statewide Get There Florida workforce education initiative. This initiative capitalized on rapid credentialing grants and provided critical information about Career Technical Education (CTE) career pathways and highlighted public education institutions with associated CTE offerings. By aligning a student's interest with potential career pathways, Get There helped to increase enrollment in valuable workforce training programs by connecting students directly to their local institution.

In addition, CareerSource Florida helped spearhead the Future of Work Florida campaign in partnership with the Florida Department of Education Division of Career and Adult Education and the Florida Chamber of Commerce. Future of Work Florida targets Florida middle and high school students and parents to showcase Career and Technical Education opportunities across the state. The initiative also reaches businesses who have a vested interest in the future of Florida's workforce as it relates to CTE-focused jobs. In addition to sharing careers and CTE programs of the future with Florida youth, the Future of Work Florida initiative brought together job creators, industry leaders and partners to showcase the careers of the future and the industries with growth potential.

Complementing the Get There endeavor, the "Your Way" initiative was introduced as an additional branch of the campaign facilitated by FDOE. "Your Way" serves to assist adult learners in finding a classroom and getting the skills needed to succeed. Furthermore, the "Your Way" initiative offers a range of resources and fosters collaborative efforts with adult education providers to advocate their programs. Its focus lies in promoting high school equivalency diplomas and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs as viable options for educational prosperity for adults in Florida.

A collaborative effort between CareerSource Florida, FDOE and FloridaCommerce, Apprentice Florida is a statewide outreach campaign that seeks to expand registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in Florida, in turn creating a fortified talent pipeline in targeted sectors and driving economic development across the Sunshine State.

Apprenticeships are a proven training method benefiting job seekers and businesses. Through mentorship and technical instruction, apprentices receive OJT to learn necessary skills while earning a paycheck. Meanwhile, the flexibility for an employer to design an apprenticeship program specific to their needs offers a consistent way to recruit, train and retain talent.

Apprentice Florida's website, ApprenticeFlorida.com, connects employers and job seekers alike with resources to help begin their apprenticeship journeys, including video tutorials for getting

started, in-depth guides on how to build and launch a program, and testimonials from businesses and apprentices across Florida. Leveraging a strategic mix of multimedia communications strategies, including advertising, social media outreach, partner and media engagement and email marketing, the Apprentice Florida campaign educates employers and job seekers alike on how registered apprenticeship programs can transform their talent pipelines and careers.

The FCS supports, strengthens, and expands efforts through its post-secondary institutions to deepen the region's talent pool in targeted sectors. FDBS continues to seek opportunities to broaden collaboration and resource alignment through its partnerships with state colleges. The Division contracts with the Florida State College at Jacksonville to provide pre-employment transition services. Florida State University (FSU) offers a combined BS/MS pathway in Visual Disabilities Education, the only program of its kind in the Southeast. FSU students visit during the fall and spring semesters to learn about the programs and services offered by the Division. Future efforts will focus on expanding outreach to other state colleges for a more robust partnership with the FCS.

Local VR offices have longstanding relationships with local colleges and universities to both help recruit FDVR applicants and support students. VR staff participate in information sharing events for students in rehabilitation and counseling programs to discuss VR employment and internship opportunities. Liaisons from VR offices are assigned to colleges and universities throughout the state to partner with disability resources and student support center staff. VR staff also partner with local colleges and universities at job fairs and open house events and serve on various support services boards and committees.

**Facilitating Postsecondary Education**
The REACH Act established many initiatives to facilitate post-secondary education. The creation of a Credentials Review Committee to create a MCL that defines degree and nondegree credentials of value creates transparency and informs funding decisions based on the needs of employers. The development of a Workforce Opportunity Portal will help Florida's students assess different career paths and the education programs aligned with those paths. The Open-Door Grant program established by the REACH Act provides up to two-thirds of tuition assistance for select programs at FCS and Technical College institutions.

The Florida Divisions of Blind Services and Vocational Rehabilitation entered into an MOU with the FDOE's Division of Public Schools, 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.

As required by the interagency agreement, 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 BEESS within FDOE to the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg as well as others within the agency.

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.

FDBS has a formal interagency agreement with other divisions within FDOE that provide pre-employment and other 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. The Get There Florida Initiative is in partnership with the state's 28 FCS institutions and the state's 48 technical colleges or centers. It accelerates completion time for an in-demand industry certification or postsecondary workforce credential. The Division added the guide for this initiative on the FDBS website and integrated it into the College Handbook.

**Education and Industry Consortium**
Senate Bill 240 (2023) requires LWDB chairs to appoint an Education and Industry Consortium for each local workforce area. Consortium members must represent public and private sector education providers from the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary sectors. Industry representatives must be representative of the focused sectors in the area and the largest employers in the area. Representatives must be leaders of their respective organizations.

The Consortia are required to meet quarterly and discuss the talent needs of the businesses and the related programs offered by education. Reports from the meeting are to be shared with the LWDB. This strategy ensures that industry and education leaders in all Florida communities are engaging and informing the LWDB strategies for talent development.

### (F) Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

**Partnerships with School Districts**
VR has partnered with school districts to provide Work-Based Learning Experiences and Career Camps for students with disabilities. VR Transition Youth services align with the Pre-ETS required under WIOA. VR is seeking an expansion of capacity by encouraging school districts to become Pre-ETS providers.

VR counselors serving transition students participate in each area's local interagency councils. Interagency councils are a collaborative effort between VR and FDOE's Division of Public-School partners, public high schools, adult service agencies, workforce programs, parents, students, advocates and employers cooperating to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

FDBS provides technical assistance to Local Education Agency (LEA) staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities to post-secondary education or employment options via Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. Partners collaborate and promote program services through participation in existing interagency committees and workgroups. The Division created training tools for Pre-ETS and Transition for LEA staff to facilitate coordination of services, parent outreach, training, and identification of students who may benefit from the Pre-ETS program.

As required by the interagency agreement, 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 BEESS within the FDOE to the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg as well as others within the agency.

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.

**Leveraging Partnerships for Exceptional Education and Student Services**
The Florida Divisions of Blind Services and Vocational Rehabilitation entered into an MOU with the FDOE's Division of Public Schools, 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.

**ETPL**
Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) of training services or programs of study are entities that are eligible to receive WIOA Title I-B funds for adult and dislocated worker participants who enroll in programs of study through Individual Training Accounts (ITA). ITAs may also be used for WIOA Title I Youth funds to provide training to out-of-school youth, ages 18 to 24. To be eligible to receive training funds under Section 133(b), WIOA, the ETP must be on the state or local ETPL. Florida is currently operating under a federal waiver allowing in-school-youth to utilize ITAs for training.

The REACH Act positions Florida to help individuals with barriers to education and employment become self-sufficient through a system-wide approach that includes requiring FloridaCommerce, with input from FDOE, the state workforce development board, and others to establish minimum performance criteria for WIOA ETPs to be eligible for inclusion and to subsequently remain on the ETPL.

The REACH Act charges FloridaCommerce with establishing WIOA ETP criteria focused on participant outcomes. The quality and selection of providers and training services programs is vital to achieving these core principles.

The CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 090 – WIOA ETPL provides guidance to LWDBs about the ETPL and related federal and state requirements, performance standards, data reporting, and procedures for determining initial and continued eligibility of training providers, including in-state and out-of-local-area and out-of-state providers and programs of study. The policy describes the state policy on enforcement of ETPs including denials, deactivation, removal, loss of eligibility, re-application, and the appeals process for LWDBs and providers.

This policy conforms with requirements established by the USDOL, the REACH Act, and implements a critical system-wide improvement as part of the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan approved by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors.

Existing programs on the state and local ETPLs must meet at least two of the minimum performance criteria to be approved for subsequent (continued) eligibility to remain on the state and local ETPLs. The minimum program criteria may not exceed the threshold at which more than 20 percent of all ETPs in the state would fall below. A program must have a minimum of five participants to determine if they performed successfully – training programs with fewer than five participants will remain on the ETPL until there is enough data to determine performance outcomes. LWDBs can adopt more stringent performance criteria for programs. However, programs meeting the minimum criteria below may remain on the state ETPL.

**Additional Opportunities for Partnership**

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors provides funding allocations to each LWDB for delivery of services. LWDBs are encouraged to leverage federal and state funds to expand local provision of services. LWDBs are expected to obtain and document leveraged resources within the project budget. Leveraged resources may be in the form of financial support or in-kind services. In-kind services are services that are provided to enhance the project at no charge or at discounted charges.

Leveraged resources must:

- Contribute to the success of the project.
- Strengthen partnerships for future outreach.
- Promote the sustainability of the project.

All leveraged resources must be identified by source. Leveraged resources may be obtained from:

- LWDB formula dollars.
- Participating businesses or business groups.
- Philanthropic organizations
- Educational institutions (public/private).
- Other sources to contribute financially to the project, including cross-regional collaboration.

**Comprehensive Employment, Education and Training and Individual Training Account Waiver Policy**

Pursuant to the REACH Act, the state board approved a Comprehensive Employment, Education, and Training Strategic Policy requiring LWDBs to use all allowable and available resources to create simplified access, strengthen partnerships to leverage multiple sources of funding to provide services and eliminate duplication of services.

The Governor’s vision for increasing access to training and opportunities for individuals is anchored in state statute which requires 50% 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% rule include all customer service costs associated with the ITA program such as tuition, fees and books, supportive services, and other training services. Florida allows LWDBs to establish ITA limits and durations.

The Individual Training Account Expenditure Requirements and Waiver Request Process Administrative Policy outlines the requirements to LWDBs for Individual Training Account expenditures and the procedures to obtain a waiver from CareerSource Florida. Under unusual circumstances, local boards may obtain a waiver from the State ITA reserve requirement by applying to FloridaCommerce. For consideration of a waiver from the State ITA reserve requirement and to guide the review process by FloridaCommerce 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%) 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 FloridaCommerce 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 LWDB 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 LWDB 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.

The State Workforce Development board identified that job seekers seeking training require more support than tuition payments to engage in training services. Examples of barriers to training include transportation, childcare, the need for income, etc. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 109 – Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments governing the use of supportive services and needs-related payments provides LWDBs with requirements for ensuring supportive services and needs-related payments are provided to eligible WIOA participants and defines the requirements for establishing local operating procedures that govern supportive services and needs-related payments. Additionally, the state board directed FloridaCommerce to include supportive services and needs-related payments in the state-level requirement for 50% training expenditure rate.

**Pre-ETS**

FDBS and VR each allocate a minimum of 15% of their federal allotment to Pre-ETS for all students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for these services. Students who

are eligible or potentially eligible may receive Pre-ETS starting at age 14. Recent legislation prescribes starting the discussion about transition as early as age 12. The Division provides Pre-ETS through the age of 21, if the student receives special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or if the individual has a disability, for purposes of Section 504 of the Act.

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

**REACH Act**
The Governor's 2019 Executive Order 19-31 charts a course for Florida to become number one in the nation for workforce education by 2030. The 2019, the Legislature codified this work with the adoption of similar language in Florida House Bill 7071 and subsequently amended these requirements in the REACH Act, which creates a system-wide approach to improving access to credentials of value including postsecondary credentials. The REACH Act:

- Creates the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help in the Executive Office of the Governor to provide coordination and alignment in Florida's workforce development system.
- Requires the REACH Office to create a No Wrong Door entry strategy whereby Floridians may access services from any workforce partner with a common intake form and case management system.
- Creates the FLWINS system to create a seamless "no wrong door" approach for Florida's job seekers to reduce duplication and ensure that Floridian's can more easily obtain workforce services. .
- Requires the Talent Development Council to coordinate Florida's efforts to meet state healthcare workforce needs, by conducting a gap analysis and providing trend information on nursing programs.
- Requires the CareerSource Florida board to appoint a Credentials Review Committee to identify degree and non-degree credentials of value, including Registered Apprenticeships, and develop a MCL that directs federal and state funding.
- Creates the Open-Door Workforce Grant Program to provide grants to school districts and FCS institutions to cover up to two-thirds of the cost of short-term, high-demand programs.
- Creates the Money-Back Guarantee Program, requiring each school district and FCS institution to refund the cost of tuition to students who are not able to find a job within six months of completing select programs.
- Creates a new workforce performance funding model for school district and FCS institution workforce programs, requiring one-third of performance funding to be based on rewarding student job placement and the remaining two-thirds on student earnings, with a focus on increasing the economic mobility of underserved populations.
- Coordinates CareerSource Florida, Florida Commerce and Florida Department of Education to expand apprenticeships, preapprenticeships, and other work-based learning models.

Florida Law requires the Commissioner of Education to conduct an annual audit of K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education offerings that, at a minimum, must examine:

- Alignment of educational offerings with the Framework of Quality developed and approved by the Credentials Review Committee.
- Alignment of educational offerings at the K-12 and postsecondary levels with credentials or degree programs identified on the statewide MCL.
- Program utilization and unwarranted duplication across institutions serving the same students in a geographical or service area.
- Institutional performance measured by student outcomes such as academic achievement, college readiness, postsecondary enrollment, credential and certification attainment, job placement, and wages.

Using the findings from the annual audit, the commissioner shall phase out career and technical education offerings that are not aligned with the framework of quality, do not meet labor market demand, do not meet institutional performance, or are unwarranted program duplications. The commissioner should encourage school districts and FCS institutions to offer programs that are not offered currently.

**Credentials Review Committee**
The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors appointed an 18-member Credentials Review Committee for the state of Florida. This committee includes the Chancellors of Career and Adult Education, K-12 Education, SUS, and State College System along with agency representatives from FloridaCommerce and FDACS, private education representatives, industry representatives, and members of urban and rural LWDB. The Committee developed a definition for Credentials of Value ensuring that credentials are linked to occupations in demand and occupations that meet defined wage criteria. This Framework of Quality is used to evaluate all credentials offered in the state of Florida to create a state MCL.

The Committee meets quarterly to review applications for credentials and approve additions to the MCL. On an annual basis, the MCL is reevaluated using current labor market data thus ensuring that the list changes with the changing labor market and remains current. Biannually, the Committee is charged with reviewing the Framework of Quality and adjusting as needed.

The MCL is intended to direct federal and state funding toward the credentials most needed by Florida businesses. Currently, credentials on the list are eligible for WIOA funding for training; the state's Career and Professional Education funding; state level IWT Grants; and FDOE's Open Door Grant.

**Florida Career and Professional Education Act**
Data reveals 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 than those who do not. Students who earned a certification were more likely to take Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses than students who did not earn a certification. Earning 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.

CareerSource Florida collaborates with FloridaCommerce, FDOE's DCAE, and FDACS 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.

Credentials may not be approved for CAPE funding if they are not included on the state's MCL, ensuring funded credentials are in demand and meet specific wage threshold established by the Credentials Review Committee. The Credentials Review Committee implemented a process for evaluating new credentials for inclusion on the MCL each quarter ensuring that the list is updated to reflect the changing needs of businesses and educational offerings in the state.

The list of industry certifications is updated annually, and final funding determinations are made by FDOE. More information is available on CareerSource Florida's website and on the FDOE DCAE website.

**Education Meets Opportunity Platform**
The Education meets Opportunity Platform (EMOP) provides an interoperable data analytics tool—comprised of four data dashboards—for all of Florida's workforce education and training programs (degree and non-degree) through the state's selected vendor, PAIRIN. It displays real-time, accurate, and comprehensive data visualization and analytics to provide persistent and reliable analytics for FDOE and authorized stakeholders on academic program inventories, program performance, and labor market supply and demand. The interactive, interoperable data analytics tool/solution functions as a business intelligence tool, with the ability to ingest and integrate large volumes of data, aggregate, analyze, and summarize the data in the form of lucid, clear, and user-friendly key performance indicators.

**Open Door Grant Program**
Florida authorized an Open-Door Grant program to help support and fund IET programs that provide adults the opportunity to build their reading, math, writing and English language skills alongside workforce training activities in an integrated model, which accelerates the ability to move into employment. FDOE will continue to provide support as it expands this initiative.

**Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant**
State funds are appropriated to establish new and operate or expand existing registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs. High schools, school district career centers or colleges, school district charter technical career colleges, FCS institutions, and other entities authorized to sponsor an apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship program may submit project concepts for funding consideration.

FDBS intends to expand participation in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. The Division will work with businesses and employers to increase work-based learning experiences. The Division launched its first agency-sponsored apprenticeship program this year. The Division serves as the employer in a competency-based program leading to a recognized credential as a Web Accessibility Specialist.

**VR Pre-Employment Transition Program**
VR Pre-Employment 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 Able Trust's 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, assist in improving employment outcomes. 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 continues to deliver Pre-ETS under WIOA through a variety of initiatives throughout the year.

Coordination of transition activities for students with disabilities is a team effort between the student, parent(s) or caregiver(s), educators, and service providers. The team designs activities to produce an outcome that includes maximum independence. The team selects goals for adulthood based on the individual student's needs, preferences, and interests, and lists activities/services designed to reach these goals. The desired outcome can include any number of goals such as post-secondary education, vocational training (including registered pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships), employment, SE, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

Activities may include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school, adult-living objectives, functional vocational evaluation, and the acquisition of daily living skills.

**Adult Education IET Program**

DCAE promotes the planning, development, and implementation of an 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).
- 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.

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.
- Use occupational relevant instructional materials.

The IET 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.

To prepare adult education students for high-skilled, high-wage careers, FDOE requires institutions to consider the end goal of an IET program and ensure that it aligns with a credential of value. As part of the IET Program of Study template and approval process, institutions are required to describe the credential of value that the IET program trains for. Adult Education providers are required to submit at least one IET program per funding source and may submit new IET programs for approval to the DCAE throughout the year.

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

Florida WIOA core and combined planning partners continue to work collaboratively with economic development stakeholders to support a shared strategic vision for the state’s workforce and economic development systems. Building and strengthening Florida’s workforce remains a key economic development priority and, under the Governor’s leadership, Florida WIOA partners have remained at the forefront of economic recovery and growth efforts by continuing to enhance alignment among the state’s education, workforce, and social safety net systems to improve access to employment, training, and career pathways.

CareerSource Florida works with state, local and regional business, as well as economic development organizations to drive economic mobility, resiliency, and growth. Among its many state-level partners are FloridaCommerce, the Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC), the Florida Council of 100, Space Florida, the Florida Small Business Development Centers Network, FloridaMakes, and the Rural Economic Development Initiative. Coordinated through the Executive Office of the Governor, leaders from CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce work closely to maintain a unified approach to job creation, retention, and business expansion.

Florida’s LWDBs join CareerSource Florida in active leadership and collaboration with local and regional economic development organizations through FEDC to advance economic development opportunities in Florida communities of all sizes.

Florida’s business community is strongly united around the vision and goals of the Florida Chamber Foundation-developed Florida 2030 Blueprint, a two-year research program that engaged business and community leaders including local and state workforce leaders in each of

Florida's 67 counties to identify trends and factors that drive regional economies. This research has resulted in key targets and strategies that will:

- Improve Florida's talent pipeline.
- Lead to the creation of good jobs by diversifying Florida's economy.
- Prepare Florida's infrastructure for smart growth and development.
- Continue building Florida's business climate.
- Make government and civics more efficient and effective.
- Champion Florida's quality of life.

With their talent development strategies and workforce investments, Florida's state and local workforce development boards continue to be champions of and contributors to the statewide goals set by Florida's business community through the Florida 2030 Blueprint working with local chambers, businesses, community, and economic development, as well as education partners, to drive toward workforce development benchmarks that align with a highly accessible and upskilling-focused economic future for Floridians, employers, and communities.

As identified by FloridaCommerce, the state's principal economic development organization, the statewide sectors of focus are Advanced Manufacturing, Aviation and Aerospace, Cleantech, Defense and Homeland Security, Financial and Professional Services, IT, Life Sciences and Logistics and Distribution. State and local labor market data informs policy development and decisions made by WIOA core programs and LWDBs in support of economic growth, directed toward statewide, regional, and local targeted industry sectors through talent solutions such as sector strategies.

In fact, Florida economic development professionals have continued to cite CareerSource Florida network training programs and other business and talent recruitment services as essential contributors to their effort to retain and expand jobs across the state and in their local communities.

**(a) State Operating Systems and Policies.**

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

**State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (for example labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.).**

Florida's workforce system data infrastructure comprises three systems: Employ Florida, Reconnect, and One-Stop Service Tracking (OSST). These systems represent a strong federated model (interconnected) for data collection, management and reporting systems.

**Employ Florida** is the state's online labor exchange and case management system. It is the central hub for data collection management and reporting for Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act, TAA, WIOA and state workforce/employment initiatives. Employ Florida is used to help connect job seekers to jobs and helps businesses find the talent they need. Employ Florida is administered by FloridaCommerce, through a contracted vendor, and located online at: www.employflorida.com. Employ Florida includes a virtual job-matching tool that provides access at no charge to individuals. Users can develop a resume, assess their skills, find training to gain the skills they need, apply for jobs and engage in other workforce activities.

Employers use the system to post jobs and find the talent they need. In addition, the system users can research labor market information by industry, occupation, and region. Employ Florida is a comprehensive online software with a full suite of components that fulfill the requirements of labor exchange, case management, labor market information, service tracking, fund management, provider services and federal reporting. Training providers can use the system to display programs of training services offered in their local area or virtually.

Necessary data points required by workforce programs are collected using a single common intake, making it easier for local staff to deliver effective services to individuals. The system encourages collaboration and improved performance across WIOA Title I and III workforce programs, and the TAA and JVSG programs. Employ Florida saves a significant amount of staff time by determining eligibility of multiple programs through a single form that collects all required data fields.

Florida's **Reconnect** system is responsible for collection, eligibility, and monetary determinations, management, and reporting of unemployment compensation data. The Reconnect system interfaces claimant data into Employ Florida for additional or program-required job assistance services and assessments.

Florida's **One-Stop Service Tracking (OSST)** system is the state's case management and service tracking system that collects data on SNAP and TANF individuals required to participate in employment and training activities. OSST also collects referral, participation, and non-compliance data on SNAP and TANF recipients required to participate in employment and training activities. Participants who must complete work requirements are referred from DCF via the FLORIDA system to OSST nightly for program engagement. Employment and program non-compliance are also reported to DCF in the nightly interface.

**Florida Insight** was developed by FloridaCommerce's Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) team. WSER's mission is to produce, analyze, and deliver economic data to improve decision making. Florida Insight provides a uniform source of labor market data and analysis for the state of Florida.

While all three systems operate under different business rules, according to their programs, the OSST system and the DCF FLORIDA system communicate nightly utilizing batch job interfaces. The OSST system and Employ Florida systems process transactional jobs through an interface. Not all LWDBs use the transactional job interface.

FloridaCommerce provides daily operational management of these systems and has access to all system databases where data quality and data integrity are assessed. Data is analyzed which supports informed program decisions and implementation strategies.

The Division of Public Schools, the Florida College System, and the DCAE must coordinate to develop consistent system-wide relational databases for student, personnel, and facilities data. The databases are described fully below in section (B) Data-collection and Reporting Processes.

VR's Business Relations Representatives and the Abilities Work Help Desk use Aware to facilitate referrals of qualified job seekers to positions with VR business partners. Business customers are provided information on the Abilities Work web portal at https://abilitieswork.employflorida.com/vosnet/default.aspx which links employers and job seekers with disabilities. Employers are referred to Employ Florida to post their positions where

they have the option to indicate their preference to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities in their Employ Florida profile.

VR uses the TAP to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment. The TAP is a portal with a national talent pool of individuals with disabilities looking for employment and a platform for businesses to post jobs and find talented individuals to fill their vacancies. The Occupational Information Network (O*Net) is used for career planning by VR customers and counselors. O*Net includes detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and human resource professionals, students and researchers.

FDBS uses an automated process to upload client data from its comprehensive case management system, Aware, to the Ability Works Job Portal; thus, enabling upload into Employ Florida. FDBS uses the TAP to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment and interfaces with the O*Net. O*Net includes detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and human resource professionals, students, and researchers.

The Career Index Plus (TCI+) is a career information system that collects information from the Labor Market using various resources and transfers it into a single, user-friendly site. Data is current and accessible to our clients to assist them with making informed career choices. FDBS – in collaboration with community partners – is making progress in developing apprenticeship opportunities for clients.

VR and FDBS use the Aware Case Management System to collect and track data required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. VR and FDBS continually enhance Aware for thorough usability, data collection and advanced analysis to evaluate agency performance and identify methods that improve service delivery/program outcomes.

**FL WINS**

The REACH Act strengthens oversight, accountability, and transparency measures for the network of agencies, partners, and systems. FloridaCommerce is building a consumer-first workforce system allowing for common intake across core and combined partners. The strategic alignment and coordination of education and workforce initiatives in the REACH Act includes an online opportunity portal, allowing access to available state, federal, and local services and tools. This will provide Floridians with broader access to education and training options, labor market information, career planning tools, workforce training, and education support.

The Workforce System Integration effort is currently underway at FloridaCommerce with the completion of a Feasibility Study that provides alternatives and recommendations to best establish a consumer-first workforce system and improve coordination among workforce system partners. The study provides a roadmap for program establishment, technical integration, and enhanced business process integration. These initiatives will take place over three to five years and set a foundation for enhanced coordination and service delivery for Floridians.

**Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP)**

One of Florida's most successful innovations in evaluation and performance tracking is the FETPIP established at the 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, WP, Adult Education, Job Corps, Veterans, Welfare Transition (WT)/TANF, SNAP, Apprenticeship, RA claimants, and ex-offenders. Nearly 600 groups or sub-cohorts are tracked.

FETPIP data are provided to LWDBs, enabling them to evaluate the strength of training programs offered throughout the state. FETPIP follow-up data are electronically derived from RA 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, individuals in 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 the FDOE's website.

To develop and produce reports as required under WIOA Section 116, the Employ Florida system serves as the official system of record for federally required data for the following programs:

- Title I Adult.
- Title I Dislocated Worker.
- Title I Youth.
- Title III WP.
- JVSG.
- TAA.
- National Dislocated Worker Grant.

To meet the WIOA performance requirements, Florida successfully implemented the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) data sharing agreement. Geographic Solutions via Secure File Transfer Protocol sends a file of individual records to FETPIP for matching to obtain Florida wage information. FETPIP matches the individual against wage data received from the Florida Department of Revenue and returns the information via the same SFTP. Geographic Solutions uploads the wage information on each individual into the Employ Florida Virtual One-Stop system.

FloridaCommerce receives a data file generated from Geographic Solutions with all program information including the wages. Geographic Solutions then creates the file for reporting and provides the file to FloridaCommerce. Once FloridaCommerce receives the file from Geographic Solutions the SWIS data is incorporated into the data file by FloridaCommerce. This file is used to generate the WIOA, WP, VETS and Trade Act federal reports through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

**FDOE Operating Systems and Strategies**
In accordance with Chapter 1008.35, Florida Statutes, Chapter 1008.40, Florida Statutes, Chapter 1008.41, Florida Statutes, Chapter 1008.405, Florida Statutes and Rule 6A-1.0014 Florida Administrative Code, the Division of Public Schools, the Florida College System and the DCAE must coordinate to develop consistent system-wide relational databases for student, personnel and facilities data.

The following table summarizes the system used for agencies to report student level information on adult education students to the FDOE.

**Figure 3.03**
**Florida Department of Education**
**Operating Systems**

| Sector | Name of System | Description |
|---|---|---|
| School Districts | Workforce Development Information System (WDIS) | This is the comprehensive reporting system for all adults enrolled in programs offered through school districts. WDIS was established in 1998-99. WDIS system is required in Florida Statutes.<br><br>Link to Database Manuals: https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/CCTCMIS/dcae-dis/database-handbooks.stml |
| FCS | FCS Student Database | This is a comprehensive reporting system established through a specific appropriation enacted by the 1987 Legislature. The Florida colleges were required to develop and implement a statewide comprehensive management information system linking all levels of the state education system. The Integrated Database consists of the Admissions Database, the Student Database, the Personnel Database and the Facilities and Capital Outlay Database.<br><br>The Student Database was designed in accordance with the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) 20 USC 1221(e-1) Proviso Language.<br><br>Link to Database Manuals:<br><br>https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/CCTCMIS/college-data-diction.stml |
| Community-based Organization | Student Information System for Community-based Organizations | Developed in 2010 by the DCAE for all adult education providers who are not a local educational agency to provide student-level information on enrollment and performance of adult education students being served with federal AELFA grant funds. |

VR and FDBS use the Aware Case Management System to collect and track data required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The VR and FDBS continually enhance Aware for thorough usability, data collection and advanced analysis to evaluate agency performance and identify methods that improve service delivery/program outcomes.

The following table summarizes the systems used by FDBS to support coordinated implementation of state strategies.

**Figure 3.04**
**Florida Division of Blind Services**
**Operating Systems**

| Name of System | Description |
|---|---|
| Aware | Aware is a web-based, comprehensive case management software system designed by and for public vocational rehabilitation agencies, such as FDBS. Case management, case flow and documentation required for federal reports, financial tracking (e.g., district budgets, authorizations, and payments) are some of the functions supported by Aware. |
| QPIS | QPIS is a web-based reporting system that generates static reports for FDBS management and staff. FDBS staff uses these reports to manage client cases, monitor contracts, reports used to manage Aware budgets and financial data, and specific reports, such as the Long Range Program Plan (LRPP). |
| RCM | RCM is a web-based application that is used by the Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Daytona to manage daily activities which include student information, assessments, service plans, class schedules, progress tracking, and attendance. |
| SS Reimbursement Administration Tracker | SSRA allows tracking of FDBS clients who have enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Its purpose is to establish when FDBS can submit a reimbursement claim to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the rehabilitation services that were provided to a client. The Vocational Rehabilitation Ticket to Work/Reimbursement Tracker program (Tracker) is a system for tracking and processing Traditional Reimbursements and Ticket to Work (both outcome and milestone) payments. |
| KLAS | KLAS is an integrated library system designed to meet the distinctive needs of special libraries. |
| RSVP | RSVP is a database used to capture financial information (sales, tax, purchases, etc.) on vendors, track vendor contracts, and store other facility data in the Business Enterprise Program. |

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

**Statewide Workforce Development Board Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy**
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.

The governance structure of CareerSource Florida facilitates strategic planning. As the principal workforce policy organization for the state of Florida, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors is focused on strategic policy and aligning federal, state, and local workforce development priorities.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, the CareerSource Florida team , and FloridaCommerce follow a comprehensive policy development framework designed to support the vision, mission, values, strategies, and operation of the state's workforce development system. The Policy Development Framework applies to CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce and defines a best practice process for joint development and implementation of strategic and administrative policies and other documents that serve as alternatives to formal policies. Alternatives to formal strategic administrative policy and workforce guidance include communiques, memoranda, and programmatic resource guides that provide information and guidance and are used to enhance and supplement the deployment of formal policies.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved a Statewide Workforce Development Board Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy and formally adopted a Policy Development Framework which was developed by the CareerSource Florida staff and the FloridaCommerce Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support.

The Policy Development Framework differentiates between strategic and administrative policies and identifies best practices for developing and implementing these policies. The Framework describes how policies and alternatives to formal policies are developed, approved, and implemented.

**Strategic Policies**
CareerSource Florida Board of Directors strategic policies include high-level principles or directional statements that clarify federal or state legislative policy or workforce system strategies for the state of Florida. These policies direct statewide workforce efforts through a variety of means including but not limited to establishing standards or priorities for workforce delivery, directing workforce funding, and defining statewide strategic goals. Strategic policies set expectations and direct decision making at the state level and may result in the development of administrative policies by FloridaCommerce and/or local policies by the LWDBs.

Strategic policies are presented to, approved, and adopted by the state workforce development board.

**Administrative Policies, Operational Guidance and Workforce Guidance**
CareerSource Florida administrative policies and operational guidance are developed by the FloridaCommerce Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support in consultation with the CareerSource Florida staff using best practices from the Policy Development Framework. Administrative policies and operational guidance include business rules, requirements, processes, and responsibilities that expand, explain, or further specify federal and state legislative policy as well as board approved strategic policy.

- Administrative policies and operational guidance are binding on the workforce system and the implementation of these items by the LWDBs are subject to audit and monitoring by FloridaCommerce.
- Administrative policies and operational guidance are reviewed by the CareerSource Florida staff, in collaboration with FloridaCommerce, to determine when policies require approval by the state workforce development board. The state workforce development board is notified of all administrative policies updated and/or issued.
- Workforce guidance is information that explains a legislative, strategic, or administrative policy. Guidance may include best practices, supporting information, recommendations, Technical Assistance Letters, memoranda, communiques, desk aids, resource guides and other resources. Workforce guidance is reviewed and issued by FloridaCommerce and may include consultation with the CareerSource Florida staff.
- The Statewide Workforce Development Board Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy describes the criteria for determining which policies require the state workforce development board's approval versus those policies which do not require the state workforce development board's approval but do require consultation with the CareerSource Florida staff. This policy also requires that the state workforce development board be notified of new administrative policies or changes to existing guidance.
- The Statewide Workforce Development Board Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy is posted on CareerSource Florida's website.

**Policy Development Framework**

The CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy and Performance Team and FloridaCommerce Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support meet regularly as a Policy Development Workgroup to develop strategic policies initiated by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors and administrative policies and guidance necessary for the workforce system. Subject-matter experts and stakeholders are included in this workgroup, as necessary.

The CareerSource Florida 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.

**Figure 3.05**
**Policy Development Framework**

The Policy Development Framework consists of three major components:

- Establish Policy Need.
- Develop Policy.
- 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 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 FloridaCommerce.

Information about the Policy Development Framework and features of CareerSource Florida strategic and administrative policy are available on CareerSource Florida's website.

**State Policies that Support the Implementation of the State's Strategies**
In addition to the work of the Policy Development Workgroup, FDBS has a policy team to continually examine policies and procedures. The team reviews select policies on a quarterly basis. Using data derived from the quality assurance reviews, the team determines which policies require immediate review.

State policies approved or updated since 2022 to support the strategies in Section II include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Eligibility.
- Registered Apprenticeship Policy.
- Board Governance and Leadership Policy.
- Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Strategy.
- Certification of LWDAs and LWDBs.
- Disaster-Recovery Dislocated Worker Grants.
- Education and Industry Consortiums.
- Eligible Training Providers List Requirements.
- Post-Employment Services.
- Postsecondary Education.
- Recapture and Reallocation of WIOA Funds Policy.
- Regional Planning Areas.
- Regional Planning Areas Identification and Requirements
- Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services.
- Work-Based Learning and Work-Based Training for Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The USDOL developed a uniform policy for acceptable methods of cost allocation and resource sharing with respect to funding the one-stop delivery system. Under WIOA and consistent with the Uniform Guidance, funding provided by the one-stop partners to cover the operating costs, including infrastructure costs and additional costs, of the one-stop delivery system must be based on the partner program's proportionate use of the system and relative benefit received.

WIOA requires LWDBs, with the agreement of the chief elected official, to develop and execute MOUs with required partners on the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local service delivery area. Each LWDB must include an IFA in the MOU with required partners. The IFA details how infrastructure costs for the one-stop delivery system will be funded in the local area. LWDBs and career centers are expected to act in good faith and negotiate infrastructure costs and additional costs of operating a local one-stop delivery system in a transparent manner.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 106 – Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements provides LWDBs with the requirements and procedures for developing MOUs and IFAs under WIOA.

Links to strategic and administrative policies that support the implementation of the state's strategies and guidelines for one-stop partner programs are posted on the websites below:

- CareerSource Florida Strategic Policies.
- CareerSource Florida Administrative Policies and Workforce System Guidance.
- Adult Education Assessment Technical Assistance Paper
- Adult High School Technical Assistance Guide
- Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Manual
- Client Services Policies - FDBS.

**State Program and State Board Overview.**

***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.**

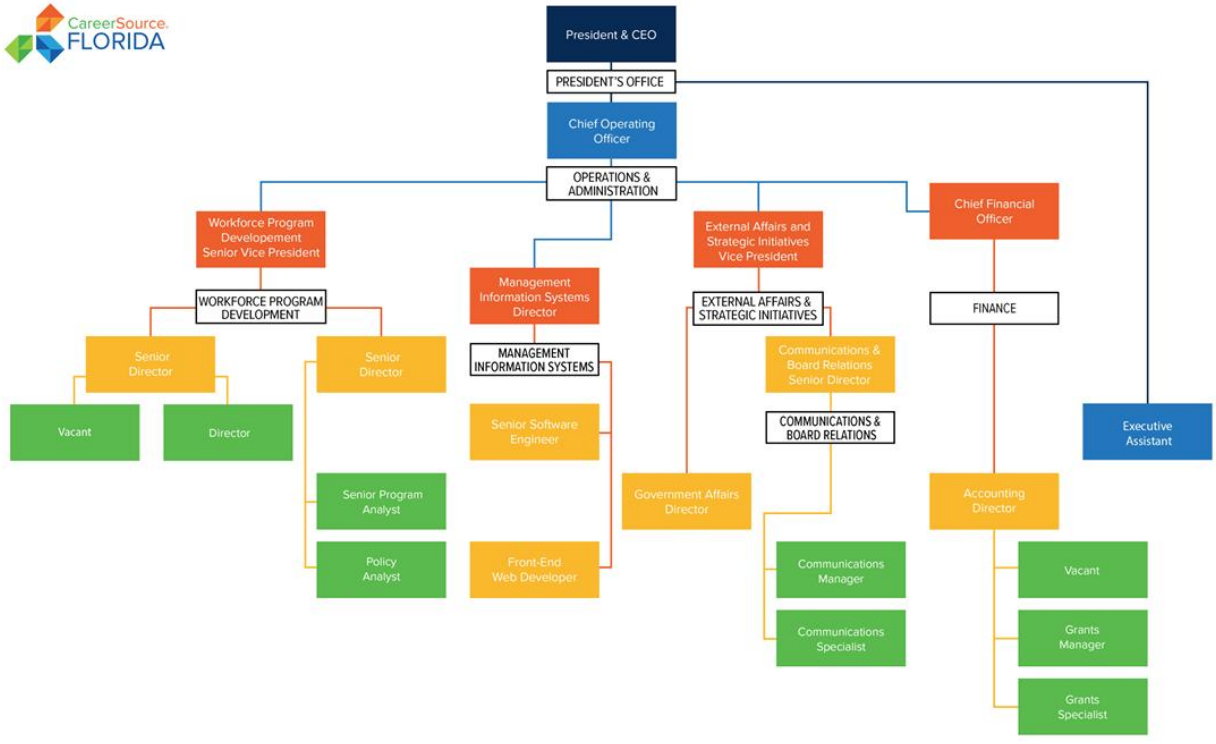
**CareerSource Florida**

The state workforce development board, known as the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, is established pursuant to WIOA, Public Law 113-128, Title I, Section 101. Chaired by the Governor, the state workforce development board establishes and directs the vision for the state workforce system, known as the CareerSource Florida network, to align with strategic partners within workforce development, education, and economic development systems. The CareerSource Florida network's strategic partners are those described within the federal WIOA and Florida Statutes.

The CareerSource Florida network comprises the state workforce development board, FloridaCommerce, LWDBs, chief local elected officials, local boards of directors, and local career centers.

The state board hires the President and CEO of CareerSource Florida, Inc. and authorizes CareerSource Florida to develop and coordinate, under the consent and guidance of the board, the strategic, policy development, financial, and programmatic direction of its vision for the state's workforce system.

**Figure 3.06**
**CareerSource Florida, Inc. Organizational Chart**

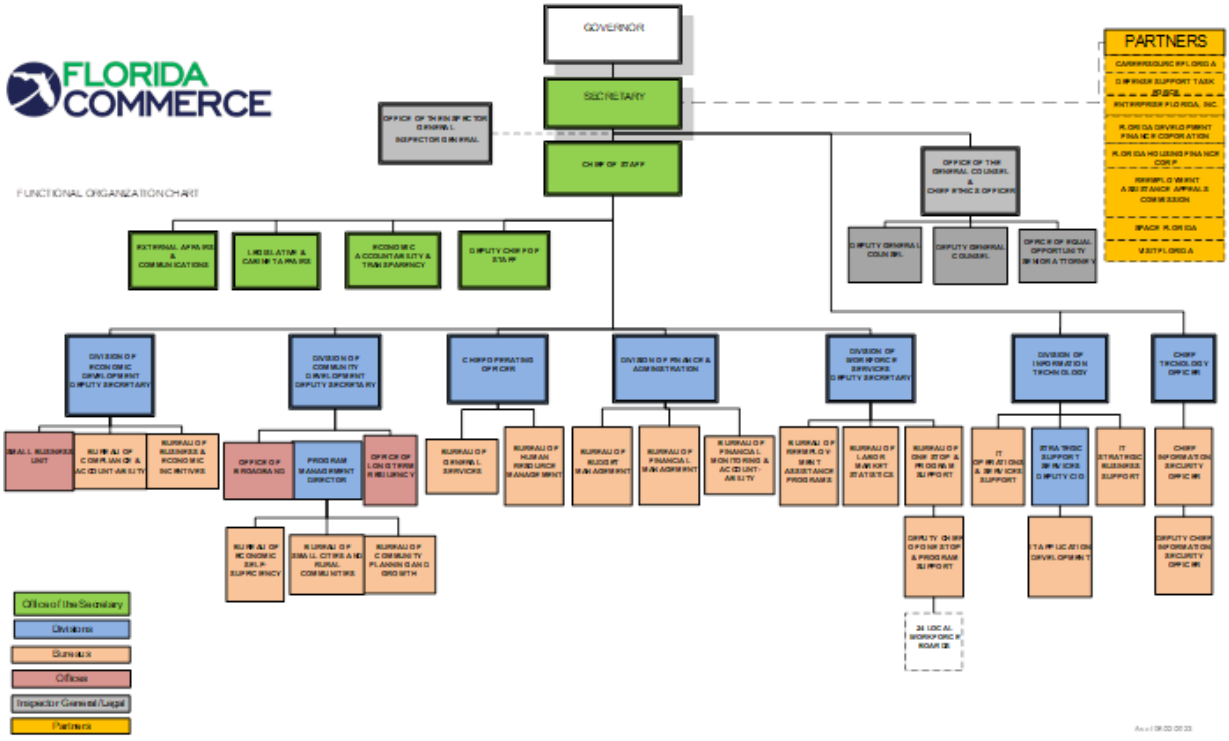


**FloridaCommerce**

FloridaCommerce is the Governor's agency for workforce support and training, economic development, and community development. FloridaCommerce partners with CareerSource Florida and the state's 24 LWDBs to strengthen Florida's business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed, and advance in their careers. FloridaCommerce oversees the administration of the state's workforce system and receives and accounts for federal funds for the system.

FloridaCommerce reports financial and performance information to USDOL and other federal organizations. FloridaCommerce distributes workforce guidance and policy initiatives and provides training, technical assistance, and monitoring to LWDBs. FloridaCommerce operates Florida's WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (WP), TAA Program, JVSG, RA, CSBG, and Labor Market Statistics Programs.

**Figure 3.07**
**FloridaCommerce Organizational Chart**



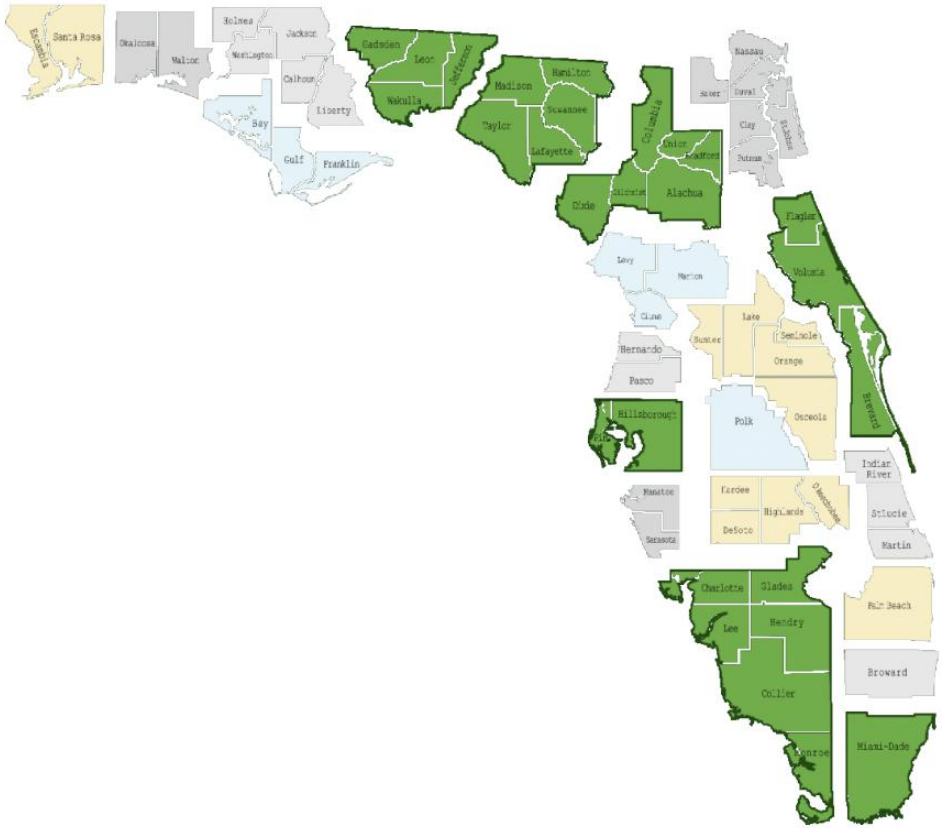

Administration of the state's workforce policy, programs and services is carried out by FloridaCommerce and the business-led LWDBs. Services are delivered through over 100 career centers (which includes affiliate sites and specialized centers) throughout Florida and through the state's online labor exchange and case management system, Employ Florida, at www.employflorida.com.

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

In 2023, the State Board approved the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan which reduced the number of LWDBs from 24 to 21. The Governor approved this plan and by July 1, 2024, 21 new workforce areas will be designated for the state of Florida. Alignment and consolidation actions include the following:

- Realign Jefferson County with CareerSource Capital Region.
- Realign CareerSource North Florida as a five-county region serving Madison, Taylor, Lafayette, Hamilton and Suwannee counties.
- Consolidate CareerSource North Central Florida and CareerSource Florida Crown.
- Consolidate CareerSource Flagler Volusia and CareerSource Brevard.
- Consolidate CareerSource Tampa Bay and CareerSource Pinellas.
- Realign Monroe County with CareerSource Southwest Florida.
- Realign CareerSource South Florida as a single-county area serving Miami-Dade County.

**Figure 3.08**
**Alignment and Consolidation Map**
**of Florida Local Workforce Development Boards**



Florida is currently in the process of designating new regional planning areas to align workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers. The state board approved a strategic policy setting forth requirements for regional planning areas in September 2023 and FloridaCommerce implemented an administrative policy in December 2023 defining the process for LWDAs to request designation as a planning area. Florida is requiring all LWDAs to be part of a regional planning area that consists of two or more areas.

As of the submission of this plan, the state board has received two requests for designation as regional planning areas:

- CareerSource Escarosa (LWDB 1), CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (LWDB 2), CareerSource Chipola (LWDB 3), and CareerSource Gulf Coast (LWDB 4).
- CareerSource Research Coast (LWDB 20) and CareerSource Palm Beach (LWDB 21).

While the state board awaits additional requests for designation, the remaining LWDAs remain designated as regional planning areas that correspond to their individual designated LWDA.

**FDOE**

The mission of 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 2.9 million students, 3,674 public schools, 28 FCS institutions, 176,000 K-12 public school teachers, 40,613 FCS faculty and administrators, and 340,000 full-time school district 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.

FDOE 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 – and 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 VR, 290 positions in FDBS, and 77 positions in DCAE. The department's annual operating budget for all entities in state fiscal year 2024-2028 is approximately $23.3 billion.

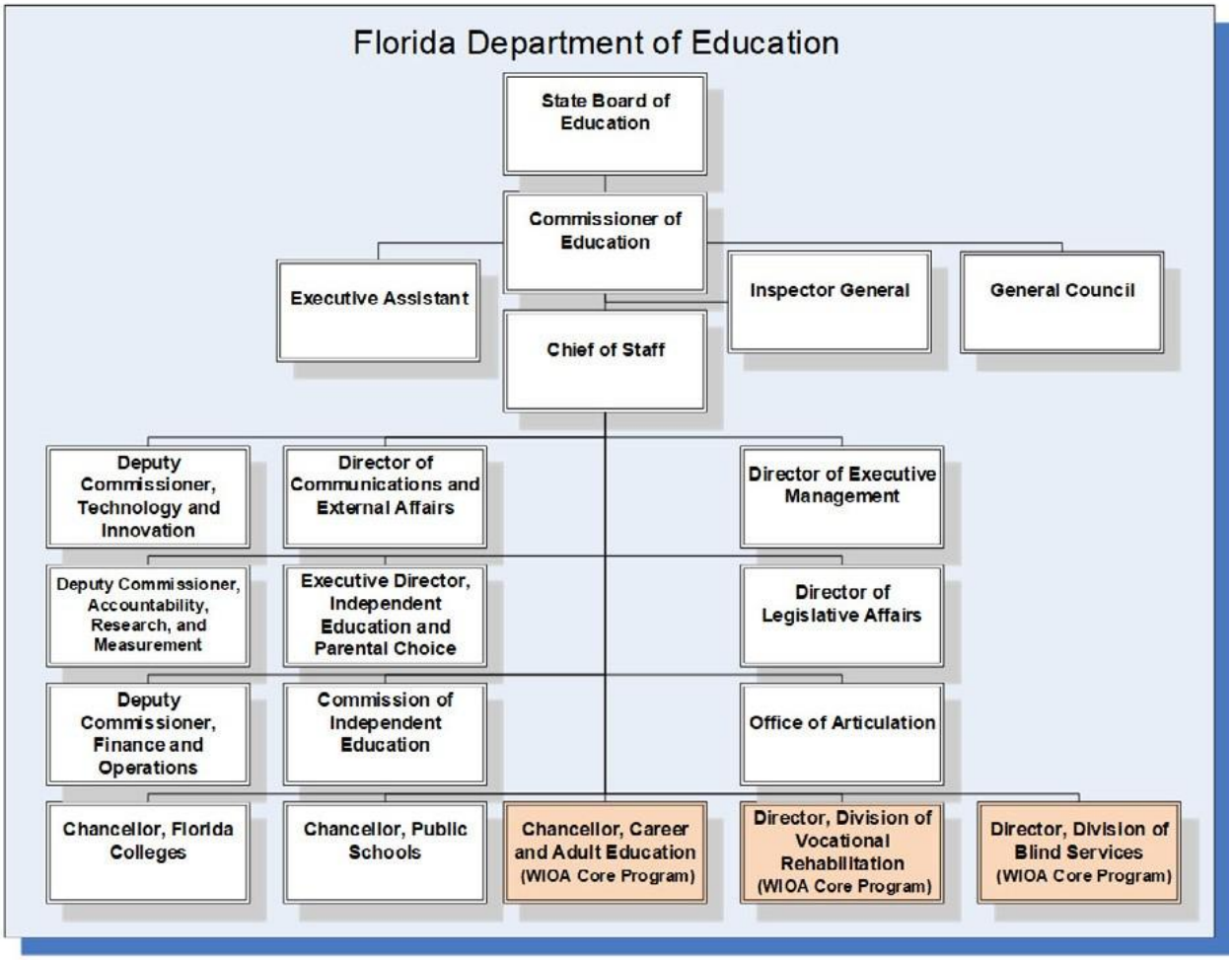
The FDOE organizational and governance structure includes the State Board of Education which consists of seven members appointed by the Governor to staggered four-year terms, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Except for the SUS, the State Board of Education is the chief implementing and coordinating 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 adopting education objectives and long-range plans for public education in Florida, exercising general supervision over the department, submitting an annual coordinated Pre K-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, VR, 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 USDOE, the Executive Office of the Governor, and the Florida Legislature.

**Figure 3.09**
**FDOE Organizational Chart**



**DCAE**

The 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 3.10**
**DCAE Organizational Chart**

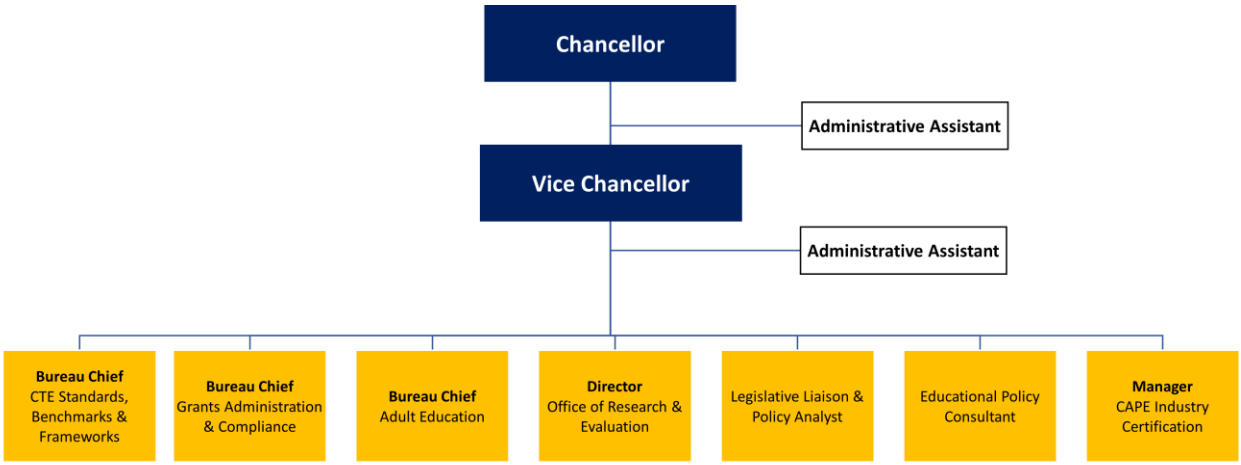
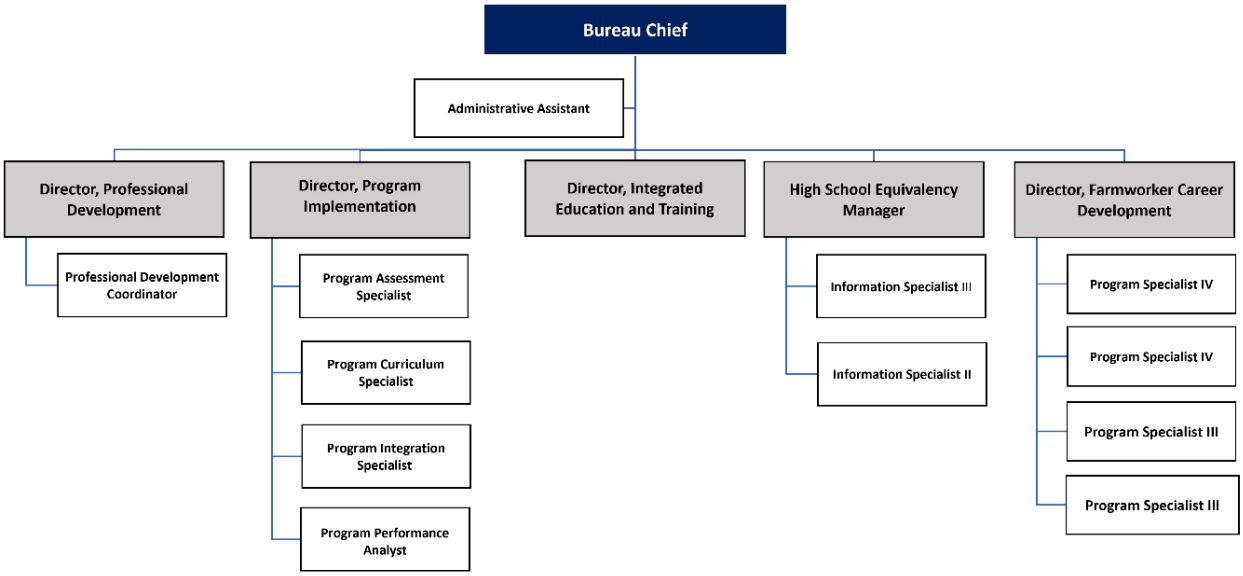



**Figure 3.11**
**DCAE**
**Bureau of Adult Education Organizational Chart**

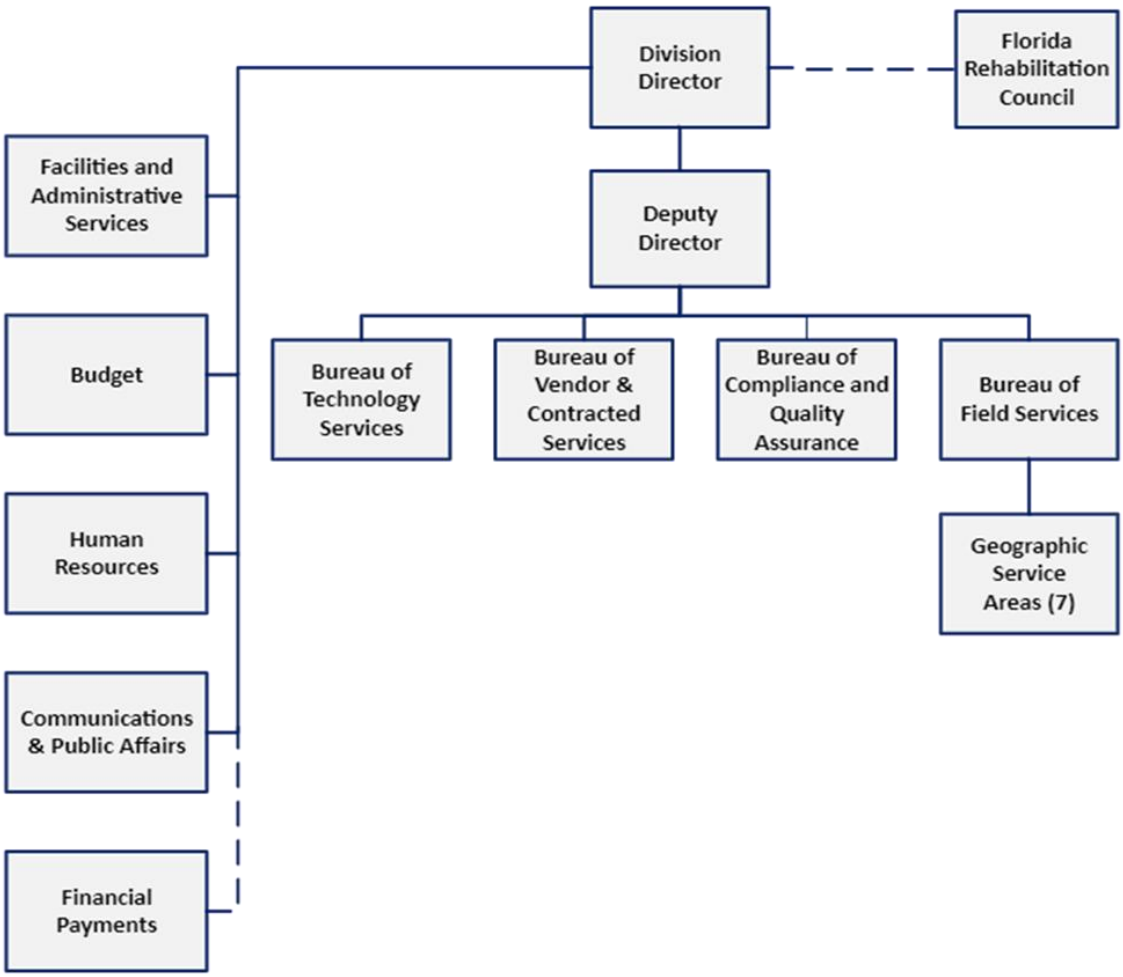


**VR**

VR is a federal program established under the Rehabilitation Act, as Amended (1998) and reauthorized as a core program of WIOA (2014) operating under Chapter 413 of Florida Statutes. In Florida, VR is a division of FDOE comprising 884 positions located in a headquarters office, seven regional areas 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 are established in the federal laws and code of federal regulations. VR provides annual planning updates and annual/quarterly/semi-annual performance and financial reports to the federal RSA which conducts regulatory and programmatic monitoring and oversight activities approximately every four years.

VR's organizational structure is represented in Figure 3.12.

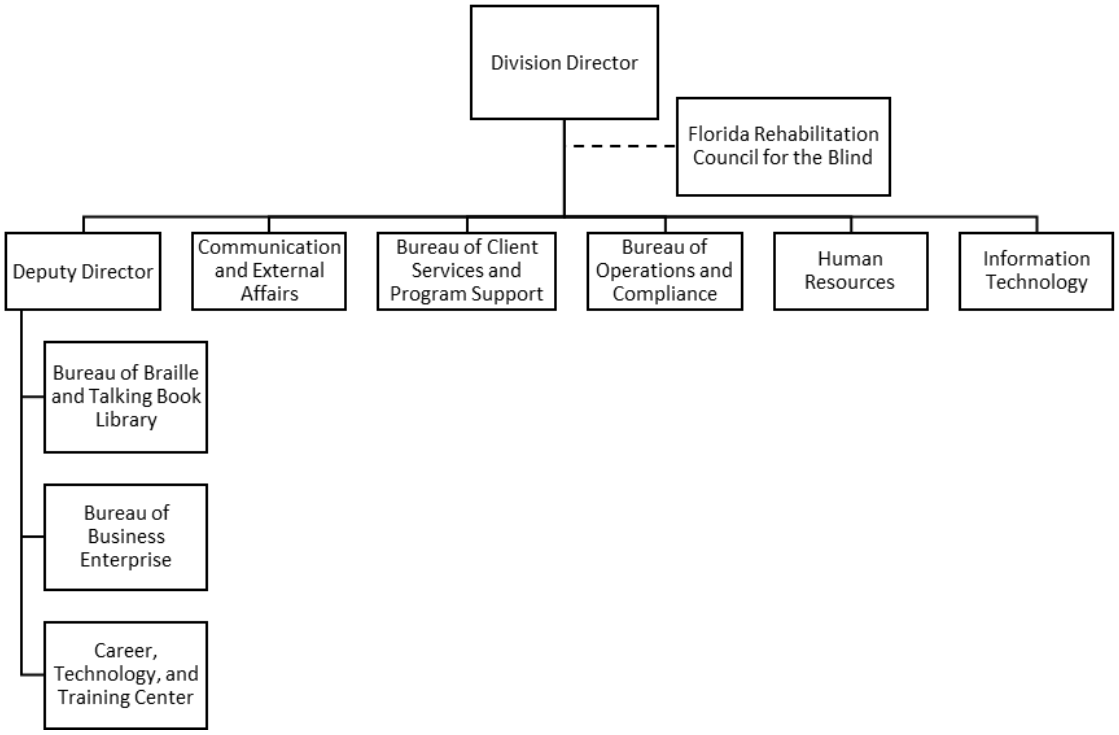
**Figure 3.12**
**VR Organizational Chart**



**FDBS**

FDBS employment program is a federally established program under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended (1998), and reauthorized as a core program of WIOA (2014). FDBS is part of FDOE and serves blind and visually impaired Floridians. Fifteen district offices and the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind administer and coordinate employment related services. Utilizing funds procured through a combination of state, federal, and community funding, FDBS provides services to consumers based on individual needs in partnership with community rehabilitation providers and other local partners.

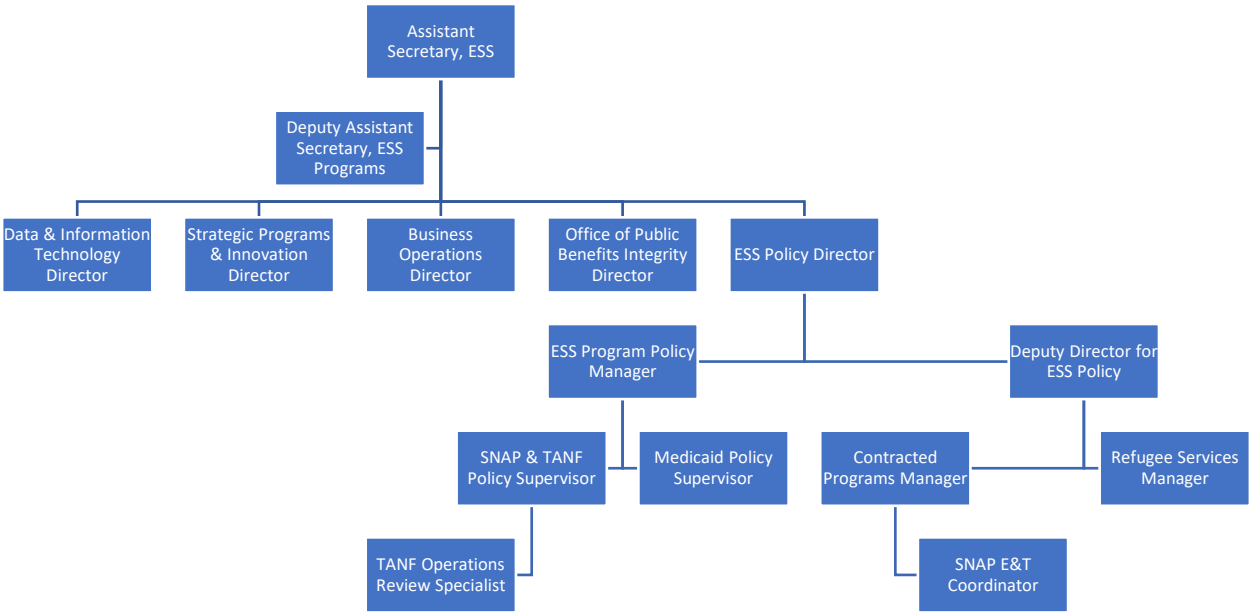
**Figure 3.13**
**FDBS**
**Organizational Chart**



**TANF Workforce Programs**

The TANF program provides states and territories with flexibility in operating programs designed to help low-income families with children achieve economic self-sufficiency. States use TANF to help low-income families with children achieve economic self-sufficiency. States use TANF to fund monthly cash assistance payments to low-income families with children, as well as a wide range of services. The Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program provides cash assistance to families with children under age 18 (or under age 19 if they are full time students in a secondary school or its equivalent) that meet the program's technical, income, and asset requirements. TCA helps families become self-sufficient so the children may remain in their own homes or the homes of relatives. Pregnant women, with no other dependent children, in their third trimester of pregnancy may also be eligible to receive TCA, if their physician restricts them from work. Otherwise, TCA eligibility is available in the ninth month of pregnancy.

**Figure 3.14**
**TANF Needy Families**
**Workforce Programs**
**Organizational Chart**



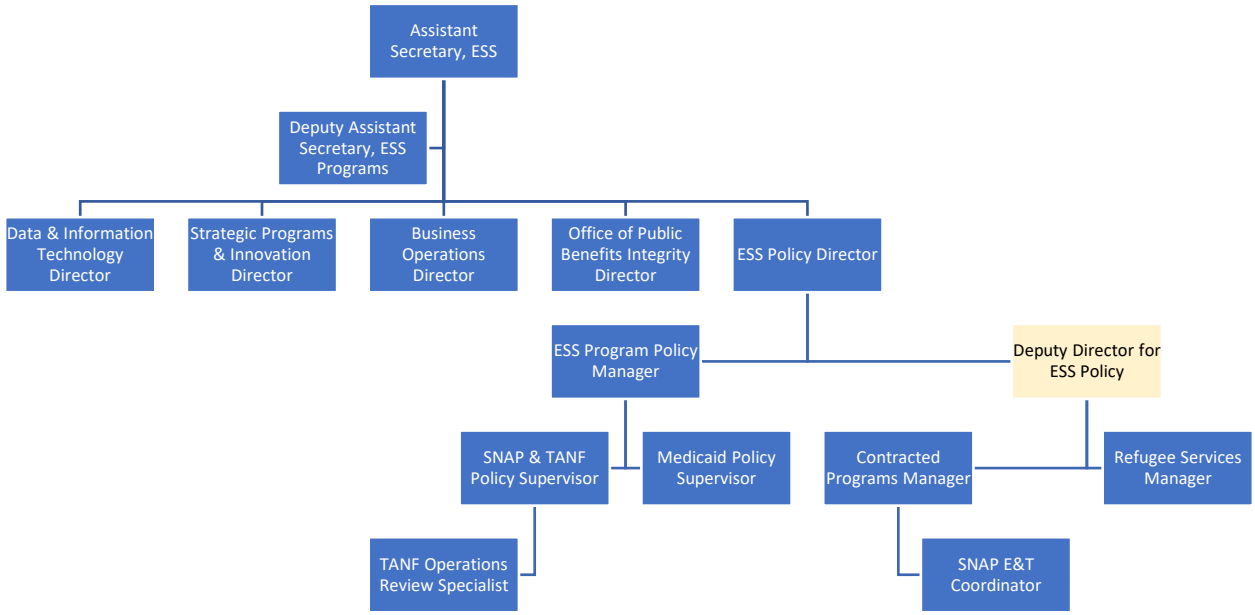
Florida administers the TANF program through three state departments, a network of LWDBs, and a workforce services delivery system. A description follows of how these organizations work together to deliver programs to assist TANF/TCA recipients make the transition from welfare to self-sufficiency and provide other family support that meet one of the four purposes of TANF:

- DCF: Eligibility Determination, TCA Payment, and Nonrecurring Short-term Benefit Programs. The Department is the recipient of the TANF block grant and is responsible for determining eligibility for a TCA payment to eligible families and imposing penalties for a participant who fails to meet WT work requirements. In addition, the Department contracts with other public and private organizations to provide some of the TANF family support services (non-assistance) programs described in this State Plan.
- FloridaCommerce: Administration and Accountability. FloridaCommerce is the designated State agency for administering workforce programs, funding, and personnel. The Florida Legislature appropriates TANF funds to FloridaCommerce, and charges it with providing administrative and program guidance for the merged workforce and TANF/WT support delivery system. FloridaCommerce also serves as the administrative and fiscal entity for the State Board, and FloridaCommerce ensures the appropriate administration of workforce programs and funds.
- State Workforce Development Board and CareerSource Florida, Inc.: Planning, Policy, and Strategic Direction. Pursuant to WIOA the state workforce development board consists of a board of directors and chair appointed by the Governor. The state workforce development board is the state's chief workforce policy organization and provides policy direction and oversight to Florida's LWDBs. CareerSource Florida is the administrative entity created by the Florida Legislature to act under the state workforce development board. The state's broad workforce strategic vision and goals are expressed through the WIOA Unified State Plan.
- LWDBs: Local Control, Accountability, and Delivery of Services. The LWDBs are responsible for implementing the state's workforce programs, including WT, other TANF non-assistance programs, and employment support services at local career centers. The LWDBs develop innovative programs tailored to the specific economic and employment needs of the community. Primarily made up of local business representatives in each area, the LWDBs focus on planning, policy implementation, and fiscal and programmatic oversight of the local workforce system.
- Workforce System: Job Training, Education, and Employment Options. The workforce system provides a full menu of job training, education, and employment options for workers, job seekers, WT participants, and local businesses at the local career centers or via electronic access. The workforce delivery system includes numerous partners, including the Department, working together under memoranda of agreement, customer referral procedures, specifying services provided, and cost allocation formulas.
- FDOE Division of Early Learning: Administration of TANF Childcare Services. The Division of Early Learning functions as the funding and oversight entity for the local coalitions providing childcare assistance to current and transitional TANF participants.

**SNAP E&T**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Florida's SNAP E&T program is designed to assist eligible SNAP E&T participants obtain skills through education, training, or work experience that will increase self-sufficiency and lead to employment. DCF is responsible for the administration of SNAP E&T. FloridaCommerce, in partnership with the LWDBs, is responsible for the delivery of SNAP E&T activities.

**Figure 3.15**
**SNAP Program**
**Employment and Training**
**Organizational Chart**




Florida's mission and vision for the SNAP E&T program is to ensure participants gain the education and skills necessary to obtain and retain employment while earning a self-sustaining wage and meeting the workforce needs of businesses in their local communities. Florida offers SNAP E&T services to mandatory E&T participants, which includes Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) and individuals subject to general work requirements between the ages of 18 and 59 who do not have children under age 18 in the home, do not meet an exemption and determined eligible for the program by DCF.

The Florida SNAP E&T program offers participants the opportunity to meet the ABAWD and general work requirements of the program through participation in qualifying program components available through LWDBs and career centers across the state. The program is intended to assist participants in gaining employment in in-demand occupations within their local area. This is both critical in helping individuals find a path to economic self-sufficiency and

ensuring that businesses have a sustainable talent pipeline to meet their current and projected needs.

Florida's SNAP E&T components that are offered to mandatory E&T participants include:

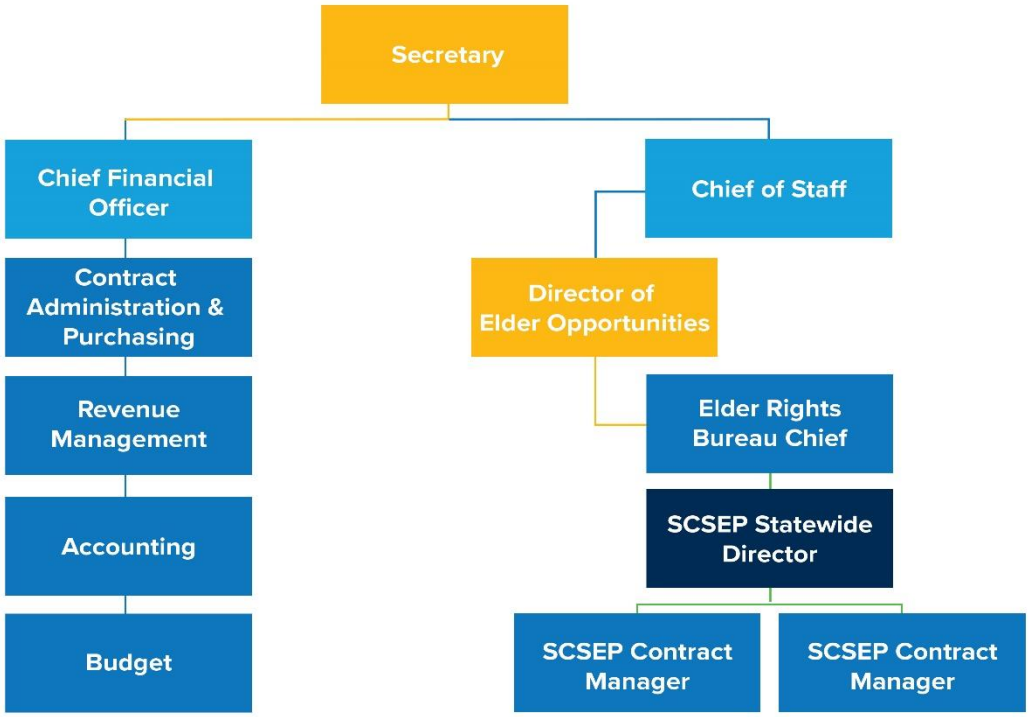
- Supervised Job Search.
- Job Search Training.
- Work Experience.
- Education.
- Vocational Training.
- Job Retention Services.

**SCSEP**

Section 503 of the Older Americans Act requires the Governor, or the highest government official in each state, to submit a State Plan. The State Plan must include a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service training and other authorized activities. The plan may be submitted as an independent document or as part of the WIOA Combined Plan. The State of Florida's SCSEP State Plan will be submitted as a combined plan with FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida, and other core and required stakeholders.

SCSEP is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the OAA, the Title V program provides training for low income, unemployed seniors. The program provides hand on training though part-time community service assignments with not-for-profit organizations and government agencies to assist program participants in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

**Figure 3.16**
**SCSEP Organizational Chart**




SCSEP's role in Florida continues to grow. Florida has the highest population percentage of residents aged 65 or older in the nation. Of the estimated 900 people moving to Florida daily, more than half are over age 60. According to the FDOEA, Florida is home to nearly 5.5 million residents aged 60 and older and currently ranks first in the nation for the 65 and older populations. As our senior population continues to increase, Florida's future is linked to the financial, health, and physical security of Florida's senior population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau it is estimated that 32.5% of Florida's population will be 60 and older by the year 2030. SCSEP continues to be a lifeline for many Floridians who feel they do not have many employment and training options available to them as they become more advanced in age. Additionally, SCSEP relieves financial strains placed on social service agencies. SCSEP plays an important role in the vitality and health of the senior population by reducing isolation, improving economic conditions, and promoting healthy aging by staying physically and mentally active.

By including SCSEP in the statewide workforce development plan, Florida is better positioned to serve eligible individuals.

***State Board.*** **Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.**

**Membership Roster**

Florida's state workforce development board, known as the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, is made up of 31 members. The Governor chairs the state board. When the Governor is unable to participate, a business representative, approved by the Board, serves as Chair. Currently, Stephanie Smith serves as the Chair on behalf of Gov. DeSantis. Board membership includes the Governor, 16 business representatives, six workforce representatives and eight government officials, including core program state representatives, state legislative representatives, and chief elected officials.

**Figure 3.17**
**CareerSource Florida Board of Directors**
**Membership Roster**

| Name | Business/Agency | Board Representation |
|---|---|---|
| **Gov. Ron DeSantis** | State of Florida | Government Representative |
| **Stephanie Smith**<br>***Board Chair*** | TECO, VP of State and Regional Affairs | Business Representative |
| **John Adams, Jr.** | Booz Allen Hamilton, Lead Associate | Business Representative |
| **Sen. Ben Albritton** | Florida Senate, Senator / President-designate (2025-26) | Government Representative |
| **Jennifer O'Flannery Anderson** | Community Foundation of Broward, President and CEO | Community-Based Organization Representative |
| **Commissioner Erik Arroyo** | Band, Gates & Dramis Attorneys at Law | Business Representative |
| **Bayne Beecher** | PGT Innovations, Senior Manager | Business Representative |
| **Kiley Damone** | FinFrock DMC, Culture and Community Specialist | Business Representative |
| **Manny Diaz, Jr.** | FDOE, Commissioner | Government Representative |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Robert Doyle III** | FDOE, Director of Blind Services | Government Representative |
| **Sophia Eccleston** | Next Era Energy Resources, Clean Energy Solutions Director | Business Representative |
| **Ryan Goertzen** | Vice President of Workforce Development for AAR Corporation | Business Representative |
| **Eric Hall** | Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Secretary | Government Representative |
| **Shevaun Harris** | DCF, Secretary | Government Representative |
| **Tim Hinson** | Miller Electric Company, Senior Director of Workforce Development | Labor Representative |
| **Bill Johnson** | Autobahn Indoor Speedway, Owner | Business Representative |
| **J. Alex Kelly** | FloridaCommerce, Secretary | Government Representative |
| **Allison Kinney** | HCA Healthcare, VP, State Government Affairs | Business Representative |
| **Joe Marino** | Veterans Florida, Executive Director | Veterans Representative |
| **Kevin McDonald** | Allstate Insurance, Agency Owner | Business Representative |
| **Victoria Gaitanis.** | FDOE, VR, Director | Government Representative |
| **Rep. Lauren Melo** | Florida House of Representative, Representative | Government Representative |
| **Kevin O'Farrell, Ph.D.** | FDOE, DCAE, Chancellor | Government Representative |
| **Commissioner Mel Ponder** | Okaloosa County Commissioner | Elected Official - County |
| **Mayor Darcy "D.C." Reeves** | Mayor of Pensacola | Local Elected Representative |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Kimberly Richey** ***Designee to Commissioner Diaz*** | FDOE, Senior Chancellor | Government Representative |
| **Laurie Sallarulo** | Junior Achievement of South Florida, President & CEO | Youth Representative |
| **Robert Salonen** | Florida Institute of Technology, Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Partnerships | Education Representative |
| **Patsy Sanchez** | Buena Vista Consultants, LLC Principal | Business Representative |
| **Brian Sartain** | Ontic, COO | Business Representative |
| **Andrew Schmadeke** | Focus School Software, Founder & CEO | Business Representative |
| **Les Sims** | Armstrong Roofing, Inc., President | Labor Representative |
| **Meridith Brock Stanfield** | Florida Professional Firefighters, Inc., Legislative Policy Director | Labor Representative |
| **Emmanuel Tormes** | The Boeing Company, Senior Manager of Government Operations | Business Representative |
| **Rep. Dana Trabulsy** | Treasure Coast Business Summit, Owner | Business Representative |
| **Lindsay Volpe** ***Designee to Secretary Kelly*** | FloridaCommerce, Deputy Secretary of Workforce Services | Government Representative |

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 chair.

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.

**Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners.**
***Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs.*** **Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. State assessments should consider local and regional planning goals.**

**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.

FloridaCommerce's Programmatic Monitoring Unit conducts annual monitoring and participant file reviews of the WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, WP, and combined partner programs WT, SNAP E&T, JVSG, TAA, DWG, and RESEA programs of each of the 24 LWDBs. These reviews ensure the LWDBs are adhering to federal and state program requirements and providing appropriate services. A formal written monitoring report identifying best practices, areas of concern, and findings resulting from the review is generated upon completion of each review. In addition to the annual programmatic monitoring, the TAA program data is validated for the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) on a quarterly basis through the TAA Data Integrity tool.

For the JVSG program, LWDBs are provided technical assistance through state-level desk reviews of JVSG participant files monitored by the FloridaCommerce State Veterans' Program Unit.

FloridaCommerce offers in-person or remote technical assistance to LWDBs to mitigate identified program deficiencies and ensure the delivery of high-quality services that produce positive outcomes and meet the needs of program participants.

The RSA assesses FDBS programs from a federal perspective, while the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) assesses programs internally. The OIG is the central point for coordination of and responsibility for activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government. The OIG is responsible for conducting audits and technical assistance activities.

**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 FloridaCommerce participate in the

workgroup, providing analyses of existing measures with comparisons of WIOA indicators of performance.

IT 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. FloridaCommerce 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.

The effectiveness of partner programs in career centers are measured by their ability to meet or exceed their agency's and/or federal entity's established goals or targets. Partner program effectiveness is also measured at the local level by the local board ensuring any responsibilities, goals and/or targets that are outlined in MOUs between the local boards and partner organizations are being fulfilled as required.

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

**FloridaCommerce**
FloridaCommerce continuously conducts data analysis of workforce system performance within the state's WIOA primary indicators of performance. This analysis is used in annual presentations to each LWDB to show how each LWDB is performing against its locally negotiated targets for each indicator.

**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 PY 2022-23 decreased by 4.3% for Adult participants. Dislocated Workers participants served increased by 15% and Youth participants served decreased by 2.4%. The chart below presents the total number of participants served and exiters leaving the WIOA program during PY 2020-21.

Florida has experienced a decrease in the total participants served since the COVID-19 pandemic. At the direction of the state board, FloridaCommerce is conducting further analysis on levels of service including enrollment history pre-pandemic versus current enrollment trends during Florida's economic recovery; identifying opportunities for increased services to youth, adults with no high school diploma; and aligning unemployment services with WIOA program services.

**Figure 3.18**
**2021-2022 WIOA Participants and Exiters**
**PY 2021 – 2022**

| WIOA Program | Total Participants Served | Total Exiters |
|---|---|---|
| Adults | 8,104 | 25,273 |
| Dislocated Workers* | 1,861 | 4,460 |
| Youth | 5,480 | 9,860 |

*Numbers include Dislocated Worker grants, which served 2,254 participants and had 2,708 exiters.

**Figure 3.19**
**2022-2023 WIOA Participants and Exiters**
**PY 2022 – 2023**

| WIOA Program | Total Participants Served | Total Exiters |
|---|---|---|
| Adults | 8,469 | 4,906 |
| Dislocated Workers* | 1,231 | 774 |
| Youth | 5,273 | 2,834 |

*Numbers include Dislocated Worker grants, which served 1,457 participants and had 1,277 exiters.

**WIOA Indicators of Performance**
Data on core measures and primary indicators of performance are collected from Florida's Management Information System (MIS), RA Wage Records, and the 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 SWIS is a database consisting of wage and employment records from other states. SWIS records supplement Florida's RA data and provide a more comprehensive picture of participant outcomes.

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% of the negotiated goal are considered to have met the goal. The 90% criterion is shown in parentheses. Florida met all performance targets for PY 2022-2023.

**Figure 3.20**
**State WIOA Statewide Primary Indicators of Performance**
**PY 2022 – 2023**

| WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance | Negotiated Goal (90% of Goal) | Actual Performance | Difference Compared To 90% of Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 85.5% (77.0%) | 85.9% | +9.0% |
| Adult Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 80.7% (72.6%) | 66.2% | -6.4% |
| Adult Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $8,411 ($7,570) | $9,620 | +$2,050 |
| Adult Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 70.0% (63.0%) | 66.0% | +3.0% |
| Adult Measurable Skills Gains | 58.0% (52.2%) | 82.4% | +30.2% |
| Dislocated Worker Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 85.0% (76.5%) | 83.3% | +6.8% |
| Dislocated Worker Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 75.0% (67.5%) | 74.2% | +6.7% |
| Dislocated Worker Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $10,093 ($9,084) | $10,053 | +$969 |
| Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 82.7% (74.4%) | 76.0% | +1.6% |
| Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gains | 60.0% (54.0%) | 80.2% | +26.2% |
| Youth Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 81.4% (73.3%) | 81.1% | +7.8% |
| Youth Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 77.6% (69.8%) | 72.5% | +2.7% |
| Youth Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $3,864 ($3,478) | $4,567 | +$1,089 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 70.0% (63.0%) | 61.4% | -1.6% |
| Youth Measurable Skills Gains | 55.0% (49.5%) | 77.5% | +28.0% |
| WP Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 65.0% (58.5%) | 68.4% | +9.9% |
| WP Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 60.5% (54.4%) | 65.8% | +11.4% |
| WP Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $5,659 ($5,093) | $7,053 | +$1,960 |

**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% criterion.

**Figure 3.21**
**LWDB WIOA Performance**
**PY 2022 – 2023**

Performance Indicators: Section 116 of WIOA identifies indicators of performance for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. These measures for FY 2022-2023 are below:

| WIOA Indicators of Performance | State Goal | Boards Achieving Local Goal | % Of Boards Achieving Local Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 85.5 % | 22 of 24 | 91.7% |
| Adult Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 80.7% | 18 of 24 | 75.0% |
| Adult Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $8,411 | 23 of 24 | 95.8% |
| Adult Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 70.0% | 14 of 24 | 58.3% |
| Adult Measurable Skills Gains | 58.0% | 22 of 24 | 91.7% |
| Dislocated Worker Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 85.0% | 24 of 24 | 100.0% |
| Dislocated Worker Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 75.5% | 18 of 24 | 75.0% |
| Dislocated Worker Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $10,093 | 21 of 24 | 87.5% |
| Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 82.7% | 18 of 24 | 75.0% |
| Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gains | 60.0% | 17 of 24 | 70.8% |
| Youth Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 81.4 % | 19 of 24 | 79.2% |
| Youth Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 77.6% | 16 of 24 | 66.7% |
| Youth Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $3,864 | 23 of 24 | 95.8% |
| Youth Credential Attainment within 4th Quarter After Exit | 70.0 % | 16 of 24 | 66.7% |
| Youth Measurable Skills Gains | 55.0% | 22 of 24 | 91.7% |
| WP Employment – 2nd Quarter After Exit | 65.0% | 23 of 24 | 95.8% |
| WP Employment – 4th Quarter After Exit | 60.5% | 23 of 24 | 95.8% |
| WP Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit | $5,659 | 24 of 24 | 100.0% |

**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.

FloridaCommerce uses a customer service survey to assess the experience of job seekers and businesses in using the state's workforce management information system, Employ Florida. Integrated in the Employ Florida system, the survey consists of seven questions. During PY 2022 – 2023, customers completed 6,039 surveys. Of those completing the survey, 89% were job seekers and 95% sought employment or career planning. Approximately 35% of respondents reported no challenges in finding information on the Employ Florida website.

Approximately 38% of the respondents reported no challenges in understanding information on the Employ Florida website, while roughly 40% of the respondents rated their overall experience as good or excellent.

FloridaCommerce utilizes these survey results as well as feedback from case managers to identify and implement features that improve the customer experience of Employ Florida. As an example, this PY, FloridaCommerce coordinated with Employ Florida's vendor, Geographic Solutions, to implement remote signature functionality. With the new electronic signature functionality, signers no longer have to be physically present to sign documents needed for program applications or job searches. Providing an extra level of protection, documents can be sent through the system's message center, by email, or via text message. Individuals can review documents and sign using either a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Documents are encrypted to ensure full security and an audit trail is maintained for each signature on file.

CareerSource Florida engaged research firm Integrated Insights to conduct a study of business partner engagement within and outside of the CareerSource Florida network. The objective of the study was to measure the awareness of CareerSource Florida services and perceived benefits to Florida businesses. A total of 177 businesses completed the survey. Of the businesses surveyed, 81 had worked with or were currently working with the CareerSource Florida network and 96 companies had never engaged with the CareerSource Florida network. Of businesses who had used the services provided by the network, 59% reported being somewhat or very likely to use CareerSource Florida services in their next recruitment search.

**LWDB Performance Reviews**
Section 445.007(3), Florida Statutes, requires FloridaCommerce to assign staff, to meet annually with each LWDB to review performance and certify compliance with state and federal laws.

FloridaCommerce staff presents information on the local board's program and financial performance and compliance annually to each LWDB board of directors. 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 and customer experiences.

FloridaCommerce holds local boards accountable for program compliance and performance. The guidance provided in Administrative Policy 104 – Sanctions for Local Workforce Development Boards' Failure to Meet Federal and State Standards, provides for consequences

to local boards in situations indicating a pattern of low performance, and programmatic and financial deficiencies found during quality assurance monitoring reviews.

**VR Customer Satisfaction Surveys**
As required by federal law 34 CFR 361.17 (h) (4), VR evaluates their programs and services using customer survey results. This data is used to recognize and motivate staff and to identify opportunities for improvement in the rehabilitation process. In PY 2022, VR administered its survey to 33,308 former and current customers. A total of 6,888 responses were received, for a 20.7% response rate. Approximately 70% of respondents indicated that the help received from VR will help them achieve financial security. Almost 81% of respondents would recommend VR to people they know who can use our help. Approximately 74% of respondents agreed that the support received from VR will help them reach their long-term career goals, and approximately 76% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the help received from VR.

**Vocational Rehabilitation – Future Efforts**
VR has renewed its efforts to increase data-based accountability throughout its portion of the system as well as the alignment 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:

- Data analytic efforts:
    - The transition to Aware will allow continuous monitoring of defined metrics that measure programmatic outcomes to identify opportunities for improvement in the outcomes for VR participants.
- Rule Making:
    - Proposed Rule 6A-25.021, Florida Administrative Code titled Service Provider Registration and Quality Assurance Requirements is scheduled to be proposed to the State Board of Education in February 2024 for adoption. The proposed rule will include quality assurance protocols and registration requirements for fee-for-service providers for Vocational Rehabilitation.
- System infrastructure improvements
    - Improving SharePoint to better share files.
    - Implementing OneDrive to allow employees better access to documents.
- Field Service Initiatives aimed at counseling interactions with VR participants:
    - Expand offerings for students with disabilities to include Pre-apprenticeships
    - 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.
    - 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.
- Retention, recruitment and development initiatives for Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians and Counselors to increase the talent pool providing coordination of these services to Floridians with Disabilities. Data-Based Accountability Initiatives:
    - Increasing data and information available to support VR participants in making informed choices about employment providers through a more robust Services Provider Choice Directory and the revision of state regulations (rules) that clearly

outline requirements for contracted services providers. Regularly evaluate data on programs like Discovery, Customized Employment, Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant, and Project SEARCH to make data-based decisions on where to increase services that align to overall program performance improvement. Refine VR's Aware Data Analytics tool and create a plan for use that supports regular identification of areas and unit performance and identifies exemplary areas/units and areas/units that require targeted, tiered assistance.

- Further refinements to the work of VR's new Bureau of Compliance and Quality Assurance to include:
    - Establishing of a tiered monitoring system for areas and units that includes the coordination of additional casework quality assurance review practices to validate data entry and the provision of tiered supports designed to improve outcomes.
- Strengthening of data requesting, reporting, and validation practices and procedures to allow for the early detection of errors and increase the alignment and consistency of work products.
- Expanding use of Benefits Planning services for Social Security recipients to promote self-support. Purchase these services when not available from SSA.
- Strategic Projects and Employee Performance - Alignment and Accountability.
    - Systematically identify and prioritize projects by streamlining resource allocation, ensuring efficient use of time and budget, and promoting a clearer understanding of overarching goals.
    - Create a process of identifying projects that establishes a framework for accountability. It delineates roles and responsibilities, making it easier to track progress and measure success. This heightened accountability extends beyond the project level, influencing employee performance expectations and appraisals.
    - Provide clear communications that contribute to increased organizational alignment as employees across various departments share a common vision and purpose. Employees are more likely to align their efforts with organizational goals when they understand how their contributions tie into broader initiatives (e.g., improved program performance, enhanced alignment, and heightened accountability throughout the entire organizational system.)

**Figure 3.22**
**Florida Vocational Rehabilitation**
**Federal Performance Indicators and Targets**

| Vocational Rehabilitation Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | PY: 2022 (07/01/2023 – 06/30/2023) | | PY: 2023 (07/01/2023 – 06/30/2024) |
| | Negotiated Level | Actual Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | 49.30% | 55.20% | 50.30% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | 49.30% | 53.80% | 51.70% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $3,780 | $4,708 | $3,902 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 20.00% | 24.80% | 21.00% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 28.70% | 38.70% | 29.70% |

**FDBS**
FDBS commissioned the VR Technical Assistance Center on Qualify Management to conduct a needs assessment in 2023. Preliminary details of this assessment revealed the following areas of focus:

- Ensure effective partnership agreements with all career centers of CareerSource Florida.
- Increase the number of FDBS employer partnerships annually.
- Secure opportunities for students/youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills by increasing work experiences for transition students.
- Increase the utilization of online job systems/portals to expose employers to job-ready clients.
- Increase client participation in industry certifications and other post-secondary outcomes.
- Increase the provision of accessibility tools, awareness, and follow-up with clients to ensure equality in educational experiences and vocation.
- Strengthen contract language to ensure increased contractor accountability, improve resource allocations, address WIOA regulations, and encourage maximum achievement of client independence.

- Increase the number of rehab counselors eligible for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) or Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) certification by 10% annually.

Based upon the results of the assessment, FDBS developed strategies that are incorporated and described throughout this plan. FDBS projects these activities and strategies will have a positive impact on program performance. See Section Vocational Rehabilitation Section VI(b) for further details.

**Adult Education**
State targets are negotiated with the USDOE, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and established for each of the educational functioning levels for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and ESOL on an annual basis. The target percentage is based on prior PY 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 2022 – 2023 and 2023 – 2024.

**Figure 3.23**
**Florida Adult Education State Targets**
**ABE and ASE**

| Performance Indicators | 2022-23 State Performance Target | 2023-24 State Performance Target |
|---|---|---|
| ABE | 28.7% | 29.3% |
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 31% | 31% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 27% | 28% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit) | $4,867 | $4,867 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 24% | 24% |

**Figure 3.24**
**Florida Adult Education State Targets**
**English for Speakers of Other Languages**

| Performance Indicators | 2022-23 State Performance Target | 2023-24 State Performance Target |
|---|---|---|
| ESOL | 26.7% | 28.2% |
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 31% | 31% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 27% | 28% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit) | $4,867 | $4,867 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 24% | 24% |

***Evaluation*. Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).**

Using funds authorized under a core program and made available to carry out this section, the State, in coordination with LWDBs and State agencies responsible for the administration of the WIOA core and combined programs, shall conduct ongoing evaluations of activities carried out in the State under such programs. The State, local boards, and State agencies shall conduct the evaluations to promote, establish, implement, and utilize methods for continuously improving core program activities to achieve high-level performance within, and high-level outcomes from, the workforce development system. The State shall coordinate the evaluations with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under section 169, section 242(c)(2)(D), and sections 12(a)(5), 14, and 107 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 709(a)(5), 711, 727) (applied with respect to programs carried out under title I of that Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.)) and the investigations provided for by the Secretary of Labor under section 10(b) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49i(b)).

Selected research and improvement projects are aligned to strategies in this combined plan and monitored by the core program planning workgroup. To select projects, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, its councils and WIOA 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 Executive Office of the Governor and the leadership of the core program partner agencies. Projects are coordinated as necessary with the Secretaries of the Departments of Labor and Education as described in WIOA Section 116(e).

Evaluations conducted under this subsection shall be designed in conjunction with the State board, State agencies responsible for the administration of the core programs, and local boards and shall include analysis of customer feedback and outcome and process measures in the statewide workforce development system. The evaluations shall use designs that employ the most rigorous analytical and statistical methods that are reasonably feasible.

The State shall annually prepare, submit to the State board and local boards in the State, and make available to the public (including by electronic means), reports containing the results of evaluations to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system.

The State shall, to the extent practicable, cooperate in the conduct of evaluations (including related research projects) provided for by the Secretary of Labor or the Secretary of Education under the provisions of Federal law. Such cooperation shall include the provision of data (in accordance with appropriate privacy protections established by the Secretary of Labor), the provision of responses to surveys, and allowing site visits in a timely manner, for the Secretaries or their agents

At the time of the submission of this combined plan, CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce and the Governor’s Office are working together to make recommendations for the use of 2024-2025 WIOA set-aside funds. The use of these funds includes conducting a statewide assessment of the landscape and opportunities for improving the delivery of soft skills and digital literacy training. Topics to explore include:

- Defining an appropriate meaning, scope, and inventory of what constitutes "foundational/employability skills."
- Identifying digital literacy gaps and developing strategies for targeted outreach.
- Identifying resources currently in use across the LWDBs statewide, along with success rates associated with current practices.
- Compiling an inventory of nationwide best practices or approaches adopted by others states, and their effectiveness.

**Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.**

***For Title I programs*, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—**

**Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),**
70% 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% 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% 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% of the civilian labor force within the workforce region.

**Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),**
Please see response for section III (5)(A)(i).

**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 in determining allocation percentages used to distribute Dislocated Worker funding to the 24 LWDBs:

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

- The factors of declining industries data and farmer-rancher economic hardship are given a zero weighting in the WIOA dislocated worker sub-state allocation formula.
- Declining industries data – Absent a recession, Florida has only one declining industry in recent times with a number of workers that is insignificant when compared to the total number in the state workforce.
- Farmer-rancher economic hardship – There is a lack of public use data sources with sufficient geographic detail to adequately serve the requirements of an allocation formula.
- 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.

***For Title II*:**
**Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.**

In accordance with Section 231 under Title II AEFLA of WIOA, the DCAE provided funding to eligible local entities to provide adult education services through a competitive process for 2023-2024 with a continuation year to occur in 2023 – 2024, 2024 –2025 and 2025 – 2026. This includes grant projects funded under Section 225 – Corrections and Other Institutionalized.

A competitive bidding process was conducted in the summer of 2023 for eligible adult education providers to submit either individual or collective grant proposals. DCAE identified, assessed, and awarded multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state in accordance with 34 CFR 463 Subpart C (see State Plan Section "b. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)" for additional details. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities that may include a/an:

- LEA.
- 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 incorporated the expansion of IET 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.

Just as in the 2021 – 2023 competition hosted under WIOA, Florida utilized data from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) to determine projected allocations (not less than 82.5%) of federal AEFLA funds for each of Florida's 67 counties for the 2023-2026 competition. ACS provides the most current data and is a standard dataset used by OCTAE and other state formula grant programs at the USDOE. The allocation and distribution of funds are expected to address the educational and training needs of eligible individuals throughout the county, particularly those eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy skills, are English language learners, or are individuals with disabilities.

**Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it**

**is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.**

DCAE ensures all eligible providers have direct, competitive and fair access to apply and compete for grants and contracts. The Request for Proposal announcement for the 2023 – 2026 competition was distributed through various communication outlets including the 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 had access to the same standardized information.

An annual webinar was 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.

***Vocational Rehabilitation Program*:**
**In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i)of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in the State.**

In Florida, vocational rehabilitation services are delivered by VR and FDBS, both of which are administratively housed in FDOE. Based on a mutual letter of understanding, Florida's federal grant funding for VR services is allocated as follows: 83% of grant funding is allocated to VR and 17% of grant funding is allocated to FDBS.

## Program Data

***Data Alignment and Integration*. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, UI programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date. Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.**

**Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.**

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.

The strategic alignment and coordination of education and workforce initiatives in the REACH Act includes an online opportunity portal, allowing access to available state, federal, and local services and tools. This will provide Floridians with broader access to education and training options, labor market information, career planning tools, workforce training, and education support. Additionally, the REACH Act strengthens oversight, accountability, and transparency measures for the network of agencies, partners, and systems.

The Workforce System Integration effort (FL WINS) is currently underway at FloridaCommerce with the completion of a Feasibility Study that provides alternatives and recommendations to best establish a consumer-first workforce system and improve coordination among workforce system partners. The study provides a roadmap for program establishment, technical integration, and enhanced business process integration. These initiatives will take place over three to five years and set a foundation for enhanced coordination and service delivery for Floridians.

The Feasibility Study can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

Key Solution Components of the FL WINS online opportunity portal include:

- A **Customer Portal** to enable Floridians to more easily obtain the support they need by offering multiple points of entry to apply for services and receive information.
- A **Common Intake** form to reduce duplicative information being entered by agency staff and Floridians requesting services and refer them to services targeted to meet their needs.
- A **Data Hub** that helps agencies better serve Floridians by providing a comprehensive overview and greater availability to link them with the services they may need.
- Answers to frequently asked questions about the FL WINS Workforce System Integration effort can be viewed on FloridaCommerce's website.

**Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.**

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. Employ Florida provides an integrated online labor exchange and case management system for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, WP, JVSG, TAA and RESEA programs through one system. Employ Florida also interfaces with Reconnect, Florida's system for the UI Benefits program.

Employ Florida optimizes the use of staff time by determining eligibility of multiple programs through a single form that collects all required data fields. Data transfers can be facilitated from local areas, providing flexibility, and reporting for local agencies and providers using independent systems. In addition, Employ Florida offers integrated report design, distribution methods, and management features that meet the PIRL requirements.

The Employ Florida system allows for effective evaluation and monitoring of each LWDB's program performance by FloridaCommerce. Electronic, paperless participant case files created in the Employ Florida system allow for remote monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, career center program staff have access to the Employ Florida Document Management system that provides the ability to scan, upload, and attach electronic files. Employ Florida provides for consistency across LWDBs throughout the state by using identical criteria for establishing program eligibility and participation. The system effectively tracks participants and their activities across workforce programs, efficiently organizing the information and data required for consistent monitoring and evaluation of Title I and III programs.

FloridaCommerce and FDOE developed and signed a data-sharing agreement that allows for the exchange of data for federal funded programs under WIOA. A process has been put in place which allows for the exchange of PIRL files between both agencies. In addition to the PIRL files, DOE provides FloridaCommerce with the necessary data required for the Employer Indicators. FloridaCommerce then combines the data and submits the indicators for both agencies.

The REACH Act calls for FloridaCommerce, in collaboration with FDOE and DCF, to spearhead a consumer-first workforce system that allows for common intake across partners and integrated case management. FloridaCommerce's commissioned feasibility study is guiding future work toward integration of systems.

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

The state 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 further exploring integration through the consumer-first workforce system called for in the REACH Act.

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

The 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 approved by FloridaCommerce for certification and reviewed by CareerSource Florida staff. Florida core partners continue to work toward improving the process via modified data sharing mechanisms and reporting protocols.

There are multiple state agencies in Florida that have administrative responsibility for the WIOA core programs. These include both FloridaCommerce and FDOE. While each of these entities maintains separate participant and financial information systems, the agencies continue to work collaboratively to integrate data across Florida's workforce development system.

Employ Florida is based on federal requirements to collect the data for reporting for Title I and III programs. Each week, the Employ Florida vendor, Geographic Solutions, produces the PIRL

files. On a bi-monthly basis, FloridaCommerce reviews the data in the files and checks for data issues. A list of issues or missing data is sent to the respective LWDB Regional Security Officer to be corrected in Employ Florida. In addition to reviewing the data, the files are uploaded into the Workforce Integrated Performance System edit checks. This process is performed monthly throughout the PY.

FloridaCommerce submits the Employer Indicators for both DOE and FloridaCommerce to WIPS. DOE provides the required information to FloridaCommerce which is combined with FloridaCommerce's data and then submitted through WIPS. In addition to federal reporting, FloridaCommerce provides participant and exiter data from the Employ Florida Virtual One Stop (VOS) to FDOE. This information is used to develop and produce the FETPIP Annual Outcomes Report.

**VR Reporting**
VR's Aware case management system is highly aligned with the RSA-911 quarterly reporting data elements and requirements. The quarterly RSA-911 reports are submitted to RSA, which compiles them to produce the WIOA Annual Report. Aware produces the RSA-911 reports periodically, with the most frequent periods being nightly.

Throughout each quarter, RSA-911 reports from Aware are passed through an edit checker created and maintained by Alliance Enterprises, who created and maintains the Aware case management system. Edit checker results are evaluated for causes and specific resolution criteria using internal queries and reports. At the end of each quarter, RSA's web portal edit checker becomes available. The RSA web portal contains historical reporting-based edit checks beyond those available in the Alliance edit checker. The RSA-911 reports are processed within the web portal multiple times per week until the report submission deadline allowing any data entry errors to be resolved. Once UI Wage data, Secondary, and Post-secondary enrollment, graduation, and credential attainment data becomes available, VR requests these corresponding data for currently reported customers from FETPIP. The results from FETPIP are included in the RSA-911 report prior to final submission.

VR also follows the aforementioned process of exchanging PIRL files in order to ensure accurate co-enrollment measures among WIOA Partner agencies throughout the year. Annually, VR's required data for the Employer Indicators is provided to FloridaCommerce through FETPIP, so that VR's Employer Indicator data is also included when reported by FloridaCommerce.

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

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

CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce offer ongoing technical assistance through webinars, one-on-one telephone consultations, and in-person presentations, including training

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.

***Use of UI Wage Record Data.*** **Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)**

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 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.

***Privacy Safeguards.*** **Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.**

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.

Florida is aware that a key element of success in utilizing data across agencies for either improved customer service or improved measurement and tracking of outcomes is ensuring the integrity of all data and ensuring confidential data is treated as such. This is accomplished with various technical safeguards and ensuring personnel handling this data are properly trained in all relevant regulations and the fundamentals of handling personal and confidential data.

Technical safeguards may include:

- Approved processes that limit access to the data to only those personnel who require access to carry out their daily job functions.
- Network security, monitoring, firewalls, etc. to prevent unauthorized access to data from entities outside of state government.
- Encryption technology.
- Secure data transport mechanisms.

Data Sharing Agreements are used when confidential information is shared with another entity. All partners that will provide and share data in collaboration efforts will enter a MOU and/or a data sharing agreement to ensure security of sensitive information. All partners expressly agree to abide by all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding confidential information and to adhere to the same standards of confidentiality as state employees.

Florida's Title II AEFLA programs ensure strict adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g), its implementing regulations (34 CFR part 99) to protect the privacy of students' education records and afford eligible students certain rights to inspect and review education records, to seek to amend these records, and to consent to the disclosure of personal identifiable information from education records. All funded adult programs must submit

signed assurances concerning privacy safeguards and periodic review of such safeguards are part of the Florida Department of Education's compliance monitoring system.

In addition to the safeguards listed, the Division of Career and Adult Education ensures strict adherence to the FDOE Acceptable Use Policy document, and all employees sign a Data Use Agreement that specifically states all confidential information shall be used solely for conducting the work of the Division. Access to confidential client data is strictly limited to employees based on their job function and 'need-to-know' basis to perform the functional duties of their position.

All employees, contractors, and agents must complete mandatory security awareness training annually. The required security awareness training advises employees, contractors, and agents of the civil and criminal sanctions for non-compliance to applicable federal and state laws.

FDBS follows the policy and procedures detailed in FDOE's Computer Security Incident Response policy document that provides the steps required to respond to suspected computer security incidents. These steps include identifying incidents, notifying the designated Computer Security Incident Response Team, and reporting findings to agency management.

All VR employees, contractors, and agents must complete mandatory security awareness training annually. The required security awareness training advises employees, contractors, and agents of the civil and criminal sanctions for non-compliance to applicable federal and state laws.

Florida is a signatory state for the SWIS, and FDOE is an Access PACIA. To limit the parties involved and further bolster customer privacy, the VR conducts matching of both UI records and educational records through FDOE for the purposes of WIOA.

**Priority of Service for Veterans.**

**Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the USDOL.**

Florida shall ensure priority of service to eligible veterans and covered persons in its program delivery and services that are directly funded, in whole or part, by the USDOL in accordance with all federal guidance letters and notices, including 20 CFR Part 1010, Employment and Training Administration's Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-09, and Training and Employment Notice 15-10. Florida ensures the provision of priority of service with the following:

- All career center staff are trained to screen and identify potential covered persons. The question "Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?" is asked of every individual upon initial visit in the career center.
- Signage notifying covered persons to identify are displayed at every intake counter in the career centers.
- Veterans and covered persons who register in Employ Florida receive a pop-up message that ensures these newly registered veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service and the scope and types of services available under priority of service.
- Employ Florida notification of priority of service is documented by an automated service code 089.

- Staff are trained to inform veterans and covered persons of their entitlement to priority of service and the scope and types of services available under priority of service and manually document this service in Employ Florida with service code 189.
- LVER staff are fully integrated into the CareerSource network and provide annual priority of service training to all career center staff.

**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.

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.

**Implementation**

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 covered persons 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.

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

**Monitoring Priority of Service**

FloridaCommerce, in coordination with the Florida USDOL Director of Veterans Employment and Training, conducts on-site technical assistance for the LWDBs to review local implementation of priority of service. In accordance with U.S.C. § 4104(f), LWDBs must submit a Veterans Quarterly Manager's Report to FloridaCommerce each quarter regarding compliance with federal law and regulations with respect to special services and priorities for eligible veterans and eligible persons. The report requires the LWDB to explain, in writing, how they are implementing priority of service at the local level. These reports are monitored by the FloridaCommerce State Veterans' Program Coordinator. Additionally, FloridaCommerce ensures

LWDBs' compliance with priority of service in accordance with 20 CFR Part 1010 as part of annual programmatic monitoring.

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

To facilitate the intake screening, LWDBs must use the Veteran Intake Form, or locally established equivalent, to determine the individual's service level needs and eligibility for enhanced services from a DVOP specialist. The Veteran Intake Form may be modified by the LWDB or integrated into a local electronic intake kiosk, if the core elements which identify the required demographics are retained. Individuals determined eligible for DVOP specialist services must immediately be referred to a DVOP specialist. Individuals who are not found to be eligible must be provided services by the first available qualified and appropriate career center staff member.

In instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, individuals who would normally be served by DVOP specialists must be served by the next available qualified and appropriate career center staff member.

Services to Significant Barriers to Employment and special population veterans must not be delayed or postponed due to the unavailability of a DVOP specialist.

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

**One-Stop Center Certification Policy**

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 093 outlines Florida's One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements including the criteria for evaluating how effectively the one-stop career centers and delivery systems take actions to comply with the physical and programmatic accessibility issues and other disability-related regulations implementing WIOA sec. 188, as set forth in 29 CFR Part 38. CareerSource Florida Policy 091 further describes the LWDB certification process.

Florida strives to assure quality services are delivered in the most efficient and effective ways possible through full integration and coordination of one-stop career center partners and resources to support seamless service delivery. FloridaCommerce, in consultation with the state board, CareerSource Florida, is responsible for establishing objective criteria and procedures for use by LWDBs in certifying One-Stop Centers. LWDBs and their CEOs have responsibility for ensuring the achievement of certification and quality standards for One-Stop Career Centers.

The LWDBs must have at minimum one certified Comprehensive One-Stop Center. The goal is to assure that each LWDB has been determined to meet uniform certification standards, such that businesses and job seekers can expect a minimum baseline of quality services regardless of location. At least once every two years, LWDBs must assess the effectiveness (including customer satisfaction), of physical and programmatic accessibility in accordance with WIOA sec. 188, and continuous improvement of one-stop career centers and the one-stop delivery system using the federal and state criteria outlined and established by policy.

Once every two years, one LWDB must be certified for each local area in the state, based on the criteria described in WIOA sec. 107(b) and FloridaCommerce policy. For a second or subsequent certification, certification must be based on the extent to which the local area ensures workforce investment activities carried out in the local area enabled the local area to meet the corresponding performance accountability measures and achieve fiscal integrity as defined in WIOA sec. 106(e)(2).

CareerSource Florida, acting as the state board on behalf of the Governor, approves the certification of LWDBs every two years. At the appropriate time intervals, FloridaCommerce, in consultation with CareerSource Florida, issues instructions to the LWDBs about the certification process, including documentation requirements. LWDBs must assess the effectiveness (including customer satisfaction), of physical and programmatic accessibility in accordance with WIOA sec. 188 (discussed more fully in other sections), and continuous improvement of one-stop career centers and the one-stop delivery system using the federal and state criteria outlined and established by policy. Upon satisfactory review of LWDB's certification documents, FloridaCommerce provides a recommendation regarding certification to the state board.

Additionally, FloridaCommerce's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for program compliance monitoring, which includes accessibility for individuals with a disability. The OCR makes periodic reviews of the physical structures used by recipients using a facilities accessibility survey and recommends and monitors a corrective-action plan where recipients' facilities are found to be out of compliance. The OCR reviews locally completed facility-accessibility surveys during the regularly scheduled program reviews.

All new construction and alterations to existing career centers must be carried out so that, to the maximum extent feasible, the career center is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. For older buildings where no alterations are undertaken, LWDBs are required to remove architectural barriers to physical accessibility of the career center for persons with disabilities unless the removal is not readily achievable. The standards to be applied are the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines along with applicable portions of Florida law.

LWDBs must ensure that all interested individuals, including those with visual or hearing impairments, can obtain information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities.

Where any of a LWDB's career centers are inaccessible, the LWDB must provide signs at the primary entrance of each such facility directing users to a location where they can obtain information about how to access the career center. During scheduled program reviews by the OCR, the OCR checks for accessibility, compares the findings with locally conducted surveys, and provides training and technical assistance on accessibility compliance, if needed.

**Disability Program Navigator**
FloridaCommerce was one of the original recipients of the USDOL's Disability Program Navigator (DPN) grant in 2002 and has expanded services to people with disabilities at CareerSource Florida network 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 in assisting people with varying disabilities.
- Ensure career centers were readily accessible.

**Ticket to Work Employment Networks (ENs)**
LWDBs continue expanding employment and training services for people with disabilities. 18 of Florida's 24 LWDBs have been approved as ENs under the Ticket to Work program. Career Source Palm Beach County and Career Source Broward provide employment network services to VR participants that are Ticket to Work holders.

**Mobile Centers**
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.

**Participation on Boards**
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.
- Florida Developmental Disability Council-led Employment First Initiative and its Employment and Transportation Task Force.
- CSBG Advisory Council.
- Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.
- National Council of State Agencies for the Blind.
- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Florida Independent Living Council.

VR, FDBS, and DCF are all represented on the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors.

VR and FDBS have been partners 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 that career centers offer customers and provide support the workforce system cannot.

As noted previously in this statewide plan, the 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 FloridaCommerce in partnership with VR, FDBS, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (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. FloridaCommerce and these partners continue monitoring the web portal and make improvements in response to suggestions from users and staff.

**Opportunities for Enhanced Collaboration**
Combined partners assist the workforce development system in maximizing comprehensive services for job seekers offering the opportunity for self-sufficiency through meaningful employment.

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.

**Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE)**
Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an internationally recognized model of SE for people with serious mental illness. The focus is on helping those with behavioral health conditions find gainful employment, who represent approximately 35% of VR participants. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. The model emphasizes a collaborative approach between the mental health system and the VR system. VR counselors and employment specialists are integrated with the individual's mental health treatment team to promote success with the individual's employment goals.

IPS is recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as an evidence-based practice.

In 2021, Florida applied for and was selected to participate in the ASPIRE initiative under the USDOL. The initiative aims to assist states in aligning their policies and practices in support of competitive integrated employment for people with mental health conditions. Florida has continued participation in the ASPIRE initiative in 2022-2023 and has focused on building sustainability for IPS. The initiative is expected to conclude in July 2024. CareerSource Florida participates in bi-weekly ASPIRE implementation team meetings and quarterly steering committee meetings. CareerSource Florida is currently working with ASPIRE partners to seek grant funds to expand this IPS initiative in Florida.

Since 2021, Florida has expanded its capacity to provide IPS at four new sites and has hired a full-time IPS State Trainer to assist new sites with implementation of the model. Outcome data from the initial expansion indicate that, as of June 2023, 50% of participants are competitively employed and/or attending a credit-bearing educational program. Participants who are employed earn a median wage of $15/hour and work an average of 32 hours per week.

The resources described above provide a strong foundation for accessibility in the CareerSource Florida network service delivery system. To support and strengthen existing resources, FloridaCommerce's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) conducts regular onsite and desktop reviews of each LWDB's compliance with the 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.
- 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.

To support LWDBs in serving individuals with disabilities, FloridaCommerce will do the following:

- Facilitate quarterly technical assistance calls between FloridaCommerce, LWDBs, and other presenters. LWDBs should have staff that regularly interact with customers and attend at least one call per year to maintain knowledge of best practices.
- Create and maintain a list of resources for employers and LWDBs about employing and serving individuals with disabilities. FloridaCommerce will provide state-level resource information on its website.
- Maintain and disseminate a schedule of upcoming webinars from various disability associations that staff from LWDBs may attend (such as the Jobs Accommodations Network and the National Disability Institute).

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 participants are included in this process when possible. Adaptive equipment and/or software, such as ALDs and UbiDuos, are available in some VR facilities. Specific applications were developed using custom Job Access with Speech (JAWS) script and workflow documentation to meet the needs of users.

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. The Division has an agreement with Vispero to obtain licenses for assistive technology, such as JAWS (computer screen reader) and Zoom Text (screen magnifier and voice over). This allows the Division to provide assistive technology to clients, CareerSource Centers, core partners, and other state agencies.

FDOE conducts ADA inspections on new and renewed facilities leased by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Any facility out of compliance receives a plan outlining the accessibility improvements required to acquire or maintain the lease.

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 expand access to interpreters and translators to reach underserved populations and increase communication with customers.
- Reduce barriers to information about division services by providing materials and program information in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole.
- 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.

**Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners. Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.**

FloridaCommerce understands the importance of ensuring universal and meaningful access to its programs and services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). Therefore, FloridaCommerce has an established LEP plan that outlines the strategies for ensuring English language learners obtain meaningful access to federally funded programs and services. FloridaCommerce has taken the below steps to provide adequate translation services to individuals LEP:

- Entered into a contract for translation services. All FloridaCommerce employees that may have oral interactions with LEP individuals have been trained to identify a customer's need for translation services and to provide the service in a timely manner and free of charge. No individual is required to provide their own interpreter.

- Taken reasonable steps to publicize the availability of free translation services and has created a special assisted claims filing telephone service for individuals that cannot read or write effectively in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. FloridaCommerce has posted notice of these services on its website and in Florida's career centers. Additionally, FloridaCommerce has instructed Florida's 24 LWDBs to distribute the notice to local community organizations serving LEP populations.
- Includes, on every vital document, a "Babel Notice," informing customers in 15 different languages that free translation services are available upon request.
- Made the entire RA claims and benefits information system available in Spanish and Haitian Creole.
- Distributed "Language Communication Cards," or "I speak Cards," to the LWDBs. These resources assist employees in providing direct services to customers with quickly identifying the need for translation services.
- Employs bilingual staff to assist LEP individuals.

Florida's adult education programs offer adult 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 VR process. Program forms are also available in Spanish.

# SECTION IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

**Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Combined State Plan.**

**Florida Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Leadership**
A State Plan Implementation Team consists of professional team members from all core and combined programs and the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Office at the Executive Office of the Governor who meet monthly to discuss each core and combined program's critical issues, challenges, and accomplishments including implementation of the state workforce development plan and performance goals. This includes discussion of program structures, purpose, customer base, and contributions that could improve the statewide system.

The State Plan Implementation Team uses the WIOA Combined Plan as an ongoing opportunity to review and update coordination with state plan programs. The objectives for the monthly team meetings include:

1. Ensure appropriate representation to include core and combined partner leadership and subject-matter experts. Personnel with specialized legal, financial, or information technology expertise may be selected to attend specific meetings. This participation structure is designed to ensure a thread of vertical coherence throughout the system so that key issues may be identified at each level and brought for discussion at the WIOA Core Program Leadership meetings.
2. Monitor progress toward relevant partner-specific and shared performance objectives, definitions, and targets presented in this plan.
3. Provide workgroup updates and relevant WIOA information that impacts the Florida workforce system. The Core Leader Team uses tracking and communication tools to ensure reliable progress reporting, resource identification, and recommendations for additional workgroups to implement key components of the state plan.
4. Discuss state-level initiatives and agreements on how to leverage and braid funding and services are established.
5. Explore collaborations with core and combined planning partners and stakeholders to develop new jointly funded initiatives and engage in coordinated projects designed to continue implementing and enhancing the workforce system within the WIOA framework.
6. Identify barriers to partnerships and discuss with a goal of finding efficient and effective solutions.

**Policy Development Workgroup**
Policy development begins with identifying an issue or need for new or revised policy consistent with the Policy Development Framework adopted by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors in 2021. The CareerSource Florida Board, CareerSource Florida professional team, the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), WIOA core partners, the Governor, or Legislature may originate issues and needs for evaluation. Changes in federal or state law, regulations, or rules may require developing or updating strategic or administrative policies or workforce guidance.

FloridaCommerce program areas routinely assess activities, responsibilities, and the external environment to identify the need for administrative policies. The monitoring process may identify

the need to update or develop policy. Administrative policies or workforce guidance may be developed in anticipation of a need or in response to a need.

Substantive revisions may affect the intent or objective of the policy and may require a new policy. This may occur as the result of significant changes in federal or state law. Minor revisions do not affect the intent or objective of the policy and are typically classified as policy updates. Revisions may include clarifying points of the initial policy; reorganizing information for a better flow, description, or explanation; making corrections to existing definitions, punctuation, spelling, or agency titles adding new definitions; or incorporating attachments to aid in policy statements or clarification.

Once the need for new or revised policy or workforce guidance is identified, the Policy Development Workgroup, comprised of CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy and Performance team members and the FloridaCommerce's Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support, receives the policy assignment. The Policy Development Workgroup ensures policy alignment with the key characteristics of the CareerSource Florida Policy Development Framework and with the Statewide Workforce Development Board Policymaking Authority and Delegation Policy.

Additional staff, board members, core or required partners, representatives from local workforce development boards (LWDBs), and other subject matter experts may assist the Policy Development Workgroup in various stages of policy development.

Members of the Policy Development Workgroup collaborate to present policies to the CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy and Performance Council and the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors for action. When policies are approved, CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce's Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support collaborate to distribute policies, guidance, and other tools to LWDBs and partners.

**Workforce Performance and Finance Team Meetings**
CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce's Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support and Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research continually collaborate to align performance and finance activities throughout Florida's workforce system. Performance and finance team members from both organizations meet monthly to review the ongoing implementation of CareerSource Florida budget initiatives, statewide and local performance on federal and state metrics, LWDB monitoring activities, and technical assistance needs. These meetings complement the ongoing work of team members on several projects and initiatives required under the REACH Act, WIOA, and state statutes.

**REACH Act Implementation Meetings**
Since the REACH Act went into effect, a cross-agency leadership group meets weekly to focus on implementation of the legislation. This workgroup consists of agency leaders from the Governor's REACH Office, Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Career and Adult Education and State University System divisions, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), CareerSource Florida, and FloridaCommerce. This group identifies challenges and opportunities to eliminate barriers to collaboration, leverages resources across agencies, and reviews and reports on current implementation efforts.

**Joint Planning and Coordination Among Core Programs and Required One-Stop Partner Programs**

As described in 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Combined State Plans Under Title I of WIOA, §676.135, LWDBs must regularly revisit state plan strategies and recalibrate them to respond to the changing economic conditions and workforce needs of the state.

Regular interagency meetings of the WIOA Core and Combined Partner programs address aspects of plan implementation. These meetings include leadership and subject matter experts from the FDOE's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Blind Services; the Florida College System; FloridaCommerce; and CareerSource Florida. This group revisits state plan strategies and obtains data-driven information about program performance.

Every two years, a workgroup of subject matter experts from the core partners and the Florida College System is formed. This group addresses the federal Information Collection Request (ICR) requirements for the State Plan and creates instructions for local plans. These meetings typically occur before receiving the ICR, training, or guidance. This workgroup identifies opportunities to continuously improve the quality of the plan and the process for managing the plan.

The plan consists of strategic and operational planning elements that define each program's statewide duties and roles relating to the workforce system, and it details a process to integrate all federally mandated and optional partners. The WIOA Combined Plan (2024-2028) is consistent with the requirements of federal and state law with an emphasis on modernizing and streamlining services, strengthening partnerships to leverage coordinated resources, delivering universal access through system integration, promoting increased accountability, and enabling local board and private sector leadership toward local flexibility and integration of programs.

Workgroup members collaborate to identify and submit information reflecting changes in the labor market and economic conditions, along with a narrative update on strategic and operational planning elements described in the original combined plan. The workgroup focuses on writing and submitting a plan that describes accomplishments since 2022 and aligns program elements with the state's vision and goals. Plan partners meet regularly and collaborate to complete updates and submit the plan in the WIOA State Plan Portal.

**Local and Regional Plans**

As required by WIOA, LWDBs submit local plans to the state in partnership with the chief local elected official. CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce solicit input from FDOE's Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Division of Blind Services (FDBS) to develop requirements governing the submission of local plans. After this collaboration, FloridaCommerce distributes local planning instructions for local boards to submit their four-year plans and two-year modifications. These instructions provide direction for creating local plans, which serve as four-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and support the state's vision and operational goals.

FloridaCommerce codified the state's policy governing the submission of local plans through an administrative rule, as required by the REACH Act. This administrative rule and procedural guidelines outlined in federal regulations govern the local plan development process.

The rule ensures local plans align with the state's combined plan and the state's Comprehensive Education, Employment and Training Policy. Local plans set a strategy to utilize all allowable resources to:

- Assist Floridians in securing employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency and reduces the need for public assistance.
- Provide opportunities for Floridians to develop skills intended to meet the present and future needs of employers.
- Ensure that workforce-related programs are responsive to present and foreseeable future needs of business and industry.
- Prioritize evidence-based, results-driven solutions to improve outcomes for Florida's residents and businesses.
- Identify barriers to coordinate and align workforce-related programs and develop solutions to remove such barriers.

Local elected officials, LWDB board members, core program partners, and mandatory one-stop partners are integral to the planning process. Each plan addresses how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs of VR, FDBS, DCAE, and combined partners including DCF's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T programs, adult and community education, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

Under WIOA and consistent with the Uniform Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), LWDBs, with the agreement of the chief elected official(s), are required to develop and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with required partners on the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local service delivery area. Each LWDB must include an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) in the MOU with required partners. The IFA details how infrastructure costs for the one-stop delivery system will be funded and shared locally.

LWDBs and career centers are expected to act in good faith and transparently negotiate infrastructure costs and additional costs of operating a local one-stop delivery system. Funding provided by the one-stop partners to cover the operating costs, including infrastructure costs and additional costs, of the one-stop delivery system must be based on the partner program's proportionate use of the system and relative benefit received. These agreements are designed to enhance access to other partners' federal, state, and local resources and streamline service delivery. WIOA Combined planning is designed to assist with cultivation and coordination of this process.

In 2021, the state board began reporting the combined and other partners co-located within comprehensive one-stop centers throughout the state.

**Regional Planning Area Plans**

Beginning in PY 2024, designated Regional Planning Areas will be required to submit an addendum to their local plan outlining their regional strategies. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors passed a Regional Planning Area Strategic Policy that requires all local workforce areas to be part of a Regional Planning Area to:

- Align workforce strategies to address the needs of shared industry sectors, employers, and significant populations of job seekers.
- Address common labor shortages and worker skills gaps with aligned service strategies.
- Realize system efficiencies through reducing resource costs (monetary, time, or other).

Regional Planning Area and local WIOA plans must align with Florida's WIOA Statewide Plan.

Regional Planning Areas are required by policy to meet the following requirements:

- Each local workforce development area (LWDA) must be part of a Regional Planning Area.
- Regional Planning Areas must include, at a minimum, two contiguous LWDAs within Florida.
- Regional Planning Areas shall have relevant relationships as evidenced by population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, labor force conditions, and geographic boundaries.
- Regional Planning Areas shall establish a shared regional service strategy with a defined goal.
- Regional Planning Areas shall establish administrative cost arrangements across LWDAs. Acceptable examples of administrative cost arrangements include but are not limited to shared staff, technology systems, or back-end administrative support tools.
- Chief Local Elected Officials in a new Regional Planning Area MUST participate in the regional planning process that results in the inclusion of the shared regional objectives and initiatives as an addendum to each LWDB's WIOA plan.
- The regional plan must include a description of activities that result in the following items:
    - Establish regional service strategies using cooperative service delivery agreements that include but are not limited to:
        - Consistent eligibility standards and enrollment processes.
        - Common training and coordination of supportive service offerings.
        - Common technology tools and sharing of data within tools outside of Employ Florida.
    - Develop and implement sector strategies for in-demand sectors or occupations.
    - Collect and analyze regional labor market data.
    - Coordinate supportive services.
    - Coordinate services with regional economic development services and providers.
    - Establish agreement concerning how the Regional Planning Area will collectively negotiate performance for the LWDA or the planning region.

**FloridaCommerce Monthly Local Board Calls**
FloridaCommerce facilitates a monthly call of leadership and subject matter experts representing FloridaCommerce, CareerSource Florida, Executive Directors, and/or staff of LWDBs and other partners as determined appropriate. The call serves as a forum to facilitate the identification of areas of opportunity to improve transparency and accountability; obtain input

to assist with decision-making; and to provide updates on federal and state initiatives, policy changes, performance/data reporting, and budget/finance concerns.

**Improvements to Strategic Planning Business Relationships**
Florida has a streamlined and efficient approach comprised of three key business relationships for coordinating WIOA programs. Each group and associated coordination activities are listed below:

**The State Workforce Development Board (CareerSource Florida Board of Directors) Membership**
The Florida Governor, gubernatorial appointees and statutorily designated members, including majority representation from Florida businesses; labor organizations; community-based organizations; representatives of organizations that demonstrate experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth (OSY); the lead state officials primarily responsible for WIOA core programs; DCF; two or more chief elected officials collectively representing both cities and counties; members of the Florida Legislature; and other representatives and officials designated by the Governor. The collective goals of this board include:

- Approve state workforce system policies on the implementation and management of WIOA.
- Review state and local workforce system performance.
- Approve the budget for the State Workforce Development System and direct the investments of the WIOA set aside budget.
- Initiate and direct board-led initiatives to address the economic needs of the state.
- Direct the creation of the state WIOA plan.
- Provide support and assistance in delivering key policy messages and recommendations to the Governor, legislators, federal entities, and other key stakeholder groups as needed.

**WIOA Core and Combined Program Leadership Team Membership**
The WIOA Core and Combined Program Leadership Team is composed of WIOA Partner Program Directors and subject matter experts including staff who represent CareerSource Florida; FloridaCommerce's Division of Workforce Services and the Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support; the REACH Office, FDOE's Divisions of Career and Adult Education, VR, FDBS, and Florida Colleges and Universities and combined planning partners.

- Receive and consider recommendations from the WIOA State Plan Implementation Team and provide leadership for WIOA implementation.
- Discuss issues, challenges, and opportunities 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 workgroups to research strategies and implement action as needed.
- Arrange for resource support as needed.
- Prepare and deliver key information and recommendations for implementation, strategy development, and performance management to the Governor, agency heads,

legislators, the state workforce investment board, and federal Departments of Labor and Education.

**WIOA State Plan Implementation Team Membership**
The WIOA State Plan Implementation Team includes Planning Directors and Program Leadership for WIOA partner programs. The purpose of this team is to:

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

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

Topics covered by these workgroups include:

- Enhancing infrastructure and data sharing processes, including development of state data sharing agreements.
- Conducting studies to evaluate case management systems and make recommendations for features and functionalities of future Florida workforce network solutions (copy of reports available upon request).
- Implementing the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan.
- 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/).
- Developing and communicating the value of Florida's Master Credentials List.
- Reviewing LWDB Letter Grades.
- Implementing Florida's CLIFF Suite of Tools.
- Continuing expansion of apprenticeships into key industry sectors.
- Coordinating membership of state and local workforce boards.
- Developing 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 activities.

- Reviewing services, programs, and partnerships of core WIOA programs to reduce duplication of efforts, identify gaps between programs, and identify and eliminate barriers to coordination among programs.
- Working collaboratively to ensure that staff in the state's workforce development system are cross-trained on workforce-related programs, integrated case management, individual employment planning, and other activities to support a No Wrong Door strategy.
- Identifying opportunities to expand services/programs to meet ongoing needs of people with barriers to employment, including people with disabilities.
- Identifying opportunities and innovations in service delivery to ensure that business services are in line with the changing needs of Florida businesses.

Workgroups use project management and process-oriented approaches and tools. These include charter and mission statements, flowcharting, timelines for deliverables, requirements matrices, and other project and process 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 of Directors. This encourages and ensures transparency, the free flow of information, and open communication between all core and combined programs and their related services.

## V. COMMON ASSURANCES (for all core programs)

**Figure 5.01**
**Common Assurances**

| The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| **1.** | The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; |
| | • Chapter 112.3143(1)(c), Florida Statutes<br>• Chapter 445.004, Florida Statutes<br>• Chapter 445.007 Florida Statutes<br>• 07/01/2021 Reimagining Education and Career Help Act (House Bill 1507) and Related Party Contracts Memorandum<br>• 2018.09.26.A.1 CareerSource Florida Ethics and Transparency Policy<br>• 2017.05.17.C.2 CareerSource Florida Board of Directors Conflict of Interest Disclosure Policy<br>• 2012.05.24.A.2 State Workforce Development Board Contracting Conflict of Interest Policy |
| **2.** | The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; |
| | • Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes, Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees<br>• Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, Public Records<br>• Chapter 286, Florida Statutes<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 110 – Local Workforce Development Area and Board Governance<br>• 2018.09.26.A.1 CareerSource Florida Ethics and Transparency Policy |
| **3.** | The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; |
| | • **Yes.** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **4**. | The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;<br><br>The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; |
| | • **All core and combined partners including the Executive Office of the Governor, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors and the Florida Department of Commerce, Reemployment Assistance Program participate in the development of the Four-Year Combined Plan.**<br><br>• **The 2024-2027 WIOA Combined Plan was published for public comment February 13 – March 15, 2024 on the CareerSource Florida Website.** |
| **5.** | The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; |
| | • **Described in Section III(5) Operational Elements, Distribution of Funds for Core Programs** |
| **6.** | The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); |
| | • Chapter 445.003, Florida Statutes<br><br>• Federal law requires the state to monitor all workforce programs receiving federal funds. The purpose of the monitoring review is to periodically assess and evaluate whether the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are complying with program laws, regulations, state and local plans, and appropriate FloridaCommerce administrative policies and guidance in administering statewide workforce programs.<br><br>• FloridaCommerce conducts both programmatic and financial monitoring reviews at least once annually for each of the State's LWDBs. Programmatic monitoring is carried out by program specific staff in FloridaCommerce's Division of Workforce Services, Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support (OSPS). Financial monitoring is carried out by program specific fiscal staff in FloridaCommerce's Division of Finance and Administration, Bureau of Financial Monitoring & Accountability. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Information about programmatic monitoring including monitoring tools and monitoring review schedules can be obtained on the Florida Department of Commerce's Website. |
| **7.** | The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; |
| | • **Described in Section III(8), Operational Elements, Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 042 – Guidelines for Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by Section 199 of the Workforce Investment Act<br>• CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.09.15.A.2 – Availability of Services to Floridians |
| **8.** | The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; |
| | |
| **9.** | The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; |
| | |
| **10.** | The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); |
| | • CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Center Certification Requirements<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 042 – Guidelines for Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by Section 199 of the Workforce Investment Act |
| **11.** | Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and |
| **12.** | Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. |
| | • **Described in Section III(7) Priority of Service for Veterans and in Section VII and Section VII: Program Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Program Jobs For Veterans State Grants**<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 119 – JVSG Consolidated Position Operational Requirements |

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|---|---|
| | • CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 117 – JVSG Employment and Advocacy Services<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 102 – Veteran Intake at Career Centers<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 112 – Staffing Requirements<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 105 – Priority of Service<br>• CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 103 – Local Veteran Employment Representative and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist Outreach Process at American Job Centers |

**Section V. Common Assurances Signatures**

**CareerSource Florida**

**Adrienne Johnston, President and CEO** **DATE:**

**Florida Department of Commerce**

**J. Alex Kelly, Secretary** **DATE:**

**Florida Department of Education**

**Manny Diaz, Jr., Commissioner** **DATE:**

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

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

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

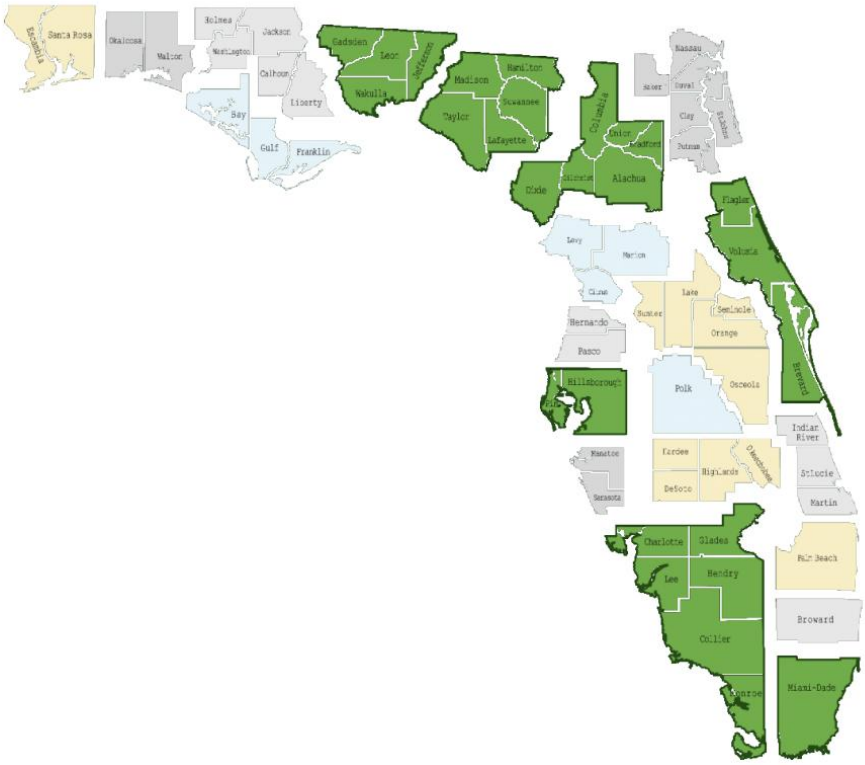
**(a) General Requirements**

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

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

Florida's 21 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and the LWDAs they serve are shown in the map below and are listed at careersourceflorida.com.

**Figure 6.01**
**Florida Workforce Development Boards**



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

**LWDAs**

As directed by the 2021 Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act, CareerSource Florida conducted a statewide analysis of all 24 workforce areas to reduce the total number of areas in the state. Upon completion of the analysis, the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan was considered and approved by the board of directors in February 2023. This plan included a recommendation to the governor for the designation of 21 total areas for the state. Governor DeSantis officially affirmed this recommendation and the state is currently implementing the new area designations by July 1, 2024.

CareerSource Florida, in coordination with the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), reviews the performance and financial integrity of each of the state's designated workforce local areas and existing LWDBs on an ongoing basis. Recommendations are presented to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors to designate all workforce local areas and to continue the charter of existing LWDBs. The existing 24 local workforce areas were designated for the period from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, at the June 2023 board meeting. In a public meeting, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors reviewed the action to provide the subsequent designation to existing workforce local areas and to continue the charter to the existing LWDBs.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 094 – Local Workforce Area Designation outlines the process for new and subsequent area designation, including the defined performance and fiscal criteria for LWDBs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

To determine subsequent LWDA designation, the phrase "performed successfully" means the LWDA met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance for the last two consecutive years for which data are available, and that the local area has not failed the same measure for the last two consecutive program years.

"Sustained fiscal integrity for all program years" means the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has not made a formal determination that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area improperly expended funds due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration for the two-year period preceding the determination.

**Planning Regions**

Prior to the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan, the state 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.

Various regional alignments may be considered and proposed by workforce system stakeholders using these six factors, including state policymakers, members of the state and local CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, state and local workforce staff, partner program staff, business and industry partners, and workforce and education associations. For the state to consider and designate LWDAs, a formal proposal must be presented to the state workforce development board 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 LWDB plan incorporates its respective strategies to continue evaluating potential regional planning areas.

As part of the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan implementation, regional planning areas are developed to include a minimum of two contiguous LWDAs, ensuring increased collaboration and productivity. In September 2023, the state workforce development board (state board) approved CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2023.09.19.A.1 – Regional Planning Areas, implementing the requirements for regional planning areas.

FloridaCommerce, after consultation with CareerSource Florida, LWDBs, and chief local elected officials for the Regional Planning Area, shall require the LWDBs and chief local elected officials within a planning region to include the shared Regional Planning Area objectives, activities, and performance elements as a regional addendum to each LWDB's WIOA local plan. FloridaCommerce shall provide technical assistance and labor market data, as requested by local areas, to assist with such regional planning and subsequent service delivery efforts.

As of February 2024, there have been two requests for identification as a regional planning area. While the state board awaits additional requests for designation, the remaining LWDAs remain designated as regional planning areas that correspond to their individual designated LWDA.

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

Florida has established appeals process specific to objections on local area designations. This process is published in Guidance Paper 005 found online at: https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/lwdb-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers/2017-guidance-papers/localareadesignatn-ap94.pdf?sfvrsn=2e3770b0_4.

To date, the appeal process has never been invoked or used.

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

The USDOL developed a uniform policy for acceptable methods of cost allocation and resource sharing with respect to funding the one-stop delivery system. Under WIOA and consistent with the Uniform Guidance, funding provided by the one-stop partners to cover the operating costs, including infrastructure and additional costs, of the one-stop delivery system must be based on the partner program's proportionate use of the system and relative benefit received.

WIOA requires LWDBs, with the agreement of the chief local elected official, to develop and execute memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with required partners on the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local service delivery area. Each LWDB must include an infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) in the MOU with required partners. The IFA details how infrastructure costs for the one-stop delivery system will be funded locally. LWDBs and career centers are expected to act in good faith and negotiate infrastructure costs and additional costs of operating a local one-stop delivery system transparently.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 106, MOUs and IFAs, 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, FloridaCommerce, and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE)).

If a LWDB is unable to execute MOUs or agree on infrastructure costs with required partners, all parties shall attempt to resolve the issue in a timely and efficient manner. If resolved, no further action is necessary. If issues regarding MOUs and/or IFAs remain unresolved, LWDBs shall document the issue and efforts at resolution. Documentation is forwarded to the FloridaCommerce Division of Workforce Services, the Chancellor for Career and Adult Education, the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Director of the Division of Blind Services, or the executive administrator(s) of agencies responsible for administering the partner's program. FloridaCommerce and the appropriate division will work to resolve the impasse and secure an executed agreement. A joint decision shall be transmitted within 30 calendar days of receipt.

Issues will be remanded 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 Secretary of FloridaCommerce, or other agency heads to resolve the impasse and provide a resolution response to all parties. Decisions are considered final.

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

Under the Local Funding Mechanism (LFM), one-stop career center partners may determine what funds they will use to pay for infrastructure costs. There are no specific caps on the amount or percentage of overall funding a partner may contribute to fund infrastructure costs under the LFM, except those contributions for administrative costs may not exceed the amount available for administrative costs. LFMs provide LWDBs and partners with the flexibility to design and fund a one-stop delivery system through a consensus to meet the needs of their local area by leveraging the funds and resources available to provide program services. The intent of the LFM is to encourage local areas to reach a consensus in developing a local IFA.

After all local MOU and IFA negotiation options have been exhausted, even when only one required partner is unable to come to an agreement, the SFM is triggered.

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, represented by its CareerSource Florida professional staff, consults with the Governor regarding the funding of infrastructure costs and is responsible for developing the formula used by the Governor under the SFM to determine a one-stop career center's budget.

Under the SFM, the LWDB is required to calculate the statewide funding caps and the amount available for local areas that have not reached consensus and to determine the partners' contributions for infrastructure. The statewide caps are calculated by considering total funding for a partner against the statutory caps specified in WIOA for infrastructure costs. The SFM is only applicable to required partners and cannot be triggered by additional partners not reaching a consensus.

If the SFM is triggered, LWDBs must provide a notice that they are unable to reach a consensus on infrastructure funding to the Governor, CareerSource Florida, and FloridaCommerce. Notification must be provided by the specific date established in FloridaCommerce's guidance on infrastructure funding.

The SFM requires complex calculations and determinations and seeks the guidance of multiple parties. Reaching consensus on IFAs must be completed by the LWDBs no later than March 30, prior to the beginning of the subsequent program year (PY) beginning July 1.

LWDBs must provide local negotiation materials to FloridaCommerce. The following steps will be executed:

- Determine one-stop career center infrastructure budget(s).
- Establish cost allocation methodology.
- Determine partners' proportionate shares.
- Calculate statewide caps.
- Assess the aggregate total of infrastructure contributions as it relates to the statewide cap.
- Adjust proportionate shares.

LWDBs and partners may appeal the state funding mechanism and determination of shared infrastructure costs. The appeal may be founded on the basis that the determination is inconsistent with proportionate share requirements, the cost contribution limitations, or the cost contribution caps consistent with the process described in the state plan.

Appeals must be sent within 21 days from the LWDB's receipt of the state's determination on shared infrastructure costs. Appeals must be filed in writing with the President and CEO of CareerSource Florida. Decisions on appeals will be documented in writing and considered final.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 106, Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements can be viewed online.

**(2) Statewide Activities.**

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

State policies and guidance are communicated to LWDB staff and partners through state law, this four-year plan, CareerSource Florida strategic and administrative policies, and workforce guidance. Programmatic and administrative requirements are described in a Grantee-Sub-Grantee Agreement executed by FloridaCommerce and each LWDB requiring their compliance with all federal and state laws, regulations, and any state requirements.

State law, policy and guidance can be found at: Chapter 445, Florida Statutes (WIOA), Section 1008 FETPIP and other administrative requirements described in State Guidance – http://leg.state.fl.us/STATUTES/.

- FloridaCommerce Regulations, Division of Workforce Services, Florida Administrative Code 73B: https://flrules.org/.
- Policy Development Framework: https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/.
- State Board Strategic Policies: https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us/policies-and-initiatives/careersource-florida-policies/.
- FloridaCommerce Administrative Policies (organized by program): https://floridajobs.org/local-workforce-development-board-resources/policy-and-guidance/guidance-papers.
- FloridaCommerce Memoranda (organized by year of issuance): https://floridajobs.org/local-workforce-development-board-resources/policy-and-guidance/memoranda.
- FloridaCommerce Monitoring Tools: https://floridajobs.org/local-workforce-development-board-resources/program-monitoring-and-reports/Programmatic/Tools.
- FloridaCommerce Program Resources: https://floridajobs.org/local-workforce-development-board-resources/programs-and-resources/program-resources.
- FloridaCommerce forwards federal directives and other resource materials via communiques or via email notification and posting on the FloridaCommerce website.

**(B) Describe how the State intends to use the Governor's set aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.**

WIOA allows for the allocation of a portion of each of the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding streams for use by the Governor for state-level initiatives.

After statewide administrative and program costs are deducted from the total WIOA funds available, the remaining balance is available for the Governor's discretionary projects. The state workforce board determines specific allotments for purposes of state demonstration and pilot projects as well as other workforce development initiatives. Projects funded by the set aside

funding are intended to advance innovative approaches to service provision and encourage braiding of services or funding across partners. Additionally, the state aims to address the unique needs of target populations in the state (including youth, individuals receiving public assistance, individuals with disabilities, veterans, etc.) and employ industry sector strategies to focus efforts on building needed talent pipelines.

Examples initiatives include:

**Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise Initiative**

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity was launched in 2020 as a pilot program by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise is the latest program expansion and focuses on enhancing collaboration between the CareerSource Florida network and DCF to help Floridians achieve self-sufficiency through employment, training, and support services.

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity is a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty and promoting economic mobility in Florida. Through this initiative, DCF is guiding Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity and economic self-sufficiency by focusing on community collaboration among the private sector, faith-based community organizations, non-profits, and government entities to break down silos and connect Floridians to resources that lead to stability and new economic opportunities.

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise strengthens coordination between DCF and Florida's LWDBs to better assist eligible Floridians with overcoming barriers to education, training, and employment. Under the Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise initiative, a referral process involving regional DCF offices and LWDBs was established and specialized services and programming are made available using these funds to help Hope Florida program participants find jobs, enroll in training, and launch new career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency and, ultimately, to economic prosperity. LWDBs can refer potential clients in need of immediate support to address barriers and challenges not related to employment to DCF to access resources that are beyond the allowability of WIOA funding.

Lastly, continually linking these efforts to the spirit of the REACH Act of 2021 and 2023's Senate Bill 240, this No Wrong Door approach would further ensure public resources are effectively targeted to help more Floridians and their families achieve economic stability and improve their quality of life. The employment-focused expansion continues to build on the momentum and outcomes of the innovative Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity initiative that now also includes programs for supporting seniors (Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose) and at-risk youth and their families (Hope Florida – A Pathway to Potential).

**Florida Healthcare Training Initiative (FHTI)**

The FHTI is a specialized program under WIOA that enhances healthcare training opportunities and fosters a skilled healthcare workforce in Florida. FHTI recognizes the critical role of well-trained healthcare professionals in delivering quality healthcare services and aims to provide accessible and comprehensive training programs to individuals seeking healthcare careers.

A key goal of the FHTI pilot is to assess the impact of fully leveraging the flexibilities allowable within WIOA to remove barriers to enrollment and increase both the type and length of services

to increase credential attainment in healthcare, along with initial employment and employment retention for one year.

The objectives of this initiative include:

- Promote High-Quality Training: FHTI will promote high-quality healthcare training programs aligned with industry standards and best practices. These programs will cover a range of healthcare occupations including nursing, medical coding, medical assisting, pharmacy technicians, and laboratory technicians. Training curricula will emphasize both theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for employment.
- Expand Access and Minimize Eligibility Requirements: FHTI will prioritize accessibility by fully utilizing the flexibilities allowed in WIOA through minimizing eligibility requirements and expanding available services. The goal is to ensure individuals from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented populations and underserved communities have robust and highly accessible opportunities to enroll in healthcare training programs and attain employment. The initiative will focus on expanding pathways for healthcare careers.
- Supportive Services: FHTI will establish a robust system of supportive services to address participants' needs throughout their training journey. These services may include career counseling, academic advising, mentorship programs, transportation assistance, childcare support, and access to affordable healthcare. The goal is to provide innovative, individualized, and allowable wraparound support that enables participants to focus on training and successful attainment of a credential as well as employment by continuing supportive services throughout the participants' first year of employment in healthcare.
- Employer Engagement and Work-Based Learning: FHTI will foster partnerships with healthcare employers, industry associations and healthcare education providers to develop work-based learning opportunities. These may include apprenticeships, internships, and clinical rotations, allowing participants to gain practical experience, develop professional networks, and increase their employability in the healthcare field.
- Data-Driven Approach: FHTI will use data to drive decision-making to continuously evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the initiative. By monitoring participant outcomes, program performance, and labor market trends, FHTI will be able to make informed adjustments to training programs, supportive services, and partnerships to maximize the impact on and achieve positive employment outcomes for participants.

**Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grant Program**

When workers lack needed training and businesses experience skills gaps, a company's ability to compete, expand and retain workers can be compromised. Florida's IWT grant program addresses such needs. The IWT grant program was created to provide grant funding for continuing education and training of incumbent employees at existing Florida businesses. The program has proven to be a popular resource for small businesses.

**Rural Initiatives**

Florida has identified 29 Florida counties and six cities in three additional counties as Rural Areas of Opportunity. These counties and cities face extraordinary economic challenges. Historically, CareerSource Florida's Board of Directors has designated supplementary allocations for LWDBs identified as rural boards to support operations by Florida's smallest LWDBs in providing workforce services to employers and residents in the areas they serve.

Initiatives funded through this allocation will support critical workforce development needs in rural communities.

**Support System Improvements and REACH Act Implementation**
An investment of $5 million in funding was allocated to aid in modernizing the alignment of LWDBs to better support service excellence across the CareerSource Florida network, with an emphasis on assisting in the alignment of local workforce development boards. This includes transition assistance, supporting the creation of new legal entities, rebranding assistance, and organizational change management. This investment in supporting the realignment from 24 LWDBs into 21 boards will help ensure the LWDBs' continuity of constituent services is uninterrupted, and the goals of the workforce system transformation plan can be fully realized, including:

- Increased access to workforce training options while never decreasing access to services.
- Collaboration among economic, educational, and governmental agencies.
- Consistent services to businesses and workforce across the state.
- Alignment of workforce development with economic development.
- Elimination of administrative layers to help focus on workforce development.
- Flexibility in allocating resources to businesses and workforce.
- Maintenance of business partnerships and sector strategies.
- Accountability of workforce-related programs.

**(C) Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at-risk companies and workers.**

Each LWDB has a business services unit that includes a Rapid Response Coordinator. LWDB staff respond and provide rapid response services to employers that submit Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices and Trade Act Petitions. LWDBs have strong relationships with local economic development staff and companies in their area. These relationships allow a LWDB to become aware of challenges a company is experiencing and provide an opportunity to offer layoff aversion assistance prior to WARN activity.

LWDB staff are responsible for making initial contact with a company official to obtain information about the layoff. The Rapid Response Coordinator will then help convene partners to meet with the employer and create a plan of services to meet both the employers' and separating employees' needs. If workers are still attached to the employer, the Rapid Response Coordinator conducts Rapid Response Information Meetings for the workers providing information on various services offered in the CareerSource Florida One-Stop Career Center and through partner programs. Through discussion with the employer, the LWDB may offer strategies that support layoff aversion or rapid reemployment which include:

- Shared work/short-time compensation.
- IWT program opportunities.
- Assistance with filing Reemployment Assistance Compensation.

- Assistance with filing trade petitions, if applicable.
- Information on retraining/upskilling opportunities.
- Job search workshops.
- Financial literacy and planning workshops.
- Retraining opportunities.

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 involves fewer than 50 workers, affected workers are directed to the nearest career center for re-employment services.

In response to mass layoffs, job dislocations, and plant closings, the State Rapid Response Program Unit works collaboratively with local Rapid Response Coordinators to ensure they have the support needed during these events. Local Rapid Response coordinators are assisted by programmatic staff who provide individualized guidance and peer-to-peer counseling to staff assisting job seekers in the local area. When WARN notices are received, internal processes are in place to meet with the local area career board to discuss specific strategies to minimize the impact on the community. Ongoing monthly technical assistance sessions are facilitated with frequent discussions on targeted activities performed by local area staff.

Layoff Aversion is a major element and a proactive strategy for natural disasters. Local Rapid Response Coordinators will continue to receive technical assistance with detailed strategies for engaging employers during the business cycle. Additionally, local area staff have access to the EconoVue platform, which is a business intelligence data-driven application that measures the health of an organization. EconoVue provides targeted business outreach and strategic planning for engaging business prior to a natural disaster. This allows Florida to engage businesses and prepare proactive measures that will assist before and during these events.

**(D) Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.**

The Reemployment and Emergency Assistance Coordination Team (REACT), managed by the State Rapid Response Coordinator, is responsible for carrying out statewide rapid response activities and overseeing rapid response and layoff aversion activities carried out by the LWDBs. FloridaCommerce REACT staff are the initial contact for employers who submit layoff and business closing notices under the 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 FloridaCommerce website at floridajobs.org. FloridaCommerce 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.
- Total number of affected workers.
- Affected employer's industry.
- WARN notification date.
- Layoff dates.
- Copy of WARN notice.

In cases of natural disasters, the FloridaCommerce Rapid Response Coordinator works closely with the FloridaCommerce 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 FloridaCommerce and the CareerSource Florida network deploy to affected areas to deliver rapid response services.

The State Rapid Response and Disaster Recovery programs collaborate with FEMA and other community related partners to provide updates regarding ongoing activities to prepare for natural disasters and participate in conference calls and meetings facilitated by FEMA and State Emergency Management officials. The state has an administrative policy regarding Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grants that addresses coordination with other disaster response and recovery agencies. Additional administrative policies for Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion are currently in process.

FloridaCommerce and the CareerSource Florida network have 22 mobile career centers equipped with telecommunications equipment. These mobile units contain computers, workstations and supplies to provide 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.

**(E) Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) and ensures the provision of appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A) and TAA Section 221(a)(2)(A)).**

**This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition and how the state will ensure the provision of appropriate career**

**service to workers in the groups identified in the petition (TAA Sec. 221(a)(2)(A)).**

FloridaCommerce uses a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), trade Adjustment Assistance 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 affected workers. Each LWDB has a business services unit and a designated Rapid Response Coordinator responsible for making initial contact with a company official within 48 hours 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.

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.

If a TAA petition is filed and not approved at the time of the rapid response meeting, the worker 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 conducted, 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 until the petition is certified.

If the worker group has not received rapid response assistance, although workers may have officially separated from the company or firm, it is recommended 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.

**(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements.**

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

**QRT Program**

Established in 1993, the QRT grant program provides state-level funding for customized training to new or expanding businesses. Florida has an enhanced application process powered by a Salesforce customer relationship management system which allows businesses to quickly respond to training objectives in demand-driven areas. In the PY 2022-2023, more than $7.3 million in QRT training grants were awarded to 24 businesses to provide skills upgrade training to more than 2,200 trainees.

The Florida Legislature provided funding to develop and launch a strategic marketing and business outreach plan for Florida's nationally recognized QRT program. The marketing plan was developed to identify a long-term vision and strategic objectives for QRT.

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 provides a clear, concise roadmap for CareerSource Florida's current and future investments in the marketing and promotion of QRT among businesses, including small businesses and key influencers. 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.

**IWT Program**

Established in 1999, IWT grants provide funding for 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 PY 2022-2023, CareerSource Florida awarded IWT grants totaling more than $2.1 million to help companies train and retain more than 1,634 full-time employees. A recent study of IWT trainees found that trainees who completed training in 2017-2018 realized median wages 15% higher one year after training.

Florida's IWT program is typically funded at $3 million by the legislature in the General Appropriations Act, with additional funding at the discretion of the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors. Funding priority was established by the REACH Act and is awarded in the following order:

- Businesses that provide employees with opportunities to acquire new or improved skills by earning a credential on the Master Credentials List.
- Hospitals operated by nonprofit or local government entities that provide nursing opportunities to acquire new or improved skills.
- Businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant upgrade in employee skills.
- Businesses with 25 employees or fewer, businesses in rural areas, and businesses in distressed inner-city areas.
- Businesses in a qualified targeted industry or businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant layoff aversion strategy.

Florida's IWT program has helped more than 3,000 businesses strengthen more than 200,000 employees' skills over the past two decades.

**Transitional Jobs and On-the-Job Training (OJT)**

Florida utilizes Transitional Jobs and OJT as additional avenues to provide training opportunities to WIOA participants. LWDBs are encouraged to leverage current local level partnerships and develop new ones with local businesses and industry to support economic development in their communities. Economic development strategies are coordinated at the state level by CareerSource Florida.

LWDBs may allocate up to 10% of local Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to transitional jobs for individuals with barriers to employment. LWDBs offering transitional jobs as an individualized career service must ensure these jobs are time-limited, wage-paid, subsidized work experiences that help individuals who are chronically unemployed and/or have an inconsistent work history.

LWDBs are also encouraged to target individuals who are long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and current or former recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. Transitional jobs are used to assist individuals with establishing a work history and developing skills to obtain unsubsidized employment and progress in the workplace.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 100 – Work-Based Learning and Work-Based Training outlines specific requirements LWDBs must include in their local operating procedures governing transitional jobs and other work-based learning activities.

OJT ensures high-quality training for both participants and employers as both have a vested interest in the program's success. LWDBs are encouraged to use this training method to address critical workforce needs for in-demand occupations, enhance skills of participants, and aid employers in attaining a qualified, skilled workforce with competencies to meet their needs. Employers have the unique opportunity to train potential candidates in the most efficient way to perform tasks for their company at a subsidized cost. Participants receive direct training and 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.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 009 – On-the-Job Training outlines specific requirements governing the provision of OJT.

**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.

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 100 – Work-Based Learning and Work-Based Training outlines specific requirements LWDBs must include in their local operating procedures governing customized jobs and other work-based training activities.

**(2) Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants, and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).**

CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2019.02.13.A.1 – Apprenticeship Policy calls for a network-wide apprenticeship strategy to be implemented by all LWDBs to develop talent pipelines for Florida employers and establish the state as a national leader in registered

apprenticeship programs. This strategy also fosters strong partnerships between LWDBs, economic developers, employers, educational institutions, and other key stakeholders. This strategic policy was updated in December 2023 to establish a series of ambitious apprenticeship expansion goals to be accomplished by 2030. By positioning registered 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.

CareerSource Florida works with the FDOE Office of Apprenticeship to identify opportunities to promote registered apprenticeship and explore education opportunities for LWDBs to engage the state apprenticeship office and its local representatives. Florida received an ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant from the USDOL to integrate registered apprenticeships within the state's existing workforce and economic development system. As part of the grant implementation, CareerSource Florida joined forces with FloridaCommerce, the FDOE's Office of Apprenticeship, LWDBs, industry intermediaries, and many other strategic partners to identify barriers, opportunities, and pilot models of success.

This collaboration led to the development of Apprentice Florida, which promotes registered apprenticeship, educates individuals regarding apprenticeship opportunities, assists businesses in establishing or participating in registered apprenticeships, and encourages expansion of apprenticeship into targeted sectors like Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Construction, Healthcare, Hospitality & Tourism, Information Technology, and Trade & Logistics. Key achievements include developing and maintaining the Apprentice Florida website, an EY Apprenticeship Assessment report, and ongoing interagency collaboration and information-sharing.

To build capacity and improve awareness, the apprenticeship navigator project has enabled all 24 local boards to designate apprenticeship navigators or allow staff members to engage in apprenticeship navigator functions. The apprenticeship navigator training program provides a repository of accessible tools and resources within a virtual team platform that provides a forum for ongoing support. Additionally, navigators meet monthly to discuss expansion initiatives, identify process delivery improvements, and review outreach/communications mechanisms. Technical assistance with WIOA support for apprenticeship activities is also offered to navigators on an ongoing basis.

As subject matter experts, apprenticeship navigators at LWDBs work with internal partners to identify the needs of businesses and job seekers. They also work with external partners to leverage resources that increase apprenticeship opportunities. The navigators educate themselves and their partners on local, state, and national apprenticeship funding opportunities such as grants, incentive programs, and philanthropic awards and work closely in partnership with the FDOE Office of Apprenticeship's apprenticeship training representatives to expand apprenticeship opportunities statewide.

**(3) <u>Training Provider Eligibility Procedure</u>. Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).**

WIOA and its regulations establish the allowable types of training service, including work-based and classroom instruction, with the goal of ensuring provider performance, job-driven training,

informed consumer choice, continuous improvement, and cost-effective investment of public funds. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 90 – WIOA Eligible Training Provider List was implemented to provide guidance to LWDBs regarding the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements. This policy was subsequently revised to streamline the eligibility determination process and improve alignment with the REACH Act. The revised Administrative Policy 90 – Eligible Training Provider List Requirements was approved by the CareerSource Florida board on September 19, 2023.

Administrative Policy 90 – WIOA Eligible Training Provider List Requirements outlines the process for initial and continued eligibility. In addition, the policy introduces the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) portal which is managed by FloridaCommerce and maintained in Employ Florida. The ETPL portal is the mechanism used by FloridaCommerce to manage the ETPL process, and by LWDBs and training providers to apply for initial and continued eligibility. Training providers seeking initial or continued eligibility determinations may begin the application process by:

- Contacting the LWDB in the local area or planning region in which they plan to operate. LWDBs may assist the training provider with the application process including registration in Employ Florida, reviewing the application for accuracy, and uploading documentation in the ETPL portal necessary to complete the eligibility request.
- Contacting the State ETPL Coordinator.

In either situation, the State ETPL Coordinator will make the determination to either approve or deny the application for initial or continued eligibility for the state's ETPL. When establishing local ETPLs, LWDBs must select approved training providers from the state ETPL.

The REACH Act requires FloridaCommerce, with input from the state workforce development board, FDOE and others, to establish minimum criteria that WIOA ETPs must achieve for completion, earnings, and employment rates of participants. Training providers will be required to meet at least two of the minimum criteria for continued eligibility. The minimum criteria established may not exceed the threshold at which more than 20% of all ETPs in the state would fall below. FloridaCommerce released new performance criteria to the CareerSource Florida network and stakeholders for ETPs in July 2020, and continues to develop and update performance criteria based on guidance provided through the REACH Act.

The REACH Act also requires FloridaCommerce, along with other stakeholders, to develop an administrative rule to codify the state's minimum initial and continued eligibility performance requirements. FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida developed this administrative rule using the Policy Development Workgroup, which consists of staff from CareerSource Florida's Strategic Policy and Performance team and FloridaCommerce's Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support and includes LWDBs and other stakeholders. The administrative rule was updated and posted for public comment to solicit recommendations and feedback from interested members of the public but has been delayed to better align the rule with recent changes to workforce legislation. Once the rule is codified, the CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 90 will be updated to align to the changes enacted through the administrative rule.

Information about procedures, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility for registered apprenticeship programs is available in CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2019.02.13.A.1 – Apprenticeship Policy and

CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 100 – Work-Based Training. CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 90 has been revised and appropriate relevant policies and procedures will also be updated as necessary during implementation of the new policy and associated ETPL portal. Further implementation of Administrative Policy 90 will align with the TEGL No. 08-19 and 8-19, Change 1 guidelines and will address initial and continued eligibility determinations of training providers, the federal and state requirements for ETPs, performance standards, the reporting of data and the removal provisions for training providers.

**(4) Describe how the State will implement and monitor for the Adult Priority of Service requirement in WIOA section 134 (c)(3)(E) that requires American Job Center staff, when using WIOA Adult program funds to provide individualized career services and training services, to give priority of service to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners).**

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. As outlined in CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 105 – Priority of Service, each LWDB is required to describe in its local plan 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 labor exchange and case management system, Employ Florida.

**(5) Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.**

WIOA sec. 133(b)(4) provides the authority for LWDBs, with the approval of the Governor, to transfer up to and including 100% of the funds allocated to local areas for adult activities for expenditure on dislocated worker activities, and up to 100% of funds allocated to local areas for dislocated worker activities for expenditure on adult activities. FloridaCommerce receives and reviews such requests for approval, on behalf of the Governor, to allow LWDBs to transfer funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Funds may be transferred between the adult and dislocated worker programs when the criteria established in CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 118 – Adult and Dislocated Worker Funds Transfer Authority have been met. LWDBs are required to ensure any transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs complies with federal law as well as record and document their use and application of local funds.

**(6) Describe the State's policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).**

LWDBs must co-enroll TAA and WIOA participants in accordance with the Florida's Trade Adjustment Assistance and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Co-

enrollment policy. The policy is posted on the FloridaCommerce website and is accessible by the local area coordinators. However, the policy is distributed annually to the local area TAA coordinators during training as a reminder of the requirements for co-enrolling participants. The State Trade Program is in the process of updating the program's webpages and correspondence to be plain language. LWDB staff will continue to receive training regarding uniform procedures for co-enrolling TAA participants in WIOA. Additional assistance for co-enrollment may be located on FloridaCommerce's Co-enrollment Help Center created to assist the local area career centers.

**(7) Describe the State's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)**

At the writing of the plan, the TAA Program is currently in reversion and USDOL is not accepting new petitions. The State Trade Program is in the process of engaging individuals who are included in a certified petition. Participants seeking training through the TAA program will be co-enrolled into the WIOA Program to maximize the services that are available to the participant. LWDBs maintain a roster of customers who attended orientation meetings and record information in the state management information system, Employ Florida.

**(8) Describe the State's process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305**

FloridaCommerce will facilitate regional training as a part of its annual training for local area board staff that will co-focus on the TAA Program. The State Trade Program will break up the state into four sections and hold an annual training in a centralized location and invite the surrounding LWDBs to participate in the mandatory training. LWDBs may choose which of the four training sessions they would like to participate in if they are unable to attend the session that is closest to their local area. Additionally, the State TAA Coordinator will provide onsite training to LWDBs who have onboarded new staff to ensure proficiency in knowledge about the Trade program. Technical assistance may be provided to the LWDBs at any point, based on a request by the LWDB or the state's determination that additional training or guidance is necessary to correct a noted deficiency. Monthly program calls also provide a forum to familiarize one-stop staff on the TAA program.

**(c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-**

**(1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA. Further, include a description of how the State assists local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.**

When LWDBs award grants or contracts to youth service providers, they must do so in accordance with the following criteria outlined in Administrative Policy 120 – Youth Service Provider Selection that demonstrate the ability of the provider(s) to:

- Effectively provide the youth services sought by the LWDB; specifically, the execution of the 14 youth program elements.
- Coordinate services with other community organizations, vendors, or the LWDB.
- Provide services at a reasonable cost and provide an accurate project budget.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the WIOA program statutory and regulatory requirements, and any other federal, state, and local policies impacting youth program operations.
- Identify partners the provider will work with to help youth achieve successful outcomes.
- Offer or provide access to a continuum of services that allow participants to obtain a General Education Development or high school diploma, enroll into post-secondary education, and obtain employment within their chosen career paths, as applicable.
- Utilize career pathways and sector strategy models with a structured sequence of activities, and multiple entry and exit points that provide adequate supportive services, as applicable.
- Meet or exceed performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of the youth served by the program, and the minimum standards and targets set by the LWDB to ensure the LWDB's indicators of performance negotiated with the state for the youth program are met.
- Meet established reporting requirements.
- Demonstrate past performance providing youth services, if applicable.
- Demonstrate strong community and business linkages to ensure the ability to develop work-based learning opportunities and meet the skill and training needs for the state's talent pipeline.

LWDBs must ensure the provider has been in business for at least six months prior to submitting a bid or response to provide services and has a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division. LWDBs must also ensure the provider has not been found at fault in criminal, civil, or administrative proceedings related to its performance as a training provider or educational institution, and they must disclose any pending criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent.

Further, LWDBs may establish additional criteria to ensure they use providers best positioned to deliver required program elements resulting in strong outcomes for youth participants. If an LWDB establishes additional criteria, it must describe such criteria in its WIOA four-year local plan.

FloridaCommerce provides technical assistance regarding the provision of youth activities, as necessary.

**(2) Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving equitable results for out-of-school and in-school youth. Describe promising practices or partnership models that local areas are implementing and the state's role in supporting and scaling those models within the state for both in-school and out-of-school youth.**

Florida recognizes the need to develop strategies that address challenges of at-risk youth, whether in school or out, geared at addressing student retention, engagement, and immediate transition to post-secondary education, meaningful employment, and/or military service. To support achieving impactful and measurable results for all youth throughout the state, Florida requested two waivers that would allow the LWDBs to provide equitable services to at-risk youth that are in-school, at a comparable rate of youth who are out-of-school:

- Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth (ISY) (ages 14 to 21) – allows for greater flexibility with, and increases the state's capacity for, responding to the training and employment needs of the state's youth, more specifically those who are in school. LWDBs will be more equipped to respond to the workforce needs of ISY. Additionally, there will be increased access to, and engagement of, ISY that need post-secondary education, training, and support necessary to succeed in the labor market at a similar rate to that of out-of-school youth.

- Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Expenditure Rate - lowered the OSY expenditure rate to 50% for statewide and local area activities to allow the State and local areas to serve ISY at a comparable rate. This approach allows for the expansion of opportunities at the local level for recruitment and enrollment of at-risk ISY who could benefit from the services of the workforce system. By design, the waiver allows Florida to expend half of its youth funding on both populations of youth thereby increasing the equitability of obtaining positive outcomes, regardless of how the youth was enrolled.

There are several promising practices for youth service programming within the state. Below are a few examples of such.

- CareerSource Tampa Bay (CSTB) created the Apprenticeship-to-Career Empowerment (ACE) Program in partnership with the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners to provide youth between the ages of 18 to 24 of Hillsborough County resources to connect to a career ladder with future, self-sustaining wages, employment security and the training to succeed in industries with high-demand occupations such as IT, Health Care, and Manufacturing. The program is designed to reach out to young adults in low-income households, especially those exiting the foster care system and those escaping from human trafficking, to connect them with apprenticeship opportunities and occupational skills training. These opportunities serve as meaningful work experiences with local employers and will result in industry-recognized certifications and a pathway for a brighter future. With the success of the program over the past four years, CSTB scaled the program and has increased the age of individuals served up to 29 years of age to provide more young adults an opportunity to connect to promising career ladders.

- CareerSource Florida partnered with The Children's Trust who invests $3 million to fund Miami-Dade County Public Schools Summer Youth Internship Program. This is a great demonstration of leveraging community resources to provide opportunities for young adults to explore a variety of career paths to boost their skills and empower them on their journey to economic mobility. Due to the success of this partnership, the program is in its sixth year. Other local areas are encouraged to seek out similar opportunities to partner with community-based organizations to fund strategic investments and improve the lives of young people.

In addition, FloridaCommerce is creating a WIOA-specific workgroup that includes state-level policy and monitoring staff along with subject matter experts from the local areas to:

- Receive training and updates on the program from FloridaCommerce staff, as appropriate.
- Have an opportunity to receive on-demand technical assistance related to the program.
- Identify programmatic problems experienced locally and collaboratively brainstorm and develop solutions.
- Identify and share best/promising practices that can be scaled across the state.

**(3) Describe how the State assists local workforce boards in implementing innovative models for delivering youth workforce investment activities, including effective ways local workforce boards can make available the 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2); and explain how local areas can ensure work experience, including quality pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, is prioritized as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy.**

All 14 program elements described in WIOA sec. 129(c)(2) are required to be made available and effectively implemented by LWDBs, including quality pre-apprenticeships. When competitively procuring youth services, LWDBs must ensure offerors/bidders successfully meet the criteria outlined in Section VI. (c)(1). LWDBs are also encouraged to evaluate their internal partners for services to youth that may be leveraged within the career center service delivery model.

Each LWDB is required to describe in its four-year local plan the design framework for local youth programs and how the 14 program elements are made available within that framework. In addition to reviewing each LWDB's local plan for compliance, FloridaCommerce will ensure that all 14 program elements are available within LWDBs through its annual programmatic monitoring reviews. Where possible, FloridaCommerce will make suggestions or share best practices from other states and/or local areas that may assist in improving the provision and utilization of the program's required program elements. Additionally, based on its assessment of policies or feedback from LWDBs, FloridaCommerce will update its policies to allow flexibility, within the confines of the federal and state laws and regulations.

LWDBs are encouraged to utilize work-based learning as an effective service strategy to assist youth in entering and advancing along a career path leading to self-sufficient employment. Work-based learning activities include registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and work experience. Work-based learning affords young people who lack work experience opportunities to prove their abilities and skills to then transition to regular employment progressively.

FloridaCommerce will further support LWDBs on the use of work-based learning activities as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy through its upcoming youth framework and design administrative policy. Youth apprenticeship is a proven workforce solution, and support for quality pre-apprenticeships will assist youth in preparing to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. FloridaCommerce will continue to provide technical assistance and policy guidance to LWDBs interested in implementing innovative models for

delivering workforce activities to youth, including youth-focused apprenticeship expansion activities, to ensure program compliance while offering the flexibility to design programs that accelerate the youth's attainment of education and career goals. Youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship have been a focus of state and local collaboration through projects and initiatives like ApprenticeFlorida, Apprenticeship Navigators, and inter-agency apprenticeship accelerators.

Additionally, Florida Commerce provides on demand and planned training to LWDBs on effective delivery of the 14 program elements and work experience.

**(4) Provide the language contained in the State policy for "requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment" criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for "requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment" criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.**

FloridaCommerce does not have a policy on the "requires additional assistance" criterion, but it does confirm the local area complies with federal guidance for this activity through various ways to include monitoring and technical assistance reviews. Florida Commerce also provides training on this topic to ensure an understanding of the "requires additional assistance" criterion. Florida Commerce provides on-demand and scheduled training on the youth program. LWDBs can interact/network with each other and identify/share local promising practices.

If an LWDB uses this criterion, it must define the term "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment" and correlating eligibility documentation requirements. The local definition must describe in detail the circumstances or other criteria the LWDB will use to qualify a youth under this eligibility barrier. The definition must be included in the LWDB's local plan and applicable youth eligibility local operating procedures. Such procedures should be reasonable, quantifiable, and based on evidence that specific characteristics of the youth identified in the definition objectively require additional assistance.

FloridaCommerce will ensure the local areas have a policy for these criteria by reviewing their local plans to ensure the definition is included and compliant with WIOA. Additionally, FloridaCommerce requires each LWDB to provide a copy of its local operating procedures as part of the annual programmatic monitoring reviews. The local operating procedures are reviewed for compliance with the monitoring tool by the Quality Assurance Team and shared with the Policy & Guidance Team for additional review/feedback. If the local operating procedures are determined to be insufficient, the Policy & Guidance Team schedules a technical assistance call to discuss the deficiencies and require that the LWDB update the procedures. Where necessary, FloridaCommerce will also consult on the drafting of an LWDB's procedures to ensure compliance at inception.

**(d) <u>Single-area State requirements</u>. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected**

**official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—**

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

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

**(3) A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**

**(4) A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**

**(5) The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.**

**(6) How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.**

**(7) How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.**

**(8) Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.**

This section is not applicable.

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

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

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

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

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

**(A) supporting employer engagement.**

**(B) connecting education and training strategies.**

**(C) supporting work-based learning.**

**(D) improving job and career results, and**

**(E) other guidance issued by the Department.**

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

**(6) Describes the processes used to:**

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

**(7) The most recent data available regarding the results and outcomes observed through implementation of the existing waiver, in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.**

Florida has three waivers in effect for PY 2022-2023 and seeks renewal through the duration of this plan. They are as follows:

**WIOA OSY Expenditure Requirement**

Florida submitted a request to the USDOL for a waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75% of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) responded March 9, 2023, approving the state's request to lower the expenditure requirement of reserve funds to 50% for OSY. In addition, the ETA approved the State's request to waive the requirement that local areas expend 75% of local youth formula funds on OSY. Florida was permitted to lower the local youth funds expenditure requirement to 50% for OSY.

**WIOA ISY ITAs**

Florida submitted a request to the USDOL for a waiver associated with the requirement 20 CFR 681.410 to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY. The ETA approved the State's request to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY Youth, ages 16-21.

**Recapture and Reallocation of WIOA Funds**

Florida submitted a request to the USDOL for a waiver of the reallocation provisions at WIOA Sections 128(c)(3) and 133(c)(3) to allow the State to develop different criteria than required by statute for the reallocation of recaptured funds among local workforce areas. The UDSOL responded by letter on December 6, 2022, approving the State's request according to State-developed criteria.

The charts below compare new ISY and OSY participations from PY 2021 to PY 2022. As a result of approved waivers, Florida saw an increase of 74 new ISY participations in PY 2022 compared to the prior year.

- 48% of PY 2022's ISY were new participants compared to only 30% in the prior year.
- Measurable skills gain rates for ISY increased 18.2% in PY 2022 from the prior year.

- 355 of the 421 (84.3%) new ISY participants in PY 2022 have measurable skills gains (not represented here).

**Figure 6.02**
**Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth Participation**
**for Program Years 2021-2022**

| | PY | Program | OSY Youth Participants | ISY Youth Participants | Total Youth Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SW | 2021 | Youth Participants | 4302 (78.7%) | 1167 (21.3%) | 5469 |
| SW | 2022 | Youth Participants | 4322 (83%) | 881 (16.9%) | 5203 |

| | PY | Program | New OSY Youth Participants | New ISY Youth Participants | Total New Youth Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SW | 2021 | New Youth Participants | 2363 | 347 | 2,710 |
| SW | 2022 | New Youth Participants | 2604 | 421 | 3,025 |

Below are counts of ISY and OSY enrolled in education or training programs leading to a recognized credential by PY. In summary, ISY enrollments have decreased, and measurable skill gains increased from the prior year.

**Figure 6.03**
**In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth**
**Enrolled in Education or Training Programs Leading to Credentials**

| PY | Program | OSY enrolled in Education and Training | OSY w/ Measurable skills gains | OSY Measurable Skills Gain Rate | ISY Enrolled in Education and Training | ISY with Measurable Skills Gain | ISY Measurable Skills Gain Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | Youth | **2843** | 2018 | 71.0% | **1107** | 727 | 65.7% |
| 2022 | Youth | **2976** | 2254 | 75.7% | **843** | 707 | 83.9% |

The chart below shows the number of OSY and ISY that were enrolled in education or training and utilized an ITA.

**Figure 6.04**
**In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth**
**Enrolled in Education or Training Using an Individual Training Account**

| PY | Program | Education and Training | Training Accounts | ISY Enrolled in Education and Training | Using Individual Training Accounts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | Youth | **2843** | 804 | **1107** | 28 |
| 2022 | Youth | **2976** | 846 | **843** | 14 |

**Figure 6.05**
**TITLE I-B ASSURANCES**

| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; |
| 2. | The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; |
| 3. | The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members; |
| 4. | The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2); |
| 5. | Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership; |
| 6. | The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults |
| | with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions; |
| 7. | The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7); |
| 8. | The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan; |
| 9. | If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; |
| 10. | The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. |
| 11. | The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); |

**Title I-B Signature Page**

**CareerSource Florida**

**Adrienne Johnston, President and CEO** **DATE**

**Florida Department of Commerce**

**J. Alex Kelly, Secretary** **DATE**

# SECTION VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS- WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Service)

**(a) Employment Service Staff.**

**(1) Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (WP), such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.**

Florida uses state merit staff when such services are mandated to be provided by state merit staff. Additionally, depending on local area structure, state merit staff and sub-recipient staff may be used for the provision of services.

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

Florida designed a comprehensive professional certification, formally known as the Florida Certified Workforce Professional (FCWP) to equip all career center and employment service 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 FCWP curriculum is a thorough online training program that covers topics including workforce system history, workforce program overview, 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 become an FCWP and demonstrate proficiency in assisting 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 FCWP–Tier II certification program. The Tier II curriculum includes in-depth information of specific workforce programs and prepares staff in Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Wagner Peyser (WP), Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Welfare Transition programs. FloridaCommerce plans to update the Tier II curriculum to include other programs such as Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), Florida's Unemployment Insurance program known as Reemployment Assistance (RA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training. The FCWP – Tier II certification program is a cost-effective method to train staff statewide that is immediately accessible.

In keeping with the Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan, the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) is implementing the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act via an initiative to enhance customer consistency through enhanced professional development training. FloridaCommerce will overhaul the FCWP – Tier III certification program to incorporate certification level training that is specific to vital positions within the one-stop

delivery system such as case manager (including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) Outreach Specialist), business services representative, program managers and other essential roles. The certification program will provide specialized credentials signifying staff have obtained the role-specific basic knowledge and skills to perform in such positions, providing a uniform foundation irrespective of program affiliation and nuances in processes of individual local workforce development board (LWDBs). Tier III provides a mechanism for role-based foundational training for staff new to workforce development, those interested in promoting, changing positions, or relocating within or outside of Florida.

FloridaCommerce hosts periodic on-site and web-based training opportunities to share programmatic 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.

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

In addition to LWDB employees and front-line staff, Florida provides available curriculum from the FCWP certification program to all core partners.

LWDBs may request training directly from the Bureau of Reemployment Assistance to ensure front-line staff are trained on the RA program, in general, as well as trained to help identify potential eligibility issues for referral to adjudication. Additionally, the Bureau of Reemployment Assistance coordinates with the Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support to facilitate and provide training to LWDB front-line staff as requested including but not limited to the following:

- RA filing activities.
- The rights and responsibilities of claimants.
- Required information necessary to file a claim.
- Where to refer customers for further assistance.

Webinar training sessions are recorded and RA educational resources, such as general information and frequently asked questions, are made available to local boards.

As mentioned earlier, FloridaCommerce plans to revamp the FCWP - Tier II certification program to include RA to further increase awareness on the identification of RA eligibility issues. In addition, as FloridaCommerce continues to evaluate the curricula of the FCWP and FCWP – Tier II certifications, Florida may also incorporate curriculum into the FCWP – Tier II certification program that includes program-specific training for adult education and vocational rehabilitation.

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

In Florida, most RA 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 RA claims and benefits management information system (Reconnect) and Employ Florida.

Each night, new RA 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 their Employ Florida login information.
- Provides a link to the initial list of jobs matching the claimant's employment history.
- Provides a link for 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 RA 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 RA and job services. The skills assessment measures an individual's skills, abilities, and career aptitude.

LWDBs conduct a skills assessment that 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. Results from the assessment may indicate the claimant is equipped with skills to seek jobs and obtain employment before their benefits expire. These individuals require less staff intervention. Conversely, assessment results may also indicate a claimant may require more intensive staff intervention before being job ready.

**RESEA Grant**

The RESEA program was launched in Florida in 2016 pursuant to the federal change that replaced the Reemployment Assessment program with the RESEA program. In Florida, the target populations are all transitioning veterans receiving unemployment assistance for ex-service members (UCX) and claimants most likely to exhaust RA benefits. UCX claimants receive the highest level of priority in the selection process and an automatic seat in an RESEA event.

A pool consisting of RA claimants is created on a weekly basis from initial RA 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 weekly benefit amount, county, occupation, separation reason, education level, and unemployment rate. Excluded from the PREP pool are:

- Claimants whose program identification is other than intrastate claimant.
- Interstate claimants.

- Transitional claimants.
- Claimants on recall status within eight weeks of filing their claim.
- Members of a labor union.
- Claimants who are in approved training; and
- Claimants with a first payment issued more than 42 days after the benefit year beginning date.

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, they 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.
- 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 RA Program for RESEA participants who miss their initial appointment.

RA 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 RA Program to conduct an eligibility review questionnaire to determine the claimant's eligibility for continued RA benefits.

The Bureau for Reemployment Assistance instituted additional resources to assist with providing information and meaningful assistance to claimants via LWDB staff to include:

- **Escalated Phone Queue**: Escalated phone queues were established to provide a meaningful method of escalated communication for individuals applying for or receiving RA benefits at the local career centers. The queue provides for direct communication with the RA Customer Support Center. All types of calls are handled through this line as a normal process.
- **Express Phone Line Functionalities:** The express phone line provides CareerSource Center employees the ability to refer RA claimants to contact RA directly (via CareerSource Queue). This line will connect the claimants to the RA Customer Support

Center wherein they will receive assistance regarding their RA claim. Designated LWDB staff utilize the designated phone for claimants to be routed to the escalated phone queue for assistance from an RA staff member. Each career center within an LWDB has an express phone line, deemed as a high priority call, programmed to route claimants into the escalated phone queue. Assistance is provided in Florida's three major languages (Creole, English, and Spanish).

- **RA Help Center**: FloridaCommerce created the RA Help Center which is an online portal for both claimants and employers. This self-help portal continues to be updated with additional capabilities including reporting fraud or identity theft, uploading documents, contesting monetary determinations, and filing appeal requests. The Help Center provides resources such as step-by-step guides, frequently asked questions, and informational videos to provide information and claim assistance for claimants and employers. The Help Center is available 24 hours a day.
- LWDB staff may also submit an Escalated RA Case through this resource. Upon receipt of the Escalated RA Case, the Bureau of Reemployment Assistance routes the communication quickly to the appropriate team members to review and assist.

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

The RA program introduced Reconnect (formerly known as CONNECT) Self-Service to help claimants easily access their account details through any mobile device without ever needing to speak to an agent. This self service allows claimants to update their Reconnect PIN, update contact telephone number, change correspondence or payment method, change tax withholding option, and receive detailed claim information including payment status, notice of determination issued, appeal information and RA program messages.

FloridaCommerce has created the RA Help Center—an online portal for both claimants and employers. This self-help portal continues to be updated with additional capabilities including reporting fraud or identity theft, uploading documents, contesting monetary determinations, and filing appeal requests. The Help Center provides resources such as step-by-step guides, frequently asked questions, and informational videos. The Help Center is available 24 hours a day.

The Floridajobs.org website provides information about FloridaCommerce. Customers may sign up to receive FloridaCommerce news and information directly. The site provides information re: Economic Development, Workforce Investments, Strong Communities, Small Business Assistance, RA, Employ Florida etc.

Reemployment Assistance Service Center for Claimants with links for Applying for Benefits, Requesting Benefit Payment, Adjudication, Filing an Appeal, FAQs, RA Resources, etc.

**(d) Describe how the State will use WP funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between the Employment Service and UI, as appropriate including the following**:

**(1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by WP.**

Claimants may be selected to attend the mandatory RESEA program if they are profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits prior to returning to work. Selection to attend a RESEA

appointment provides claimants with an orientation of the career center to include services available and an initial assessment to determine additional needs. Claimants selected for reemployment services 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 RESEA are offered the full array of WP career services depending on the claimant's request and other needs. Career services may be scheduled in Employ Florida, the state's online labor exchange and case management system, requiring the claimant to fulfill their 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 WP 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, Reconnect, various data points are collected from the claimant's application and transmitted into Employ Florida to create a basic WP application in Employ Florida. 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 separation reason, occupation, county of residence, 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 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. FloridaCommerce 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.

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 if required by State law;**

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, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and**

Section 443.091, Florida Statutes, requires all RA 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. 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.

LWDBs conduct a skills assessment that 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. Results from the assessment may indicate the claimant is equipped with skills to seek jobs and obtain employment before their benefits expire. These individuals require less staff intervention. Conversely, assessment results may also indicate a claimant may require more intensive staff intervention before being job ready.

For claimants selected to receive RESEA 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 RA system notifying an adjudicator of potential eligibility issues. The RA unit conducts a follow-up to determine if the absence should result in disqualification. An eligibility review program (ERP) questionnaire is conducted for all RESEA claimants to determine eligibility for continued benefits.

**(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 co-located with educational institutions where claimants may be referred for education assistance.

WP 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). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include an assessment of need.**

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

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the agricultural industry in Florida employs approximately 2.5 million people and contributes more than $180 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 2022, Florida ranked first in the United States in the value of production for processing bell peppers, floriculture sales, foliage plants for indoor use, Valencia oranges, grapefruit, sugarcane, fresh market tomatoes, and watermelons. During the 2021-2022 season, Florida farmworkers produced 53 million boxes of oranges and 4.1 million boxes of grapefruit. All citrus fruit on-tree sales exceeded $929 million. Florida ranks second in the value of production for all oranges, strawberries, sweet corn and non-Valencia oranges. Florida growers harvested vegetables for fresh market, potatoes, strawberries, and blueberries from 176,500 acres in 2022. Cash receipts for all agricultural products total $7.75 billion in 2021. Crop commodities, such as floriculture, sugarcane, oranges, and tomatoes, accounted for 79.7% of these total cash receipts.

According to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service Florida (NASS) Field Office, 2023 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 2022, Florida ranked third nationally in the production of cabbage.

MSFWs need affordable housing that is not substandard, access to public transportation, health insurance coverage, English as a Second Language education, access to General Education Diploma testing, health care, childcare, legal representation, and safer working conditions.

**(5) Provide an assessment of the agricultural activity in the State: 1) identify the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identify any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.**

The following breakdown illustrates Florida's top major labor-intensive crop activity during the 2022-2023 season.

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

| Crop | Usual Harvesting Begin | 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 | 45,000 |
| Grapefruit | September | September - June | Indian River, St. Lucie, Polk, Hendry, Highlands, Osceola, Charlotte, Collier, Lake, Okeechobee | 5,000 |
| Specialty Citrus | June | June – April | Polk, Lake, Highlands, Hendry, Charlotte, Hardee, St. Lucie, Collier, De Soto, Indian River, Hillsborough, Lee | 1000 |
| Tomatoes | Mid-October | November - June | Manatee, Collier, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Hendry, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jackson | 9,500 |
| Blueberries | March | March - May | Polk, Alachua, Hardee, Hamilton, Levy | 7,000 |
| Strawberries | Mid-December | February - March | Hillsborough, Manatee, Hardee, Miami-Dade | 10,000 |
| 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 | 3,500 |
| 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 | 2,800 |
| Squash | September | November - May | Miami-Dade, Collier, Lee, Hillsborough, Gadsden, Jackson, Suwannee | 2,500 |

| Crop | Usual Harvesting Begin | Usual Harvesting Most Active | Primary Geographical Area of Activity | Labor Pool |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |

Source: Data obtained from Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

Results of the USDA NASS 2021 Commercial Citrus Preliminary Report show total citrus acreage is 407,348 acres, down 3% from the last survey. The net loss of 12,104 acres is 955 acres more than what was lost the previous season. All citrus trees, at 59.7 million, are down 1% from the previous season.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Florida ranks second in the United States by sales in the nursery industry, 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' 2021 Florida Agriculture by the Numbers, the state's expanded wholesale value of floriculture crops surpassed $1 million.

According to the USDA 2023 Florida Citrus Statistics, 28,000 farmworkers were hired for the week of October 8-14. Hired workers were paid an average gross wage rate of $15.75, down from $16.08 in October 2022. In January 2023, growers were still assessing damages from the freezing temperatures in many areas during the Christmas week. The cold weather caused significant damage to wheat, strawberries, and spinach. The cold weather caused major damage to winter grazing pastures with some pastures being killed in certain parts of the state. There were reports the cold weather conditions killed calves.

By February 2023, temperatures were well above average in the citrus growing region. Abnormally dry conditions expanded considerably to cover the citrus growing region, except for one area on the west coast. Field personnel reported blooms in groves across several areas in the state. Packinghouses were shipping red and white grapefruit, mid-season and late oranges and tangerines. Processors were handling Valencia orange packinghouse eliminations and a small amount of field run fruit. Grove caretakers continued with normal spray programs, fertilizing, applying herbicide, hedging, and taking care of young trees. Irrigation was being run statewide.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service in Florida reported 6.2 days suitable for fieldwork for the week ending November 26, 2023. Temperatures remained seasonable in the citrus growing

region in November, with average highs from the mid 70's to low 80's. According to the November 23, 2023, U.S. Drought Monitor, moderate drought, and abnormal dryness receded toward the west coast, while other drought categories maintained previous coverage in the citrus counties along the Gulf of Mexico. The optimal weather and temperatures allowed most farmers to make progress with planting and harvesting. Grove operations included spraying pesticides and nutrients, fertilizing, mowing, hedging, topping, removal of dead trees, replanting young trees, and general grove maintenance. Irrigation was being run on an as-needed basis statewide.

During December 2023, the Northern half of the state received light showers while the Southern half of the state received little to no rain. Cattle were reported to be in mostly good to fair condition due to hay and winter supplementation. Pastures were reported to be in fair to good condition but were declining due to drier weather. In mid-December, most of the state received moderate to heavy rain causing many farmers to experience wind damage which delayed planting and harvesting. Most cattle sought shelter due to the heavy rain and wind.

**(6) Provide an assessment of the unique needs of MSFWs characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.**

Based on local MSFW-related data and reports, there were an estimated 161,631 MSFWs in Florida during Program Year (PY) 2022. During the low season, this number may drop to fewer than 100,000. MSFWs in Florida are primarily from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti with their primarily languages spoken being Spanish, Haitian Creole, and English language learners.

As mentioned, MSFWs need affordable housing that is not substandard, access to public transportation, health insurance coverage, English as a Second Language education, access to General Education Diploma testing, health care, childcare, legal representation, and safer working conditions.

**(7) Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:**

**(1) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.**

All career centers must locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted by career centers, in accordance with 20 CFR 653.107(b). Outreach is not limited to those offices designated by the United States Department of Labor as significant MSFW career centers or significant multilingual MSFW career centers.

Significant MSFW career centers are those centers where MSFWs account for 10% or more of annual participants in employment service activities. Significant multilingual MSFW career centers are centers where 10% or more of the MSFW participants are estimated to require service provision in a language(s) other than English. Florida has 10 career centers designated as significant multilingual MSFW career centers (referred to as “significant offices”) located in Plant City, Winter Haven, Bradenton, Wauchula, Port Saint Lucie, Vero Beach, Belle Glade, Homestead, Immokalee and Clewiston. Each significant office has one full-time, year-round MSFW outreach staff assigned to conduct outreach activities. 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 staff conduct outreach activities in areas with significant MSFW populations to locate and contact 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 staff make personal contacts with MSFWs daily to explain services available through local 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, is also provided.

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 (the 511N form) in their native language (available in English, Spanish and Creole). The form contains information on FloridaCommerce’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 511N form includes the locations of all significant offices in Florida.

To contact the maximum number of MSFWs, outreach staff visit sites where farmworkers live, work, 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 in the farmworker community. Outreach staff conduct follow-up with MSFWs as necessary and appropriate to ensure their needs are met and to determine if other workforce or supportive services are necessary. FloridaCommerce continues to enhance existing relationships with local, state, and federal organizations serving farmworkers, employers and employer organizations to solicit and exchange information on behalf of MSFWs.

As of the 2022-2023 program year, Florida operates its ten-designated significant multilingual MSFW career centers. The following chart includes a list of these significant career centers, along with corresponding outreach goals per program year.

**Figure 7.02**
**Significant Multilingual MSFW Career Center Locations and Outreach Goals**

| Career Center Location | LWDA | # of Assigned FTE Positions | # of MSFW Outreach Contacts | # Quality MSFW Outreach Contacts | # of Staff Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winter Haven | 17 | 1 | 1,800 | 1,250 | 185 |
| Plant City | 15 | 1 | 2,200 | 1,700 | 185 |
| Bradenton | 18 | 1 | 2,000 | 1,650 | 185 |
| Wauchula | 19 | 1 | 2,200 | 950 | 185 |
| Port Saint Lucie | 20 | 1 | 1,800 | 1,100 | 185 |
| Vero Beach | 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** | **20,150** | **11,350** | **1850** |

**(2) Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.**

Outreach staff are trained in all aspects of employment-related services to MSFWs. New outreach staff receive training on WP services, benefits and protections afforded to MSFWs through the career centers and local procedures by the LWDB.

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) provides 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 staff 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 this program year by the SMA. The SMA provided technical assistance to significant multilingual MSFW career center staff during the monitoring reviews to address any immediate training needs.

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

Refresher training and farm labor compliance training is provided to outreach staff during the MSFW Annual Staff 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 increase 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. FloridaCommerce staff customarily present workshops on WP and WIOA requirements, the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System and Foreign Labor Certification Job Orders, among other topics. The workshops provide career center staff with knowledge necessary to discuss farmworker rights with MSFWs onsite and during outreach.

**(3) Increasing outreach staff training and awareness across core programs including the UI program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.**

Career center staff, including outreach staff, have access to online training modules and resources through FloridaCommerce's website for core programs including UI benefits (referred to as RA benefits in Florida). In-person trainings and webinars are offered each year. Outreach staff 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 RA benefits.

**(4) Providing outreach staff professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

The MSFW Annual Staff Development Conference provides outreach staff 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 MSFW Annual Staff Development Conference.

Outreach staff can also access the FCWP and FCWP – Tier II certification programs and participate in training and webinars conducted by LWDB staff on other programs and resources available within the career center and through local community-based agencies. Further, outreach staff will have access to specialized training as a part of the FCWP – Tier III certification program curriculum.

**(5) 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 2022, approximately 709 additional contacts were made through nonfinancial agreements with cooperating agencies.

A memorandum of understanding was executed with the Florida Department of Education's FCDP, the state's NFJP grantee, outlining these outreach efforts. The memorandum outlines requirements for significant career center outreach staff and FCDP local provider staff to supply information on the other partner's programs and services during individual outreach efforts; to conduct outreach jointly when feasible; and, to report outreach activities and contacts to the other party. Career centers with agricultural activity that do not meet the 10% criteria for the significant career center designation are required to have nonfinancial agreements with cooperating agencies.

The MSFW outreach staff 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 staff assist career center staff in recruiting MSFWs for specific job orders.

**(5) <u>Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system</u>. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:**

**(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**

**(i) How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**

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 are assessed to determine appropriate jobs to which they may be referred. Job referrals are provided through mass recruitment, 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 and require staff to prescreen and refer job seekers to these job orders, which ensures maximum protections to the applicants. Staff are required to follow up on referrals made to H-2A job orders.

Referrals are made to English as a Second Language classes to reduce language barriers, 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 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. WP monitoring staff ensure MSFWs have equal access to services during quality assurance desk reviews of LWDBs that do not have any significant offices.

**(ii) How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

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 Service 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 centers assist MSFWs in the preparation of applications for employment services and assistance in obtaining referrals to current and future employment opportunities. FloridaCommerce office staff promote labor exchange services to agricultural employers through participation at employer conferences and seminars and through FloridaCommerce's website. The SMA partners with USDOL, 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 (ARS).

Identifying the needs of employers is a high priority. The CareerSource Florida network'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 that meet specific regulatory requirements to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs. FloridaCommerce's Foreign Labor Certification office enters H-2A job orders in the state's online labor exchange system, Employ Florida. During PY 2022, the Department processed 686 H-2A applications and job orders for Florida employers, an increase from the previous year. Applications are expected to steadily increase for PY 2023, based on previous years' trends. During PY 2022, 70 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 staff, with current information on job availability. Career centers are provided information on 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 2022, 70 MSFWs were referred to agricultural employers as indicated in the Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System.

**(B) Marketing the Complaint System to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.**

Outreach staff take complaints while in the field. The Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System is marketed to farm workers and to agencies. One mechanism used to promote the complaint system is the Florida Farmworker Helpline, a toll-free number farmworkers can call to file a complaint or report violations anonymously. Outreach materials such as the Form FloridaCommerce-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 also provided to agencies and businesses serving farm workers. Farmworkers and agencies are informed complaints can be filed in person at any career center or with an outreach staff.

**(C) Marketing the ARS to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.**

The ARS is a recruiting and referral system designed to assist employers who have temporary agricultural or food processing jobs and need workers. Because MSFWs migrate from Florida to other states in search of employment, FloridaCommerce utilizes Employ Florida as a way to promote the ARS. Job orders for interstate and intrastate farmwork are placed in Employ Florida to assist employers needing to locate and hire workers. FloridaCommerce, through the Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) Unit works directly with employers interested in the ARS. The FLC ensures job orders entered in Employ Florida contain all regulatory requirements, including terms and conditions of employment before the job order is posted. The SMA promotes the ARS during employer forums to agricultural employers and employer organizations as well as through the FloridaCommerce website. ’ To increase public knowledge, the SMA plans to increase attendance at employer forums geared towards agricultural employers and organizations that serve such employers. Additionally, the SMA will review the FloridaCommerce website for updates to be more appealing and conspicuous.

**(6) <u>Other Requirements</u>.**

**(A) *Collaboration*. Describe any collaborative agreements the State Workforce Agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and establish new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).**

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 local LWDB(s).

As part of a strategic initiative to increase collaboration and co-enrollments with FCDP local providers, the SMA 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 continue to strengthen, resulting in an increase in cross-referrals and co-enrollments of MSFWs for services. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), through a contract with FloridaCommerce, 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 WP services provided to mutual customers. This maximizes seamless service delivery to MSFW customers by career centers and FCDP providers. The partnership between FDOE and FloridaCommerce has enhanced collaboration efforts, allowed for efficient data sharing and co-enrollments between WP and FCDP programs.

**(B)** ***Review and Public Comment*. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must:**

**1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP;**

**2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons; therefore, and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.**

**i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.**

Information was solicited from the Florida Department of Education, Farmworker Jobs and Education Program (FCDP); Farm Labor Program, Department of Business and Professional

Regulation; Florida Department of Health, Division of Disease Control and Health Protection; Agricultural Labor Programs, Inc.; Florida Legal Services, Inc; Migrant Farmworker Justice Project, Florida Legal Services, Inc.; Florida Non-Profit Housing, Inc.; Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations, Inc.; Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.; Redlands Christian Migrant Association; Catholic Charities; Florida Fruits and Vegetable Association; Florida Citrus Mutual; and CareerSource Florida Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for at least 30 days for review and comments.

During the 30 day period, FloridaCommerce received public comments from CareerSource Tampa Bay; CareerSource Heartland; CareerSource Research Coast; and CareerSource Palm Beach County for consideration in the preparation of the final AOP. General public comments received from CareerSource Florida centered on requests for FloridaCommerce to reduce the number of MSFW contacts for outreach staff and requests for on-going MSFW training and technical assistance.

FloridaCommerce responded that it strives to meet and exceed outreach goals by conducting especially vigorous outreach activities where MSFWs live, work and congregate. Also, FloridaCommerce continues to monitor changes to the state's agricultural industry by reviewing MSFW data, including MSFW outreach report narratives to assess the estimated number of MSFWs contacted through outreach activities. FloridaCommerce recognizes the number of outreach contacts assigned to significant multilingual MSFW career centers may change, due to the increase of housing development purchases of agricultural lands in the state and increase relocation of MSFWs out of the state.

**(C)** ***Data Assessment*. Review the previous four years WP data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.**

Florida is the second most MSFW significant state in the country, behind California. For Program Year (PY) 2022-2023, 89,447 WP applications were entered in Employ Florida Of those applications, 4,322 were MSFWs. In PY 2021, there were a total of 5,082 MSFW applicants. These reductions in MSFW applications from PY 2022 and PY 2021, 4,322 and 5,082 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. 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 that were placed in permanent positions (jobs over 150 days).

Outreach staff are required to spend a total of 185 staff days, or 80% of staff time, conducting outreach. For PY 2022, MSFW outreach staff made 15,907 outreach contacts with MSFWs; however, the State did not meet or exceed its goal of 20,150 MSFW outreach contacts (as indicated in the AOP) as in PY 2020.

Florida meets its goals providing services to MSFWs on a quantitatively proportionate level as those provided to non-MSFWs. FloridaCommerce and LWDBs designated as significant MSFW offices strive to meet or exceed all federally required Equity Ratio Indicators and Minimum

Service Level Indicators. Florida met four federally required Equity Ratio Indicators and four Minimum Service Level Indicators. These indicators are: received staff-assisted basic career services, referrals to jobs, received unemployment insurance (UI) claim assistance, referrals to other Federal/State assistance, review of significant offices, field checks conducted, outreach contacts per staff days and timely processing of complaints.

Extended outreach staff vacancies; long-term impacts of the national health crisis; and severe weather during hurricane season(s), prevented FloridaCommerce from meeting all federally required goals. FloridaCommerce will continue to monitor employment and career services provided to MSFWs across the state; provide training on best practices for outreach and engagement

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

As previously reported, FloridaCommerce outreach staff made 15,907 contacts with MSFWs during PY 2022. The goal of 12,950 quality outreach contacts where staff assisted services were provided was not met. Only 3,491 staff assisted outreach contacts were made during PY 2022, a rate of 27%. Of the 1,850 goal for staff days of outreach, only 940 days were completed. Over the past three years, Florida has continued to experience a decline in the number of MSFWs in the state. This reduction is impacting the state's ability to meet its established outreach goals. Additionally, staff turnover, limited time spent by staff conducting outreach activities, impacts of Hurricane Ian, and multiple extended vacancies in two significant offices and Hurricane Ian impacted outreach activities. FloridaCommerce is reinforcing outreach workers through training that H2-A workers are also considered MSFWs for the purposes of outreach to ensure this is understood and these efforts are being counted. The goal of 185 staff days per outreach staff was 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 staff. The goal for 500 outreach contacts made by cooperating agencies was met; a maximum of 709 contacts was reported for Program Year 2022.

FloridaCommerce, in partnership with the LWDBs, strives to meet or exceed all federally required Equity and Minimum Service Level Indicators. During Program Year 2022., Florida met four of eight federally required Equity Ratio Indicators and four of seven minimum service level indicators. To comply with services to MSFWs, the state is required to meet all eight Equity Ratio Indicators and four of seven Minimum Service Level Indicators. The level of services attained is attributed to intensive outreach efforts by MSFW outreach staff and career center staff properly serving customers. The SMA engages 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 staff, to ensure accurate data is collected and reports are submitted in a timely manner. The report accurately reflects data of LWDBs' efforts to assist MSFWs through out-of-office contacts, referrals to supportive services and provisions of employment information and referrals.

**(E) *State Monitor Advocate*. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.**

The SMA reviewed and approved the 2024-2028 WIOA Unified Agricultural Outreach Plan. All comments, suggestions and recommendations of the State Monitor Advocate are incorporated in the plan.

**Figure 7.03**
**Wagner-Peyser Act Program Assurances**

| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | The WP Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); |
| 2. | If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements; |
| 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 WP services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth<br>Programs under Title I; and |
| 4. | SWA officials:<br>1) Initiate the discontinuation of services;<br>2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;<br>3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;<br>4) Approve corrective action plans;<br>5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;<br>6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and<br>7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing. |
| 5. | The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601). |

**Wagner-Peyser Assurances Signature Page**

**CareerSource Florida**

**Adrienne Johnston, President and CEO** **DATE:**

**Florida Department of Commerce**

**J. Alex Kelly, Secretary** **DATE:**

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM (TANF)

**(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)**

The Florida Workforce System was instructed to include the complete Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) plan in its WIOA Combined Plan. The complete plan including elements not specific to workforce development strategies can be viewed on the Florida Department of Children and Families Website.

**States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:**

The TANF portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act.

**(a) Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).**

**The TANF Program**. Florida administers the TANF program through three state departments, a network of local workforce development boards (LWDBs), and a workforce services delivery system. A description follows of how these organizations work together to deliver programs to assist TANF/Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients make the transition from welfare to self-sufficiency and provide other family support that meet one of the four purposes of TANF:

- **Department of Children and Families (DCF): Eligibility Determination, Temporary Cash Assistance Payment, and Nonrecurring Short-term Benefit Programs.** DCF is the recipient of the TANF block grant and is responsible for determining eligibility for a TCA payment to eligible families and imposing penalties for a participant who fails to meet Welfare Transition (WT) work requirements. In addition, DCF contracts with other public and private organizations to provide some of the TANF family support services (non-assistance) programs described in this State Plan.
- **Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce): Administration and Accountability.** FloridaCommerce is the designated state agency for administering workforce programs, funding, and personnel. The Florida Legislature appropriates TANF funds to FloridaCommerce, and charges it with providing administrative and program guidance for the merged workforce and TANF/WT support delivery system. FloridaCommerce also serves as the administrative and fiscal entity for the State Board, and FloridaCommerce ensures the appropriate administration of workforce programs and funds.
- **State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and CareerSource Florida, Inc.**

**(CSF): Planning, Policy, and Strategic Direction.** Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) the SWDB consists of a board of directors and chair appointed by the Governor. The SWDB is the state's chief workforce policy organization. The SWDB provides policy direction and oversight to Florida's LWDBs. CareerSource Florida is the administrative entity created by the Florida Legislature to act under the SWDB. The state's broad workforce strategic vision and goals are expressed through the WIOA Unified State Plan.

- **LWDBs: Local Control, Accountability, and Delivery of Services.** The LWDBs are responsible for implementing the state's workforce programs, including WT, other TANF non-assistance programs and employment support services at local career centers. The LWDBs develop innovative programs tailored to the specific economic and employment needs of the community. Primarily made up of local business representatives in each area, the LWDBs focus on planning, policy implementation, and fiscal and programmatic oversight of the local workforce system.

**1. Workforce System: Job Training, Education, and Employment Options.** The workforce system provides a full menu of job training, education, and employment options for workers, job seekers, WT participants, and local businesses at the local career centers or via electronic access. The workforce delivery system includes numerous partners, including DCF, working together under memoranda of agreement, customer referral procedures, specifying services provided, and cost allocation formulas.

**2. Department of Education, Division of Early Learning (DOE, DEL): Administration of TANF Childcare Services.** DEL functions as the funding and oversight entity for the local coalitions providing childcare assistance to current and transitional TANF participants.

**(b) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act).**

**Work Requirement**.
Individuals who apply for TCA and are not exempt from work activity requirements must complete the work registration process as a condition of eligibility for TCA. F.S. 414.095 requires that an individual must meet certain eligibility requirements before receiving services or TCA, except that a participant shall be required to register for work and engage in work activities in accordance with section 445.024, F.S. Florida operates an online process that allows applicants to complete work registration requirements. These requirements include an overview of the WT program and an assessment. The LWDBs may require additional registration tasks when the participant completes the online program overview and assessment. The additional requirements are displayed immediately after the applicant completes the online portion of work registration.

As part of the work registration process, participants learn about the WT program, their opportunities, and their responsibilities. They engage in work activities based on their ability to comply. If a participant is not able to begin immediate involvement in job search or other activities because of medical limitations, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, or

domestic violence, the participant is engaged in a modified work registration process. An individual who needs assistance to look for work, to participate in work activities, or who requires special accommodation to participate are offered services based on their needs.

Failure to complete the work registration process, unless the applicant meets an exemption, results in a denial of benefits. Individuals who are not able to work because of a medical incapacity, substance abuse or mental health issue, domestic violence or other disability/limitation may be excused from having to work, register, or participate in work activities prior to receiving assistance. DCF refers non-exempt individuals to the LWDB for assessment and assignment to appropriate work activities.

Section 445.024, F.S., specifies the work activity requirements of the WT program. These requirements ensure that TANF-eligible parents and caretakers engage in work in accordance with sections 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) and 407 of the Social Security Act as amended by the PRWORA, the Deficit Reduction Act and 45 CFR Parts 261, 262, 263 and 265, Reauthorization of the TANF Program, Final Rule published Feb. 5, 2008. Unless a parent or caretaker meets a specified exemption, the statute requires immediate entry into work or other activities, subject to federal and state funding.

**(c) Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act). Consistent with the required strategic elements discussed in section II (a)(2) herein, provide a specific analysis of how the State's workforce development activities are addressing employment and training services for parents or caretakers receiving assistance.**

Participants must participate in work activities for not less than the minimum number of hours required under federal law in 42 USC s. 607(c), SSA, as amended. The amount of time in a work activity cannot exceed that which is permitted under federal law or regulation.

LWBDs may develop activities under each of the following categories of work activities. They may use the following categories of work activities, based on federal law and regulations, individually, or in combination to satisfy the work requirement for a participant in the WT program:

- Unsubsidized employment.
- Subsidized private sector employment.
- Subsidized public-sector employment.
- On-the-job training.
- Community service programs.
- Work experience.
- Job search and job readiness assistance.
- Vocational educational training.
- Job skills training directly related to employment.
- Education directly related to employment.
- Satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a graduate equivalency diploma.
- Providing childcare services.

Florida defines its work activities in its approved Work Verification Plan. The state uses the

same definition for each work activity as described in the Deficit Reconciliation Act of 2005 Final Regulations, 45 CFR Parts 261, 262, 263 and 265, Reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, Final Rule published Feb. 5, 2008.

**(d) Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act).**

**Disclosure of Information**. Florida uses an integrated eligibility process on the FLORIDA system that simultaneously determines eligibility for food assistance, TCA, and Medicaid. While the federal AFDC cash assistance regulations changed in many respects because of TANF, the confidentiality requirements for food assistance and Medicaid remain unchanged. Consequently, when DCF obtains information as part of an integrated eligibility process that includes either food assistance or Medicaid and TCA, or both, it safeguards the use or disclosure of such information in accordance with food assistance regulations (7 CFR 272.1(c), Medicaid regulations (42 CFR 431.300-431.306), and Florida's TCA statutory exemption laws (sections 414.106, 414.295 and 445.007, F.S.).

**(e) Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act).**

**Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies. Florida defines "out-of-wedlock" as: "The mother is not married at the time of delivery." If the parents were married at time of conception, but are not married at time of delivery, this is termed an "unwed birth." If the father dies prior to delivery, this is termed an "unwed birth."**

The birth rate among teens 19 and under in Florida and the nation is steadily declining.

In Florida, the birth rate for female teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 was 50.6 per 1,000 females in 2000. In 2018, this rate declined to 16.7 per 1,000 females.

The state has a broad array of programming directed toward reducing out-of-wedlock births and teenage pregnancy. They are not in this plan because they are offered through public agencies and private or community-based groups that make them available to individuals and families without regard to specialized eligibility criteria and they are not receiving TANF or MOE funding.

DOE offers programs and initiatives extensively throughout Florida through its school districts, the Department of Health (DOH) through its local health agencies, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Legal Affairs, the Urban League, and a variety of community and church groups. All provide for outreach and education and seek non-restricted participation in their activities.

Examples include:

- Education Now and Babies Later (ENABL).
- Teen Pregnancy Programs in school districts.
- Sexual Risk Avoidance Programs.
- Family Planning Clinics and Programs.
- Juvenile Redirections Programs.
- Practical Academic Cultural Education (PACE) for Girls.
- Children In Need of Services/Families in Need of Services (CINS/FINS).

**Rape Crisis Program**. In 2003, the Florida Legislature created the Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act (F.S. 794.055) and the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund (F.S. 794.056). The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act acknowledges that victims of sexual assault in the state of Florida should have access to basic services including:

- Hotline.
- Crisis intervention.
- Advocacy.
- Support services.
- Therapy.
- Medical intervention.
- Service coordination.
- Community awareness.

The Act created a funding system for distribution of monies generated by a $151 surcharge assessed on each offender who pleads guilty or nolo contender or found guilty of sexual battery and other offenses that included many of the aggravated battery and other battery offenses. While the clerk of the court retained $1 of the surcharge, DCF deposits $150 in the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund. This Act requires DOH to contract with a statewide, nonprofit association to distribute these funds to provide sexual battery recovery services.

Per Florida Statutes, DCF must use funds received under section 938.085 to provide sexual battery recovery services to victims and their families. DOH retains five percent for administrative costs and provides the remaining 95% to the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) via contract. The FCASV retains no more than 15% of the funds for statewide initiatives and distributes the remainder of the funds to rape crisis centers, based on an allocation formula that considers the population and rural characteristics of each county.

Section 827.04, F.S., mandates that a person aged 21 or older who impregnates a child less than 16 years old commits an act of child abuse which is a third-degree felony punishable under sections 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S. Neither the victim's lack of chastity nor the victim's consent is a defense to the crime proscribed under this subsection.

ESS Program Policy requires all eligibility staff to report suspicion of abuse through statutory rape to the Florida Abuse Hotline.

1. Excerpt from ESS Program Policy Manual.
2. 0420.0300 Report of Abuse (TCA).
3. Florida Statutes require the reporting of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of any child, aged person or disabled adult.
4. Also make a report when there is reasonable cause to suspect that:
5. A newborn is physically drug dependent.
6. A child, from birth to five years of age, is a drug-exposed child.
7. The parent/caregiver is unable to provide safe care for the child(ren).
8. A male age 21 or older impregnates a female under the age of 16 (applicable to children conceived after Oct. 1, 1996); or

The participant has used the cash benefits for purposes other than the support of a child(ren).

Section 409.2355, F.S., directs DCF to establish a program (if the Legislature appropriates funds) so local communities may apply for grants through the state attorney's office of each judicial circuit to fund innovative programs for the prosecution of males over age 21 who victimize girls younger than 16 years old in violation of sections 794.011, 794.05, 800.04, 827.04(3), or 847.0135(5), F.S.

Section 382.356, F.S., directs the Office of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health, the Department of Revenue, and the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association to develop a protocol for sharing birth certificate information to facilitate the prosecution of offenses in which a male over the age of 21 impregnates a child less than 17 years old.

**(f) Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act)**

**Section 6: Statutory Rape Prevention And Male Involvement**

These are state/federal funded initiatives complementary to and coordinated with the TANF program at the local level. They are not TANF or TANF/MOE funded.

Florida programs that provide educational information and training to state and local law enforcement officials, educational institutions, and relevant counseling services on the problem of statutory rape, teenage pregnancy prevention programs, and the role of fathers have been expanded in scope to include improved strategies to reach more males.

### 6.1 Violence Intervention And Prevention Program

The Violence and Injury Prevention Section's Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to educate the public, professionals, and underserved populations on sexual violence interventions and prevention through creation of safe, healthy environments, and behaviors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides recommendations on successful evidence-based strategies for preventing sexual violence in a technical package entitled "STOP SV.' This package uses the best available evidence to provide a select group of strategies with the greatest potential to reduce sexual violence. These strategies focus on promoting social norms that protect against violence (S); teaching skills to prevent SV (T); providing economic and social opportunities to empower and support girls and women (O); creating protective environments (P); and supporting victims/survivors to lessen harms (SV). The approaches included for these strategies address shared risk and protective factors for multiple forms of violence across the socio-ecological spectrum.

**Figure 7.04**
**Stop Sexual Violence**

| STOP SV | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Strategy** | **Approach** |
| **S** | Promote **Social Norms** that Protect Against Violence | • Bystander approaches<br>• Mobilizing men and boys as allies |
| **T** | **Teach** Skills to Prevent Sexual Violence | • Social-emotional learning<br>• Teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents<br>• Empowerment-based training |
| **O** | Provide **Opportunities** to Empower and Support Girls and Women | • Strengthening economic supports for women and families<br>• Strengthening leadership and opportunities for girls |
| **P** | Create **Protective** Environments | • Improving safety in schools<br>• Establishing and consistently applying workplace policies<br>• Addressing community level risks through environmental approaches |
| **SV** | **Support Victims**/Survivors to Lessen Harms | • Victim-centered services<br>• Treatment for victims of SV<br>• Treatment for at-risk children and families to prevent problem behavior including sex offending |

Research presented in the co-text guidance “Connecting the Dots” demonstrates children and families living in communities with many risk factors, such as high poverty, unemployment and crime, are more likely to experience multiple forms of violence than children and families in other communities. Similarly, people living in communities with protective factors, such as coordination of resources and services, access to mental health and substance abuse services and community support and connectedness are less likely to experience violence and more likely to be resilient. Addressing shared risk and protective factors provides an opportunity to move beyond individual-level programming to address the co-occurrence of multiple forms of violence on the community level.

Applying strategies to address factors on all levels of the social ecological model (SEM) is a key public health approach and will maximize impact for both communities and disproportionately affected populations. Florida’s efforts continue to focus on building capacity to impact multiple forms of violence by addressing shared risk and protective factors. With a focus on community level efforts.

## 6.2 Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund

In 2003, the Florida Legislature created the Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act (F.S. 794.055) and the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund (F.S. 794.056). The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act acknowledges that victims of sexual assault in the state of Florida should have access to basic services including:

- Hotline
- Crisis intervention
- Advocacy
- Support services
- Therapy
- Medical intervention
- Service coordination
- Community Awareness

The Act created a funding system for distribution of monies generated by a $151 surcharge assessed on each offender who pleads guilty or nolo contender or found guilty of sexual battery and other offenses that included many of the aggravated battery and other battery offenses. While the clerk of the court retained $1 of the surcharge, the Department deposits $150 in the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund. This Act requires the Department of Health to contract with a statewide, nonprofit association to distribute these funds to provide sexual battery recovery services.

Per Florida Statutes, the Department must use funds received under section 938.085 to provide sexual battery recovery services to victims and their families. Department of Health retains five percent for administrative costs and provides the remaining 95 percent to the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) via contract. The FCASV retains no more than 15 percent of the funds for statewide initiatives and distributes the remainder of the funds to rape crisis centers, based on an allocation formula that takes into account the population and rural characteristics of each county.

**(g) Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act).**

**EBT Restrictions**. In July 2015, Florida Statute 402.82(4)(a) prohibits the use or acceptance of an electronic benefit transfer card for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage as defined in section 561.01 and sold pursuant to the Beverage Law.

In October 2013, Florida Statute 402.82(4) (b) through (f) prohibiting use or acceptance of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card at the following locations:

- An adult entertainment establishment as defined in section 847.001.
- A pari-mutuel facility as defined in section 550.002.
- A slot machine facility as defined in section 551.102.
- A commercial bingo facility that operates outside the provisions of section 849.0931.

- A casino, gaming facility, or gambling facility, or any gaming activities authorized under part II of chapter 285.

Procedures to prevent access to TCA through use of EBT cards at the above locations will require the EBT vendor to block both Point of Sale (POS) machines and Automated Teller Machines (ATM) at the prohibited locations.

The vendor will block POS transactions from businesses identified by the Merchant Category Code (MCC), developed by the "Card Association," at package stores (beer, wine, and liquor), high risk adult entertainment, and betting, which includes lottery/casino/wagers. The state will identify which MCC codes the vendor should block. If the MCC code is present and, on the vendor's, "no process" list, the transaction will be declined.

The EBT vendor will block ATM transactions by programming a block on the specific ATM terminal ID. ATM transactions are reviewed monthly through a data analysis process to identify ATM terminal IDs in prohibited locations. The EBT vendor will then enter this terminal ID into their system to block any EBT cash transactions from the ATM machine at the prohibited location.

Retail stores, other than liquor stores where use of the EBT card is prohibited, will be responsible for ensuring the EBT card is not used for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage as defined in section 561.01. The Florida Retail Association has advised all retail stores of the state law.

**(h) Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act).**

**TCA Access**. Recipients may redeem TCA benefits at any commercial POS machine that displays the QUEST® logo and any financial institution's ATM that displays the QUEST®, STAR®, or PRESTO® logos. Merchants that accept the Florida EBT card display the QUEST® logo to let cardholders know they can use their cards at these locations.

ATMs offer TCA withdrawal services only. POS machines offer TCA purchase transactions and may offer TCA back with a TCA purchase and TCA withdrawal transactions. Transactions performed at ATMs and some POS machine merchants are subject to surcharges by the financial institution or owner. ATMs and POS machines that redeem EBT TCA benefits will have a dollar sign on their QUEST® logos.

The cardholder can use their EBT card in all fifty states plus Washington, DC and the U. S. territories of Guam and the Virgin Islands.

**Fees and Surcharges**

- **Fees:** The first two TCA only withdrawal transactions each month are provided at no cost to the cardholder. There is a $0.85 fee for the third and subsequent TCA only withdrawal transactions. There is no fee charged by DCF or its fiscal agent (FIS eFunds) for TCA purchases, or for receiving TCA back with a purchase.

- **Surcharges:** A surcharge is an additional fee that may be charged for using a card at an ATM machine, or for withdrawing cash only at some point-of-sale machines in retail stores. The surcharge is charged by the owner of the equipment or financial institution supporting the ATM. Banks and other retailers may have varying surcharges. For example, some banks charge a $1.50 surcharge to customers who do not have an account with them. Other ATMs/financial institutions may charge anywhere from $1 up to $3.50 for the same service. Some ATM networks do not surcharge EBT cash cardholders.

**Direct Deposit**
Customers can choose to have their TCA benefits deposited into their own bank accounts through direct deposit. TCA benefits are deposited into recipient's bank account on the same schedule as those posted to EBT accounts at the financial institution designated on the Direct Deposit Authorization form.

The Department of Children and Families provides information on accessing TCA benefits with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access TCA with no fee or charge to the EBT cardholder in a printed informational brochure included with EBT cards. EBT account access, card use, and customer service information is available on DCF's website www.myflfamilies.com.

**(i) Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act)**

**State-to-State Eligibility**. Florida does not determine eligibility for families moving into the state from another state differently than in-state families participating under the program. Individuals who move from another state are subject to the same time limitation as Florida residents. Florida counts the months of TANF assistance received in another state toward its 48-month lifetime limit.

**(j) Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act).**

**Noncitizen Eligibility**. Florida provides assistance to qualified noncitizens as allowed by federal law and in accordance with state law. Qualified noncitizens who receive TCA are subject to the same work requirements and time limits as other recipients.

**(k) Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act).**

**Due Process**. WIOA provides for applicant/participant protections against erroneous and arbitrary decision-making through opportunities for hearings and appeals in accordance with section 409.285, F.S. Participants are subject to the same health, safety, and nondiscrimination standards established under federal, state, or local laws that otherwise apply to other individuals engaged in similar activities who are not participants in the WT. The act also provides DCF with administrative rulemaking authority and directs DCF to adopt such administrative rules to

ensure participant protection and due process in accordance with section 414.45, F.S. DCF does not discriminate against any person based on race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

**(l) Indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(a)(1)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act)—**

**(1) providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or**

**(2) in other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.**

**Elder Care**. Florida affirms that it includes healthcare needs of elders in its planning for workforce and economic development.

Florida intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment in other (healthcare) occupations related to elder care determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel.

The following is a brief description of some of the labor market analysis, training opportunities, and healthcare related initiatives in Florida. While not all demand occupations mentioned below are for elder care exclusively, the fact that Florida is one of the primary locations for the nation's retirement population means that most healthcare workers will cope with the issues of elder care during their career.

Description: Florida has been the destination of choice for decades for retirees seeking a home in a state with year-round sunshine, a relatively low cost of living and no state income tax, so that their retirement funds stretch further. The state currently ranks number one in the percentage of citizens who are elders and will likely continue. For this reason, Florida has long been aware of the need to train a labor force with the skills to care for the needs of this large segment of its population. Florida's technical schools, community colleges, and universities all have strong records of preparing individuals for all areas of the elder health care industry – from physicians specializing in gerontology to in-home caregivers. The Florida Statewide Demand Occupations List, which sets the training agenda for all workforce training programs in Florida, includes more than 11 health-related occupations, all listed as high-skill, high-wage occupations. The list does not include all the beginning-level training programs, such as Certified Nurse Assistants, where many individuals start their career path in elder health care in the state's many assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

As an integral part of the workforce system in Florida, TANF-funded WT Program participants are encouraged to train for occupations with growth and high wage potential.

**(m) Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and**

**Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7).**

**MOE**. All TANF MOE funded services are provided to eligible families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. MOE funded programs include:

- TANF TCA: This program provides TCA payments, vouchers, and other benefits to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, utilities, household goods, personal care items and general incidental expenses). Program expenditures also include administrative and systems costs related to assisting those families.
- Childcare/School Readiness: This program provides childcare to children from low-income families, allowing parents to participate in counseling and workforce training that will ultimately result in economic self-sufficiency. The program seeks to provide extended-day and extended-year services to the maximum extent possible to meet the needs of parents who work or participate in work activities.
- In Home Supports (Includes Family Builders and Other Services, such as Protective Investigations, Hotline, Case Management, And Other Family Safety Activities): In home support services provide certain measures of safety and care for the entire family through intensive in-home services. The program provides:
    - Support to families in providing prevention services and promoting family well-being, to maintain the safety of children in their own homes, to support families preparing to reunify or adopt and to assist families in obtaining services and other supports necessary to address their multiple needs.
    - In-home intervention for families to provide safety and care for the entire family and to prevent the out of home placement of children.
    - Assessments, family preservation plans, parent education, role modeling, case management, advocacy for families and teaching techniques to improve the environment, including improvement of communication skills through an in-home service model of moderate duration, not to exceed 90 days, or 120 days if an extension has been granted.
- Healthy Families Florida: This program provides a community-based, voluntary home visiting program for expectant families and families with newborns who are experiencing stressful life situations. The program provides prevention services and promotes family well-being.
- Homelessness Prevention Program (Challenge Grant): This program provides emergency financial assistance to prevent eviction. The program provides outreach, assistance in obtaining identification documents, emergency and transitional shelter, referral hotlines, job skills training, etc.
- Prepaid Tuition Scholarship (STARS): Project STARS (Scholarship Tuition for At-Risk Students) is a prepaid college tuition program administered by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation. The scholarships serve as incentives for at risk students from low-income families to graduate from high school. This program serves TANF Purpose Three. At risk students are recommended for the scholarship and monitored carefully through the remainder of their high school experience. Each participant is assigned a mentor to guide them through their journey and provide additional academic support assuring the participant reaches their goals.
- Family Intensive Treatment: Provides intensive services to families in the child welfare system with parental substance use. Upon successful completion, the family would have

the skills and natural support system needed to maintain improvements made during services.

- Community Action Team: Provides community-based serves to children and young adults with a mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis who are at-risk for out-of-home placement.

**TANF CERTIFICATIONS**

**Figure 7.05**
**TANF Certifications**

| **States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:** | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act); |
| 2. | Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act); |
| 3. | Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—<br>(A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and<br>(B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services: |
| 4. | Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act); |
| 5. | Hope (optional)<br>Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—<br>(i) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals.<br>(ii) refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and<br>(iii) waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly<br>penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence. |

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (SNAP E &T) and WORK PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 6(d)(4) and 6 6(o) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008

**(OMB Control Number: 0584-0083)**

**(a) General Requirements: The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:**

**(1) The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;**

The Florida SNAP E&T program offers participants the opportunity to meet the able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) and general work requirements of the program through participation in qualifying program components available through local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and career centers across the state. The table below details each component.

**Figure 7.06**
**Qualifying Program Components**

| Component | Direct Link | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| Supervised Job Search | Participants assigned to the job search component are provided with job search assistance and guidance to include job referrals and job leads, hiring events invitations, and labor market information. These types of activities ensure a direct linkage to the employment opportunities of individuals engaged in the activity. This means a participant in a supervised job search must likely be able to find a job through the activity, and there must be appropriate jobs available for that participant in the community. | $477 per participant |
| Job Search Training | Job search training includes assistance in the development of essential job readiness/ employability skills for the participant to secure and retain employment. Job search training may include career assessments, classroom instruction, job development and placement services, or other training or support activities such as workshops that address life skills, time management, soft skills, interpersonal skills, decision making, foundational courses to address resume development, appropriate dress for the workplace, and career planning. | $652 per participant |
| Basic Education | Basic education services are defined as academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase the mandatory participants' ability to:<br>• Read, write, and speak English.<br>• Perform math or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or equivalent.<br>• Transition to post-secondary education and training.<br>• Obtain employment (WIOA Title II sec. 203). | $324 per participant |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Allowable education activities may include, but are not limited to:<br>• Adult basic education.<br>• Remedial education.<br>• High school completion or General Educational Development.<br>• English lessons for speakers of other languages. | |
| Vocational Training | Career/technical education and vocational training provides an opportunity for mandatory participants to participate in courses or programs of study that are part of a program of career and technical education (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006) and other post-secondary education. The vocational training component offers participants an opportunity to earn postsecondary credentials valued by employers and industry, including certifications and degrees, industry-recognized credentials, and licensures. | $3,173 per participant |
| Work Experience | Work experience connects participants with employers to build job-related skills through practical experience or training at a worksite. Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited time. LWDBs arrange worksites within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, and the public sector where participants can gain work experience designed to increase their employability. | $2,772 per participant |
| Job Retention Services | Job retention services are support services offered to individuals who successfully participate in program components and obtain employment within 30 days of participation in a qualifying component. | $500 per participant |

**(2) A description of the case management services and models, how participants will be referred to case management, how the participant's case will be managed, who will provide case management services, and how the service providers will coordinate with E&T providers, the State agency, and other community resources, as appropriate. The State plan should also discuss how the State agency will ensure E&T participants are provided with targeted case management services through an efficient administrative process;**

- Comprehensive intake assessments
- Individualized Service Plans
- Progress monitoring
- Coordination with service providers
- Reassessment

Local workforce development boards are required to provide case management for all participants who are referred to the workforce system by the Department of Children and Families. After participants complete the orientation and assessment, they are assigned a case manager who continues the case management process during the initial appointment. Subsequent to the initial appointment, case managers meet with the E&T participants monthly to review their program progress and success in program components, such as completing an education component, work experience and/or obtaining gainful employment. The case manager may also provide support services, information on employer events (i.e., job fairs hiring fairs, information sessions), and/or referrals to community resources based on the individual needs of the participant. All case management activities are recorded and tracked in the OSST system, FloridaCommerce's case management system.

Throughout the case management process, case managers housed in the career centers of the local workforce development boards communicate with the Department of Children and Families staff regarding participation hours, household changes, compliance/non-compliance, etc. via the interface between the FLORIDA Department of Children and Families and OSST (FloridaCommerce). Most local areas also communicate directly with DCF staff that are considered their local liaisons to resolve or troubleshoot any issues that arise. Communication between the local workforce development board case managers and Department of Children and Families staff may be verbal (telephonic/in-person meetings) or electronic (email or FLORIDA messages).

**SNAP Eligibility staff**
While serving mandatory participants, E&T case managers may be informed of changes in the household from the participant or through the interface between the FLORIDA (DCF) and OSST (FloridaCommerce) systems. The participant must report any changes to DCF within 10 days and/or the E&T case manager may provide the updated information to DCF staff directly. Additionally, each LWDB is assigned with a DCF staff serving as point of contact. The DCF point of contact email address and phone number is provided by local E & T case managers to handle any participant case management need.

**State E&T Staff**
State E&T staff track referrals through the FLORIDA system. The FLORIDA system includes

participant information such as the case number, the personal identification number, social security number, name, ethnicity, date of birth, gender, residence/mailing address, benefit history, food assistance amounts, approval periods, and other information.

The daily eligibility transactions are communicated to FloridaCommerce via a secure file data transfer between FLORIDA and OSST. Once FloridaCommerce receives the referral notice through the case to do in OSST, an Employment and Training Referral (ETR) notification is sent to the participant. The ETR informs the participants of the mandatory requirements for participation and includes the online initial engagement steps. The online initial engagement steps include completing an orientation, assessment and scheduling an initial engagement appointment.

Once the participant completes the required steps, the participant will meet with a LWDB case manager. The LWDB case manager will further explain the program requirements, review the assessment, discuss goals, assignment to program components, support services, and/or participant reimbursements as needed. The participant will be assigned to program components based on the information obtained through the initial engagement, including assessments, education/employment goals, etc.

Community resources and partnerships may also be provided to participants. If participants have challenges completing the online requirements the participant can request to come into the office to complete the manual processes.

**Other E&T Providers**
There are no E&T providers other than local workforce development boards.

**Community Resources**
All local workforce development boards maintain a community resource listing of local partnerships within their local network to provide support to participants as needed. Community resources and partnerships with LWDBs are made throughout their communities to better serve participants. The case manager may refer participants to community resources and/or partners through their locally established referral procedures to receive additional support outside of what is available through the career center.

DCF ensures E&T participants receive targeted case management services by reviewing local workforce development board case files during monitoring. DCF's programmatic monitoring reviews include a review of the case managers oversight of assessment, orientation, grievance/compliance, administering of components, employment verification and participant reimbursements. During the monitoring review, the case managers are informed of any identified issues (observation or finding) and are given up to 10 days to resolve.

Any unresolved issue (observation or finding) is documented and addressed between DCF's and FloridaCommerce's agency leadership to determine a resolution or apply a corrective action.

While FloridaCommerce is responsible for the administration of the E&T services and OSST serves as the case management system, DCF ensures participants receive targeted case management through monitoring of the services provided by FloridaCommerce. E&T case

managers use OSST as an accountability tool and use to track participation, reimbursements, notification letters, documents, case notes, activities and other case management services. Case management appointments are scheduled in a manner that allows appropriate follow-up time to discuss progress, appropriate and available components. Participants can provide mandatory documentation via electronic communication. Having electronic communication capabilities allows participants to provide documentation timely to their case manager and maintain compliance with program requirements thereby avoiding adverse impacts to their benefits.

**(3) An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50% Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;**

**Figure 7.07**
**SNAP E&T Funding Sources**

| Total Fiscal Year Plan Funding | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Funding Sources** | **Non-Federal Share** | **Federal Share** | **Total** |
| 100% Federal Grant | | $ 6,960,052.00 | $ 6,960,052.00 |
| ABAWD Pledge Grant, if applicable | | $ - | $ - |
| | | | |
| 50% Administrative | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| 50% Dependent Care | $ - | $ - | |
| 50% Transportation/Other | $ 142,349.00 | $ 142,349.00 | |
| 50% Total Participant Reimbursements | $ 142,349.00 | $ 142,349.00 | $ 284,698.00 |
| Total 50% Funds | $ 142,349.00 | $ 142,349.00 | $ 284,698.00 |
| | | | |
| Total | $ 142,349.00 | $ 7,102,401.00 | $ 7,244,750.00 |

**(4) The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;**

Florida's exemption categories include:

- Mandatory work registrant who is head of household and has a child in the home under age 18.
- Mandatory work registrant who is not head of household and has a child in the home under age 18.
- Illness (medical limitation).
- Confirmed pregnancy.
- Transportation unavailable for over two hours or due to rural location.
- Extreme communication or language limitation.
- Circumstances beyond control.
- Lack of childcare for ages 6 to 12 years old.
- ABAWD with indicator 'N' mandatory FSET/ ABAWD only (ABAWD already meeting the work requirement).
- ABAWD with indicator 'N' mandatory refugee referral (refugees in first 12 months, and already meeting the work requirement).
- Non-reimbursable expenses for participating in E&T.
- No available openings in an E&T component.

It is anticipated that 93% of work registrants will be exempt from E&T services. Florida re-evaluates its exemption categories on an annual basis.

**(5) The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;**

Florida's SNAP E&T population includes ABAWDs, returning citizens, underemployed, those that reside in rural areas, and work registrants ages 53-59 that do not meet any exemptions.

**(6) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;**

Florida operates a mandatory SNAP E&T program that serves ABAWDs and individuals subject to general work requirements between the ages of 18 and 59 who do not have children under age 18 in the home, do not meet an exemption, and determined eligible for the program by Department of Children and Families (DCF).

CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce conferred with the Florida Department of Children and Families and confirmed that as the state agency operates the mandatory E&T program, the estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in employment and training is zero.

**(7) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;**

Florida offers a statewide SNAP E&T program and services include supervised job search, job search training, work experience, education, vocational training, and job retention services.

**(8) The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;**

Based on work registrant data received from DCF's FLORIDA system, DCF's process for tracking work registrant data includes creating a base table at the beginning of the federal fiscal year, then adding individuals to that base table every month and marking those individuals as "NEW" only if they are not already in the base table. Each month, "NEW" registrants are only counted if they were not identified in any previous month during the FFY.

Work registrants are defined as SNAP eligible participants receiving food assistance in the report month and identified with work registrant and deferred work registration codes in the FLORIDA eligibility system. Participants must be between the ages of 16 and 59, and not a current Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipient in the report month. At the beginning of each FFY (October 1), DCF determines the number of work registrants receiving food assistance benefits as of September 30th.

**(9) The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS–583;**

Federal E&T National Reporting Measure data will be collected from the OSST data entry system and the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data. E&T program participants whose cases close due to notification from DCF (E&T participation no longer required, exempt, sanction imposed, etc.) will have the case closure date

or the set activity end date, whichever is greater, used as the E&T exit date. This date will be used to determine the quarter of exit from E&T participation. UI wage data will be used to provide employment counts and wage information (employment & median earnings) for the second and fourth quarters after E&T exit.

Participant characteristics, including highest educational level, are collected during the assessment, and stored in the OSST system. Participant characteristics are verified during E&T assessment. The OSST system will be used to determine the disaggregation of the number and percentage of participants for each national measure. When determining the participants' age category, the participants' age at E&T participation will be used rather than the participants' age at the E&T exit. The number and percentage of participants that completed a training, educational, work experience or an on-the-job training component will be calculated from the OSST system when the activity outcome equals "completed" and the end date is within the program year.

**(10) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i).**

To prevent duplicate counting, each recipient is coded with a unique identifier and work registration code. Each FFY, DCF builds a table of all SNAP recipients with work registration codes. This table includes a unique identifier (the PIN), as well as the recipient's work registration code. The PIN allows DCF to conduct a distinct count of recipients, thereby preventing duplication.

**(11) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs.**

DCF is responsible for and administers the SNAP E&T program in Florida. DCF is responsible for determining food assistance eligibility, screening, and identifying individuals who are subject to work requirements, ensuring appropriateness of ABAWD referrals to the SNAP E&T program, determining exemptions and exceptions from the program, determining if good cause exists for an ABAWD, and imposing of sanctions due to noncompliance and lifting of sanctions. The SNAP E&T team works closely with FloridaCommerce to ensure SNAP E&T participant information is coordinated between the State agency and LWDBs. Coordination and communication to eligibility workers takes place through regular training sessions, updated policies and procedures, broadcast messages, and updated policy resources on DCF's intranet.

FloridaCommerce oversees the 24 LWDBs and conducts annual programmatic monitoring reviews of SNAP participants (Florida is implementing a system-wide transformation of its

workforce system that includes the realignment and consolidation of Florida's current LWDBs from 24 to 21, effective July 1, 2024).

Participant data and information is shared daily through an interface between DCF's FLORIDA eligibility system and FloridaCommerce's OSST system. If the individual is no longer participating, FloridaCommerce will send DCF an alert of non-compliance. DCF will notify the customer of the non-compliance and allow 10 days to report good cause for not participating in the program, if applicable.

**(12) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection.**

DCF contracts with FloridaCommerce to administer the SNAP E&T components outlined in this state plan, Section I. These services and activities include supervised job search, job search training, education and vocational training, work experience, and/or a combination of components.

FloridaCommerce holds a grantee/sub-grantee agreement with each of the 24 LWDBs which outlines the LWDBs requirements to operate the SNAP E&T program in accordance with the federal and state laws and policy. As it relates to monitoring for adherence with 7 CFR 275.8, national target areas and/or at-risk areas as identified by Federally by Food and Nutrition Services, as well as compliance with the SNAP E&T Plan, Interagency Agreement and any other federal or state requirements as needed, DCF will work with FloridaCommerce to ensure compliance.

CareerSource Florida is the State Workforce Development Board for Florida. In the development of the FFY2024 SNAP E&T state plan, FloridaCommerce consulted with the CSF by providing the draft state plan to the CareerSource Florida professional team for review and input on June 22, 2023. Key members from DCF, FloridaCommerce, and CSF met to review the CareerSource Florida team's feedback and input.

Members of the CareerSource Florida team included its Chief Operating Officer and members of the Workforce Program Development Team. The below input was provided by CareerSource Florida to be incorporated in the SNAP E&T state plan:

- CLIFF Dashboard - Leveraging of the CLIFF Dashboard and associated suite of CLIFF tools by LWDB staff and extending use of the tools to partners and stakeholders serving recipients of public assistance to prioritize employment, emphasize education and training, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, and meet employer needs. The Florida CLIFF Dashboard offers a graduated series of informational resources to use in case management practices (e.g. highlighting wage information based on the desired occupation in supervised job search, education, vocational training components) such as the CLIFF Snapshot, Dashboard and Financial Planner. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors published a strategic policy in June 2023 directing the LWDBs to implement and track the use of the CLIFF Dashboard in their case management processes. The CLIFF tools will be

used by the LWDB staff when managing SNAP E&T participants to prepare them for potential cliffs when moving from receipt of food assistance benefits to self-sufficiency through employment. Additionally, the LWDB staff will use the career planning (forecasting) elements to assist with helping SNAP E&T participants to understand and visualize the timing, magnitude, and general effects of increased earnings as they progress along in-demand career pathways and tracking towards self-sustaining employment.

- Hope Florida-A Pathway to Promise program is a signature program of the Florida First Lady that helps participants identify barriers at the individual level, secure appropriate referrals, and facilitate the sharing of information between DCF, FloridaCommerce and LWDBs. On the whole, such cross-partner collaboration reflects the state's keen focus on transforming its workforce system to better assist participants and employers. To this end, Navigator positions created under this initiative assist with ensuring participants are provided holistic services to help move them towards self-sufficiency. In coordination with the LWDB case managers, Navigators will assist individuals, including SNAP E&T participants, in obtaining wraparound services that may be needed as they progress towards self-sufficiency.

- Master Credentials List - A statewide list of degree and non-degree credentials that respond to market demand and lead to careers with middle/high-level wages promoting self-sufficiency and stability. The Master Credentials List serves as a public and transparent inventory of state-approved credentials of value, directs the use of federal and state funds for workforce education and training programs that lead to approved credentials of value, and guides workforce education and training programs by informing the public of the credentials that have value in the current or future job market. SNAP E&T participants have access to this information and can use the information as a basis for locating in-demand occupations that may be of interest.

FloridaCommerce also values the input of the LWDBs to ensure both state- and local-level perspectives are considered in the design of the state's E&T program. A workgroup comprised of subject matter experts from small, medium, and large LWDBs was formed and convened to gather feedback regarding the design and delivery of E&T services. This consultation helped gather feedback related to local needs in the development of the SNAP E&T program, needs of local employers, and needs of the participants.

Further, consultation with the LWDBs will occur throughout FFY2024 to gain meaningful feedback on a more consistent basis for improvement of services to E&T participants in Florida. Specifically, the consultation will cover:

- Design and delivery of E&T services (i.e. review of provider determination, participant reimbursement, etc.)

- New initiatives for FFY2024 (i.e. expansion of mandatory E&T participants and

development of training modules for LWDBs to meet the needs of this new demographic.)

- Emerging challenges and needs for FFY 2025

The required consultation with the state workforce development board will occur in the first quarter of FFY2024.

**(13) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations.**

DCF consulted with the Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) by phone and email with an invitation to discuss the purpose of the SNAP E&T program, availability of services/activities through the SNAP E&T program and review the state plan for their feedback on addressing the unique needs of tribal members living on the reservation through the E&T program.

Both ITOs were provided with a copy of the SNAP E&T State Plan. The ITOs were also offered direct contact information at DCF who can assist with providing eligibility assistance to any member.

The Miccosukee Tribe Council and Seminole Tribe advised that members of each tribe are likely precluded from qualification for SNAP assistance. The Tribes advised they will confirm whether additional consultation is needed.

**(14) If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and**

N/A

**(15) The payment rates for childcare established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.**

N/A

**(16) The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.**

N/A

**(17) Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.**

The approved reimbursements include:

**Figure 7.08**
**Participant Reimbursements**

| Allowable Participant Reimbursements | Participant Reimbursement Caps (optional) | Who provides the participant reimbursement? | Method of disbursement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Any allowable, reasonable, and necessary expenses for participation in SNAP E&T | | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Transportation | $100 monthly | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Books | $360 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Tools | $500 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Professional Licensure or Exam Fees | $1,000 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Work Uniforms (including shoes) | $360 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Driver's License/Exam Fees | $75 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Clothing (interview/job) | $100 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Electronic Device (laptop/computer) | $1,000 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Background Checks | $50 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Drug Test Fee | $100 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |
| Fingerprinting Fee | $100 per participant | LWDBs | Reimbursement via EBT (actual amount) |

**(18) For each component that is expected to include 100 or more participants, reporting measures that the State will collect and include in the annual report in paragraph (c)(17) of this section. Such measures may include:**

**(A) The percentage and number of program participants who received E&T services and are in unsubsidized employment subsequent to the receipt of those services;**

As outlined in the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, the following information provides the number of individuals in unsubsidized employment after program completion:

- 8,193 of 18,692 individuals in unsubsidized employment in the 2nd quarter which equals 43.83 percent

- 9,150 of 19,827 individuals in unsubsidized employment in the 4th quarter which equals 46.15 percent

**(B) The percentage and number of participants who obtain a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship, or a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), while participating in, or within 1 year after receiving E&T services;**

As outlined in the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, the following information provides the number of individuals who obtained a recognized credential, registered apprenticeship or diploma (or its recognized equivalent) while participating in, or within one year after receiving program services:

- 2 of 213 individuals who completed vocational training and obtained a credential which equals 0.9 percent.

**(C) The percentage and number of participants who are in an education or training program that is intended to lead to a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship an on-the-job training program, a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), or unsubsidized employment;**

As outlined in the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, the following information provides the number of individuals who are in an education or training program leading to a recognized credential, registered apprenticeship, on-the-job training or diploma (or its recognized equivalent) or unsubsidized employment:

- 1,309 of 10, 832 which equals 12.08 percent.

**(D) Measures developed to assess the skills acquisition of E&T program participants that reflect the goals of the specific components including the percentage and number of participants who are meeting program requirements or are gaining skills likely to lead to employment; and**

**Figure 7.09**
**Measures Developed to Assess**
**Skills Acquisition of E&T Program Participants**

Below are the state component measures noted in the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report.

| Component | Measure | Value |
|---|---|---|
| Non-Education, Non-Work Components—Job Search Training | Number and percentage of individuals that participated in Job Search Training and obtained employment | 12,9%<br><br>Numerator: 166<br>Denominator: 1,283 |
| Non-Education, Non-Work Components- Employment Retention Services | Number of participants who received job retention services for 30, 60, and 90 days after they obtained employment | %<br><br>Numerator: 0<br>Denominator: 0 *(No local board requested)* |
| Education Components – Basic Education | Number and percentage of individuals who completed basic education and obtained a General Equivalency Degree (GED) or High School Equivalency (HSE) | 13.1%<br><br>Numerator: 1,183<br>Denominator: 9,007 |
| Education Components – Vocational Training | Number and percentage of individuals who completed vocational training and obtained a credential | 0.9%<br><br>Numerator: 2<br>Denominator: 213 |
| Work Components – Work Experience | Number and percentage of individuals who completed work experience and obtained employment | 8.3%<br><br>Numerator: 7<br>Denominator: 84 |

**(E) Other indicators approved by FNS in the E&T State plan.**

N/A

**(b) Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)28:**

**State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:**

**1. Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients.**

N/A

**2. Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge.**

N/A

**3. A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements.**

N/A

**4. A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs; Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and**

N/A

**5. Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and**

N/A

**6. Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement.**

N/A

**(a) Optional Workfare: State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following:**

**1. State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the Combined Plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan.**

N/A

**2. If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.**

N/A

**(b) Voluntary Workfare30: State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The number of hours to be worked**

**will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.**

N/A

**(c) Comparable Workfare: The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.**

N/A

**(d) Process: The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.**

**(e) Plan Modifications: If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.**

***Funding Disclaimer:*** *Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.*

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

TAA is administered by the Florida Department of Commerce. TAA is included in the WIOA Combined Plan and information about collaboration with TAA is detailed in Sections I – IV of this plan.

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

**(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)**

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B)) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

**(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG.**

Florida's workforce system is led by the state workforce development board, comprised of business and government leaders charged with guiding workforce development for the state of Florida, and CareerSource Florida, the agency that provides support to the state board. Collectively, the state board and CareerSource Florida provide policy direction for talent development programs administered and overseen by the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), the designated state workforce agency responsible for workforce policy implementation and the state's administrative and fiscal entity for workforce development programs and funds, including JVSG.

FloridaCommerce provides services through the state's 21 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and their network of local career centers. FloridaCommerce partners with CareerSource Florida and the state's 21 LWDBs to strengthen Florida's business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed, and advance in their careers.

Florida's JVSG program creates opportunities for all eligible veterans and eligible persons to obtain meaningful and successful careers through provision of resources and expertise that maximize employment opportunities and protect eligible veterans' employment rights. Services provided by DVOP specialists include, but are not limited to, comprehensive assessments, development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), career counseling, and referrals to eligible veteran and community organizations as needed. LVER staff are fully integrated members of the LWDBs' Business Services Team (BST). LVER staff promote the hiring of veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups; facilitate employer training; plan and participate in career fairs; and conduct job development contacts on behalf of veterans with employers.

Veterans determined to need occupational skills training or access to apprenticeship opportunities to enhance their marketability for employment will be referred to partners in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and/or the Florida Department of

Education (FDOE). Veterans determined to be job ready are referred to the LVER to ensure they are promoted within the business community as available for immediate job placement.

**Career Centers**
Florida's career centers, operated by the LWDBs, are designed to deliver, and provide access to services for employers seeking qualified workers, as well as career services and training for new and existing employees and all job seekers. Services are available to Florida's veterans and businesses through local career centers in areas strategically located throughout the state. All of Florida's career centers are easily identified using the CareerSource Florida network brand and the identifier "A proud partner of the American Job Center network."

Florida's comprehensive career centers provide expanded services and access to WIOA core and required partner programs either through colocation of partners or linkages to partner services. Programs and services available to veterans in comprehensive career centers include, but are not limited to:

- WIOA Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker.
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance.
- National Dislocated Worker Grants, as applicable.
- Senior Community Service Employment Program.
- Indian and Native American Programs.
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker.
- Reintegration of Returning Citizens.
- National Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment.

While these programs and services are universally accessible to all eligible job seekers, veterans and covered persons who meet the program eligibility requirements receive priority of service.

**(b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance.**

FloridaCommerce has determined that the deliberate assignment of JVSG-funded staff to LWDBs is paramount to the success of the program. Integration of JVSG-funded staff in career centers is accomplished by utilizing established procedures for serving eligible veterans and other eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBE) and combining them with the state administrative policies and processes that will support functional alignment within the career center. All partners will work together to support a seamless, customer-driven system.

FloridaCommerce fills vacant JVSG-funded staff positions at the recommendation of the LWDBs and the State Veteran Program Coordinator. All veterans who meet the published requirements are offered an opportunity to interview for open positions. Provisions under JVSG require the state to fill these positions with eligible veterans and give preference to those with disabilities as defined in Title 38 U.S.C., with priority given to special disabled, disabled, and others who are eligible. All Florida JVSG-funded staff are designated as full-time.

**Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists**
DVOP specialists are assigned to career centers for the purpose of providing individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible persons through the case management process. DVOP specialists are made available to eligible veterans who have been identified as having a SBE and require additional enhanced services through case management consistent with VPLs 03-14, 03-14 Change 1, 03-14 Change 2, and 03-19. Through integration within career centers, DVOP specialists provide individualized career services under a coordinated case management strategy to SBE veterans who have been identified by career center partner staff.

Service delivery starts at the initial point of entry into the career center where the first person the veteran encounters will be a non-JVSG staff member trained in all aspects of career center services available to the veteran. This staff member will conduct an initial assessment using a questionnaire that has been developed in accordance with federal guidance to determine the level and type of service(s) needed. If the staff member decides during the initial assessment that the level of service precludes the need to see a DVOP specialist, the veteran will be referred to the next available non-JVSG staff member for assistance. If the eligible veteran, or other eligible person, is deemed to have a SBE and has a need for enhanced services, the covered person will be referred to a DVOP specialist for assistance. Upon referral, the DVOP specialist must provide the following elements of the case management framework:

- Conduct an in-depth assessment of individualized needs.
- Develop a documented IEP.
- Conduct consistent contacts.

These three activities form the core of an effective case management plan under which most individualized career services will be delivered. These services may include:

- Providing vocational guidance and counseling as required, such as skills assessment, career planning, communications skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional conduct.
- Coordination of supportive services by:
    - Providing technical assistance to community-based organizations regarding employment and training services to eligible veterans.
    - Developing relationships with Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and consulting with other representatives of federal, state, and local programs to provide additional services.
    - Job referral for specific employment opportunities.
    - Referral to training with federal partners and other state agencies.

DVOP specialists will conduct outreach activities with the intent of locating eligible veterans with SBEs and providing them with appropriate individualized career services. DVOP specialists must seek out potential veteran clients at locations such as:

- VA facilities.
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) offices.
- Regional medical centers.
- VA-sponsored veteran centers.
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Plan (HVRP) partner offices.
- Homeless shelters.
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program offices.

- Civic and service organizations.
- LWDB partners.
- State vocational rehabilitation agencies.
- Other service providers as deemed to be a probable location for eligible veterans with SBEs.

Florida will continually collect, monitor, and assess the performance data of services provided to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of DVOP specialists are adhered to and adjust the administration of the program, as needed. This is accomplished through the Veterans Quarterly Manager's Reports (VQMRs), along with onsite office validations completed by the State Veterans Program Office.

**VR&E Program**
The VR&E program, administered by the VA, assists veterans with service-connected disabilities by helping them prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. Florida's DVOP specialists establish contact with these veterans and assist in any way possible to ensure positive outcomes are achieved by VR&E participants. Although nationally there has been a pause in the process in which VR&E program graduates are referred to the JVSG-funded staff for job search assistance and other workforce development services, Florida will continue its efforts to engage VR&E program graduates to ensure their continued access to JVSG-funded services.

**Veteran Readiness & Employment Coordinator**
Two DVOP specialists will be designated as FloridaCommerce Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) Coordinators (ISCs). One of the VR&E Coordinators will be assigned as the lead VR&E Coordinator. The lead VR&E Coordinator will be responsible for compiling the Chapter 31 report (formerly known as the 201 report). Once compiled, the lead VR&E Coordinator will send the report to the SVPC 28 days after the end of each quarter.

The VR&E Coordinators function as liaisons between the veteran, Employment Counselors, Vocational Readiness Counselors (VRCs), and the local career centers. VR&E program participants who have completed training and are deemed job ready are referred to the ISCs through the flvre@commerce.fl.gov email inbox. These veterans will be referred to a Veteran Program Manager or designated Chapter 31 contact at one of the 21 LWDBs. A DVOP specialist will then be assigned to the VR&E participant for the provision of individualized career services through the case management process and offered access to applicable career center services.

**Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) Staff**
LVER staff are assigned to career centers to facilitate employment, training, and placement services and ensure easier access to the appropriate employment and training services for job seeking veterans. LVER staff are placed throughout the state to reach out to employers and promote the benefits of hiring veterans. LVER staff advocate for all veterans served by career centers with business, industry, and other community- based organizations by participating in activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs.
- Conducting employer outreach.
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and business to promote and secure employment and training opportunities for veterans.
- Informing federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans.

- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans.
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

LVER staff actively advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations on behalf of veterans consistent with VPL 03-14, Changes 1 and 2, and VPL 03-19. LVER staff will be assigned duties that promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans and will be fully integrated with the Business Services Team (BST) within the career center to conduct outreach activities to these entities. As part of these assigned duties, LVER staff will:

- In conjunction with employers, conduct job searches and workshops and establish job search groups to facilitate the use of the State's labor exchange and case management system (Employ Florida) to enhance their employee search activities.
- Form effective relationships with the business community and trade unions to enhance the availability of employment and training opportunities for veterans.
- Encourage businesses to hire veterans and to provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs geared to the veteran community.
- Maintain current labor market information on trends and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Work with training providers and credentialing bodies to promote opportunities for veterans.
- Encourage employers in professions requiring licensure or certification to develop OJT and/or apprenticeship programs for veterans.
- Promote the participation of veterans in programs leading to certification or licensure.
- Advocate with training providers and credentialing agencies for recognition of equivalent military training.
- Plan and participate in job fairs to provide employment opportunities for veterans. LVER staff will facilitate this by:
    - Initiating contact and developing relationships with employers, industry and economic development organizations, community leaders, labor unions, veterans' organizations, and training program representatives to develop their commitment to providing employment and training opportunities for veterans.
    - Maintaining current information regarding a full range of employment and training options available to veterans.
- Work with federal contractors to inform them of the process they can use to recruit and hire veterans within Employ Florida and discuss their responsibilities under the Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Program and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act final rule to attain the appropriate percentage of veteran hires.

The result of LVER staff outreach to employers and the community will be an increased awareness of the benefits of hiring veterans and the capabilities of veterans. LVER staff will also promote the HVMP program. The Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans (HIRE Vets) Medallion Award is the only federal-level veterans' employment award program that recognizes a company or organization's commitment to veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. In 2022, Florida ranked second in the country with 66 awardees.

**Employer Relations**
LVER staff will establish and maintain regular contact with employers to maximize the development of employment and training opportunities for the veteran community. This will be accomplished through the following:

Development of an employer contact plan designed to encourage the employment of veterans using business and community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, human resource groups, and others as determined to be beneficial in the facilitation of hiring veterans. This can be accomplished by:

- Personal visits.
- Phone calls.
- Email contacts.
- Internet and social media connections or other means deemed effective.
- Monitoring federal contractor job listings and encouraging the hiring of veterans by federal contractors.
- Coordinating activities with DVOP specialists, along with other career center staff and partners to promote veteran job seekers who have been deemed job ready to employers looking to match the specific skill sets of individuals to their needs.
- Advocating veterans as a category of job seekers who have highly transferable skills and experience. This can be accomplished by encouraging employers to develop apprenticeship programs to increase the employment opportunities for veterans.

**Capacity Building of Other Service Providers**
It is essential that LVER staff assist other workforce development providers in increasing their ability to recognize and respond to the employment and training needs of veterans. LVERs accomplish this through training career center staff and service delivery system partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues by:

- Providing technical assistance to LWDB staff and managers and other one-stop partners.
- Encouraging participation by raising the awareness of veterans in employment and training programs.

**Consolidated Positions**
The SVPC assigns Consolidated Position (CP) staff to select areas of the state in accordance with Administrative Policy 112: Jobs for Veterans' State Grant Staffing Requirements. The assignment of CP staff is determined through consultation with a LWDB and USDOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) State Director. LWDBs will be assigned CP staff when it is established that the assignment of a CP staff person will:

- Promote a more efficient administration of services to veterans with an emphasis on services to disabled veterans.
- Have no hindrance on the provision of services to veterans and employers.
- Maximize the effectiveness of the JVSG program within the career center and local area.

CP staff perform both the role of LVER staff and DVOP specialists. CP staff attend all mandated National Veterans Training Institute training for both LVER staff and DVOP specialists within 18 months of appointment. The SVPC monitors the activities of CP staff throughout the state on a quarterly basis to ensure the positions are being utilized to promote a more efficient administration of services to veterans and employers.

**State Veterans' Program Coordinator**
The SVPC is responsible for managing the Assistant State Veteran Program Coordinator

(ASVPC), four Regional Veterans Program Coordinators (RVPCs), and two ISCs, and provides functional oversight, direction, guidance, training, and technical assistance to LWDB Executive Directors, Career Center Operators/Directors, FloridaCommerce Administrators and their staffs in the management and operation of the DVOP/LVER Grant and career center Veterans' Program responsibilities.

The SVPC ensures that DVOP/LVER grant, and career center Veterans' Program administrative policies, procedures, guidelines, and related directives are implemented; evaluates impact on career center operations; and identifies potential problems and recommends appropriate action.

The SVPC will ensure that FloridaCommerce's Bureau of Human Resource Management is aware of the JVSG program's unique funding stream and will keep all vacancies filled by veterans, as well as non-veterans when appropriate, within the 60-day period in accordance with Title 38 U.S.C. and outlined in VPL 03-22: Jobs for Veterans State Grant Recurring Report Requirements.

To maintain accurate tracking and reporting of all JVSG-funded positions across all 21 LWDBs, FloridaCommerce has developed a statewide standardized tracking mechanism (501 report) that monitors new hires, vacancies, and changes in staffing.

The SVPC ensures that all JVSG-funded staff attend the mandated training offered by NVTI located in Dallas, Texas and administered by Management Concepts, Inc. This training must be completed within 18 months of their position start date as a LVER staff, DVOP specialist or CP staff.

**Assistant State Veteran Program Coordinator**
The ASVPC assists in providing functional oversight to LWDBs, One-Stop Operators and partners, including in the review of LWDB policies and procedures. The ASVPC is charged with the oversight of the ISCs and the management of the Vocational Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program and takes the lead with special projects.

**Regional Veterans' Program Coordinator**
RVPCs will assist the SVPC with monitoring and training for all 24 LWDBs. The RVPCs are responsible for collecting, monitoring, and assessing the performance data of services provided to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the JVSG staff are adhered to per federal guidelines. This is accomplished through Veteran Quarterly Manager's Report (VQMR) and routine state monitoring.

The RVPCs also assist with the development, revision, and implementation of administrative policies for the JVSG program. RVPCs conduct one-on-one virtual and on-site training, site audit visits, and continuous program support for all 21 LWDBs.

**(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's employment service delivery system or American Job Center.**

**DVOP Specialist, CP, and LVER Staff Integration**
DVOP specialists, CP, and LVER staff are fully integrated into career centers to form a comprehensive team that provides services to eligible veterans to address their employment and training needs. All career centers (except for those located in extremely rural locations) have assigned JVSG staff allocated according to veteran population and the needs of the community. DVOP specialists are assigned to areas with the highest concentration of veterans,

including disabled, homeless, and veterans with SBEs. LVER staff assignments are based on the employer population and the probabilities of economic growth in their areas. Placement of veteran staff is under constant review by the SVPC to determine if changes in staffing are warranted.

DVOP specialists are integrated into career centers' eligible veteran referral process. DVOP specialists collaborate with career center partners to assist eligible veterans and eligible persons by providing appropriate referrals and supportive services. DVOP specialists also participate in career center workshops and community-sponsored events organized by community-based organizations and veteran resource groups to promote the JVSG program.

In addition, DVOP specialists work closely with VA/VR&E Program and USDOL VETS partners to provide services to eligible veterans who are receiving funding from the VA/VR&E Program to gain the skills and training needed to enter the workforce. DVOP specialists assigned to the role of ISCs facilitate this process.

DVOP specialists also collaborate with the HVRP grant programs, along with local shelters, food banks, and community and faith-based organizations, to connect veterans with employers and support systems. Formerly incarcerated veterans also receive DVOP specialist provided individualized career services and support to help them integrate back into society as valued members of the community.

LVER staff promote veterans to local labor markets and businesses through presentations that highlight the advantages of hiring veterans and by creating job development contacts. LVERs coordinate with career center partners to promote employer participation in veteran focused job fairs, hiring events and stand downs. This collaboration serves to connect employers and job-ready veterans identified through the efforts of the career center, to include the DVOP specialists. In addition, LVERs work with all career center staff and partners to identify and build capacity to increase resources for all veterans.

CP staff perform the duties, tasks, and functions of the LVER and DVOP as established in Title 38, U.S.C., and outlined in federal and state guidance.

**Service Providers**
DVOP specialists are assigned to career centers where a full range of workforce programs are accessible to eligible veteran job seekers. In addition to the partners located within the career center (National Council on Aging, FDOE Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.), the DVOP specialist is also tasked with developing relationships with other agencies that provide services to veterans. These may include, but are not limited to:

- HVRPs.
- Supportive Services of Veterans and Families.
- Other organizations dedicated to providing employment and training services to veterans.

DVOP specialists actively seek to establish partnerships in providing services to veterans with other state and federal agencies, County VSOs, and community service organizations. LVER staff will perform outreach to businesses, training providers, and any other entities with the ability to positively impact the employability of Veterans.

**In-Demand Careers**

LVER staff work with local industry leaders to identify employment opportunities and the requisite skill sets needed for in-demand careers for their area and develop opportunities for training through programs such as OJT grants, WIOA, and other locally available programs. Additionally, LVER staff coordinate with state educational facilities to promote training programs for in-demand jobs.

**Public Outreach to Veterans Concerning Employment and Training Opportunities**
In addition to the efforts of the DVOP specialist and LVER staff, BST members will promote the available services, including employment and job training opportunities, to veterans through the variety of forums in which they are involved. These can include job fairs, Chamber of Commerce meetings, SHRM meetings, employer visits, public radio, television spots, and departmental brochures.

**(d) Describe the state's performance incentive award program to encourage individuals and/or employment service offices to improve and/or achieve excellence in the provision of services to veterans, including:**

**1. the nomination and selection process for all performance incentive awards to individuals and/or offices;**

During the summer, FloridaCommerce seeks nominations from Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for LVERs and DVOPs. The LWDBs are divided into three categories: small, medium, and large. The review team consists of JVSG staff, as well as staff from the USDOL VETS office, and Veterans Florida, with members rating the submissions independently based on performance during the year as reflected in the Veterans Quarterly Management Report and written submission of community outreach. The team convenes and selects recipients (1st and, in some cases, 2nd place).

Additionally, one DVOP and one LVER are recognized as Veteran of the Quarter. (Because of the limited number of Consolidated Position staff, such employees are not recognized every quarter.) LWDBs are encouraged to nominate one staff member for each category. The nominations are then reviewed by JVSG State and Regional Coordinators based on performance and initiative.

**2. the approximate number and value of cash awards using the one percent incentive award allocation;**

The cash awards are evenly split among the small, medium, and large LWDBs. For the most recent fiscal year the total allocated to incentive awards was $110,597. The LWDBs in 1st place each received $25,000 and the 2nd place LWDBs received $11,865/11,866.

**3. the general nature and approximate value of non-cash performance incentive awards to be charged to the base allocation;**

Non-cash awards are provided to individual JVSG staff in the form of paid travel/attendance at statewide, regional or national conferences, such as the National Association of State Workforce or Southeastern Employment and Training Association. Attendance at these events allow them to network with their peers and bring back best practices that inform their provision of services to Florida’s veterans. The approximate cost of such attendance annually would be $100,000-200,000.

**4. any challenges the state may anticipate to carrying out a performance incentive award program as mandated by 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This should include any state laws or policies that prohibit such awards, if applicable. Describe the state's efforts in overcoming those challenges.**

No challenges *per se*. State law prohibits the payment of cash incentives to state employees. Thus, cash incentive awards are made to the JVSG staff's LWDB.

**(e) The populations of eligible veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes).**

The Secretary of the U.S Department of Labor (USDOL), through the ASVET, has identified certain categories of veterans most in need of individualized career services to mitigate significant barriers to employment (SBE). Within these categories, certain populations of veterans must be targeted for services.

38 U.S.C. 4101(4) and 4211(4) define the term "eligible veteran" as a person who:

a) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge;
b) was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;
c) was a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty pursuant to section 12301(a), (d), or (g), 12302, or 12304 of title 10, served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
d) was discharged or released from active duty by reason of a sole survivorship discharge (as that term is defined in section 1174(i) of title 10).

Under 20 CFR Part 1010 and 38 U.S.C. 4215, "priority of service" is provided to all "covered persons." Section 4215(a)(l) defines "covered persons" to mean veterans and the spouses "of any of the following:

a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
    i. Missing in action;
    ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
    iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power; or
c. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs or any veteran who died while such a disability was in existence." Under the regulatory definition of "covered persons", "veteran" is defined as it is in 38 U.S.C. 101(2) as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Under 38 U.S.C. 1720G(d), the term "family caregiver" is defined as an individual who provides personal care services to the veteran.

An eligible veteran or eligible person is determined to have a SBE if they attest to belonging to at least one of the criteria below:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1) and (3). Special disabled and disabled veterans are those:
    - Who are entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retired pay, would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs.
    - Were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
- A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. I 1302(a)). Also considered to be homeless is any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- A recently separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months.
- An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration.
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
- A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36)).
- Veterans aged 18 to 24.
- Vietnam-era veterans.

In annual appropriation bills since the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Congress authorized JVSG grants to support services as described in Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 03-19 to:

- Eligible transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of individualized career services, per guidance issued through the most current VPL.
- Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities (MTF) or warrior transition units (WTU).
- The spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members.

Note: Veterans with a SBE, or labeled in a specified category, have access to all appropriate career center services and are not limited to receiving services exclusively from DVOP specialists.

DVOP specialists are required to take an active role in seeking out and assisting these targeted groups by networking with other local, state, and federal government agencies. DVOP specialists develop partnerships with veteran service organizations, community service organizations, LWDB partners, faith-based organizations, and any other entities that are dedicated to serving veterans in need.

FloridaCommerce acknowledges that homeless veterans are not likely to seek workforce services on their own and that initiative is to be taken by DVOP specialists to go where these veterans can be located. In locations where there is access to organizations such as USDOL/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) HVRP grantees, U.S. Department

of Veteran Affairs (VA) facilities, WTUs, MTFs, etc., direct partnerships have been established where the DVOP specialist regularly visits the facility to provide services as needed.

**(f) How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons.**

Career center operators must enable veterans and covered persons to identify as such at the point of entry to the system or program, so that they may take full advantage of priority of service and be offered immediate services. To ensure that veterans and covered persons have the opportunity to self-identify, banners and posters are posted around the career center along with clear signage on each LWDB's webpage. Once identified, career center operators ensure that covered persons are made aware of:

- Priority of service entitlement.
- The full array of employment training and placement services available.
- Applicable eligibility requirements for programs and services.

To receive priority of service for individualized career services, customers may self-attest their veteran or eligible person status. It is neither necessary nor appropriate, for any staff to require verification of the status of a veteran or covered persons at the point of entry for priority of service for individualized career services from career center or JVSG staff.

The only services that require eligibility verification are those cases where a decision is made to commit funding to a covered person over another non-covered person. For all other purposes, covered persons should be enrolled and provided immediate priority before requiring verification. To receive priority for training services under WIOA, veteran status must be verified. This can be done by reviewing the original or a photocopy of the veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, which is commonly known as the DD-214 Form. Verification from another official source may also be accepted. For example, Florida affixes a Veteran designation on driver licenses and state identity cards.

**(g) How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and American Job Center staff: (1) job and job training individualized career services, (2) employment placement services, and (3) job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons.**

- Employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program.
- Employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit.
- Median earnings in the second quarter after exit.

**Figure 7.10**
**JVSG Performance Measures**

| Florida Outcomes | Program Year (PY) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PY2020 | PY 2021 | PY 2022 | PY 2023 |
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 53.1% | 50.6% | 59.2% | 58.6% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 50.3% | 58.7% | 57.1% | 57.5% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $6,113 | $7,929 | $7,810 | $7,810 |
| JVSG Performance Measures PY 2024-27 | Goal | | | |
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 51.0% | | | |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 49.0% | | | |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $5,750 | | | |

Florida will continually collect, monitor, and assess the performance data of services provided to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of DVOP specialists are adhered to and adjust the administration of the program, as needed. This is accomplished through the VQMRs, along with onsite office validations completed by the State Veterans Program Office.

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**(OMB Control Number: 1205-0132)**

**The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program requires a State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) on a 2-year planning cycle that is a condition of receipt of administrative funding to administer the program. The SQSP is the State's UI performance management and planning process that allows for an exchange of information between Federal and State partners to enhance the UI program's ability to reflect their joint commitment to performance excellence and client-centered services.**

**A formal two-year SQSP is submitted biennially. On the off years, States may be required to modify the SQSP with additional corrective action plans and narrative if they are failing any new performance measures, and they are required to provide updated budget documents, certifications, and assurances. Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition provides detailed guidance for the preparation and submittal of the SQSP, and supplemental guidance is provided in an annual Unemployment Insurance Program Letters (UIPL), issued as UIPL 15-19 for the fiscal year 2020 SQSP.**

**The Social Security Act sections 302 and 303 authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide funds to administer the UI program and govern the expenditure of those funds. States that choose the option to include UI in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan will be required to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process. The SQSP must be prepared in accordance to the instructions in ETA Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition and there are no changes to the established SQSP cycle if a State chose to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process.**

**(a) Contents of a complete UI SQSP package: A complete UI SQSP package includes the following documents, as described in Chapter 1, ETA Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition:**

**(1) *Transmittal Letter:* A cover letter to the appropriate Regional Office transmitting all the required SQSP documents.**

**(2) *Budget Worksheets/Forms:* Budget worksheets/forms and plan for program administration based on projected allocations received from the Federal partner. These forms include Worksheet UI-1 and SF 424, SF 424A and SF 424B. The SF 424A is only required if the State varies the quarterly distribution of base claims activity staff years.**

**(3) *The State Plan Narrative:* The State Plan Narrative is a vital element of the SQSP that provides a vehicle for sharing with the Federal partner State-specific efforts that affect the administration of the UI Program. The State Plan Narrative allows the State to describe in a single narrative: a) State performance in comparison to the Government Performance Review Act goals; b) actions planned to correct deficiencies regarding UI programs, UI program reviews and reporting requirements; and c) results of customer satisfaction surveys (optional).**

**(4) *Corrective Action Plans (CAPs):* CAPs are expected as a part of the SQSP when State's annual performance does not meet the established criteria for core measures, Secretary's Standards, UI program, assurances, and other program deficiencies identified in the annual SQSP guidance provided by the Department. The CAP must list both specific milestones for key corrective actions or improvement activities, and the completion date for each milestone.**

**(5) *UI Program Integrity Action Plan (UI IAP):* The UI IAP outlines the strategies the State will undertake during the planning period regarding the prevention reduction and recovery of UI improper payments.**

**(6) *Organizational Chart:* The organization chart must conform to the requirement for delivery of service through public employment offices, or such other designated providers as the Secretary may authorize; show the State's configuration from the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery; and provide sufficient detail to show each organizational unit involved and the title of the unit manager.**

**(7) *SQSP Signature Page*. The State administrator must sign and date the SQSP Signature Page. By signing the Signature Page, the State administrator certifies that the State will comply with all the assurances and activities contained in the SQSP guidelines**

**(8) *Transmittal Letter:* A cover letter to the appropriate Regional Office transmitting all the required SQSP documents.**

**Figure 7.11**
**SQSP Fiscal year 2025 Transmittal Letter**

Ron DeSantis GOVERNOR
J. Alex Kelly SECRETARY

September 17, 2024

Ms. Renata Adjibodou
Acting Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center
Room 6M12-61 Forsyth Street S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Renata Adjibodou:

Enclosed is the Florida Department of Commerce Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program State Quality Assurance Plan (SQSP) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. This package transmits the following items:

- Florida's FY25 SQSP CAPs and Quarterly Reporting Workbook
- Florida's FY25 State Plan Narrative
- Florida's FY25 Integrity Action Plan
- SQSP Signature Page
- Organizational Chart

All items have been prepared in accordance with the instructions in the Department of Labor, Employment and Training (ETA) guidance that was issued under the Additional Planning Guidance for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Unemployment Insurance (UI) State Quality Service Plan (SQSP), the Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) Number 16-24, and the Employment and Training (ETA) Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition, Change 4.

If you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 599-0314.

Sincerely,

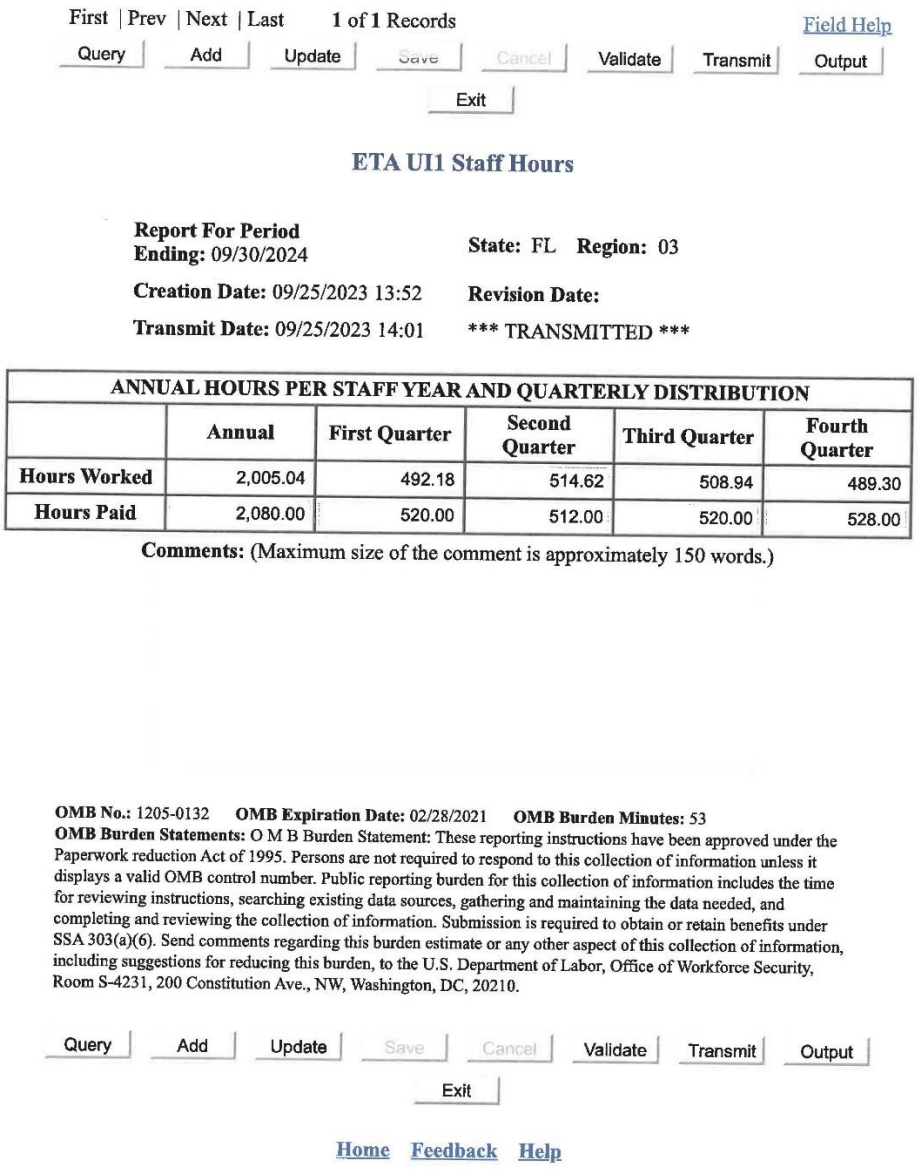
Wendy Castle
Assistant Deputy Secretary, Division of Workforce Services

Caldwell Building | 107 E. Madison Street Tallahassee, FL 32399
850.245.7105 | www.FloridaJobs.org | Twitter: @FLACommerce

An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TTD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

***(2) Budget Worksheets/Forms:*** **Budget worksheets/forms and plan for program administration based on projected allocations received from the Federal partner. These forms include Worksheet UI-1 and SF 424, SF 424A and SF 424B. The SF 424A is only required if the State varies the quarterly distribution of base claims activity staff years.**

**Figure 7.12**
**ETA UI-I**



First | Prev | Next | Last 1 of 1 Records Field Help

Query | Add | Update | Save | Cancel | Validate | Transmit | Output | Exit

**ETA UI1 Staff Hours**

**Report For Period Ending:** 09/30/2024 **State:** FL **Region:** 03

**Creation Date:** 09/25/2023 13:52 **Revision Date:**

**Transmit Date:** 09/25/2023 14:01 *** TRANSMITTED ***

| ANNUAL HOURS PER STAFF YEAR AND QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTION | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Annual** | **First Quarter** | **Second Quarter** | **Third Quarter** | **Fourth Quarter** |
| **Hours Worked** | 2,005.04 | 492.18 | 514.62 | 508.94 | 489.30 |
| **Hours Paid** | 2,080.00 | 520.00 | 512.00 | 520.00 | 528.00 |

**Comments:** (Maximum size of the comment is approximately 150 words.)

**OMB No.:** 1205-0132 **OMB Expiration Date:** 02/28/2021 **OMB Burden Minutes:** 53
**OMB Burden Statements:** O M B Burden Statement: These reporting instructions have been approved under the Paperwork reduction Act of 1995. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Submission is required to obtain or retain benefits under SSA 303(a)(6). Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Security, Room S-4231, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 20210.

Query | Add | Update | Save | Cancel | Validate | Transmit | Output | Exit

Home Feedback Help

**Figure 7.13**
**FY2025 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines (ETA-UIPL-19-24-BASE)**

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## WORKSPACE FORM

1-800-518-4726
SUPPORT@GRANTS.GOV

This Workspace form is one of the forms you need to complete prior to submitting your Application Package. This form can be completed in its entirety offline using Adobe Reader. You can save your form by clicking the "Save" button and see any errors by clicking the "Check For Errors" button. In-progress and completed forms can be uploaded at any time to Grants.gov using the Workspace feature.

When you open a form, required fields are highlighted in yellow with a red border. Optional fields and completed fields are displayed in white. If you enter invalid or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. Additional instructions and FAQs about the Application Package can be found in the Grants.gov Applicants tab.

| OPPORTUNITY & PACKAGE DETAILS: | |
|---|---|
| Opportunity Number: | ETA-UIPL-19-24-BASE |
| Opportunity Title: | Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines |
| Opportunity Package ID: | PKG00287919 |
| CFDA Number: | 17.225 |
| CFDA Description: | Unemployment Insurance |
| Competition ID: | ETA-UIPL-19-24-BASE |
| Competition Title: | Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines |
| Opening Date: | 09/17/2024 |
| Closing Date: | 10/17/2024 |
| Agency: | Employment and Training Administration |
| Contact Information: | Rahel Bizuayene |
| **APPLICANT & WORKSPACE DETAILS:** | |
| Workspace ID: | WS01417466 |
| Application Filing Name: | Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines |
| UEI: | WVR6ECT1G9F8 |
| Organization: | FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE |
| Form Name: | Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) |
| Form Version: | 4.0 |
| Requirement: | Mandatory |
| Download Date/Time: | Sep 17, 2024 11:01:38 AM EDT |
| Form State: | No Errors |

**FORM ACTIONS:**

CHECK FOR ERRORS | SAVE | PRINT

View Burden Statement

OMB Number: 4040-0004
Expiration Date: 11/30/2025

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| * 1. Type of Submission: | * 2. Type of Application: | * If Revision, select appropriate letter(s): |
| ☐ Preapplication | ☒ New | |
| ☒ Application | ☐ Continuation | * Other (Specify): |
| ☐ Changed/Corrected Application | ☐ Revision | |

| | |
|---|---|
| * 3. Date Received: | 4. Applicant Identifier: |
| Completed by Grants.gov upon submission. | |
| 5a. Federal Entity Identifier: | 5b. Federal Award Identifier: |
| | |
| **State Use Only:** | |
| 6. Date Received by State: | 7. State Application Identifier: |
| | |

**8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

| | |
|---|---|
| * a. Legal Name: | Florida Department of Commerce |
| * b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): | * c. UEI: |
| 36-4706134 | WVR6ECT1G9F8 |

**d. Address:**

| | |
|---|---|
| * Street1: | 107 East Madison Street |
| Street2: | |
| * City: | Tallahassee |
| County/Parish: | |
| * State: | FL: Florida |
| Province: | |
| * Country: | USA: UNITED STATES |
| * Zip / Postal Code: | 32399-6545 |

**e. Organizational Unit:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Department Name: | Division Name: |
| Florida Department of Commerce | Finance and Administration |

**f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Prefix: | * First Name: Wendy |
| Middle Name: | |
| * Last Name: | Castle |
| Suffix: | |
| Title: | Deputy Director, Reemployment Assistance |
| Organizational Affiliation: | |
| * Telephone Number: | 850-599-0314 Fax Number: |
| * Email: | Wendy.Castle@Commerce.FL.Gov |

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

Employment and Training Administration

**11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:**

17.225

CFDA Title:

Unemployment Insurance

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ETA-UIPL-19-24-BASE

* Title:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

**13. Competition Identification Number:**

ETA-UIPL-19-24-BASE

Title:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

**14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

State UI Activities
The estimated indirect cost is $5,072,956

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments | Delete Attachments | View Attachments

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

* a. Applicant: FL-02 * b. Program/Project: FLALL

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

**17. Proposed Project:**

* a. Start Date: 10/01/2024 * b. End Date: 12/31/2025

**18. Estimated Funding ($):**

| | |
|---|---|
| * a. Federal | 89,006,780.00 |
| * b. Applicant | 0.00 |
| * c. State | 0.00 |
| * d. Local | 0.00 |
| * e. Other | 0.00 |
| * f. Program Income | 0.00 |
| * g. TOTAL | 89,006,780.00 |

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .

☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

☒ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

**21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix: * First Name: Caroline

Middle Name:

* Last Name: Womack

Suffix:

* Title: Chief Financial Officer

* Telephone Number: 850-245-7126 Fax Number:

* Email: Caroline.Womack@Commerce.FL.Gov

* Signature of Authorized Representative: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission. * Date Signed: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission.

***(3) The State Plan Narrative:*** **The State Plan Narrative is a vital element of the SQSP that provides a vehicle for sharing with the Federal partner State-specific efforts that affect the administration of the UI Program. The State Plan Narrative allows the State to describe in a single narrative: a) State performance in comparison to the Government Performance Review Act goals; b) actions planned to correct deficiencies regarding UI programs, UI program reviews and reporting requirements; and c) results of customer satisfaction surveys (optional).**

The region was informed on July 18, 2024 that because of the sensitive nature of some SQSP documents, the Office of Unemployment Insurance requires that only specific documents be included with the WIOA Combined state plan.

The State Plan Narrative is removed as instructed.

***Corrective Action Plans (CAPs):*** **CAPs are expected as a part of the SQSP when State's annual performance does not meet the established criteria for core measures, Secretary's Standards, UI program, assurances, and other program deficiencies identified in the annual SQSP guidance provided by the Department. The CAP must list both specific milestones for key corrective actions or improvement activities, and the completion date for each milestone.**

**Figure 7.14**
**Corrective Action Plans**
**Measures/Programs to be Addressed for Biennial SQSP Fiscal Year 2025**

| Florida | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MEASURES/PROGRAMS TO BE ADDRESSED FOR BIENNIAL SQSP FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2025 | | | | | | |
| | Measures/Programs to be Addressed (Each Measure Below is Hyperlinked to the CAP Worksheet) | Acceptable Level of Performance (ALP) | Corrective Action Plan (CAP) N | Corrective Action Plan (CAP) E | Narrative Required (in Word Doc.) | SQSP 2025 Performance Year Data |
| BENEFITS | First Payment Promptness | ≥ 87% | | | | 76.54% |
| | First Payment Promptness (IntraState 14/21 Days) | ≥ 87% | | | | 76.51% |
| | First Payment Promptness (InterState 14/21 Days) | ≥ 70% | | | | 81.17% |
| | First Payment Promptness (IntraState 35 Days) | ≥ 93% | | | | 90.18% |
| | First Payment Promptness (InterState 35 Days) | ≥ 78% | | | | 91.97% |
| | Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness | ≥ 80% | | | | 11.93% |
| | Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations | ≥ 75% | | | | 42.18% |
| | Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Nonseps | ≥ 75% | | | | 58.97% |
| APPEALS | Lower Authority Appeals (30 Days) | ≥ 60% | | | | 76.40% |
| | Lower Authority Appeals (45 Days) | ≥ 80% | | | | 90.43% |
| | Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals | ≤ 30 days | | | | 15.1 |
| | Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals | ≤ 40 days | | | | 17.7 |
| | Lower Authority Appeals Quality | ≥ 80% | | | | 94.0% |
| TAX | New Employer Status Determinations Timelapse | ≥ 70% | | | | 94.1% |
| | Tax Quality (Part A) | No more than 3 tax functions failing TPS in a year | | | | Pass |
| | Tax Quality (Part B) | The same tax function cannot fail for 3 consecutive years | | | | Pass |
| | TPS Sample Reviews | Pass | | | | Pass |
| | Effective Audit Measure | Pass 4 factors/score ≥ 7 | | | | Fail: Factor 1: 0.8% |
| INTEGRITY | Improper Payments Measure | < 10% | | | | 39.17% |
| | Detection of Overpayments - 3 Year Measure | ≥ 50% & ≤ 95% | | | | 67.51% |
| | Overpayment Recovery Measure | ≥ 68% | | | | 3.54% |
| | Data Validation - Benefits (All Submitted & Passing) | All Benefit Pops Submitted & Passing | | | | Fail: Benefits 3, 4, 13, Not Submitted: BTQ 1-3 |
| | Data Validation - Tax (All Submitted & Passing) | All Tax Pops Submitted & Passing | | | | Pass |
| BAM | NDNH BAM Compliance | Pass | | | | Pass |
| | BAM Operations Compliant | Pass All M&P | | | | Fail Comparison Report: Denied (Monetary) = -45.27% Denied (Separation) = -83.60% Denied (Non-Sep) = -77.39% |
| | Incorrect Recording of Issue Detection Date | 95% | | | | 75.34% |
| | Incorrect Recording of Determination Date | 95% | | | | 100.00% |
| | UI Reporting Requirements | Pass | | | | Pass |
| GPRA | Percent of Intrastate Payments Made Timely | 87% | | | | 76.51% |
| | Detection of Recoverable Overpayments | 57.5% | | | | 48.28% |
| | Percent of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely | 90% | | | | 93.92% |
| Integrity Action Plan (IAP) Top Three Root Causes - Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) Year Data | | | | | | |
| Separation Issues | | | | | | |
| Other Eligibility | | | | | | |
| Benefit Year Earnings | | | | | | |
| Monitoring Findings/Audit Resolution | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

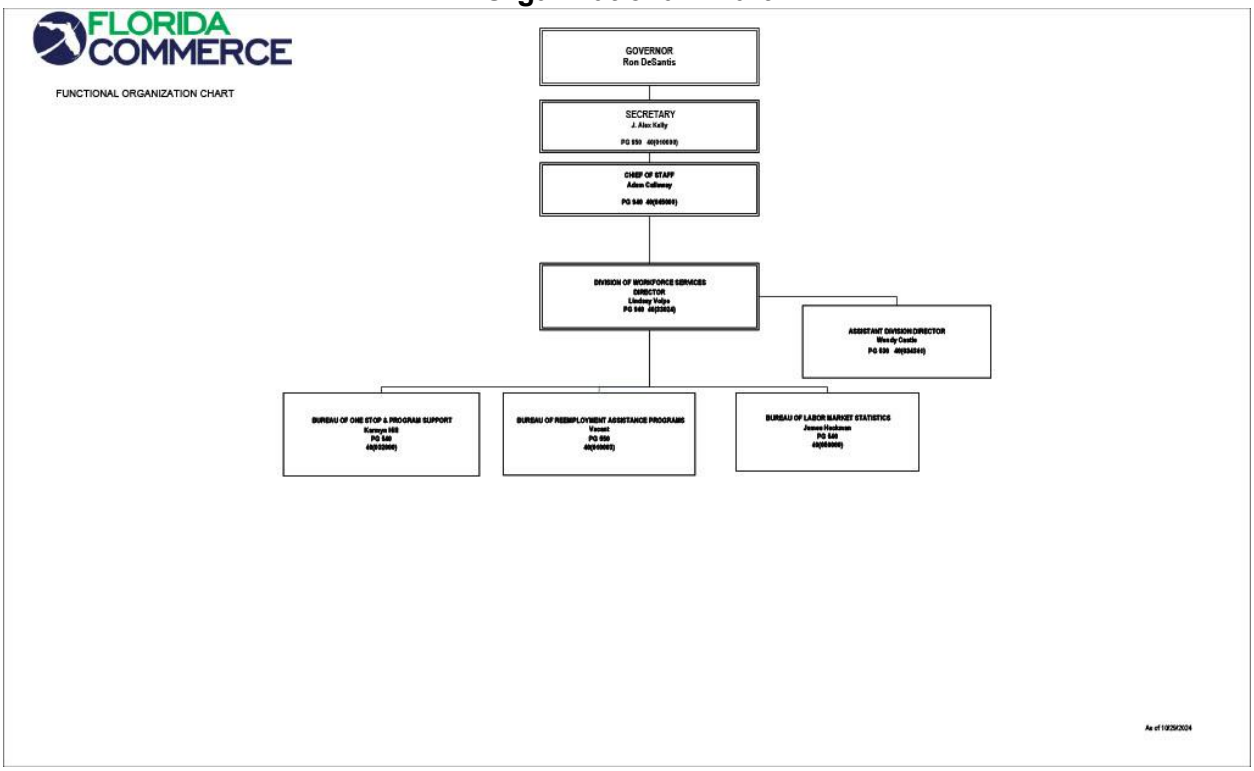
***UI Program Integrity Action Plan (UI IAP):*** **The UI IAP outlines the strategies the State will undertake during the planning period regarding the prevention reduction and recovery of UI improper payments.**

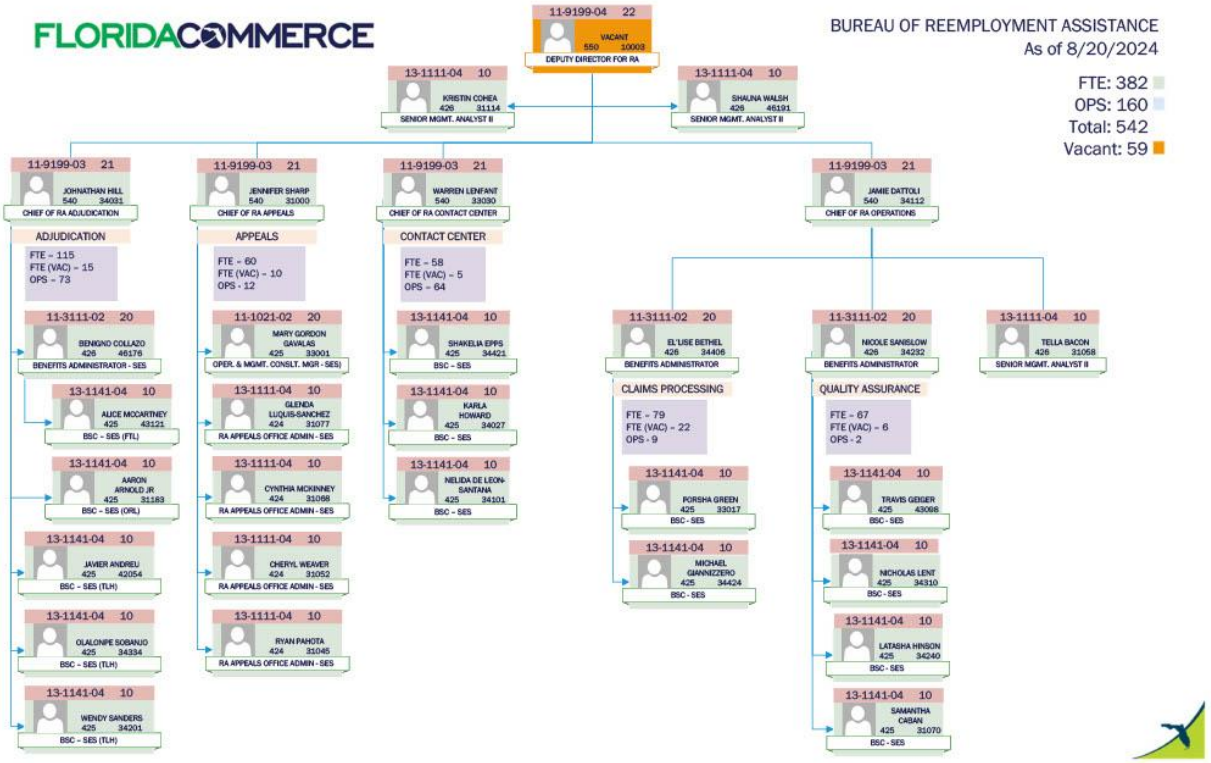
The region was informed on July 18, 2024 that because of the sensitive nature of some SQSP documents, the Office of Unemployment Insurance requires that only specific documents be included with the WIOA Combined state plan.

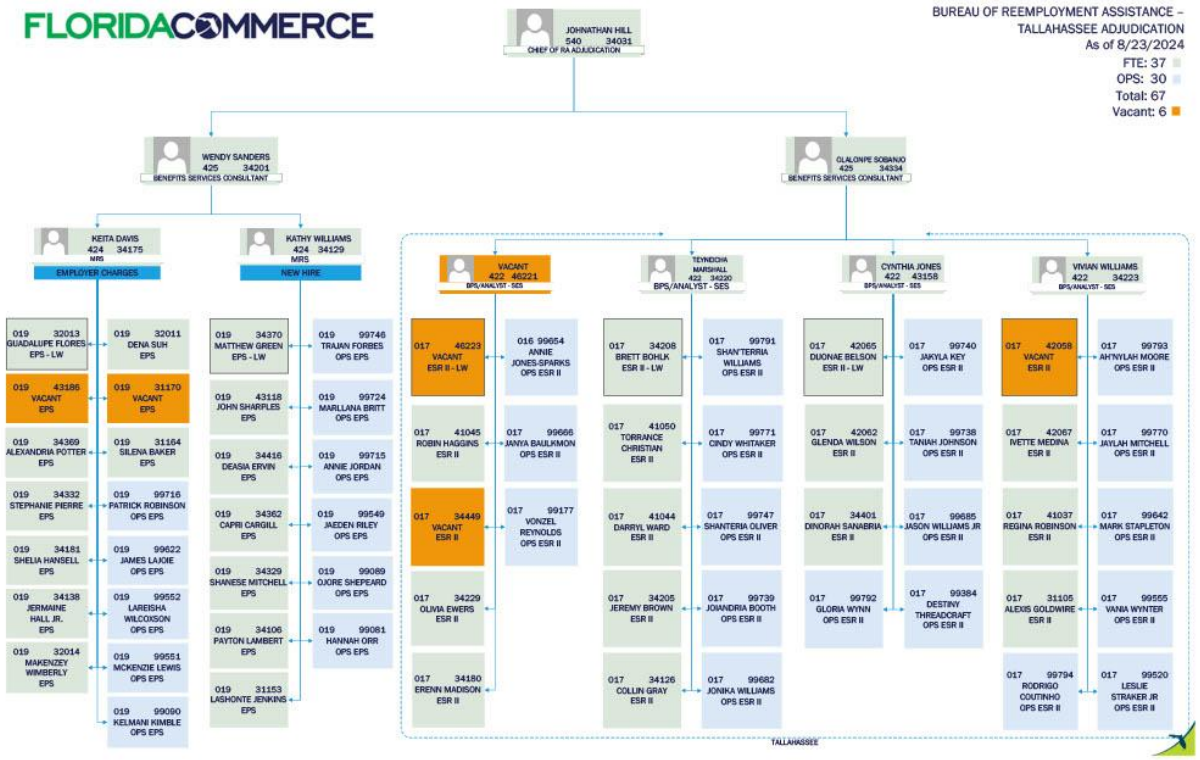
The UI Program Integrity Action Plan (UIAP) is removed as instructed.

***(4) Organizational Chart:*** **The organization chart must conform to the requirement for delivery of service through public employment offices, or such other designated providers as the Secretary may authorize; show the State's configuration from the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery; and provide sufficient detail to show each organizational unit involved and the title of the unit manager.**

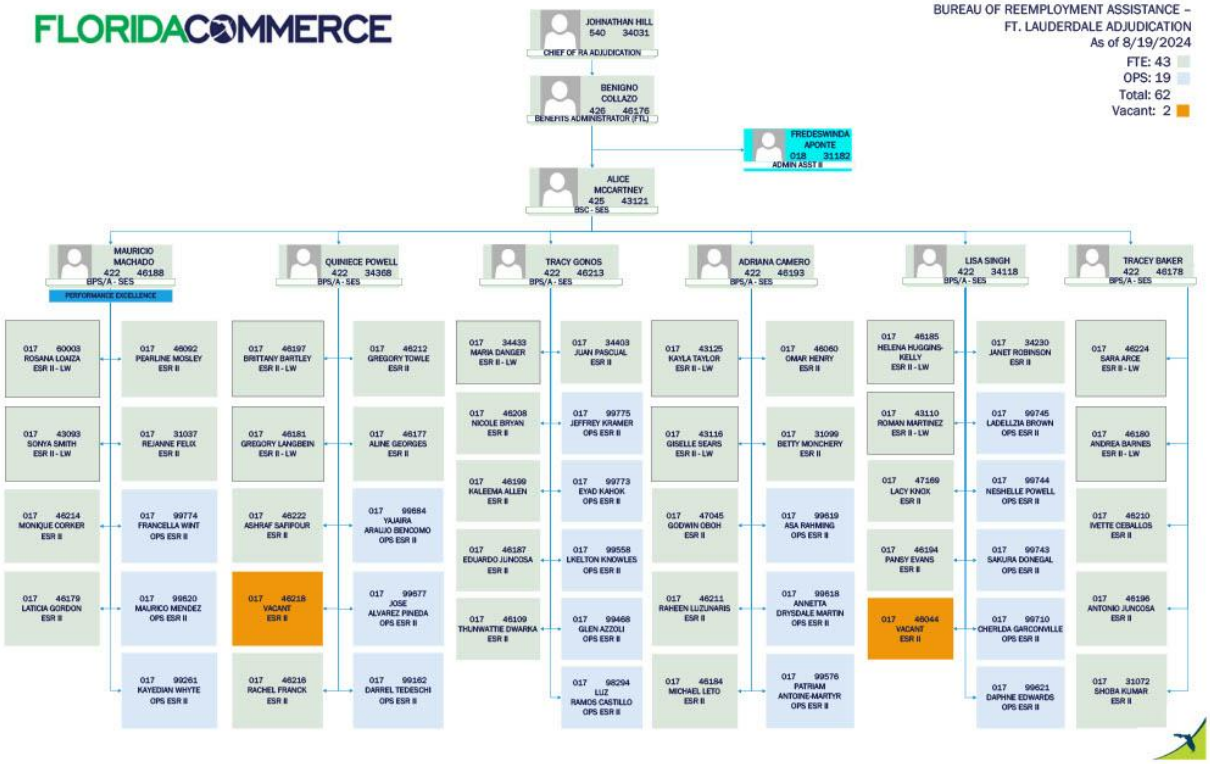
**Figure 7.15**
**FloridaCommerce Bureau of Reemployment Assistance**
**Organizational Chart**

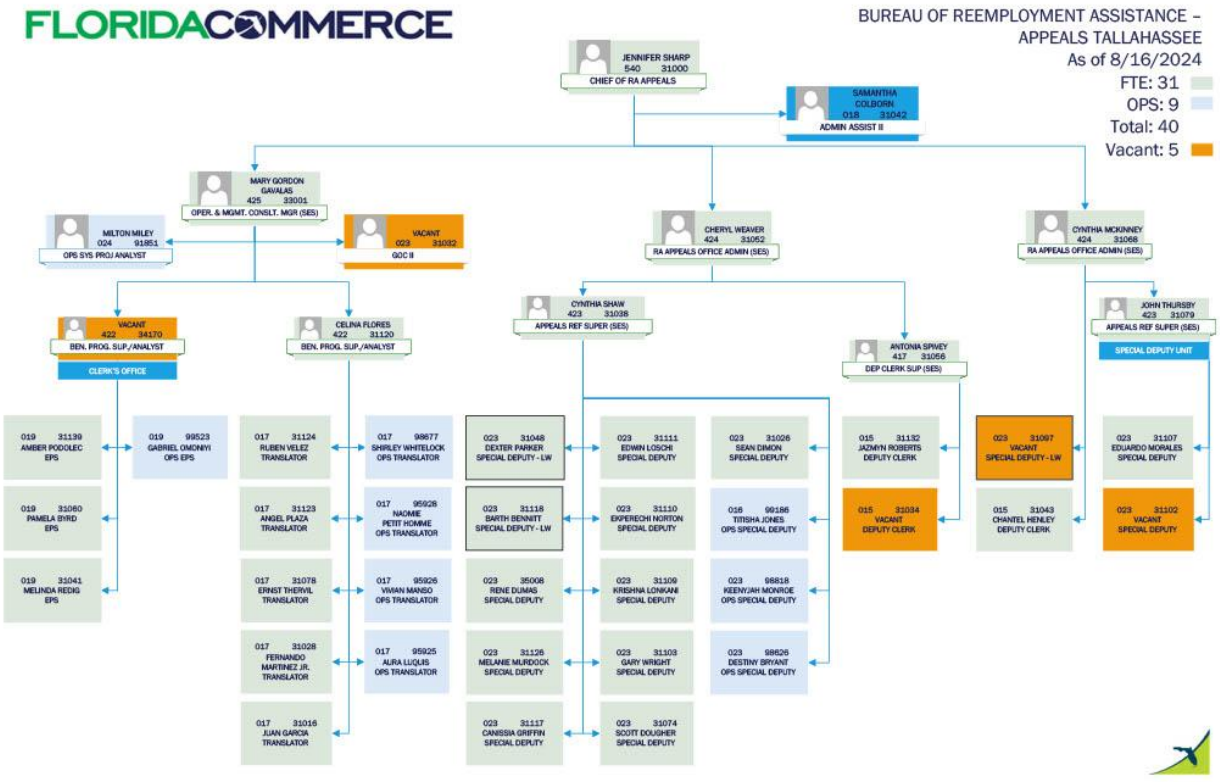



FLORIDACOMMERCE
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE – TALLAHASSEE ADJUDICATION
As of 8/23/2024
FTE: 37
OPS: 30
Total: 67
Vacant: 6
JOHNATHAN HILL 540 34031 CHIEF OF RA ADJUDICATION
WENDY SANDERS 425 34201 BENEFITS SERVICES CONSULTANT
OLALONPE SOBANJO 425 34334 BENEFITS SERVICES CONSULTANT
KEITA DAVIS 424 34175 MRS EMPLOYER CHARGES
KATHY WILLIAMS 424 34129 MRS NEW HIRE
VACANT 422 46221 BPS/ANALYST - SES
TEYNDCHA MARSHALL 422 34220 BPS/ANALYST - SES
CYNTHIA JONES 422 43158 BPS/ANALYST - SES
VIVIAN WILLIAMS 422 34223 BPS/ANALYST - SES
019 32013 GUADALUPE FLORES EPS - LW
019 32011 DENA SUH EPS
019 43186 VACANT EPS
019 31170 VACANT EPS
019 34369 ALEXANDRIA POTTER EPS
019 31164 SILENA BAKER EPS
019 34332 STEPHANIE PIERRE EPS
019 99716 PATRICK ROBINSON OPS EPS
019 34181 SHELIA HANSELL EPS
019 99622 JAMES LAJOIE OPS EPS
019 34138 JERMAINE HALL JR. EPS
019 99552 LAREISHA WILCOXSON OPS EPS
019 32014 MAKENZEY WIMBERLY EPS
019 99551 MCKENZIE LEWIS OPS EPS
019 99090 KELMANI KIMBLE OPS EPS
019 34370 MATTHEW GREEN EPS - LW
019 99746 TRAJAN FORBES OPS EPS
019 43118 JOHN SHARPLES EPS
019 99724 MARLLANA BRITT OPS EPS
019 34416 DEASIA ERVIN EPS
019 99715 ANNIE JORDAN OPS EPS
019 34362 CAPRI CARGILL EPS
019 99549 JAEDEN RILEY OPS EPS
019 34329 SHANESE MITCHELL EPS
019 99089 OJORE SHEPEARD OPS EPS
019 34106 PAYTON LAMBERT EPS
019 99081 HANNAH ORR OPS EPS
019 31153 LASHONTE JENKINS EPS
017 46223 VACANT ESR II - LW
016 99654 ANNIE JONES-SPARKS OPS ESR II
017 41045 ROBIN HAGGINS ESR II
017 99666 JANYA BAULKMON OPS ESR II
017 34449 VACANT ESR II
017 99177 VONZEL REYNOLDS OPS ESR II
017 34229 OLIVIA EWERS ESR II
017 34180 ERENN MADISON ESR II
017 34208 BRETT BOHLK ESR II - LW
017 99791 SHAN'TERRIA WILLIAMS OPS ESR II
017 41050 TORRANCE CHRISTIAN ESR II
017 99771 CINDY WHITAKER OPS ESR II
017 41044 DARRYL WARD ESR II
017 99747 SHANTERIA OLIVER OPS ESR II
017 34205 JEREMY BROWN ESR II
017 99739 JOIANDRIA BOOTH OPS ESR II
017 34126 COLLIN GRAY ESR II
017 99682 JONIKA WILLIAMS OPS ESR II
017 42065 DIJONAE BELSON ESR II - LW
017 99740 JAKYLA KEY OPS ESR II
017 42062 GLENDA WILSON ESR II
017 99738 TANIAH JOHNSON OPS ESR II
017 34401 DINORAH SANABRIA ESR II
017 99685 JASON WILLIAMS JR OPS ESR II
017 99792 GLORIA WYNN OPS ESR II
017 99384 DESTINY THREADCRAFT OPS ESR II
017 42058 VACANT ESR II
017 99793 AH'NYLAH MOORE OPS ESR II
017 42067 IVETTE MEDINA ESR II
017 99770 JAYLAH MITCHELL OPS ESR II
017 41037 REGINA ROBINSON ESR II
017 99642 MARK STAPLETON OPS ESR II
017 31105 ALEXIS GOLDWIRE ESR II
017 99555 VANIA WYNTER OPS ESR II
017 99794 RODRIGO COUTINHO OPS ESR II
017 99520 LESLIE STRAKER JR OPS ESR II
TALLAHASSEE

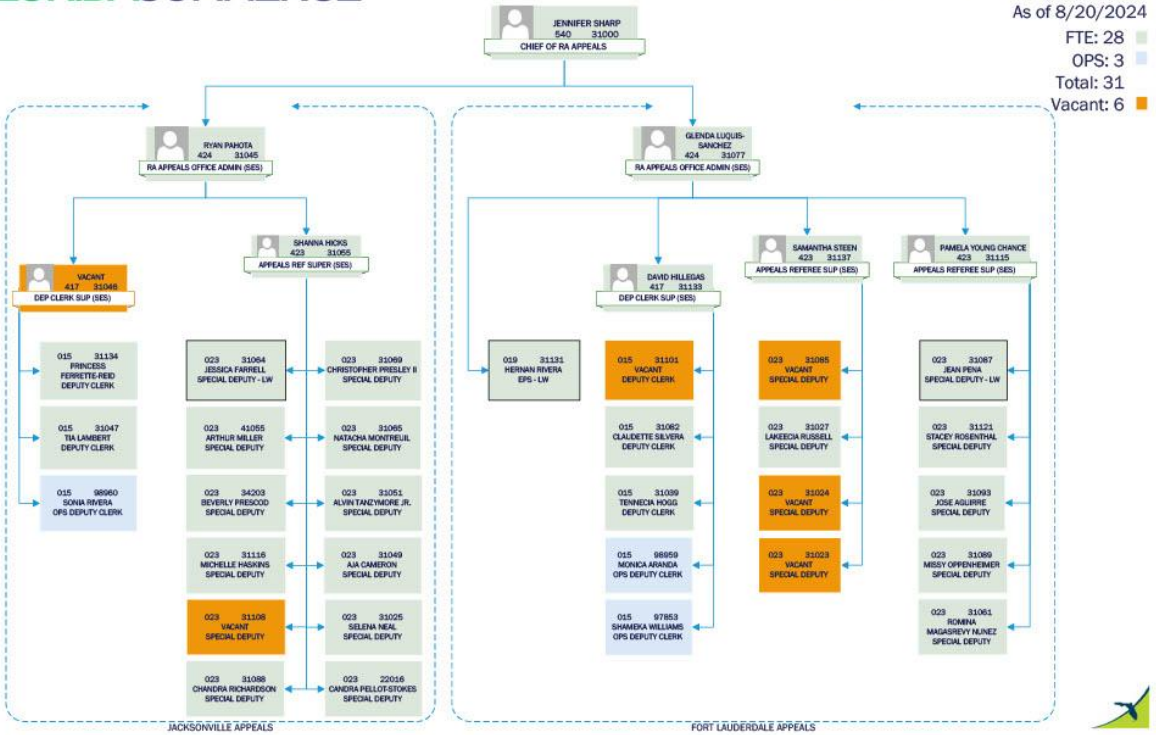
FLORIDACOMMERCE
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE – ORLANDO ADJUDICATION
As of 8/22/2024
FTE: 32
OPS: 31
Total: 63
Vacant: 10
JOHNATHAN HILL 540 34031 CHIEF OF RA ADJUDICATION
GINA BUTLER 018 43103 ADMIN ASST II
BENIGNO COLLAZO 426 46176 BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR (FTL)
AARON ARNOLD JR. 425 31169 SSC - SES
JAVIER ANDREU 425 42054 SSC - SES
JOYA GOODEN-LARRY 422 34210 BPS/ANALYST - SES
TRICHALEE MOGAN-SADDLER 422 34184 BPS/ANALYST - SES
MARGARET MARCHY 422 31191 BPS/ANALYST - SES
JOEL SAINT FLEUR 422 43113 BPS/ANALYST - SES
MOHINI CHAMBETT 422 34120 BPS/ANALYST - SES
TRACEY WARNER 422 43090 BPS/ANALYST - SES
RASHOD ADAMS 422 43104 BPS/ANALYST - SES


FLORIDACOMMERCE
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
FT. LAUDERDALE ADJUDICATION
As of 8/19/2024
FTE: 43
OPS: 19
Total: 62
Vacant: 2
JOHNATHAN HILL
540 34031
CHIEF OF RA ADJUDICATION
BENIGNO COLLAZO
426 46176
BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR (FTL)
FREDESWINDA APONTE
018 31182
ADMIN ASST II
ALICE MCCARTNEY
425 43121
BSC - SES
MAURICIO MACHADO
422 46188
BPS/A - SES
PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE
QUINIECE POWELL
422 34368
BPS/A - SES
TRACY GONOS
422 46213
BPS/A - SES
ADRIANA CAMERO
422 46193
BPS/A - SES
LISA SINGH
422 34118
BPS/A - SES
TRACEY BAKER
422 46178
BPS/A - SES
017 60003 ROSANA LOAIZA ESR II - LW
017 48092 PEARLINE MOSLEY ESR II
017 46197 BRITTANY BARTLEY ESR II - LW
017 46212 GREGORY TOWLE ESR II
017 34433 MARIA DANGER ESR II - LW
017 34403 JUAN PASCUAL ESR II
017 43125 KAYLA TAYLOR ESR II - LW
017 46060 OMAR HENRY ESR II
017 46185 HELENA HUGGINS-KELLY ESR II - LW
017 34230 JANET ROBINSON ESR II
017 46224 SARA ARCE ESR II - LW
017 43093 SONYA SMITH ESR II - LW
017 31037 REJANNE FELIX ESR II
017 46181 GREGORY LANGBEIN ESR II - LW
017 46177 ALINE GEORGES ESR II
017 46208 NICOLE BRYAN ESR II
017 99775 JEFFREY KRAMER OPS ESR II
017 43116 GISELLE SEARS ESR II - LW
017 31099 BETTY MONCHERY ESR II
017 43110 ROMAN MARTINEZ ESR II - LW
017 99745 LADELLZIA BROWN OPS ESR II
017 46180 ANDREA BARNES ESR II - LW
017 46214 MONIQUE CORKER ESR II
017 99774 FRANCELLA WINT OPS ESR II
017 46222 ASHRAF SAFIFOUR ESR II
017 99684 YAMIRA ARAUJO BENDOMO OPS ESR II
017 46199 KALEEMA ALLEN ESR II
017 99773 EVAD KAHOK OPS ESR II
017 47045 GODWIN OBOH ESR II
017 99619 ASA RAHMING OPS ESR II
017 47169 LACY KNOX ESR II
017 99744 NESHELLE POWELL OPS ESR II
017 46210 IVETTE CEBALLOS ESR II
017 46179 LATICIA GORDON ESR II
017 99620 MAURICO MENDEZ OPS ESR II
017 46218 VACANT ESR II
017 99577 JOSE ALVAREZ PINEDA OPS ESR II
017 46187 EDUARDO JUNCOSA ESR II
017 99558 LIXELTON KNOWLES OPS ESR II
017 46211 RAHEEN LUZUNARIS ESR II
017 99618 ANNETTA DRYSDALE MARTIN OPS ESR II
017 46194 PANEY EVANS ESR II
017 99743 SAKURA DONEGAL OPS ESR II
017 46196 ANTONIO JUNCOSA ESR II
017 99261 KAYEDIAN WHYTE OPS ESR II
017 46216 RACHEL FRANCK ESR II
017 99162 DARREL TEDESCHI OPS ESR II
017 46109 THUNWATTIE DWARIKA ESR II
017 99468 GLEN AZZOLI OPS ESR II
017 46184 MICHAEL LETO ESR II
017 99576 PATRIAM ANTOINE-MARTYR OPS ESR II
017 46044 VACANT ESR II
017 99710 CHERLDA GARCONVILLE OPS ESR II
017 99621 DAPHNE EDWARDS OPS ESR II
017 31072 SHOBA KUMAR ESR II
017 98294 LUZ RAMOS CASTILLO OPS ESR II


FLORIDACOMMERCE
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
APPEALS TALLAHASSEE
As of 8/16/2024
FTE: 31
OPS: 9
Total: 40
Vacant: 5
JENNIFER SHARP
540 31000
CHIEF OF RA APPEALS
SAMANTHA COLBORN
018 31042
ADMIN ASSIST II
MARY GORDON GAVALAS
425 33001
OPER. & MGMT. CONSLT. MGR (SES)
MILTON MILEY
024 91851
OPS SYS. PROJ ANALYST
VACANT
023 31032
GOC II
CHERYL WEAVER
424 31052
RA APPEALS OFFICE ADMIN (SES)
CYNTHIA MCKINNEY
424 31068
RA APPEALS OFFICE ADMIN (SES)
VACANT
422 94170
BEN. PROG. SUP./ANALYST
CLERK'S OFFICE
CELINA FLORES
422 31120
BEN. PROG. SUP./ANALYST
CYNTHIA SHAW
423 31038
APPEALS REF SUPER (SES)
ANTONIA SPIVEY
417 31056
DEP CLERK SUP (SES)
JOHN THURSBY
423 31079
APPEALS REF SUPER (SES)
SPECIAL DEPUTY UNIT
019 31139 AMBER PODOLEC EPS
019 99523 GABRIEL OMONIYI OPS EPS
017 31124 RUBEN VELEZ TRANSLATOR
017 98877 SHIRLEY WHITELOCK OPS TRANSLATOR
023 31048 DEXTER PARKER SPECIAL DEPUTY - LW
023 31111 EDWIN LOSCHI SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 31026 SEAN DIMON SPECIAL DEPUTY
015 31132 JAZMYN ROBERTS DEPUTY CLERK
023 31097 VACANT SPECIAL DEPUTY - LW
023 31107 EDUARDO MORALES SPECIAL DEPUTY
019 31080 PAMELA BYRD EPS
017 31123 ANGEL PLAZA TRANSLATOR
017 95928 NAOMIE PETIT HOMME OPS TRANSLATOR
023 31118 BARTH BENNITT SPECIAL DEPUTY - LW
023 31110 EKPERECHI NORTON SPECIAL DEPUTY
016 99186 TITISHA JONES OPS SPECIAL DEPUTY
015 31034 VACANT DEPUTY CLERK
015 31043 CHANTEL HENLEY DEPUTY CLERK
023 31102 VACANT SPECIAL DEPUTY
019 31041 MELINDA REDIG EPS
017 31078 ERNST THERVIL TRANSLATOR
017 95926 VIVIAN MANSO OPS TRANSLATOR
023 35008 RENE DUMAS SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 31109 KRISHNA LONKANI SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 98818 KEENYJAH MONROE OPS SPECIAL DEPUTY
017 31028 FERNANDO MARTINEZ JR. TRANSLATOR
017 95925 AURA LUQUIS OPS TRANSLATOR
023 31126 MELANIE MURDOCK SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 31103 GARY WRIGHT SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 98826 DESTINY BRYANT OPS SPECIAL DEPUTY
017 31016 JUAN GARCIA TRANSLATOR
023 31117 CANISSIA GRIFFIN SPECIAL DEPUTY
023 31074 SCOTT DOUGHER SPECIAL DEPUTY

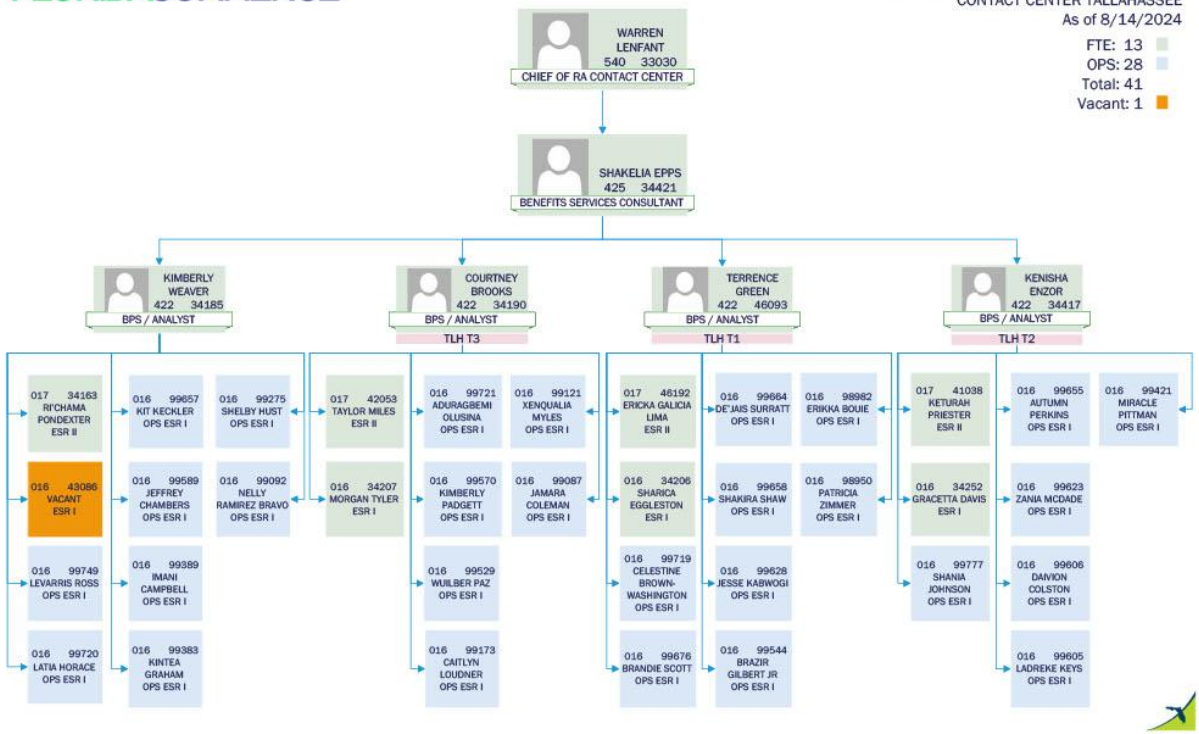
FLORIDACOMMERCE

BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
APPEALS JACKSONVILLE/FT. LAUDERDALE
As of 8/20/2024
FTE: 28
OPS: 3
Total: 31
Vacant: 6



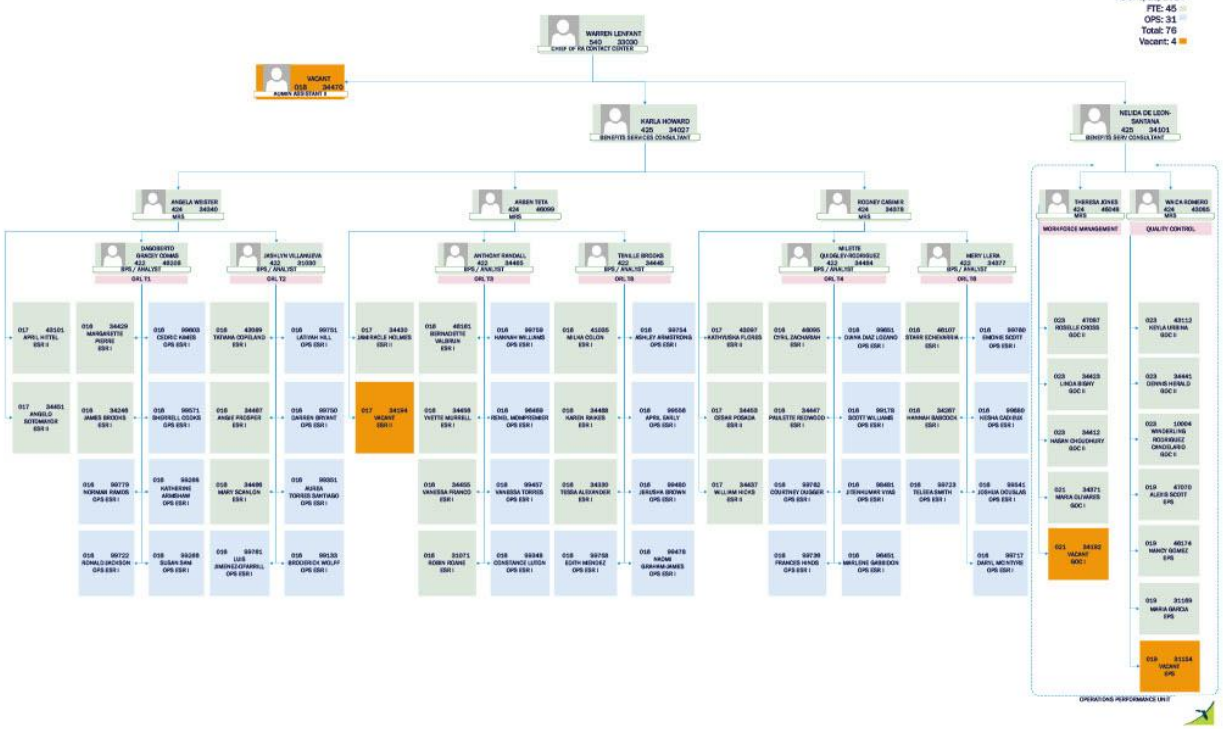

FLORIDACOMMERCE

BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
CONTACT CENTER TALLAHASSEE
As of 8/14/2024
FTE: 13
OPS: 28
Total: 41
Vacant: 1



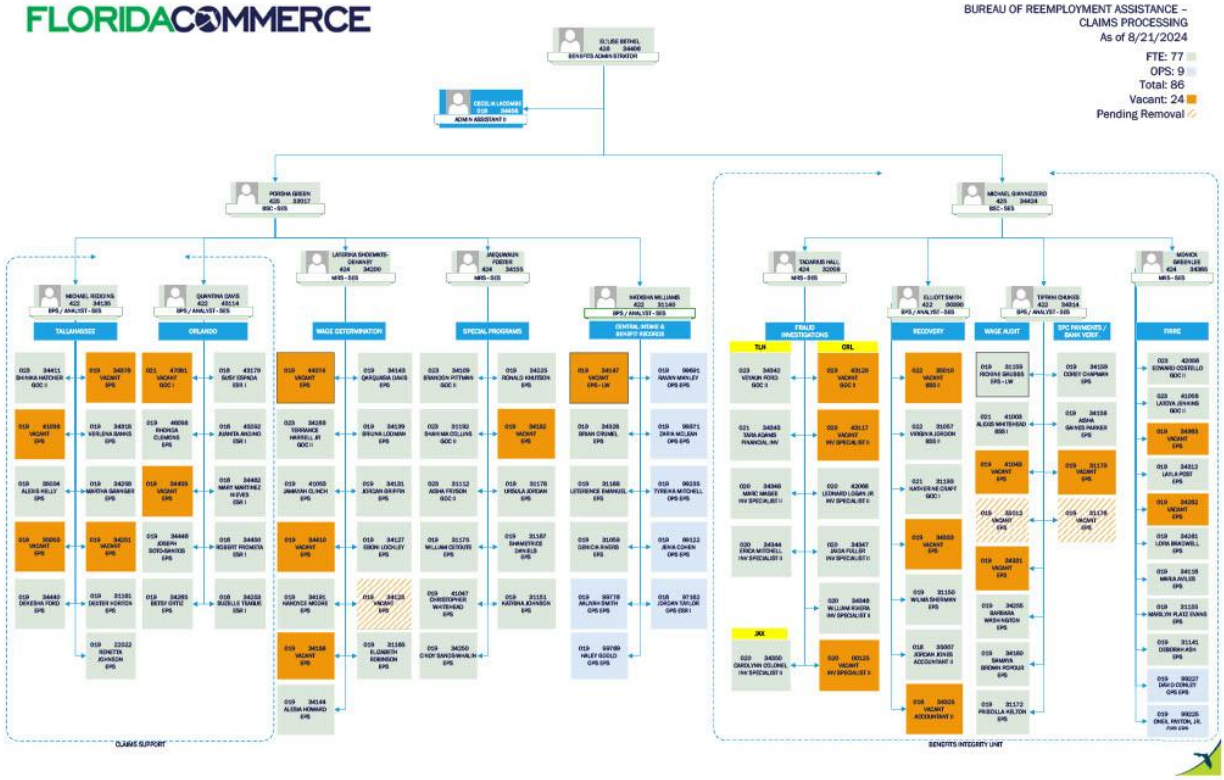
FLORIDACOMMERCE

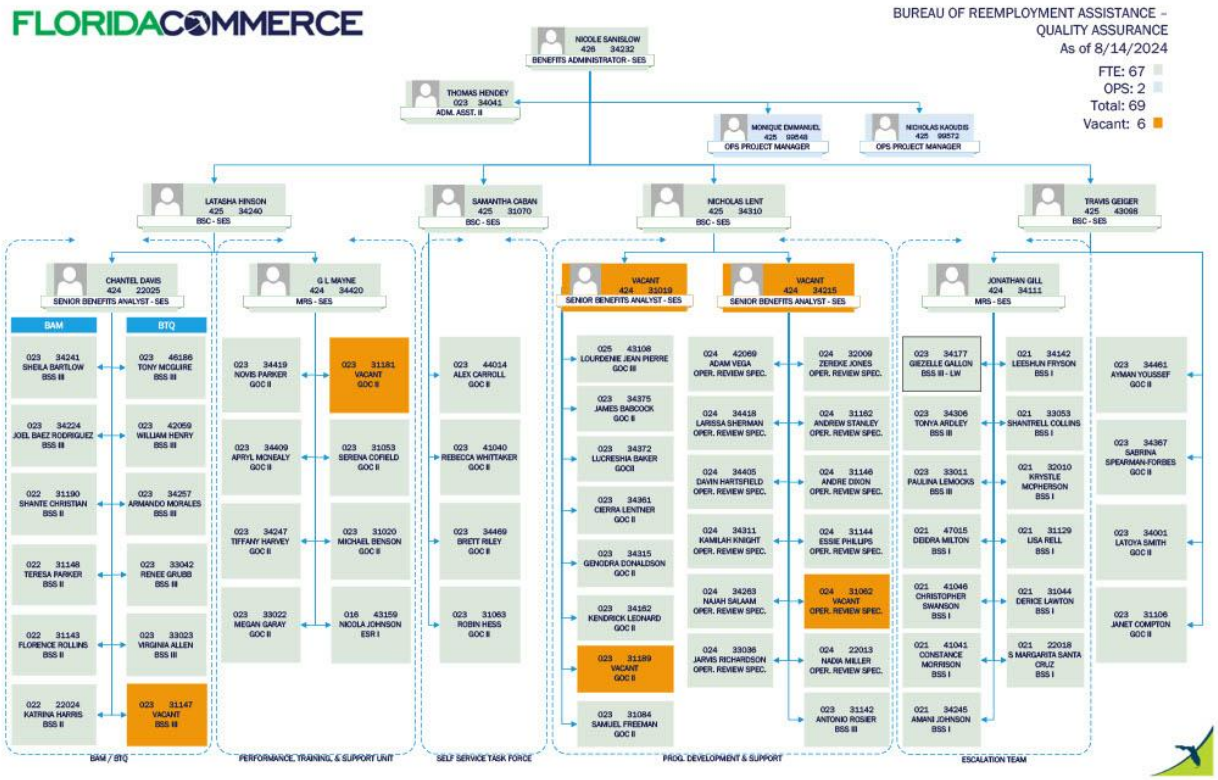
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
CONTACT CENTER ORLANDO
As of 8/22/2024
FTE: 45
OPS: 31
Total: 76
Vacant: 4



FLORIDACOMMERCE

BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE –
CLAIMS PROCESSING
As of 8/21/2024
FTE: 77
OPS: 9
Total: 86
Vacant: 24
Pending Removal




FLORIDACOMMERCE
BUREAU OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE – QUALITY ASSURANCE
As of 8/14/2024
FTE: 67
OPS: 2
Total: 69
Vacant: 6
NICOLE SANISLOW 426 34232 BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR - SES
THOMAS HENDEY 023 34041 ADM. ASST. II
MONIQUE EMMANUEL 425 99548 OPS PROJECT MANAGER
NICHOLAS KAOUDIS 425 99572 OPS PROJECT MANAGER
LATASHA HINSON 425 34240 BSC - SES
SAMANTHA CABAN 425 31070 BSC - SES
NICHOLAS LENT 425 34310 BSC - SES
TRAVIS GEIGER 425 43098 BSC - SES
CHANTEL DAVIS 424 22025 SENIOR BENEFITS ANALYST - SES
BAM
BTQ
023 34241 SHEILA BARTLOW BSS III
023 34224 JOEL BAEZ RODRIGUEZ BSS III
022 31190 SHANTE CHRISTIAN BSS II
022 31148 TERESA PARKER BSS II
022 31143 FLORENCE ROLLINS BSS II
022 22024 KATRINA HARRIS BSS II
023 46186 TONY MCGUIRE BSS III
023 42059 WILLIAM HENRY BSS III
023 34257 ARMANDO MORALES BSS III
023 33042 RENEE GRUBB BSS III
023 33023 VIRGINIA ALLEN BSS III
023 31147 VACANT BSS III
BAM / BTQ
G L MAYNE 424 34420 MRS - SES
023 34419 NOVIS PARKER GOC II
023 34409 APRYL MCNEALY GOC II
023 34247 TIFFANY HARVEY GOC II
023 33022 MEGAN GARAY GOC II
023 31181 VACANT GOC II
023 31053 SERENA COFIELD GOC II
023 31020 MICHAEL BENSON GOC II
016 43159 NICOLA JOHNSON ESR I
PERFORMANCE, TRAINING, & SUPPORT UNIT
023 44014 ALEX CARROLL GOC II
023 41040 REBECCA WHITTAKER GOC II
023 34469 BRETT RILEY GOC II
023 31063 ROBIN HESS GOC II
SELF SERVICE TASK FORCE
VACANT 424 31019 SENIOR BENEFITS ANALYST - SES
VACANT 424 34215 SENIOR BENEFITS ANALYST - SES
025 43108 LOURDENIE JEAN PIERRE GOC III
023 34375 JAMES BABCOCK GOC II
023 34372 LUCRESHIA BAKER GOCII
023 34361 CIERRA LENTNER GOC II
023 34315 GENODRA DONALDSON GOC II
023 34182 KENDRICK LEONARD GOC II
023 31189 VACANT GOC II
023 31084 SAMUEL FREEMAN GOC II
024 42089 ADAM VEGA OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 34418 LARISSA SHERMAN OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 34405 DAVIN HARTSFIELD OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 34311 KAMILAH KNIGHT OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 34283 NAIAH SALAAM OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 33036 JARVIS RICHARDSON OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 32009 ZEREKE JONES OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 31162 ANDREW STANLEY OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 31146 ANDRE DIXON OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 31144 ESSIE PHILLIPS OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 31062 VACANT OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
024 22013 NADIA MILLER OPER. REVIEW SPEC.
023 31142 ANTONIO ROSIER BSS III
PROG. DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT
JONATHAN GILL 424 34111 MRS - SES
023 34177 GIEZELLE GALLON BSS III - LW
023 34306 TONYA ARDLEY BSS III
023 33011 PAULINA LEMOCKS BSS III
021 47015 DEBRA MILTON BSS I
021 41046 CHRISTOPHER SWANSON BSS I
021 41041 CONSTANCE MORRISON BSS I
021 34245 AMANI JOHNSON BSS I
021 34142 LEESHUN FRYSON BSS I
021 33053 SHANTRELL COLLINS BSS I
021 32010 KRYSTLE MCPHERSON BSS I
021 31129 LISA RELL BSS I
021 31044 DERICE LAWTON BSS I
021 22018 S MARGARITA SANTA CRUZ BSS I
ESCALATION TEAM
023 34461 AYMAN YOUSSEF GOC II
023 34367 SABRINA SPEARMAN-FORBES GOC II
023 34001 LATOYA SMITH GOC II
023 31106 JANET COMPTON GOC II

***(5) SQSP Signature Page. The State administrator must sign and date the SQSP Signature Page. By signing the Signature Page, the State administrator certifies that the State will comply with all the assurances and activities contained in the SQSP guidelines.***

**Figure 7.16**
**SQSP Signature Page**

**U.S. Department of Labor**
**SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE**

OMB Control No.: 1205-0132 Expiration Date: 06/30/2027

| **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration** | **FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR** 2025 | **STATE** FL |
|---|---|---|

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**
**STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN**
**SIGNATURE PAGE**

This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and

Florida Department of Commerce
**(NAME OF STATE AGENCY)**

The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan, and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds.

All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.

| **TYPED NAME AND TITLE** | **SIGNATURE** | **DATE** |
|---|---|---|
| **J. Alex Kelly**<br>**STATE ADMINISTRATOR (print name)** | | 9/17/24 |
| Renata Jones Adjibodou on behalf of Lenita Jacobs-Simmons<br>**DOL – REGIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)** | RENATA ADJIBODOU Digitally signed by RENATA ADJIBODOU Date: 2024.10.31 20:30:26 -04'00' | 10/31/2024 |
| **DOL – NATIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)** (if required) | | |

**Though a State needs to submit the complete SQSP package on a 2-year cycle, there are certain documents contained in the SQSP package which are required to be submitted by States annually as part of the off-year submission. The documents which are required to be submitted annually are considered a modification to the complete SQSP submitted the previous year. Since funds for State UI operations are appropriated each year, each State is required to annually submit the transmittal letter, budget worksheets, organizational chart, and the signature page. The modification may also include CAPs for newly identified performance deficiencies, and any required modifications to existing CAPs. Since the UI program is a required one-stop partner, States have the option of including UI in the Combined State Plan authorized by WIOA sec. 103.**

***(6)*** **Requirements for States electing to include UI in the Combined State Plan: States that elect to include UI in the Combined State Plan must:**

**a. Submit an SQSP in the following manner depending on their timing in the SQSP cycle:**

**i. If a State is in the first year of their 2-year cycle, the State is required to submit the most recently approved complete SQSP package. A complete SQSP package will include the Transmittal Letter, Budget Worksheets/Forms, State Plan Narrative, CAPs (including the milestones and the completion date for each milestone), the UI IAP, Organizational Chart, and the SQSP Signature Page. One of the key goals for the UI program is to ensure that claimants are able to successfully return to work. As such, the SQSP State Plan Narrative must provide a discussion of the plan coordination with other WIOA Combined Plan programs to ensure a coordinated effort and integrated service delivery.**

**ii. If a State is in the second year of the 2-year cycle, the State is required to submit the most recently approved complete SQSP package with a modification that must include the Transmittal Letter, Budget Worksheets/Forms, Organizational Chart, and the SQSP Signature page. The modification may also include CAPs for newly identified performance deficiencies, and any required modifications to existing CAPs. The CAP must list both specific milestones for key corrective actions or improvement activities, and the completion date for each milestone.**

**b. Submit the required off-year SQSP components as a modification to the Combined State Plan on the same cycle as the regular SQSP process which must be approved by September 30th each year.**

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

**(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)**

**Purpose**
The State Plan is intended to foster both short-term and long-term coordination among various organizations and key stakeholders in promoting and facilitating SCSEP activities.

Section 503 of the Older Americans Act (OAA) requires the Governor, or the highest government official in each state, to submit a State Plan. The State Plan must include a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service training and other authorized activities. The plan may be submitted as an independent document or as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Plan. The State of Florida's SCSEP State Plan will be submitted as a combined plan with the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), CareerSource Florida, and other core and required stakeholders.

**Introduction**
SCSEP is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the OAA, the Title V program provides training for low income, unemployed seniors. The program provides hands on training though part-time community service assignments with not-for-profit organizations and government agencies to assist program participants in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP's role in Florida continues to grow. Florida has the highest population percentage of residents aged 65 or older in the nation; of the estimated 900 people moving to Florida daily, more than half are over age 60. According to the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (FDOEA), Florida is home to nearly 5.5 million residents aged 60 and older and currently ranks first in the nation for the 65 and older populations. As our senior population continues to increase, Florida's future is linked to the financial, health, and physical security of our elder population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau it is estimated that 32.5% of Florida's population will be 60 and older by the year 2030. SCSEP continues to be a lifeline for many Floridians who feel that they do not have many employment and training options available to them as they become more advanced in age. Additionally, SCSEP relieves financial strains placed on social service agencies. SCSEP plays an important role in the vitality and health of the senior population by reducing isolation, improving economic conditions, and promoting healthy aging by staying physically and mentally active.

This plan serves to describe the planning and future implementation process for services and activities required under the grant. Eligible individuals and employment opportunities within the state are distributed throughout the state. The State Plan is intended to foster coordination among the various SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients operating within the state and to facilitate the efforts of stakeholders, including state and local boards, to work collaboratively through a participatory process to accomplish SCSEP's goals. The plan contains the prescribed elements as set forth in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 11-19, Change 1, 20 CFR 641.302 and 641.325.

## (a) Economic Projections and Impact

### (1) Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)) (May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)

Based on the Jobs by Industry Florida report published by FloridaCommerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Florida is expected to see an overall growth of 8.6% for all industries between 2022 and 2030 (https://floridajobs.org/economic-data/employment-projections). The industries expected to see the largest growth include Professional and Technical Services, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing, Health Care and Social Assistance, Transportation and Warehousing, Accommodation and Food Services, Construction, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Educational Services, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation https://floridajobs.org/economic-data/employment-projections/fastest-growingindustries.

Of those industries, Nurse Practitioners, Information Security Analysts, Physician Assistants, Physical Therapist Assistants, Gaming Dealers, Health Specialties Teachers, Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Veterinary Technologists and Technicians, Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers, Respiratory Therapists are the professions gaining the most jobs in the same time frame.

https://floridajobs.org/economic-data/employment-projections/fastest-growingoccupations

**See Section IV: Florida Fastest Growing Occupations and Occupations Gaining the Most Jobs**

### (2) Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Using the Bureau of Workforce Statistics data on fastest growing occupations and occupations gaining the most jobs, the State of Florida SCSEP evaluated which occupations best suit program participants. To do this, five variables were analyzed: the level of skill needed for the occupation; physical demands; availability of training opportunities already established with local not for profit and public agencies; the availability of training opportunities that may be established; and the interest of participants. Due to the level of skill needed and considering existing partnerships and established training opportunities, utilities, Retail Trade, Transportation, Real Estate, Public Administration, Healthcare, and Healthcare Support/Technical Occupations were found to be optimal occupations. Using the same data and current interest by participants, office and clerical jobs were also high on the list and offer growth and employment opportunities to SCSEP participants. To be successful in these industries, you must be detail-oriented, committed to accuracy, empathic, and adaptable. Additionally, competent interpersonal skills and the ability to multitask are necessary for success. A participant should be well-organized, capable of prioritizing, able to problem solve, and interested in collaborating with teammates and coworkers.

**See Section IV: Occupation Overview**

**(3) Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR641.325(c))**

In the fourth quarter of calendar year 2022 (the latest available data from the U.S. Census Bureau for Labor Force Statistics Datasets), workers aged 55 - 64 reported the highest employment sector being healthcare and social assistance. Workers aged 65-99 reported the highest employment sector being in Retail Trade.

Transportation and Warehousing industry is expected to see 14.8% growth by 2030. Health Care and Social Assistance and Real Estate are expected to see a 14.7% growth in employment by 2030. These are industries where vocational certifications are required. The pay for jobs in these industries is expected to average between $14.24 to $45.62 per hour by 2030. However, by 2026, Florida's minimum wage will increase to $15 per hour.

https://floridajobs.org/economic-data/employment-projections/occupational-data-search

**See Section IV: Popular Industries for Employment by Age**

**(b) Service Delivery and Coordination**

**(1) A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:**

**(A) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))**

SCSEP grantees in the state have established meaningful and beneficial partnerships with WIOA Title I programs. SCSEP is currently collaborating with CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), Florida Department of Education (FDOE), and several other state agencies and other entities to develop more innovative ways to work together. The collaboration is designed to improve program goals and outcomes, grow partnerships, streamline program services, and enhance overall customer service.

The Department of Elder Affairs has established a partnership with CareerSource Florida and executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SCSEP and CareerSource Florida. The purpose, roles, and responsibilities as it relates to coordinating and performing activities and services are outlined within the MOU. A well-defined scope of work is established for the duration of the agreement, and options for executing amendments, oversight and support, assurances, and dispute resolution are addressed in the MOU.

Participants are required to sign up at local CareerSource Florida network career center if a location is available in their county. SCSEP Project Directors often serve on local workforce

boards and play an active role in expressing the goals of SCSEP and changes that will contribute to the success of participants.

**(B) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the OOA. (20 CFR 641.302(h))**

SCSEP coordinates and networks with many Older Americans Act programs that can augment services being provided to or are needed by SCSEP participants. Referrals for supportive services are routinely made when those services cannot be provided through SCSEP. FDOEA contracts with Florida's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide home and community-based services under the OAA to Florida's elder population. Those services include nutrition assistance and counseling, transportation, legal services, long-term-care planning, housing, and caregiver support. SCSEP participants are invited to participate in health, prevention, and wellness programs such as chronic disease self-management, disease-prevention, and health-promotion services. SCSEP participants are also encouraged to attend forums and training related to prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

When available, SCSEP works with the AAAs to host SCSEP participants. This is mutually beneficial. Training at the AAA provides needed support in the administration of OAA programs. It also exposes participants to the many OAA programs available to them and provides an excellent source of training in case management, customer service, office, and computer skills.

**(C) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))**

The Department of Elder Affairs works in coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation’s Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged as required by Florida Statute 427. This allows SCSEP to provide transportation resources. SCSEP also refers participants to State programs or Agencies. This approach ensures a participant’s success in their SCSEP training. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor markets and job training initiatives (20 CFR 641.302(j)).

**(D) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))**

SCSEP services are maximized when partnerships are developed with other job training initiatives that may be available in the state. Some current activities to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives are as follows:

- Acquiring and analyzing labor market statistics.
- Acquiring and analyzing data on growing industries and occupations.
- Acquiring and analyzing employment projections.
- Providing training and employment referrals.
- Organizing and participating in meetings on potential training programs and.
- Co-enrollment in training activities for individuals who meet program qualifications

(20 CFR 641.140).

Analyzing data will help determine the counties in Florida with the most need. DOEA SCSEP utilizing partnerships such as AAAs, CareerSource Florida, and SCSEP national sponsors, and plans to increase coordination and partnership with WIOA required as FDOE's Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE), VR, the Florida College System (FCS), FloridaCommerce, and DCF.

**(E) Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)**

CareerSource Florida provides oversight and policy direction for training and employment services. These services are administered by FloridaCommerce, Florida's 21 local workforce development boards (LWDBs), and their more than 100 career centers. SCSEP is an active partner in this one-stop delivery system. Depending on local programs, available one-stop centers may provide SCSEP use of equipment, furniture, computers, and meeting spaces. The required Infrastructure Agreement detailed in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 17-16 between CareerSource and SCSEP allows for these partnerships to continue, even with budgetary constrictions. SCSEP contributes their proportionate value of space and services utilized and have developed MOUs to ensure a strong working relationship that will benefit older job seekers. SCSEP, FloridaCommerce, and Career Source Florida will continue to foster strong relationships through the Combined planning within the state.

**(F) Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.**

**(2) The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.)**

SCSEP will partner with state agencies and entities such as DCAE, VR, FCS, FloridaCommerce, DCF, and CareerSource Florida. Through these partnerships SCSEP will be able to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and support the vision and operational goals. These partnerships will assist our participants in becoming economically self-sufficient, reduce the need for public assistance, develop a more skilled labor force, and potentially decrease labor shortages. Employer engagement is crucial for placing participants in unsubsidized employment. Therefore, utilization of the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act and the Master Credential List through CareerSource Florida will assist participants overcome the barriers to employment.

Plans are being developed to improve partnerships with the quality of Host Agency's to assure quality training on a more professional level. A forward push to utilize this method and maintain a model that can withstand future events that may cause disruption to traditional services is underway. This professionally skilled model aims to increase our ability to reach rural areas where we would typically have the hardest time serving individuals. To help in rural counties where we have a variance in enrollment, AARP Foundation utilized effective practices and strategies such as locating site participant "assistants" in these areas; segmenting and targeting outreach and recruitment activities to reach participants, host agencies, businesses, and other

community partners; scheduling outreach time regularly in each county.

**(3) The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))**

In accordance with the OAA, the levels of participation of minorities are elevated to ensure the state's ability to meet the performance expectations established by Congress. The annual Minority Report issued by the Charter Oak Group on behalf of United States Department of Labor (USDOL) is used to evaluate service levels. In recent years, it has been reported that minorities achieve employment outcomes equal to those of non-minorities. The state's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals is to use the Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS) or an approved USDOL or minority report to continuously monitor the service level of minority populations, and to the extent of focusing on increasing efforts to recruit and enroll additional eligible minorities. The State has been effective in serving minority groups through SCSEP and we will continue to make this a priority.

**(4) A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)**

FDOEA is looking for community service assignments that work across a broad range of employment skills. According to the last report published by SCSEP Data Validation 2020-2022 for counties of persistent unemployment, no counties were identified.

**(5) The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))**

The state will work cooperatively with National SCSEP grantees in Florida, host agencies, state agencies, LWDBs, AAAs, and other FDOEA programs to achieve cohesive implementation of SCSEP services. To do this, the Department of Elder Affairs will take the lead on engaging and establishing relationships, creating materials, and making those materials available to the public and to the Departments' partners. Materials will be designed in a way that attracts interested individuals. Host Agencies will train participants. The Department of Elder Affairs will have a strong focus on employer driven materials to increase community awareness of the aging population and the benefits of hiring older workers, as well as the socioeconomic benefits of senior employment.

The State of Florida does not lack participants or agencies that will host them. Negative stigmas around hiring seniors are important to overcome when finding willing employers. To increase the employment rate, median earning, and length of employment among SCSEP participants Combined planning among core and required partners will drive long term results.

Education and outreach are the largest component of Florida's plan to improve SCSEP, but it is not the only one. The Department of Elder Affairs is working on new and innovative ways to administer SCSEP and reduce administrative costs. The monies saved will be reinvested in

participant wages and fringe benefits and better-quality training. Hands on experience through community service is a vital part of SCSEP; however, there are employment areas that participants are suitable for that require additional training that must be provided though an outside source. The department will search for additional opportunities that will enable investment in such training. The implementation of this plan is expected to demonstrate positive outcomes in performance and facilitate the continued success of participants of SCSEP.

Per (20 CFR 641.302(k)), the below remarks are suggestions that may improve SCSEP.

- Florida has implemented minimum wage increases which will greatly reduce the number of modified positions for all grantees in the state. It is suggested that SCSEP be a stipend training program. This would allow for an increase in SCSEP services instead of a decrease.
- As the state SCSEP grantee, the Department of Elder Affairs aims to serve the most in need populations who are: severely disabled; frail; age 75 or older; old enough for, but not receiving SS Title II; severely limited employment prospects and living in an area of persistent unemployment; limited English proficiency; low literacy skills; disability; rural; veterans; low employment prospects; failed to find employment after using WIOA Title I; and homeless or at risk of homelessness, and formerly incarcerated divided by the number of participants who are active on the last day of the reporting period or who exited during the reporting period. Common Measures Employment Rate – 4th Quarter after Exit evaluates continued employment a year or more after a participant has exited SCSEP. While we are confident many participants will be successful in achieving this target, many will not be due to unexpected needs to care for a family member, the severity of their conditions and/or their most in need status. It is suggested returning the metrics to the first and second quarter after exit is a better evaluation of success or failure.
- Every year we have many undeliverable surveys returned by the U.S. Postal Service. Upon research and phone calls, many of these addresses are verified as correct. We repeat this process several times without receiving the level of information we are seeking and making the surveys non-beneficial. It is suggested that we look at new methods for survey delivery.

**(6) The State's strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))**

Aside from active initiatives in development, program staff, participants, and Host Agency supervisors are all integral parts of increasing participants' entry into unsubsidized employment. Staff must ensure participants are assigned to community service employment activities and specialized training based on information discovered during assessments and as identified in the Individual Employment Plan. Meetings should be held with Host Agency supervisors to discuss training plans that contain meaningful educational activities that will allow participants to advance from subsidized employment to unsubsidized employment. Host agency supervisors can help advance the SCSEP when they understand that the ultimate outcome is placement and the training that they provide will help participants to achieve that goal.

These components are crucial in helping to properly transition participants into unsubsidized employment. It is equally important for organizations operating the program at the local level, to make job development a priority. SCSEP is a partnership between the state, the local recipient,

and the participant to work diligently and continually with employers in both the private and public sectors to find meaningful employment.

### (c) Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

#### (1) A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

Currently, Florida's 67 counties are benefiting from SCSEP services. The Local Area Unemployment Statistics by County Chart provides information on the unemployment rate. This report is essential in identifying where projects of this type are most needed based on high unemployment rates. According to the USDOL Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, Florida counties with the highest unemployment rates as of September 2023:

- Hendry 5.6%
- Citrus and Sumter County 4.8%
- Highlands County 4.7%
- Hardee County 4.6%
- Dixie County 4.3%
- Hernando and Putnam County 4.1%
- Flagler, Glades, and Indian River County 4.0%.

Using the Elder Needs Index (ENI) produced by FDOEA, we identified 5 counties that have populations age 55 and older where 25% or more of the population were at 125% of the federal poverty level.

It was determined that an emphasis should remain on the 5 counties (Liberty, Hendry, Holmes, Lafayette, and Putnam) with populations age 55 and older where 25% or more of the population were at 125% of the federal poverty level, but that secondary efforts should be made in the counties identified as having an unemployment rate of 4.5% or higher due to the aging populations that will soon meet the criteria of age 55 and over that will reside in these counties.

**Figure 7.17**
**Localities and Populations Where**
**Title V Projects Are Most Needed**

## Unemployment Rates by County

| County Name/State Abbreviation | Month/Year | Unemployment Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Alachua County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1 |
| Baker County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Bay County, FL | September 2023 | 2.8 |
| Bradford County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2 |
| Brevard County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2 |
| Broward County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Calhoun County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |
| Charlotte County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8 |
| Citrus County, FL | September 2023 | 4.8 |
| Clay County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9 |
| Collier County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3 |
| Columbia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |
| DeSoto County, FL | September 2023 | 3.6 |
| Dixie County, FL | September 2023 | 4.3 |
| Duval County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1 |
| Escambia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2 |
| Flagler County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0 |
| Franklin County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9 |
| Gadsden County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8 |
| Gilchrist County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |
| Glades County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0 |
| Gulf County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9 |
| Hamilton County, FL | September 2023 | 5.1 |
| Hardee County, FL | September 2023 | 4.6 |
| Hendry County, FL | September 2023 | 5.6 |
| Hernando County, FL | September 2023 | 4.1 |
| Highlands County, FL | September 2023 | 4.7 |
| Hillsborough County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1 |
| Holmes County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Indian River County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0 |
| Jackson County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7 |
| Jefferson County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3 |
| Lafayette County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lake County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3 |
| Lee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2 |
| Leon County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Levy County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9 |
| Liberty County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Madison County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8 |
| Manatee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Marion County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9 |
| Martin County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2 |
| Miami-Dade County, FL | September 2023 | 1.5 |
| Monroe County, FL | September 2023 | 2.0 |
| Nassau County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Okaloosa County, FL | September 2023 | 2.7 |
| Okeechobee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |
| Orange County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Osceola County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Palm Beach County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3 |
| Pasco County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |
| Pinellas County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Polk County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8 |
| Putnam County, FL | September 2023 | 4.1 |
| Santa Rosa County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Sarasota County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Seminole County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9 |
| St. Johns County, FL | September 2023 | 2.7 |
| St. Lucie County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7 |
| Sumter County, FL | September 2023 | 4.8 |
| Suwannee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7 |
| Taylor County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9 |
| Union County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Volusia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4 |
| Wakulla County, FL | September 2023 | 2.8 |
| Walton County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0 |
| Washington County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5 |

https://www.bls.gov/lau/

**(2) List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted.**

**Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.**

The state SCSEP operates the program in 34 of Florida's 67 counties. In those 34 counties, the Department of Elder Affairs requires that all cities, both rural and urban located within the county benefit from SCSEP services. The Project Site Office location does not determine where in the county a participant may reside to receive services.

**Figure 7.18**
**County Positions Authorized for**
**State of Florida SCSEP Grant**

| Program Year 2021 | | Program Year 2022 | | Program Year 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 17 | Alachua | **17** | Alachua | 17 |
| Broward | 28 | Broward | **28** | Broward | 28 |
| Charlotte | 28 | Charlotte | **28** | Charlotte | 28 |
| Citrus | 5 | Citrus | 5 | Citrus | 5 |
| Clay | 6 | Clay | **6** | Clay | 6 |
| Collier | 34 | Collier | **34** | Collier | 34 |
| DeSoto | 5 | DeSoto | 5 | DeSoto | 5 |
| Duval | 8 | Duval | 8 | Duval | 8 |
| Flagler | 8 | Flagler | **8** | Flagler | 8 |
| Hardee | 2 | Hardee | **2** | Hardee | 3 |
| Hernando | 5 | Hernando | **5** | Hernando | 5 |
| Highlands | 6 | Highlands | 6 | Highlands | 6 |
| Hillsborough | 49 | Hillsborough | **48** | Hillsborough | 48 |
| Indian River | 4 | Indian River | 4 | Indian River | 4 |
| Lee | 27 | Lee | **27** | Lee | 27 |
| Leon | 8 | Leon | 8 | Leon | 8 |
| Levy | 4 | Levy | 4 | Levy | 4 |
| Manatee | 13 | Manatee | 13 | Manatee | 13 |
| Marion | 5 | Marion | 5 | Marion | 5 |
| Martin | 7 | Martin | 7 | Martin | 7 |
| Miami-Dade | 60 | Miami-Dade | **59** | Miami-Dade | 59 |
| Okeechobee | 3 | Okeechobee | **3** | Okeechobee | 3 |
| Orange | 18 | Orange | **18** | Orange | 18 |
| Osceola | 10 | Osceola | **10** | Osceola | 10 |
| Palm Beach | 37 | Palm Beach | 36 | Palm Beach | 36 |
| Pinellas | 14 | Pinellas | 14 | Pinellas | 14 |
| Polk | 9 | Polk | 9 | Polk | 9 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Johns | 4 | St. Johns | 5 | St. Johns | 5 |
| St. Lucie | 15 | St. Lucie | **15** | St. Lucie | 15 |
| Sarasota | 4 | Sarasota | 4 | Sarasota | 4 |
| Seminole | 21 | Seminole | **21** | Seminole | 21 |
| Sumter | 7 | Sumter | **7** | Sumter | 7 |
| Taylor | 2 | Taylor | 2 | Taylor | 2 |
| Volusia | 14 | Volusia | 14 | Volusia | 14 |
| TOTAL | **488** | TOTAL | **485** | TOTAL | **486** |

**(3) Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.**

FDOEA has identified several counties that have been over or under enrolled since Quarter One of Program Year (PY) 2023. This does not appear to be linked to population growth or decline in counties throughout the state: http://worldpopulationreview.com/states/florida-population/.

Comparing this information with data from the ENI, we found no correlation between population growth and individuals residing in the county that are aged 55 or older and at 125% of the federal poverty level. In fact, Sumter County, which reported the largest increase in population, noted that 10% or less of its population to be at 125% of the federal poverty level.

Osceola County, which had the second largest increase in population, has averaged a deficit of 5 or more enrolled SCSEP participants. Miami-Dade County, which reported 10% in population growth, currently has the highest population (27%) of individuals residing in the county that are aged 55 or older and at 125% of the federal poverty level.

Sumter County hosts a large retirement community which has been a contributor to much of the growth. While residents live in everything from homes to condos, this area is generally more affluent. Miami–Dade County residents are an aging population. This largely Hispanic population tend to be between 60-78 and are likely 125% of the poverty level prior to turning 55 years of age or retirement.

To fairly assess why we have slot imbalances, we compared six Quarters of Equitable Distribution (Quarter One 2023), the ENI, and population growth rates of Florida counties. DOEA would like to adjust its distribution of participants based on this data.

**Figure 7.19**
**Authorized Position Redistribution by County**
**2022-2023**

| Authorized Position Redistribution by County 2022 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **County** | **State Authorized Positions Per County** | **County Position Redistribution** |
| Alachua | 17 | -7 |
| Broward | 28 | -3 |
| Charlotte | 28 | -21 |

| Authorized Position Redistribution by County 2023 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **County** | **State Authorized Positions Per County** | **County Position Redistribution** |
| Alachua | 17 | -6 |
| Broward | 28 | -4 |
| Charlotte | 28 | -21 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Citrus | 5 | 0 | Citrus | 5 | -1 |
| Clay | 6 | -4 | Clay | 6 | -4 |
| Collier | 34 | -23 | Collier | 34 | -21 |
| DeSoto | 5 | -2 | DeSoto | 5 | -4 |
| Duval | 8 | -3 | Duval | 8 | -4 |
| Flagler | 8 | -8 | Flagler | 8 | -8 |
| Hardee | 2 | -2 | Hardee | 3 | -3 |
| Hernando | 5 | -3 | Hernando | 5 | -4 |
| Highlands | 6 | -1 | Highlands | 6 | -2 |
| Hillsborough | 48 | -13 | Hillsborough | 48 | -6 |
| Indian River | 4 | 4 | Indian River | 4 | 1 |
| Lee | 27 | -6 | Lee | 27 | -5 |
| Leon | 8 | 4 | Leon | 8 | 1 |
| Levy | 4 | -2 | Levy | 4 | -3 |
| Manatee | 13 | -7 | Manatee | 13 | -9 |
| Marion | 5 | 7 | Marion | 5 | 7 |
| Martin | 7 | -4 | Martin | 7 | -5 |
| Miami-Dade | 59 | -53 | Miami-Dade | 59 | -49 |
| Okeechobee | 3 | -3 | Okeechobee | 3 | -3 |
| Orange | 18 | 0 | Orange | 18 | -4 |
| Osceola | 10 | -6 | Osceola | 10 | -5 |
| Palm Beach | 36 | -11 | Palm Beach | 36 | -11 |
| Pinellas | 14 | -6 | Pinellas | 14 | -6 |
| Polk | 9 | 2 | Polk | 9 | 1 |
| St. Johns | 5 | -5 | St. Johns | 5 | -5 |
| St. Lucie | 15 | -7 | St. Lucie | 15 | -3 |
| Sarasota | 4 | 0 | Sarasota | 4 | -1 |
| Seminole | 21 | -17 | Seminole | 21 | -17 |
| Sumter | 7 | -7 | Sumter | 7 | -7 |
| Taylor | 2 | -2 | Taylor | 2 | -2 |
| Volusia | 14 | -2 | Volusia | 14 | 0 |

**(4) The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:**

**(A) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.**

**(B) Equitably serves rural and urban areas.**

In urban counties, AARP Foundation will increase the recruitment efforts that will be ongoing

and build a waiting list so applicants can be readily available for enrollment once participants exit the program for employment or other reasons. To help in rural counties where we have a variance in enrollment, AARP Foundation utilized effective practices and strategies such as locating site participant “assistants” in these areas; segmenting and targeting outreach and recruitment activities to reach participants, host agencies, businesses, and other community partners; scheduling outreach time regularly in each county.

**(C) Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)**

**Figure 7.20**
**Individuals Afforded Priority of Services**
**PY 2021 – 2023**

| **PY 2021 FINAL** | **Total participant served** | **% of Participants** |
|---|---|---|
| 5a. Severe Disability | 1 | 0.18 |
| 5b. Age 75 and Over at Date of Report | 87 | 15.82 |
| 5c. Old Enough but Not Receiving SS Title II | 2 | 0.36 |
| 5d. Rural | 9 | 1.64 |
| 5e. Frail | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5f. Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness | 477 | 86.73 |
| 5g. Failed to Find Employment After Using WIOA Title I | 14 | 0.18 |
| 5h. Disabilities | 79 | 14.36 |
| 5i. Limited English Proficiency | 105 | 19.09 |
| 5j. Low Employment Prospects | 544 | 0.18 |
| 5k. Low Literacy Skills | 322 | 58.55 |
| 5l. Severely Limited Employment Prospects in Areas of Persistent Unemployment | 3 | 0.55 |
| 5m. Formerly Incarcerated | 6 | 1.09 |
| 5n.Veterans (or Eligible Spouse of Veteran) | 50 | 9.09 |
| 5n(1). Post 9/11 Era Veterans | 0 | 0.00 |
| **PY 2022 FINAL** | **Total participant served** | **% of Participants** |
| 5a. Severe Disability | 1 | 0.22 |
| 5b. Age 75 and Over at Date of Report | 71 | 15.60 |
| 5c. Old Enough but Not Receiving SS Title II | 3 | 0.66 |
| 5d. Rural | 12 | 2.64 |
| 5e. Frail | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5f. Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness | 394 | 86.59 |
| 5g. Failed to Find Employment After Using WIOA Title I | 15 | 0.22 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5h. Disabilities | 63 | 13.85 |
| 5i. Limited English Proficiency | 82 | 18.02 |
| 5j. Low Employment Prospects | 447 | 0.22 |
| 5k. Low Literacy Skills | 295 | 64.84 |
| 5l. Severely Limited Employment Prospects in Areas of Persistent Unemployment | 7 | 1.54 |
| 5m. Formerly Incarcerated | 10 | 2.20 |
| 5n.Veterans (or Eligible Spouse of Veteran) | 38 | 8.35 |
| 5n(1). Post 9/11 Era Veterans | 0 | 0.00 |
| **PY 2023 Q3** | **Total participant served** | **% of Participants** |
| 5a. Severe Disability | 1 | 0.24 |
| 5b. Age 75 and Over at Date of Report | 60 | 14.25 |
| 5c. Old Enough but Not Receiving SS Title II | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5d. Rural | 5 | 1.19 |
| 5e. Frail | 0 | 0.00 |
| 5f. Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness | 350 | 83.14 |
| 5g. Failed to Find Employment After Using WIOA Title I | 10 | 0.24 |
| 5h. Disabilities | 56 | 13.30 |
| 5i. Limited English Proficiency | 75 | 17.81 |
| 5j. Low Employment Prospects | 407 | 0.24 |
| 5k. Low Literacy Skills | 238 | 56.53 |
| 5l. Severely Limited Employment Prospects in Areas of Persistent Unemployment | 2 | 0.48 |
| 5m. Formerly Incarcerated | 12 | 2.85 |
| 5n.Veterans (or Eligible Spouse of Veteran) | 27 | 6.41 |
| 5n(1). Post 9/11 Era Veterans | 0 | 0.00 |

The SCSEP grantees in the state convene each year to discuss the distribution of SCSEP positions in the state. This meeting is used to determine how the positions should be adjusted in each county to gain the most geographically fair alignment of slots.

SCSEP positions are allocated among the state grantee and national SCSEP sponsors operating in the state and include FDOEA, AARP Foundation, National Caucus and Center on the Black Aged, and National Urban League.

The state will use a formula-driven distribution of services to rural and urban areas. The distribution formula released by USDOL is used as the primary methodology to ensure that all of Florida's rural and urban counties are served without consideration of geographic location.

Additionally, the state will continue to ensure that in selecting eligible individuals for participation in SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics (priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520, 641.302(a), 641.365, and 641.520.

- Are 65 years of age or older.
- Have a disability.
- Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills.
- Reside in a rural area.
- Are veterans (or, in some cases, spouses of veterans).
- Have low employment prospects.
- Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the one-stop delivery system.
- Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness.
- Formerly incarcerated

**(5) The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))**

To determine eligible individuals, you must know age, income, and employment status. A reliable data source is not available to determine if all individuals that meet age and income levels are also unemployed. The chart below provides the percentage of suspected eligible individuals for the State of Florida and by Florida counties in which the Florida SCSEP operates.

**Figure 7.21**
**Eligible Individuals Per County by Age and Income**

| County | Population 55+ | Below 125% of Poverty Level- Eligible Individuals in Each Service Area | Individuals 125% of Federal Poverty Level by County |
|---|---|---|---|
| Florida Total | 7157005 | 1086408 | 15% |
| Alachua County, Florida | 68438 | 9876 | 14% |
| Baker County, Florida | 6719 | 898 | 13% |
| Bay County, Florida | 57905 | 8051 | 14% |
| Bradford County, Florida | 7847 | 1688 | 22% |
| Brevard County, Florida | 238767 | 29520 | 12% |
| Broward County, Florida | 581706 | 98950 | 17% |
| Calhoun County, Florida | 4102 | 942 | 23% |
| Charlotte County, Florida | 104805 | 12158 | 12% |
| Citrus County, Florida | 78764 | 12669 | 16% |
| Clay County, Florida | 63879 | 5967 | 9% |
| Collier County, Florida | 170122 | 16231 | 10% |
| Columbia County, Florida | 21755 | 3872 | 18% |
| DeSoto County, Florida | 11332 | 2687 | 24% |
| Dixie County, Florida | 6109 | 1179 | 19% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Duval County, Florida | 261534 | 42516 | 16% |
| Escambia County, Florida | 94812 | 13417 | 14% |
| Flagler County, Florida | 52644 | 5228 | 10% |
| Franklin County, Florida | 4600 | 758 | 16% |
| Gadsden County, Florida | 14066 | 2236 | 16% |
| Gilchrist County, Florida | 6009 | 1059 | 18% |
| Glades County, Florida | 4756 | 943 | 20% |
| Gulf County, Florida | 5489 | 646 | 12% |
| Hamilton County, Florida | 3855 | 926 | 24% |
| Hardee County, Florida | 6569 | 1441 | 22% |
| Hendry County, Florida | 9537 | 2492 | 26% |
| Hernando County, Florida | 79243 | 12697 | 16% |
| Highlands County, Florida | 48397 | 8163 | 17% |
| Hillsborough County, Florida | 378986 | 63354 | 17% |
| Holmes County, Florida | 6285 | 1623 | 26% |
| Indian River County, Florida | 76664 | 8790 | 11% |
| Jackson County, Florida | 14544 | 2834 | 19% |
| Jefferson County, Florida | 5265 | 712 | 14% |
| Lafayette County, Florida | 1977 | 498 | 25% |
| Lake County, Florida | 149147 | 17275 | 12% |
| Lee County, Florida | 318740 | 40962 | 13% |
| Leon County, Florida | 69864 | 9066 | 13% |
| Levy County, Florida | 17101 | 3540 | 21% |
| Liberty County, Florida | 2050 | 583 | 28% |
| Madison County, Florida | 5729 | 1425 | 25% |
| Manatee County, Florida | 166178 | 19160 | 12% |
| Marion County, Florida | 154855 | 23081 | 15% |
| Martin County, Florida | 73444 | 7972 | 11% |
| Miami-Dade County, Florida | 770199 | 178730 | 23% |
| Monroe County, Florida | 32219 | 4355 | 14% |
| Nassau County, Florida | 33302 | 3493 | 10% |
| Okaloosa County, Florida | 60659 | 6813 | 11% |
| Okeechobee County, Florida | 12364 | 2120 | 17% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Orange County, Florida | 326651 | 53729 | 16% |
| Osceola County, Florida | 90415 | 16252 | 18% |
| Palm Beach County, Florida | 546262 | 72511 | 13% |
| Pasco County, Florida | 194658 | 29357 | 15% |
| Pinellas County, Florida | 387236 | 59329 | 15% |
| Polk County, Florida | 226458 | 35725 | 16% |
| Putnam County, Florida | 27797 | 6976 | 25% |
| St. Johns County, Florida | 90933 | 7158 | 8% |
| St. Lucie County, Florida | 123056 | 18116 | 15% |
| Santa Rosa County, Florida | 54300 | 5529 | 10% |
| Sarasota County, Florida | 221575 | 22278 | 10% |
| Seminole County, Florida | 132433 | 15133 | 11% |
| Sumter County, Florida | 89523 | 7631 | 9% |
| Suwannee County, Florida | 14891 | 2731 | 18% |
| Taylor County, Florida | 6652 | 922 | 14% |
| Union County, Florida | 2872 | 415 | 14% |
| Volusia County, Florida | 215352 | 33086 | 15% |
| Wakulla County, Florida | 9176 | 1005 | 11% |
| Walton County, Florida | 25965 | 3092 | 12% |
| Washington County, Florida | 7467 | 1837 | 25% |

Florida Department of Elder Affairs Elder Needs Index

**(6) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:**

**(A) Reside in urban and rural areas within the State.**
**(B) Have the greatest economic need.**
**(C) Are minorities.**
**(D) Are limited English proficient.**
**(E) Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))**
**(F) Formerly incarcerated individuals, as defined in TEGL 17-20**

FDOEA has determined that all counties in Florida have many social needs. The rural population experiences the same barriers as the urban population when we are looking at transportation or language. Social isolation is an issue in Florida and the Department of Elder Affairs is working to address this issue through volunteer companionship services.

Source: U.S. Census 2018-2022 American Community Survey

https://www.lep.gov/maps/2015/county/FL_cnty_LEP.ACS_5yr.2015.pdf

**Figure 7.22**
**Relative Distribution of Eligible Individuals**

| County / State | Population 55+ | USDA Rural Counties Served by Florida SCSEP RUCA Definition | ACS Data LEP 2015 Data Language Spoken at Home (Spanish) | State Program Year 2019 Minority Report - Census Data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Florida** | **7,157,005** | **7** | | **43.90%** |
| Alachua County | 68,438 | | | |
| Broward County | 581,706 | | 62% | |
| Charlotte County | 104,805 | | | |
| Citrus County | 78,764 | | | |
| Clay County | 63,879 | | | |
| Collier County | 170,122 | | | |
| DeSoto County | 11,332 | x | | |
| Duval County | 261,534 | | | |
| Flagler County | 52,644 | x | | |
| Hardee County | 6,569 | x | | |
| Hernando County | 79,243 | | | |
| Highlands County | 48,397 | x | | |
| Hillsborough County | 378,986 | | 81% | |
| Indian River County | 76,664 | | | |
| Lee County | 318,740 | | | |
| Leon County | 69,864 | | | |
| Levy County | 17,101 | x | | |
| Manatee County | 166,178 | | | |
| Marion County | 154,855 | | | |
| Martin County | 73,444 | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Miami-Dade County | 770,199 | | 90% | |
| Okeechobee County | 12,364 | x | | |
| Orange County | 326,651 | | 70% | |
| Osceola County | 90,415 | | | |
| Palm Beach County | 546,262 | | 62% | |
| Pinellas County | 387,236 | | | |
| Polk County | 226,458 | | | |
| St. Johns County | 90,933 | | | |
| St. Lucie County, Florida | 123,056 | | | |
| Sarasota County | 221,575 | | | |
| Seminole County | 132,433 | | | |
| Sumter County | 89,523 | | | |
| Taylor County | 6,652 | x | | |
| Volusia County | 215,352 | | | |

**(7) A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))**

It is understood that program changes are inevitable and when implemented at the federal or state level, proactive steps should be taken to ensure that program participants are not negatively impacted. Participants are given both verbal and written notifications regarding what these changes mean along with steps that must be taken to avoid service interruption. Primary consideration is given to participants and working closely with them on administrative decisions. Unsubsidized employment is the optimum method for avoiding disruptions to participants enrolled in the program and this policy is applied to the greatest extent possible. It is not anticipated that participants will be terminated for purposes of moving positions to coincide with Census data; rather, increased efforts will be made to assist participants through other local SCSEP sponsors or to aggressively work with participants to secure unsubsidized employment.

The following steps will be taken to comply with the requirement to avoid disruption of services to SCSEP participants:

- Service gaps will be addressed through attrition, which could be through unsubsidized employment, self-withdrawal from the program, illness, or death.

- Participants will not be arbitrarily terminated from the program to address a decrease in county or state authorized positions.

**Requirements for Submission of State Plans:**

**As part of the Combined State Plan will be available for public comment before submission by our planning partner, CareerSource Florida. The Governor, or his or her designee, should follow established state procedures to solicit and collect public comments on the State Plan (20 CFR 641.350) and must seek the advice and recommendations of the following organizations and individuals with expertise in older workers issues (20 CFR 641.315):**

- Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging.
- State and local boards under WIOA.
- Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b).
- Social service organizations provide services to older individuals.
- Grantees under Title Ill of OAA.
- Affected communities.
- Unemployed older individuals.
- Community-based organizations serving older individuals; Business organizations; and Labor organizations.

**The State Plan must describe the procedures used to obtain such advice and public comments, including the timeline for ensuring an open and inclusive planning process (20 CFR 641.325(f)-(g)), as well as the public comments received and a summary of the comments (20 CFR 641.325(h)). National grantees also have planning responsibilities and must coordinate with state grantees in the states where they operate except as provided at 20 CFR 641.320(b).**

**Public Comment Process:**

1. Email State partners to notify them that the State Plan will be publicly posted for review and comment.
2. Post the notice of public comment to the Florida Administrative Registry. This provides the location, time, and contact information for questions.
3. Post a Notice of Public Comment to the DOEA Website News Feed.
4. Post a copy of the State Plan to the SCSEP webpage with the email used to provide public comment.
5. Provide 30 days for public comment.

**IV. Charts and Tables**
**Section I. A**

**Figure 7.23**
**Fastest Growing Occupations in Florida (Minimum 4,000 Jobs in 2022)**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29-1171 | Nurse Practitioners | 14,477 | 21,699 | 7,222 | 49.9% | 14,778 |
| 15-1212 | Information Security Analysts | 8,469 | 11,271 | 2,802 | 33.1% | 8,383 |
| 29-1071 | Physician Assistants | 8,066 | 10,639 | 2,573 | 31.9% | 6,692 |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Assistants | 7,909 | 10,052 | 2,143 | 27.1% | 10,642 |
| 39-3011 | Gaming Dealers | 4,802 | 6,076 | 1,274 | 26.5% | 7,559 |
| 25-1071 | Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary | 11,611 | 14,614 | 3,003 | 25.9% | 12,597 |
| 25-1072 | Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary | 4,634 | 5,792 | 1,158 | 25.0% | 4,972 |
| 29-2056 | Veterinary Technologists and Technicians | 11,022 | 13,752 | 2,730 | 24.8% | 9,693 |
| 31-9096 | Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers | 6,097 | 7,600 | 1,503 | 24.7% | 10,240 |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists | 8,993 | 11,172 | 2,179 | 24.2% | 5,939 |
| 29-1131 | Veterinarians | 5,472 | 6,791 | 1,319 | 24.1% | 2,862 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 118,986 | 147,046 | 28,060 | 23.6% | 181,763 |
| 15-2031 | Operations Research Analysts | 6,159 | 7,597 | 1,438 | 23.3% | 5,020 |
| 13-1161 | Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 50,961 | 62,078 | 11,117 | 21.8% | 54,882 |
| 39-2021 | Nonfarm Animal Caretakers | 20,116 | 24,335 | 4,219 | 21.0% | 30,388 |
| 29-1127 | Speech-Language Pathologists | 9,458 | 11,433 | 1,975 | 20.9% | 6,914 |
| 53-2031 | Flight Attendants | 11,785 | 14,202 | 2,417 | 20.5% | 15,137 |
| 27-4011 | Audio and Video Equipment Technicians | 7,561 | 9,069 | 1,508 | 19.9% | 8,107 |
| 39-5092 | Manicurists and Pedicurists | 5,721 | 6,857 | 1,136 | 19.9% | 6,354 |
| 29-2032 | Diagnostic Medical Sonographers | 6,032 | 7,215 | 1,183 | 19.6% | 4,906 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Figure 7.24**
**Occupations Projected to Gain the Most New Jobs in Florida**

| Code | Occupation | 2022 Employment | 2030 Employment | 2022-2030 Level Change | 2022-2030 Percent Change | Total Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35-3023 | Fast Food and Counter Workers | 241,499 | 273,660 | 32,161 | 13.3% | 449,810 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 118,986 | 147,046 | 28,060 | 23.6% | 181,763 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 193,041 | 216,636 | 23,595 | 12.2% | 108.546 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 162,499 | 179,705 | 17,206 | 10.6% | 196,206 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 154,799 | 171,598 | 16,799 | 10.9% | 123,818 |
| 35-3031 | Waiters and Waitresses | 198,790 | 215,329 | 16,539 | 8.3% | 335,957 |
| 15-1256 | Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts | 88,048 | 102,969 | 14,921 | 16.9% | 70,110 |
| 37-3011 | Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers | 114,705 | 128,285 | 13,580 | 11.8% | 138,730 |
| 49-9071 | Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 113,117 | 126,159 | 13,042 | 11.5% | 102,607 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 163,034 | 175,557 | 12,523 | 7.7% | 221,718 |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistants | 61,744 | 73,315 | 11,571 | 18.7% | 74,109 |
| 47-2061 | Construction Laborers | 103,458 | 115,018 | 11,560 | 11.2% | 96,408 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaner | 121,314 | 132,478 | 11,164 | 9.2% | 145,674 |
| 13-1161 | Marketing Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 50,961 | 62,078 | 11,117 | 21.8% | 54,882 |
| 31-1131 | Nursing Assistants | 82,332 | 93,026 | 10,694 | 13.0% | 95,315 |
| 13-1111 | Management Analysts | 69,989 | 80,337 | 10,348 | 14.8% | 64,285 |
| 41-3091 | Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, | 87,527 | 97,737 | 10,210 | 11.7% | 93,979 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel | | | | | |
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | 87,627 | 97,677 | 10,050 | 11.5% | 74,618 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 312,884 | 322,743 | 9,859 | 3.2% | 362,022 |
| 13-1198 | Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 124,918 | 134,771 | 9,853 | 7.89% | 84,883 |

*Source: Florida Department of Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Occupational and Industry Employment Projections 2022-2030.*

**Section I.B.**

**Figure 7.25**
**State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates**

| Occupation Overview | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Occupation** | **Median Hourly Pay** | **Employment** | **Description** | **Training** |
| **Personal Care Aide** | $16.14 | 3,240 | Also called homemakers, caregivers, companions, and personal attendants—provide clients with companionship and help with daily tasks. They are often hired in addition to healthcare or social workers who may visit a client's home, such as hospice workers. Personal care aides perform tasks that are like those of home health aides. However, personal care aides cannot provide any type of medical service, whereas home health aides may provide basic medical services. | Usually, formal education is not required. However, employers may prefer personal care aides to have a high school diploma or the equivalent. They are typically trained on the job by registered nurses, their direct employer, or another personal care aide. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Customer Service Representative** | $17.62 | 250,410 | Acts as the liaison between customers and the company. They answer customer questions, resolve customer complaints, and address emergency issues. | Customer service representatives typically need a high school diploma or equivalent and receive on-the-job training to learn the specific skills needed for the job. They should be good at communicating and interacting with people and have some experience using computers. |
| **Receptionist and Information Clerks** | $15.59 | 71,810 | Perform administrative support tasks such as proofreading, transcribing handwritten information, or operating calculators or computers to work with pay records, invoices, balance sheets, or other documents. Transmit information or documents to customers using computer, mail, or facsimile machine. | An individual may not need any formal qualifications to start work as a receptionist, although some employers will prefer, they have basic skills such as the ability to use the internet and email. |

**Figure 7.26**
**Occupation Overview**

| Occupation Overview | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Occupation** | **Median Hourly Pay** | **Employment** | **Description** | **Training** |
| **Billing and Posting Clerks** | $20.58 | 26,380 | Billing and posting clerks compile, compute, and record billing, accounting, statistical, and other numerical data for billing purposes. Prepare billing invoices for services rendered or for delivery or shipment of goods. | Billing clerk positions require at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Many employers will train new hires on the job if they show an aptitude for numbers and possess strong organizational skills. |
| **Home Health Aides** | $14.51 | 69,050 | Monitor patient condition by observing physical and mental condition, intake and output, and exercise. Support patients by providing housekeeping and laundry services; shopping for food and other household requirements; preparing and serving meals and snacks; running errands. | Certification. Home health aides may look to the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) to become certified. To earn their credentials, applicants must complete 75 hours of training, demonstrate their skills, and pass a written examination. |
| **Medical Secretary** | $ 18.51 | 69,250 | Type correspondence and reports, maintain files, pay vendors, handle insurance forms, and bill patients. Medical secretaries interact with the public throughout the day, taking phone calls, scheduling appointments, and greeting patients. | Medical secretaries need a minimum of a certificate or an associate degree from a vocational school or community college. Certificate programs usually take less than a year and qualify individuals for an entry-level job. Typical classes include communications, business math, medical procedures, and medical computer programs. |

Source: [Florida - May 2022 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates (bls.gov)]

**Section I.C.**

**Figure 7.27**
**Popular Industries for Employment by Age**

| Popular Industries for Employment by Age | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **State** | **Industry Code** | **Industry** | **Gender** | **Age Group** | **Year** | **Quarter** | **Employed** | **Average Earnings Monthly** |
| Florida | 22 | Utilities | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 6197 | $21.52 |
| Florida | 44-45 | Retail Trade | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 180183 | $14.71 |
| Florida | 23 | Construction | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 115896 | $24.31 |
| Florida | 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Support | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 129646 | $46.97 |
| Florida | 92 | Public Administration | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 81932 | $19.67 |
| Florida | 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 3 | 239315 | $28.98 |
| **State** | **Industry Code** | **Industry** | **gender** | **Age Group** | **Year** | **Quarter** | **Employed** | **Average Earnings Monthly** |
| Florida | 22 | Utilities | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 1459 | $21.52 |
| Florida | 44-45 | Retail Trade | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 50255 | $14.71 |
| Florida | 23 | Construction | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 94674 | $24.31 |
| Florida | 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Support | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 57146 | $46.97 |
| Florida | 92 | Public Administration | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 29168 | $19.67 |
| Florida | 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | All Sexes | 65-99 | 2022 | 3 | 94953 | $28.98 |
| **State** | **Industry Code** | **Industry** | **gender** | **Age Group** | **Year** | **Quarter** | **Employed** | **Average Earnings Monthly** |

| Florida | 22 | Utilities | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 6246 | $21.52 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Florida | 44-45 | Retail Trade | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 183496 | $14.71 |
| Florida | 23 | Construction | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 116277 | $24.31 |
| Florida | 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Support | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 129559 | $46.97 |
| Florida | 92 | Public Administration | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 80866 | $19.67 |
| Florida | 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | All Sexes | 55-64 | 2022 | 4 | 240175 | $28.98 |
| **State** | **Industry Code** | **Industry** | **gender** | **Age Group** | **Year** | **Quarter** | **Employed** | **Average Earnings Monthly** |
| Florida | 22 | Utilities | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 1498 | $21.52 |
| Florida | 44-45 | Retail Trade | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 99269 | $14.71 |
| Florida | 23 | Construction | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 51878 | $24.31 |
| Florida | 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Support | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 58600 | $46.97 |
| Florida | 92 | Public Administration | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 26326 | $19.67 |
| Florida | 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | Florida | 65-99 | 2022 | 4 | 97255 | $28.98 |

U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2022 QWI
https://ledextract.ces.census.gov/static/data.html

**Section II.D.**

**Figure 7.28**
**Community Service Needs**

| Community Service Needs | |
|---|---|
| **Community Services Needed** | **Places Where These Services are Most Needed** |
| Office Support | SCSEP Offices<br>One Stop Career Centers<br>Councils on Aging<br>State and Local Governments Police Departments |
| Community and Social Services | Community Action Agencies<br>American Red Cross<br>Association of Retarded Citizens<br>Boys and Girls Clubs<br>Housing Authority<br>Goodwill<br>Habitat for Humanity<br>Community Centers<br>Salvation Army<br>Senior Centers<br>United Way<br>Humane Society<br>Nutrition Centers<br>Catholic Charities<br>Urban League |
| Health Care | Health Care Centers<br>Community Health Agencies<br>Home Care Centers |
| Education, Training, and Library | Day Care Centers<br>Public Libraries<br>Public Schools |

**Figure 7.29**
**Occupational Skills**

| Occupational Skills | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Occupation Title** | **Job Summary** | **Education Requirements** |
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants; Receptionists; Postal Service Workers; Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers; Material Recording Clerks; General Office Clerks; Financial Clerks; Customer Service Representatives; Bill and Account Collectors | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| | Bookkeeping; Accounting; and Auditing Clerks | Some College, No Degree |
| | Desktop Publisher | Associate Degree |
| Sales and Related Occupations | Cashier, Retail Sales Workers | No Formal Educational Credentials |
| | Advertising Sales Agents; Insurance Sales; Real Estate Brokers and Agents; Travel Agents | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| | Wholesale and Manufacturing Sales Representative | |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | Chefs and Head Cooks | Other |
| | Bartenders; Cooks; Food and Beverage Serving and Related Workers; Food Preparation; Servers | No Formal Education Credentials |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | Hand Laborers and Material Movers; Taxi; Ride Sharing and Chauffer | No Formal Education Credentials |
| | Bus Drivers; Delivery Truck Drivers and Driver/Sales Workers; Flight Attendants; Railroad Workers | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| | Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers | Postsecondary Nondegree Award |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | Home Health Aides and Personal Care Aides; Opticians; Pharmacy Technicians; Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| | Dental Assistants; EMTs and Paramedics; Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses; Massage Therapists; Medical Assistants; Medical Records and Health Information Technicians; Phlebotomists; Surgical Technologists | Postsecondary Nondegree Award |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, Cardiovascular Technologists, and Technicians. This includes Vascular Technologists; Nuclear Medicine Technologists; Radiation Therapists; Radiologic and MRI Technologists; Respiratory Therapists; and Veterinary Technologists and Technicians | Associate Degree |
| Education and Training Occupations | Teacher Assistants | Some College, No Degree |
| | Preschool Teachers | Associate Degree |
| Management Occupations | Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers; Food Service Managers; Lodging Managers; Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers and Tapers; Flooring Installers and Tile and Marble Setters; Painters; Construction and Maintenance; Roofers | No Formal Education Credentials |
| | Boilermakers; Carpenters; Construction and Building Inspectors; Construction Equipment Operators; Electricians | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | | High School Diploma or Equivalent |
| | Automotive Body and Glass Repairers; Diesel Service Technicians and Mechanics; General Maintenance and Repair Workers; Heavy Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Service Technicians; Industrial Machinery Mechanics; Machinery Maintenance Workers, and Millwrights; Line Installers and Repairers; Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers | Postsecondary Nondegree Award |
| | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics; Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers<br>Medical Equipment Repairers | Associate degree |
| Retail Sales and Related Occupations | Cashiers; Retail Sales Workers; Advertising Sales Agents; Insurance Sales; Real Estate Brokers and Agents; Travel Agents | No Formal Education Credentials |
| | | High School Diploma or Equivalent |

| **Basic Skills Possessed by Eligible Individuals** |
|---|
| Interpersonal Communication; Verbal and Written Communication; Math Literacy; Time Management; Product Knowledge; Telephone Etiquette; Customer Service; Dispute Resolution; Basic Computer Knowledge; Attention to Detail; Basic Computer Knowledge; |

| |
|---|
| Time Management; Resourcefulness; Detail-Oriented; Efficient; Flexible; Special License or Certification |

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm

**Figure 7.30**
**Unemployment Rates by County**

| County Name/State Abbreviation | Month/Year | Unemployment Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Alachua County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1% |
| Baker County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Bay County, FL | September 2023 | 2.8% |
| Bradford County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2% |
| Brevard County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2% |
| Broward County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Calhoun County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |
| Charlotte County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8% |
| Citrus County, FL | September 2023 | 4.8% |
| Clay County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9% |
| Collier County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3% |
| Columbia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |
| DeSoto County, FL | September 2023 | 3.6% |
| Dixie County, FL | September 2023 | 4.3% |
| Duval County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1% |
| Escambia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2% |
| Flagler County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0% |
| Franklin County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9% |
| Gadsden County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8% |
| Gilchrist County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |
| Glades County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0% |
| Gulf County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9% |
| Hamilton County, FL | September 2023 | 5.1% |
| Hardee County, FL | September 2023 | 4.6% |
| Hendry County, FL | September 2023 | 5.6% |
| Hernando County, FL | September 2023 | 4.1% |
| Highlands County, FL | September 2023 | 4.7% |
| Hillsborough County, FL | September 2023 | 3.1% |
| Holmes County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Indian River County, FL | September 2023 | 4.0% |
| Jackson County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7% |
| Jefferson County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3% |
| Lafayette County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8% |
| Lake County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3% |
| Lee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2% |
| Leon County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Levy County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9% |
| Liberty County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Madison County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8% |
| Manatee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Marion County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9% |
| Martin County, FL | September 2023 | 3.2% |
| Miami-Dade County, FL | September 2023 | 1.5% |
| Monroe County, FL | September 2023 | 2.0% |
| Nassau County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Okaloosa County, FL | September 2023 | 2.7% |
| Okeechobee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |
| Orange County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Osceola County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Palm Beach County, FL | September 2023 | 3.3% |
| Pasco County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |
| Pinellas County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Polk County, FL | September 2023 | 3.8% |
| Putnam County, FL | September 2023 | 4.1% |
| Santa Rosa County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Sarasota County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Seminole County, FL | September 2023 | 2.9% |
| St. Johns County, FL | September 2023 | 2.7% |
| St. Lucie County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7% |
| Sumter County, FL | September 2023 | 4.8% |
| Suwannee County, FL | September 2023 | 3.7% |
| Taylor County, FL | September 2023 | 3.9% |
| Union County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Volusia County, FL | September 2023 | 3.4% |
| Wakulla County, FL | September 2023 | 2.8% |
| Walton County, FL | September 2023 | 3.0% |
| Washington County, FL | September 2023 | 3.5% |

https://www.bls.gov/lau/

**Section III.B.**

**Figure 7.31**
**County Positions Authorized for State of Florida SCSEP Grant**

| County Positions Authorized for State of Florida SCSEP Grant | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Program Year 2021** | | **Program Year 2022** | | **Program Year 2023** | |
| Alachua | 17 | Alachua | **17** | Alachua | 17 |
| Broward | 28 | Broward | **28** | Broward | 28 |
| Charlotte | 28 | Charlotte | **28** | Charlotte | 28 |
| Citrus | 5 | Citrus | 5 | Citrus | 5 |
| Clay | 6 | Clay | **6** | Clay | 6 |
| Collier | 34 | Collier | **34** | Collier | 34 |
| DeSoto | 5 | DeSoto | 5 | DeSoto | 5 |
| Duval | 8 | Duval | 8 | Duval | 8 |
| Flagler | 8 | Flagler | **8** | Flagler | 8 |
| Hardee | 2 | Hardee | **2** | Hardee | 3 |
| Hernando | 5 | Hernando | **5** | Hernando | 5 |
| Highlands | 6 | Highlands | 6 | Highlands | 6 |
| Hillsborough | 49 | Hillsborough | **48** | Hillsborough | 48 |
| Indian River | 4 | Indian River | 4 | Indian River | 4 |
| Lee | 27 | Lee | **27** | Lee | 27 |
| Leon | 8 | Leon | 8 | Leon | 8 |
| Levy | 4 | Levy | 4 | Levy | 4 |
| Manatee | 13 | Manatee | 13 | Manatee | 13 |
| Marion | 5 | Marion | 5 | Marion | 5 |
| Martin | 7 | Martin | 7 | Martin | 7 |
| Miami-Dade | 60 | Miami-Dade | **59** | Miami-Dade | 59 |
| Okeechobee | 3 | Okeechobee | **3** | Okeechobee | 3 |
| Orange | 18 | Orange | **18** | Orange | 18 |
| Osceola | 10 | Osceola | **10** | Osceola | 10 |
| Palm Beach | 37 | Palm Beach | 36 | Palm Beach | 36 |
| Pinellas | 14 | Pinellas | 14 | Pinellas | 14 |
| Polk | 9 | Polk | 9 | Polk | 9 |
| St. Johns | 4 | St. Johns | 5 | St. Johns | 5 |
| St. Lucie | 15 | St. Lucie | **15** | St. Lucie | 15 |
| Sarasota | 4 | Sarasota | 4 | Sarasota | 4 |
| Seminole | 21 | Seminole | **21** | Seminole | 21 |
| Sumter | 7 | Sumter | **7** | Sumter | 7 |
| Taylor | 2 | Taylor | 2 | Taylor | 2 |
| Volusia | 14 | Volusia | 14 | Volusia | 14 |
| TOTAL | **488** | TOTAL | **485** | TOTAL | **486** |

**Section III.C.**

**Figure 7.32**
**Authorized Position Redistribution by County**

| Authorized Position Redistribution by County 2022 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **County** | **State Authorized** PoAutsitions **Per County** | **County Position Redistribution** |
| Alachua | 17 | -7 |
| Broward | 28 | -3 |
| Charlotte | 28 | -21 |
| Citrus | 5 | 0 |
| Clay | 6 | -4 |
| Collier | 34 | -23 |
| DeSoto | 5 | -2 |
| Duval | 8 | -3 |
| Flagler | 8 | -8 |
| Hardee | 2 | -2 |
| Hernando | 5 | -3 |
| Highlands | 6 | -1 |
| Hillsborough | 48 | -13 |
| Indian River | 4 | 4 |
| Lee | 27 | -6 |
| Leon | 8 | 4 |
| Levy | 4 | -2 |
| Manatee | 13 | -7 |
| Marion | 5 | 7 |
| Martin | 7 | -4 |
| Miami-Dade | 59 | -53 |
| Okeechobee | 3 | -3 |
| Orange | 18 | 0 |
| Osceola | 10 | -6 |
| Palm Beach | 36 | -11 |
| Pinellas | 14 | -6 |
| Polk | 9 | 2 |
| St. Johns | 5 | -5 |
| St. Lucie | 15 | -7 |
| Sarasota | 4 | 0 |
| Seminole | 21 | -17 |
| Sumter | 7 | -7 |
| Taylor | 2 | -2 |
| Volusia | 14 | -2 |

| Authorized Position Redistribution by County 2023 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **County** | **State Authorized Positions Per County** | **County Position Redistribution** |
| Alachua | 17 | -6 |
| Broward | 28 | -4 |
| Charlotte | 28 | -21 |
| Citrus | 5 | -1 |
| Clay | 6 | -4 |
| Collier | 34 | -21 |
| DeSoto | 5 | -4 |
| Duval | 8 | -4 |
| Flagler | 8 | -8 |
| Hardee | 3 | -3 |
| Hernando | 5 | -4 |
| Highlands | 6 | -2 |
| Hillsborough | 48 | -6 |
| Indian River | 4 | 1 |
| Lee | 27 | -5 |
| Leon | 8 | 1 |
| Levy | 4 | -3 |
| Manatee | 13 | -9 |
| Marion | 5 | 7 |
| Martin | 7 | -5 |
| Miami-Dade | 59 | -49 |
| Okeechobee | 3 | -3 |
| Orange | 18 | -4 |
| Osceola | 10 | -5 |
| Palm Beach | 36 | -11 |
| Pinellas | 14 | -6 |
| Polk | 9 | 1 |
| St. Johns | 5 | -5 |
| St. Lucie | 15 | -3 |
| Sarasota | 4 | -1 |
| Seminole | 21 | -17 |
| Sumter | 7 | -7 |
| Taylor | 2 | -2 |
| Volusia | 14 | 0 |

**Section III.E.**

**Figure 7.33**
**Eligible Individuals Per County by Age and Income**

| Eligible Individuals Per County by Age and Income | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **County** | **Population 55+** | **Below 125% of Poverty Level-Eligible Individuals in Each Service Area** | **Percentage of Individuals 125% of Federal Poverty Level by County** |
| Florida Total | 7,157,005 | 1,086,408 | 15% |
| Alachua County, Florida | 68,438 | 9,876 | 14% |
| Baker County, Florida | 6,719 | 898 | 13% |
| Bay County, Florida | 57,905 | 8,051 | 14% |
| Bradford County, Florida | 7,847 | 1,688 | 22% |
| Brevard County, Florida | 238,767 | 29,520 | 12% |
| Broward County, Florida | 581,706 | 98,950 | 17% |
| Calhoun County, Florida | 4,102 | 942 | 23% |
| Charlotte County, Florida | 104,805 | 12,158 | 12% |
| Citrus County, Florida | 78,764 | 12,669 | 16% |
| Clay County, Florida | 63,879 | 5,967 | 9% |
| Collier County, Florida | 170,122 | 16,231 | 10% |
| Columbia County, Florida | 21,755 | 3,872 | 18% |
| DeSoto County, Florida | 11,332 | 2,687 | 24% |
| Dixie County, Florida | 6,109 | 1,179 | 19% |
| Duval County, Florida | 261,534 | 42,516 | 16% |
| Escambia County, Florida | 94,812 | 13,417 | 14% |
| Flagler County, Florida | 52,644 | 5,228 | 10% |
| Franklin County, Florida | 4,600 | 758 | 16% |
| Gadsden County, Florida | 14,066 | 2,236 | 16% |
| Gilchrist County, Florida | 6,009 | 1,059 | 18% |
| Glades County, Florida | 4,756 | 943 | 20% |
| Gulf County, Florida | 5,489 | 646 | 12% |
| Hamilton County, Florida | 3,855 | 926 | 24% |
| Hardee County, Florida | 6,569 | 1,441 | 22% |
| Hendry County, Florida | 9,537 | 2,492 | 26% |
| Hernando County, Florida | 79,243 | 12,697 | 16% |
| Highlands County, Florida | 48,397 | 8,163 | 17% |
| Hillsborough County, Florida | 378,986 | 63,354 | 17% |
| Holmes County, Florida | 6,285 | 1,623 | 26% |
| Indian River County, Florida | 76,664 | 8,790 | 11% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jackson County, Florida | 14,544 | 2,834 | 19% |
| Jefferson County, Florida | 5,265 | 712 | 14% |
| Lafayette County, Florida | 1,977 | 498 | 25% |
| Lake County, Florida | 149,147 | 17,275 | 12% |
| Lee County, Florida | 318,740 | 40,962 | 13% |
| Leon County, Florida | 69,864 | 9,066 | 13% |
| Levy County, Florida | 17,101 | 3,540 | 21% |
| Liberty County, Florida | 2,050 | 583 | 28% |
| Madison County, Florida | 5,729 | 1,425 | 25% |
| Manatee County, Florida | 166,178 | 19,160 | 12% |
| Marion County, Florida | 154,855 | 23,081 | 15% |
| Martin County, Florida | 73,444 | 7,972 | 11% |
| Miami-Dade County, Florida | 770,199 | 178,730 | 23% |
| Monroe County, Florida | 32,219 | 4,355 | 14% |
| Nassau County, Florida | 33,302 | 3,493 | 10% |
| Okaloosa County, Florida | 60,659 | 6,813 | 11% |
| Okeechobee County, Florida | 12,364 | 2,120 | 17% |
| Orange County, Florida | 326,651 | 53,729 | 16% |
| Osceola County, Florida | 90,415 | 16,252 | 18% |
| Palm Beach County, Florida | 546,262 | 72,511 | 13% |
| Pasco County, Florida | 194,658 | 29,357 | 15% |
| Pinellas County, Florida | 387,236 | 59,329 | 15% |
| Polk County, Florida | 226,458 | 35,725 | 16% |
| Putnam County, Florida | 27,797 | 6,976 | 25% |
| St. Johns County, Florida | 90,933 | 7,158 | 8% |
| St. Lucie County, Florida | 123,056 | 18,116 | 15% |
| Santa Rosa County, Florida | 54,300 | 5,529 | 10% |
| Sarasota County, Florida | 221,575 | 22,278 | 10% |
| Seminole County, Florida | 132,433 | 15,133 | 11% |
| Sumter County, Florida | 89,523 | 7,631 | 9% |
| Suwannee County, Florida | 14,891 | 2,731 | 18% |
| Taylor County, Florida | 6,652 | 922 | 14% |
| Union County, Florida | 2,872 | 415 | 14% |
| Volusia County, Florida | 215,352 | 33,086 | 15% |
| Wakulla County, Florida | 9,176 | 1,005 | 11% |
| Walton County, Florida | 25,965 | 3,092 | 12% |
| Washington County, Florida | 7,467 | 1,837 | 25% |

DOEA Needs Index

**Section III.F**

**Figure 7.34**
**Relative Distribution of Eligible Individuals**

| Relative Distribution of Eligible Individuals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **County / State** | **Population 55+** | **USDA Rural Counties Served by Florida SCSEP RUCA Definition** | **ACS Data LEP 2015 Data Language Spoken at Home (Spanish)** | **State P 2019 Minority Report - Census Data** |
| **Florida** | **7,157,005** | **7** | | **43.90%** |
| Alachua County | 68,438 | | | |
| Broward County | 581,706 | | 62% | |
| Charlotte County | 104,805 | | | |
| Citrus County | 78,764 | | | |
| Clay County | 63,879 | | | |
| Collier County | 170,122 | | | |
| DeSoto County | 11,332 | x | | |
| Duval County | 261,534 | | | |
| Flagler County | 52,644 | x | | |
| Hardee County | 6,569 | x | | |
| Hernando County | 79,243 | | | |
| Highlands County | 48,397 | x | | |
| Hillsborough County | 378,986 | | 81% | |
| Indian River County | 76,664 | | | |
| Lee County | 318,740 | | | |
| Leon County | 69,864 | | | |
| Levy County | 17,101 | x | | |
| Manatee County | 166,178 | | | |
| Marion County | 154,855 | | | |
| Martin County | 73,444 | | | |
| Miami-Dade County | 770,199 | | 90% | |
| Okeechobee County | 12,364 | x | | |
| Orange County | 326,651 | | 70% | |
| Osceola County | 90,415 | | | |
| Palm Beach County | 546,262 | | 62% | |
| Pinellas County | 387,236 | | | |
| Polk County | 226,458 | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Johns County | 90,933 | | | |
| St. Lucie County, Florida | 123,056 | | | |
| Sarasota County | 221,575 | | | |
| Seminole County | 132,433 | | | |
| Sumter County | 89,523 | | | |
| Taylor County | 6,652 | x | | |
| Volusia County | 215,352 | | | |

ENI, https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/DataFiles/53180/25564_FL.pdf?v=0 , Data and Language Maps | LEP.gov

**Figure 7.35**
**Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English**
**for The Population 5 Years and Over**

| Census - Table Results<br>**2020** | **Florida** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Label** | **Estimate** | **Margin of Error** |
| Total: | 19,773,422 | ±725 |
| Speak only English | 13,956,872 | ±22,762 |
| Spanish: | 4,312,975 | ±13,646 |
| Speak English "very well" | 2,482,857 | ±12,435 |

Data and Language Maps | LEP.gov
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=ACSDT5Y2019.B16001&g=0400000US12&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B16001

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for HUD employment and training programs. If the state includes HUD employment and training programs in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate such HUD programs in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III and IV of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

HUD considers such employment and training activities to include the following: Community Development Block Grant program, Continuum of Care, Family Self-Sufficiency program, Jobs Plus program, and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency program.

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

**(OMB Control Number: 0970-0382)**

**Note: Below is information about the employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) that is included in the WIOA Combined State Plan. The complete CSBG State Plan is submitted directly to the Federal agency that administers that program and is collected under OMB Control Number: 0970-0382.**

**Where CSBG is included in the Combined State Plan, the State CSBG Lead Agency (as designated by the chief executive of the State under the requirements of section 676(a) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(a)) will coordinate plans for employment and training activities under CSBG as part of a larger antipoverty and workforce development strategy.**

**As part of the Combined State Plan, the State CSBG Lead Agency must:**

**(a) Describe how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities through Statewide and local WIOA workforce development systems; and may**

The state and eligible entities are currently required to partner with their local workforce development board. This is a requirement of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Annually, the eligible entities provide documentation to the state to validate that they are still maintaining this partnership.

As a part of the individual contracts with the Community Action Agencies (CAA), the CAAs are required to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all CareerSource Florida, Inc. boards in the counties the CAA provides services. This MOU shall detail a cooperative partnership workforce training and employment efforts and shall describe the actions that will be taken by both parties to assure the coordination of the CSBG Program and CareerSource Florida, Inc. “One-Stop” delivery system, services, and information. The CAA and local CareerSource Florida shall review and renew the MOU at least once every three years. FloridaCommerce ensures compliance with this requirement as part of the subrecipient monitoring.

**(b) Provide examples of innovative employment and training programs and activities conducted by eligible entities or other neighborhood-based organizations as part of a community antipoverty strategy.**

An example of local workforce development boards partnering with the CSBG-eligible entities occurs in Lake County, Florida. Lake Community Action Agency partnered with the Florida Department of Commerce and CareerSource Escarosa with the Integrated Services Pilot Project. The Lake County Community Action Agency submitted a proposal to serve low-income clients that possessed barriers preventing them from gaining meaningful employment and becoming self-sufficient. Based on the agency’s community needs assessments and occupational skill demands, clients received training in demand occupations such as healthcare and construction fields. Other training such as soft skills training was provided to enhance the

client’s ability to gain and retain employment. The WIOA program was used to fund training costs and soft skills training while CSBG funds were used to cover support services. During FY 2023, Lake provided assistance to 44 applicants totaling $117,034.27. A total of 74 clients have completed this program. They obtained degrees in Nursing Assisting, Home Health Assisting, Personal Care Aides, Dental Assisting, and Licensed Practical and Vocational Nursing.

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

**Florida's Vision for Adult Education**
The vision of Florida's adult education system is to hold learners at the center and deliver outcomes that promote full participation in the workforce, resulting in high-quality credentials of value and close achievement gaps.

Florida's Strategic Priorities
The work of transforming Florida's adult education system is guided by the following strategic priorities:

- **Priority 1:** Promote regional partnerships to ensure comprehensive approaches that improve learner outcomes.
- **Priority 2:** Expand the state's talent pipeline through attainment of credentials of value and acquisition of postsecondary certifications, industry-recognized credentials, and degrees.
- **Priority 3:** Ensure all learners receive high-quality instruction that prioritizes measurable labor market needs and outcomes while working to eliminate achievement gaps in the community.
- **Priority 4:** Incent, measure, and support enhanced program effectiveness.

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

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 2021, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) implemented new standards that represent the highest quality knowledge-based standards in the nation.

The 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 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) have access to a high-quality, market-driven education regardless of their pathway to graduation. The state's Adult Basic Education (ABE) standards are the grade level equivalent of K-8 from the B.E.S.T. Standards and are revised and reviewed annually by the Division of Career and Adult 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 state of Florida High School Diploma. General Education Development (GED®) preparation courses are a component of Florida's adult secondary level programming aligned with 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 192 diploma) by FDOE.

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 the alignment of the assessment with the existing challenging academic standards. The current contract period for using the assessment is through June 2024. A new competitive procurement process will be utilized for a contract beginning July 2024 for a high school equivalency assessment.

In the end, the four-year State Plan communicates Florida's commitment to the continuous improvement of adult education programs and access to quality adult education programs to all students, including WIOA 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 or a postsecondary credential.

**(b) <u>Local Activities</u>. Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.**

**Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)**

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

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

**Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy**

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

In accordance with Section 231 under Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of WIOA, DCAE awarded multi-year grants to eligible providers of adult education services through a competitive process for 2023-2026. This 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 offers program/performance oversight to grantees. Funding for eligible local providers for the provision of adult education services occurs through a competitive Request for Proposal (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 demonstrates 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.
- Public Libraries.
- Public housing authority.
- Non-profit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services.
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above.
- Partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

In the 2023-2026 competitive grant application cycle, DCAE provided eligible adult education providers the opportunity to submit either individual or collective grant proposals. This cycle introduced collective grant applications as a new initiative, enabling providers to collaboratively develop, implement, and enhance adult education and literacy activities while aligning them with the workforce and educational needs of their local areas.

The development of collaborative partnerships yields numerous benefits by optimizing resource utilization, and combining financial assets, instructional materials, and specialized personnel. This expansion enriches the educational experience for adults and results in more adaptive and comprehensive program design, addressing a broader spectrum of educational needs and service delivery. Additionally, these partnerships lead to improved outreach, streamlined administrative processes, and an overall enhancement of adult education program quality, accountability, and sustainability.

The grant competition is widely publicized through various print and electronic media outlets across the state, while grant notifications are disseminated through the DCAE Office of Communications via formal press releases, postings on the DCAE website, social media platforms, and other available communication channels.

DCAE provides technical assistance through grant writing workshops and maintains a question-and-answer document on the RFP website. Both the workshops and the question-and-answer document offer valuable insights into the grant procurement process and are accessible to any interested parties.

The questions within the RFP are thoughtfully structured to enable applicants to demonstrate their capacity and readiness to meet the 13 considerations for funding and other expectations outlined in 34 CFR 463 Subpart C and sections 231-233 of the WIOA. The RFP meticulously outlines each of these considerations and includes probing questions designed to elicit detailed narratives.

Applicants are evaluated based on their ability to address the literacy needs of their respective areas, their compliance with WIOA expectations, and their past performance in delivering literacy instruction and achieving programmatic goals, in alignment with the 13 considerations for funding. These considerations encompass various aspects, such as:

- Responsiveness to regional needs.
- Service to individuals in need of adult education and literacy activities, including those with low literacy skills and English language learners.
- Service to individuals with disabilities.
- Past effectiveness in improving literacy.
- Alignment with local plans and one-stop partners.
- Program quality and research-based practices.
- Effective use of technology.
- Integrated education and training.
- Qualified instructors.
- Coordination with community resources, flexible schedules.
- Information management.
- Demonstrated need for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs in the local area.

Decisions regarding course offerings are determined based on local needs, while these 13 attributes guide the evaluation process to ensure the highest quality and effectiveness of adult education and literacy activities.

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

**Florida's Adult Education System**

Florida's adult education system offers a range of instructional programs designed to equip adults below the postsecondary level with essential skills, enabling them to become productive workers, responsible family members, and engaged citizens. The core program areas include ABE, Adult Secondary Education (ASE), Academic Skills Building (ASB), and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These programs prioritize fundamental skills, such as reading, writing, mathematics, and English language proficiency. Providers further enhance these primary program areas through Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. IET programs offer adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with

workforce preparation activities and specific occupational cluster trainings, fostering educational and career advancement. Adult education programs are strategically crafted to support learners in acquiring the knowledge and competencies necessary for transitioning to postsecondary education, securing employment, and contributing to the workforce.

Adult education programs are available to individuals that:

- Are 16 years or older.
- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school.
- Do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Are basic skills deficient.
- Want to learn to speak, read, and write the English language.

**Figure 8.01**
**Adult General Education Programs**

| ABE Program | |
|---|---|
| **Adult Basic Education Program** | 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. |

| ASE Programs | |
|---|---|
| **Adult High School Program** | 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. Graduation requirements for adults are the same as those for secondary students, except as provided elsewhere in law (Section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes). |
| **GED® Preparation Program** | 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. |

| ASB Program | |
|---|---|
| **Academic Skills Building Program** | The ASB Program is a non-credit program designed to develop the literacy and mathematics skills necessary for students to be successful workers, citizens, and family members. The ASB program is comprised of two courses, ASB Reasoning through Language Arts and ASB Mathematics. Students enrolled in this program are at a grade level equivalency of 9.0-12.9, may possess a high school diploma, and have the goal of preparing for postsecondary education and/or employment. |

| ESOL Program | |
|---|---|
| **Adult ESOL Program** | The Adult ESOL course is designed to improve the 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. |

| IET | |
|---|---|
| **Integrated Education and Training** | IET programs are available to adult education students enrolled in ABE, AHS, GED® Preparation Program, ASB, and/or Adult ESOL. IET is an educational model that can help workers acquire or refresh key basic skills in math, reading, and/or spoken English while also pursuing occupational or industry-specific training. IET students may also be enrolled in postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs/courses. |

DCAE reviews the standards for each course annually 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 report enrollment and educational gains accurately. If significant 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 ABE classes. The standards inform what should be taught in the classroom.

Professional development is provided through local face-to-face workshops and webinars to assist with the implementation of these standards. The curriculum frameworks are available at http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/adult-edu.

**Workforce Preparation Activities**

Workforce preparation activities encompass a range of initiatives, programs, and services. The primary aim is to assist individuals in developing a comprehensive skill set, which includes foundational academic skills, critical thinking abilities, digital literacy proficiency, and self-management competencies. This skill set equips individuals with the capabilities needed to effectively utilize resources, work collaboratively, understand complex systems, and handle information efficiently. Moreover, these workforce preparation activities are designed to empower individuals to successfully transition into and complete postsecondary education, vocational training, or gainful employment opportunities.

The DCAE Adult Education Employability Skills Standards are designed for integration into Adult General Education frameworks, drawing from the Perkins Employability Skills Standards provided by the U.S. Department of Education, specifically from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), Division of Academic and Technical Education. These standards have been developed collaboratively, with input from adult education program leaders throughout Florida. They have also undergone comprehensive review by a committee comprising adult education providers, educators, and administrators. This collaborative effort aims to identify and prioritize the most critical employability skills, providing students with the knowledge necessary for successful employment.

The Employability Framework outlines the skills and knowledge that students should possess to enter the workforce and excel across various career pathways. These employability standards serve several essential purposes:

- Assisting programs in curriculum development.
- Providing guidance for new instructors.
- Ensuring the delivery of quality instruction through ongoing professional development.
- Offering a comprehensive set of employability skills that prepare students along a continuum for workforce training and employment.

Moreover, DCAE continues to encourage Adult Education providers to incorporate entrepreneurship skills training in their programs. DCAE supports 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 current adult education frameworks and co-curricular initiatives. ABE Standards are based on the United States Department of Education, OCTAE'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 Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards. The learning objectives of the B.E.S.T. Standards 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 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 IET programs that align to a postsecondary credential or degree program.

Additionally, DCAE will continue to collaborate with CareerSource Florida to identify local workforce needs and opportunities for businesses to connect with students. DCAE will continue enrolling eligible participants in apprenticeship programs, developing additional integrated education, and training programs, and formalizing other in-demand work-based learning opportunities leading to credentials of value. 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 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to identify shared costs. As part of the AEFLA grant application process, DCAE requires each provider to submit 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 has created 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 IET service approach that provides concurrent and contextualized adult education and literacy activities combined with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a 197 specific occupation or career 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.
- 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).
- Workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, which can be any one of the training services defined in section 134(c)(3)(D) of WIOA.

All services must include the following to meet the “integrated” requirement of IET:

- 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.
- Activities and training occur simultaneously.
- Activities and training use occupational-relevant instructional materials.

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

DCAE continues to provide ample professional development to support the success of IET programs. Professional development is available through various 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.

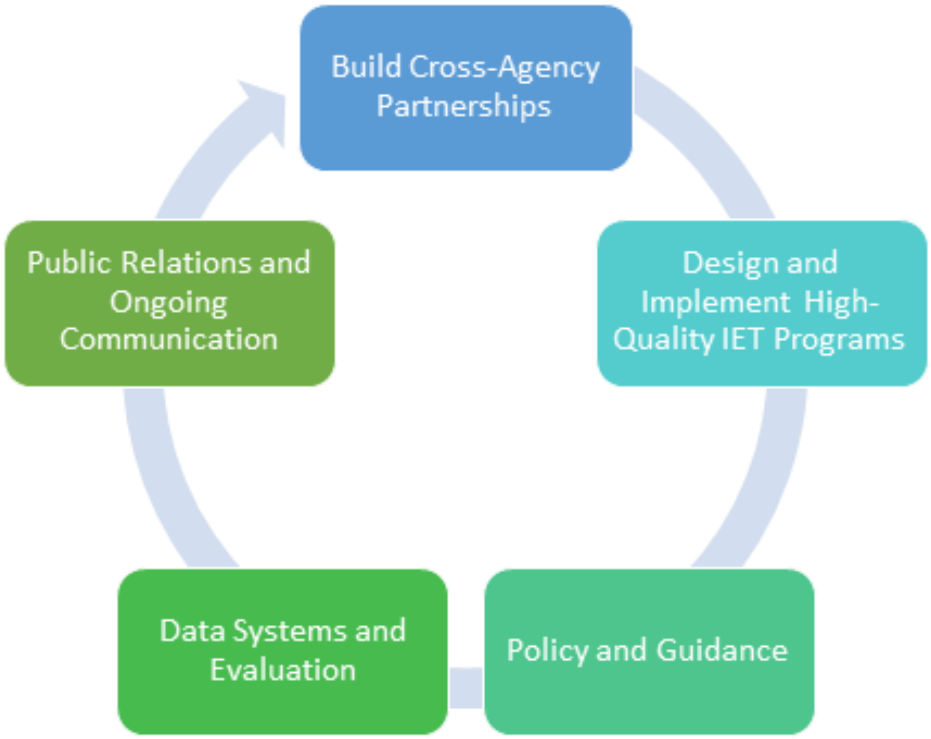
**Development of Career Pathways**
WIOA, Section 3(7) defines a career pathway as a “combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services” that:

a) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
b) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships;
c) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals.
d) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
e) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable.
f) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
g) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Career pathway strategies aim to leverage education, workforce development, and social service support 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 in transitioning into and out of education and training programs and employment.

The state aims to promote and bolster the development of a framework for career pathways by concentrating its efforts on five specific key elements or activities.

**Figure 8.02**
**Key Elements and Activities of Career Pathway Development**




**Build Cross-Agency Partnerships**
DCAE is dedicated to fostering robust collaborations with professional development organizations and WIOA partners, recognizing the pivotal role these alliances play in harmonizing activities among adult education providers, community colleges, career and technical education institutions, local workforce development boards, businesses, labor organizations, social services, and other key stakeholders. These partnerships stand as the bedrock of Florida's comprehensive career pathway system, amplifying its efficacy and breadth.

**Design and Implement High-Quality Integrated Education and Training Programs**
DCAE's unwavering commitment lies in facilitating the creation and advancement of robust career pathways through the ongoing provision of technical assistance vital for the establishment and successful execution of top-tier IET Programs. Collaboratively, Adult Education leadership grant recipients and the DCAE will champion professional development initiatives strategically designed to fortify the delivery of assessments, instruction, training, and comprehensive support services. These services are thoughtfully crafted to empower participants in formulating precise career pathways within the IET framework, meticulously documenting their strides toward completing postsecondary education and training. This concerted effort will pave the way for the attainment of in-demand, family-sustaining jobs, solidifying the prominence of IET as the linchpin in adult education's career progression paradigm.

**Policy and Guidance**

DCAE, alongside local partners, will continue providing updated policies and clear guidance for the career pathways system, encompassing assessment procedures, instructional delivery, advisory services, comprehensive support, referral facilitation, participation in training and technical assistance, provision of financial support to participants, and diligent collection, analysis, and reporting of data.

**Data Systems and Evaluation**
DCAE will prioritize the strategic advancement of career pathways through a dedicated focus on leveraging precise and up-to-date data systems alongside robust evaluation methodologies. Recognizing the pivotal role of accurate information in guiding career trajectories, DCAE diligently utilizes data on participant background characteristics, attendance records, learning progression, credential achievements, and employment statuses. This meticulous analysis not only allows for the assessment of participants' progress and outcomes but also enables the pinpointing of effective program practices and policies that significantly contribute to advancing individuals along their career pathways. Furthermore, in collaboration with WIOA partners and professional development organizations, DCAE actively collaborates to disseminate this critical data across the field, ensuring that the insights gleaned from this comprehensive information drive informed decision-making and empower individuals navigating their career journeys.

**Public Relations and Ongoing Communication**
DCAE will work collaboratively with partners to provide messaging and ongoing communication with stakeholders and constituents about career pathways purposes, benefits, activities, and outcomes.

**IELCE Programs**
IELCE programs, backed by Section 243 of WIOA funding, cater to adult English language learners, including professionals holding degrees and credentials from their home countries. These programs aim to equip these individuals with the necessary language proficiency and advanced skills required to proficiently navigate various roles within the United States as parents, employees, and active citizens. Essential components integral to an IELCE program encompass English Language Acquisition (comprising speaking and comprehension), Literacy (focusing on reading and writing), Civics Education (covering citizenship rights, responsibilities, and civic engagement), and 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 to support and provide 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 other than activities for eligible individuals.

**(c) <u>Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals</u>. Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:**

- **Adult education and literacy activities.**

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

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

As specified in section 225 of WIOA, DCAE spends no more than 20% of the 82.5% of the state grant allotted to local programs for correctional education activities. Funding allocations are determined as part of the planning process for the 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, ASB, and ESOL. Individuals participate in career exploration and planning activities to develop a career and education plan based on career goals. All eight allowable corrections education activities are eligible for funding.

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 to ensure inmates have access to Adult Education and CTE programs to 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.

For the selection process for grants, the State will award Section 225 grants or contracts in accordance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C. See Section b. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA). Similar to the section 231 grants and contracts application process, all applicants are required to submit evidence of demonstrated effectiveness by providing three years of performance data under WIOA section 116. For applicants not previously funded under WIOA are required to provide performance data showing past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of success in achieving outcomes related to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. Applications are submitted to the local board, in which the local board reviews for alignment with the local plan.

**(d) <u>IELCE Program</u>.**

**Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate IELCE programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.**

**Describe how the IELCE program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.**

**Describe how the IELCE program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.**

**Describe how the IELCE program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.**

**Describe how the IELCE program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.**

The term “IELCE” 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. English language learners holding a secondary or post-secondary degree or credential in their native country may enroll in an adult ESOL/IELCE program to improve literacy and English language acquisition through contextualized English language instruction with authentic materials and lexical items. Examples of profession-specific curriculum for participants with foreign degrees or credentials include English for Engineers or Medical English. The use of a specialized curriculum in IELCE serves to help participants acquire critical English language skills necessary to accelerate employment in the same field in which they hold a foreign degree or credential. IELCE-eligible providers engage in recruiting, enrolling, and providing ongoing wraparound support for English language learners in IELCE programs. Specifically, IELCE eligible providers support skilled individuals in evaluating foreign credentials, obtaining professional licenses, and identifying career clusters and related pathways that match their professional and career goals.

For the selection process for grants, the State will award Section 243 grants or contracts in accordance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C. See Section b. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA). Agencies who can provide required services are eligible to apply and may receive funding, with documentation of demonstrated effectiveness and meeting the minimum standards for scoring the competition and are also required to have the Local Board review applications for alignment with the local plan.

The IELCE competitive grant process was conducted in June 2023 for the years 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. 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. Florida’s B.E.S.T. Standards are integrated into curriculum frameworks, including career information and workforce preparation activities in addition to the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education. Adult educators can participate in 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 essential to successful self-rule. Emphasis will be placed on developing innovative and targeted IELCE workshops and sessions around education for democratic citizenship, entrepreneurship education, and how adult education can be a mechanism for engagement and economic and social mobility for Florida's residents.

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

Providers will integrate IELCE into the local workforce system by partnering with LWDBs, career and technical education centers, and local colleges to identify workforce needs and implement systems that facilitate the successful transition into key areas and sectors as outlined through the local memorandum of understanding. The ongoing partnership between eligible providers and local workforce providers is critical in developing a strong workforce.

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

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

The state uses leadership funds, no more than 12.5% 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 develop career pathways systems for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.

Through leadership grants, DCAE supports local career pathways design, agreements, activities, and implementation. Given a functional career pathways system 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 more substantial 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 training with experts in the field, DCAE will collaborate to establish career pathways and 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.
- Recruitment of a diverse range of students who would benefit from the career pathways model.
- Creation of a vision of the types and sequences of career pathways services and credentialing programs that an adult education provider can deliver.

**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).

State leadership recipients provide face-to-face and online professional development opportunities for adult education practitioners and various resources are available at https://www.aceoffloridafoundation.org, http://floridaliteracy.org and http://floridaipdae.org.

Resources include electronic documents, toolkits, lessons, videos, workshops, webinars, virtual training, online training modules, newsletters, and consistent communication outreach through an email contact database. The state leadership groups combine 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 FDOE 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/technicalassistance-papers.stml.

Current practices with one-stop career centers and provider partnerships include referrals, locating teachers and classrooms at local career centers, or providing space for local workforce development board staff to provide services in the adult education center.

**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 and 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. 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 a 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 the provider's specific strategies to ensure the finding(s) have been resolved.

**(f) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.**

**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 through online webinars. Workshops conducted on college and career readiness are formatted for online courses, including a post-test to determine if learning objectives were met.

The IPDAE website provides methods to measure and assess the involvement and effectiveness of 203 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 they attend. 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 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, the quality assurance team conducts an annual risk assessment. 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 apply 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 an agency's 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 Skill Gains 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 2024, DCAE will negotiate state performance targets with OCTAE, and all local providers will be expected to meet the state target for each measure 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 support 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 at the annual conference provides new directors with information such as federal and state guidelines, data collection, and National Reporting System (NRS) reporting, and resources needed to administer their programs. Additionally, the new adult education administrator course on canvas provides administrators with a hands-on, readily available resource that provides interactive avenues for administrators to learn about adult education in Florida, adult education programs and assessments, accountability and performance, grant management and professional development.

- **TABE and CASAS Training/Trainers**
  Through ongoing 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 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 ABE, ESOL, GED® preparation, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, career pathways, reading and math instructional strategies, and adults with disabilities.

**Figure 8.03**
**ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM**
**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 legally may carry out each provision of the plan; |
| 4. | All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law; |
| 5. | A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan; |
| 6. | The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan; |
| 7. | The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and |
| 8. | The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program; |
| **The State Plan must include assurances that:** | |
| 1. | The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the WIOA only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement); |
| 2. | The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. |
| 3. | The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; |
| 4. | Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. |
| 5. | The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303). |

**Authorizing or Certifying Representative**
**CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**

**Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements**

**The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:**

**(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.**

**(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.**

**(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.**

**Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

**The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:**

**If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.**

**Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.**

1. **SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).**
2. **Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying. (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).**
3. **SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable).(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).**

**Signature Page for Certification Regarding Lobbying**

**Florida Department of Education**

**Manny Diaz, Jr., Commissioner** **DATE:**

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)**

**EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

**OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026**

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.**
**GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

**State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. **Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.**

2. **Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?**

3. **Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?**

4. **What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?**

- **Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.**

- **Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.**

- **Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.**

- **Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.**
- **Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.**

**GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants**
**The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:**

- **The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or**

- **The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.**

- **The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.**

**AEFLA Section 427 of GEPA Response**
DCAE in FDOE is charged with administering WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy and actively demonstrates commitment to Section 427 of GEPA through utilization of the following strategies:

**1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.**

The Florida Department of Education's Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE) delivers outcomes that promote and adult learner's full participation in the workforce and expands the state's talent pipeline through attainment of credentials of value and acquisition of postsecondary certifications, industry recognized credentials and degrees. To ensure access to Adult Education programs in Florida, DCAE provides direct grants to eligible education agencies and supports comprehensive approaches to learning that reach adult learners in every corner of the state. Additionally, public outreach activities are designed to ensure adult learners are met and served at the state, regional, and local levels.

**2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?**

Florida Adult Education prioritizes increases in adult participation and access to services for all Floridians and works to increase opportunities. The state recognizes the need to provide access to services to all populations with potential barriers to full employment which are identified in the Act and promotes equal access to all individuals in Florida.

- Continuous recruitment and retention of qualified instructors of adult education including the extended need for qualified support professionals.
- Increased need for support services for adult learners seeking education and training.
- Additional communication between core partners to ensure “no wrong door” approach to services remains seamless for those seeking the support needed to realize their potential as part of the workforce system.
- Extension and expansion of programs and services into unserved areas of the state, including many rural areas that lack adequate transportation.
- Communication of adult education programs and opportunities reaching the populations needing services.

**3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?**

Florida Adult Education will continue to utilize a data-driven approach with increased collaboration with WIOA partners to provide ongoing technical assistance, projects, and initiatives. Efforts include:

- The statewide priority of recruiting and retaining qualified instructors of adult education is supported by DCAE’s emphasis on high quality instruction for adult learners through comprehensive, evidence-based professional development for educators.
- The increased need for support for adult learners is met with intentional focus on collaborative networks of partners to provide wrap around services for students.
- Statewide coordination of services, especially as it relates to intake procedures by creating a “no wrong door” approach to programs and services.
- The expansion into areas previously unserved by adult education has provided access to thousands of Floridians seeking education, support, and training.
- Outreach and recruitment efforts are tailored to the unique needs of adult learners and communicated via multiple platforms and mediums.

**4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?**

DCAE reviews data regularly and when available, at least annually for all measures, and meets with grantees, division leadership, agency staff and WIOA partners to review progress and identify opportunities for improvement. Milestones will include monitoring data and adjustments as needed.

**Funding of Eligible Recipients**

During 2023-2024, eligible applicants will compete to provide AEFLA instructional services. As part of the competitive process, the state will consider the ability of the eligible provider to serve

eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities, in accordance with WIOA Section 231(e)(2). As such, applicants are required to describe the policies adopted by the eligible provider to accommodate students and staff with disabilities, including learning disabilities, as defined in the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102) and WIOA Section 3(25). Additionally, applicants are required to describe how the program will identify and provide services to students with physical, emotional, mental and learning disabilities. Responses are weighted and external evaluators will assign points based on the comprehensive nature of the responses.

Eligible recipients are required (annually) to provide a concise description of the process to ensure access to, and participation of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with disabilities in accordance with the guidance provided at http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.pdf and sign an assurance statement as well.

**Quality Assurance and Compliance**
DCAE administers quality assurance and compliance through established on-site and desk monitoring protocols. Compliance with Section 427 of GEPA is embedded in its policies and procedures (http://fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/compliance/). The purpose of monitoring is to identify the specific areas in which a provider is in compliance or non-compliance with federal law and regulations, state statutes and rules Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG), Federal Register Part III, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Final Rule. The timely identification of non-compliance provides a framework to make changes to result in programs becoming more efficient and effective. A comprehensive and multi-dimensional Quality Assurance and Compliance System is a foundation for continuous improvement of services and systems both internally and externally. Our commitment to excellence supports accountability, collaboration, targeted technical assistance, continuous improvement and positive systemic change.

The Quality Assurance section of the Bureau of Grants Administration and Compliance is responsible for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive quality assurance system, including monitoring. The role of the Quality Assurance and Compliance System is to ensure financial accountability, program quality and regulatory compliance. As stewards of federal and state funds, it is incumbent upon the DCAE to regularly monitor the use of federal funds and regulatory compliance of providers, including fidelity of Section 427 of GEPA implementation.

**Evidence-Based Professional Development**
DCAE implements with fidelity its commitment to Section 427 of GEPA through its statewide professional development offerings, which consistently provide research-based instructional strategies for serving adults with disabilities in AEFLA funded instructional programs. IPDAE, currently administered by Indian River State College, ACE of Florida professional organization and the FLC are the approved statewide professional development providers. Regional workshops and webinars are conducted on professional development priorities identified by the State advisory committees for ESOL, ABE and GED/Adult High School, results from statewide needs assessments, and the DCAE staff. Priorities identified for implementing this state plan are research-based reading strategies, integrated education and training, math training for ABE and GED® preparation and implementation of college and career readiness standards in adult education and ESOL and 504 plan development.

## SECTION IX. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

**The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.**

**(a) State Rehabilitation Council. All vocational rehabilitation agencies, except for those that have an independent participant-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):**

**(B) has established a SRC.**

**In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.**

**Figure 9.01**
**Florida Rehabilitation Council Membership**

| Council Representative | Current Term Number/ Vacant | Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr. |
|---|---|---|
| Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) | Vacant | |
| Parent Training and Information Center | Vacant | |
| Client Assistance Program | 1 | 05/06/2022 |
| Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the vocational rehabilitation agency) | Vacant | |
| Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider | 1 | 07/21/2023 |
| Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider | 1 | 05/06/2022 |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | Interim | |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | 2 | 05/06/2022 |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | Vacant | |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | Vacant | |
| Disability Advocacy Groups | 3 | 07/21/2023 |
| Disability Advocacy Groups | Interim | |
| Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services | 1 | 07/21/2023 |
| Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable) | N/A | N/A |
| State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) | 1 | 05/07/2022 |
| State Workforce Development Board | Vacant | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Director (Ex Officio) | Interim | |

**If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the vocational rehabilitation agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.**

VR will work with the FRC and FDOE leadership to develop a plan for proactively addressing vacancies.

The FRC has in the past convened a membership workgroup to recruit new members and facilitate applications. Currently, information on vacant seats is posted on the FRC website, and VR anticipates that the inclusion of the VR Communications Director in the formal nominating committee will generate new ideas and leads for member recruitment. VR will work closely with the FRC and FDOE leadership to proactively fill existing vacancies.

The FRC meets quarterly and holds virtual meetings in between if needed. It does establish a quorum during meetings.

**In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of participant satisfaction and other Council reports.**

**Provide the vocational rehabilitation agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.**

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) provided the following feedback and recommendations to the vocational rehabilitation services portion of Florida's 2024-28 Combined State Plan consistent with requirements in state and federal law.

The FRC applauds the FY 2023 budgetary increase in compensation for VR staff and hopes it will result in improved recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff. To identify the impact of this increase, the FRC recommends that VR conduct ongoing correlative monitoring related to the recruiting, hiring and retaining of staff. FRC views the compensation increase as a positive step and encourages VR to continue to explore additional pay and non-pay increases for all staff.

The FRC recommends that VR continues its efforts at outreach with partners and reinstitute quarterly or semi-annual partner meetings throughout the state to increase and improve communication and the working relationship between VR and community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) including the synchronization of provisional services and billing processes.

Additionally, the FRC emphasizes the need for VR to increase the quality of employment outcomes for VR participants and for VR to continue to engage in efforts to reduce placements primarily occurring in low-pay and unskilled jobs that have historically high turnover. The FRC also encourages initiatives to reduce the length of time it currently takes for VR participants to move through the plan development and eligibility determination process of VR applicant to Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

The FRC looks forward to continuing to fulfil its statutory requirements, consistent with section 413.405, F.S. in reviewing, analyzing, and advising VR as it plans, develops and improves its programs.

**Recommendation 1 – Counselor Recruitment and Retention:**

- Work towards increasing pay and non-pay incentives for all staff.
- Create more in-person training opportunities.
- Build a stronger connection between administration and field staff to help improve the capacity of staff and address the recruitment and ongoing retention concerns.
- Report on the efficacy of these initiatives during quarterly FRC meetings.

**Agency Response: Accepted**

In the past year, VR staff received not only raises afforded to all state agency personnel but selected frontline staff also received additional raises as a result of gubernatorial and legislative action. Consequently, VR is experiencing a decrease in vacancy rates, which is expected to continue. VR will continue to implement an array of aligned training, both on-demand, virtual, and in-person to support the needs of VR staff. FRC will receive updates of initiatives from VR during at least two of the quarterly FRC meetings.

**Recommendation 2 – Transition:**

- Continue to promote early contact and assistance to all students with disabilities under an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.
- Continue to expand and increase offerings of career paths to include vocational exploration, technical training, registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, encouraging transition students to consider early identification of post-secondary options.
- Evaluate and report on policies and practices that could potentially create barriers when transitioning from education to employment.
- Reestablish peer mentoring projects throughout the state for youth and students with disabilities and identify service provider/s to help implement the projects statewide.
- Identify the opportunities to develop marketing strategies to better target all students, Exceptional Student Education directors, teachers, school counselors and parents (including digital and other materials).
- Explore the expansion of Project Search sites across the state as resources allow.

**Agency Response: Accepted**

VR is committed to continuing to review data and information of its existing systems and supports to improve employment outcomes for students with disabilities. This includes a commitment to actively expanding Pre-Employment Transition Service participation as well as exploring additional pathways towards meaningful employment opportunities like registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. The existing Peer Mentoring program is under review to ensure all participants have a clear understanding of background screening requirements to improve the alignment of that service to existing state requirements and ensure the safety of all participants.

**Recommendation 3 – Business Outreach Strategies**

- Evaluate the existing system for VR to strengthen efforts with business leaders to improve median earning jobs and retention in career-oriented employment, including increasing partnerships.

- Remain focused on participants' strengths and develop tools to communicate effectively and succinctly to potential employers.
- Consider including registered pre-apprenticeships as well as registered apprenticeships.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR future initiatives include special contracts designed to facilitate additional pathways to registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs for individuals with disabilities. Refinements in how VR shares data with staff from its new case management system to improve outreach will also be explored.

**Recommendation 4 – Rights and Conflict Resolution**

- Ensure all VR staff and participants are aware of and provided the options of the services of Disability Rights Florida (Client Assistance Program (CAP) and the VR Ombudsman's Office. This information should be provided through increased collaboration and additional engagement, including VR staff collaborating with CAP and providing decision letters with appeal rights and policies.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR decision letters currently contain appeal rights and information on how to access available administrative remedies for VR participants. This information is also shared on VR's website. Additionally, VR will continue to assess the effectiveness of available training and resources to plan for improvements if needed.

**Recommendation 5 – Public Awareness and Outreach**

- Prior to release of marketing materials, engage VR marketing staff to review for person-first language and authentic representation of persons with disabilities.
- Explore collaboration with the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) to better reach students with disabilities and their parents.
- Explore collaboration with healthcare entities to expand awareness of VR.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR will continue to assess the effectiveness of existing communication and outreach efforts to plan for any identified improvements.

**Recommendation 6 – Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities**

- Examine creative ways to address the transportation barriers statewide to better support employment outcomes for VR participants.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR will continue to assess the effectiveness of available training and resources related to transportation solutions for its participants.

**Recommendation 7 – Overall Agency Performance**

- Explore improvements in the reporting of data on VR performance in targeted areas including rapid engagement and unserved and underserved participants.
- Increase the quality of employment outcomes for VR participants such as reducing low pay and unskilled jobs that have historically high turnover rates and increasing higher median-earning jobs and retention in career-oriented employment.

- Increase coordination with federal and states agencies including creating a system that integrates information and services.
- Ensure benefits planning services are provided to VR participants as well as youth and students with disabilities prior to exiting secondary school so they can have the requisite knowledge to make informed decisions related to pursuing self-sustaining employment.
- Reinstitute quarterly or semi-annual partner meetings throughout the state to increase and improve communication and the working relationship between VR and CRPs.
- Track, monitor, and review the demand versus the capacity of fulfilling the referral for rehabilitation engineering services categories by service type and geographical area.
- Increase or enhance synchronization of provisional services and billing processes with VR authorized employment services providers and vendors.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR is committed to increasing aligned accountability of all its programs. VR meetings with CRPs are regular and ongoing. The expansion of provider resources continues to develop. Refinements in how VR collects and shares data with staff and stakeholders from its new case management system to inform program improvements is currently being refined and augmented.

**Recommendation 8 – Self- Employment and Job Customization**
- Evaluate and compare current self-employment services with other entrepreneurship-centered programs in Florida to better meet VR participants' employment goals. Consider ways to streamline and expedite the provision of self-employment services.
- Further build capacity for job customization and Innovation and Expansion projects to include unserved and underserved populations.
- Ensure benefits planning services are provided to VR participants so they can have the requisite knowledge to make informed decisions related to pursuing self-employment and entrepreneurship.

**Agency Response: Accepted**
VR currently assists its participants with relevant benefits planning on a case-by-case basis and upon demonstration of individualized need for this support. Refinements in how VR collects and shares data with staff from its new case management system to inform program improvements will be explored as it continues to implement its new case management and vendor portal system, Aware.

**Customer Feedback Survey**
The FRC is required to review and analyze the effectiveness of and participant satisfaction with VR functions, rehabilitation services and employment outcomes achieved by eligible participants including the availability of health and other employment benefits. The Customer Feedback Survey data is being utilized by the FRC and VR to focus on specific areas of excellence for recognition as well as specific opportunities for improvement.

More than 70% of respondents indicated that they were overall satisfied with VR assistance (75.9%), that the assistance would help them reach long-term career goals (73.3%) and financial security (70.1%), and that their counselor understood their needs (78.6%) and provided helpful information in support of selecting a job goal (71.1%).

More than 80% of respondents surveyed stated that their counselor listened to them (81.2%), treated them with dignity and respect (86.7%). When asked if they would recommend VR to others 80.5% of survey respondents indicated they would.

**(c) CSNA. Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide an assessment of:**

**The vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:**

- **Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for SE.**
- **Individuals with disabilities from special populations and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program, consistent with federal civil rights laws.**
- **Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and**
- **Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.**
- **Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

In Program Year (PY) 2022, VR, in collaboration with the FRC, initiated steps to complete a CSNA. The CSNA was conducted by the San Diego State University Interwork Institute. They worked closely with members of VR staff, FRC and VR's stakeholder groups to assess the perceived rehabilitation needs of Floridians with disabilities, using the following methods: analysis of existing data sources, key informant and focus group interviews, surveys of individuals with disabilities, partner surveys, VR staff surveys and business surveys. The CSNA focuses on seven topical sections and identifies recurring themes and recommendations for organizational and programmatic improvement. The CSNA final report is currently in development. CSNA findings and recommendations will help inform agency planning and development of state plans for program years 2024-2026.

The following represents selected initial recommendations in the seven topical sections from the upcoming CSNA final report.

**Overall Performance of VR**

1. VR is encouraged to implement an initiative focused on rapid engagement of participants in the VR process specifically increasing the speed of eligibility determinations and increasing the speed to plan. An analysis of data on the speed to plan and its effect on outcomes in PY 2019 illustrates the importance of moving participants through the process from application to IPE. The data indicates that the sooner an applicant moves to IPE, the more likely they are to exit with employment. The difference between 2-30 days to plan and 91-150 days is 13%.
2. VR is encouraged to develop regular and in-person staff development and training opportunities as resources allow. When possible, partner agency staff should be invited to attend these trainings.

**The needs of businesses**

1. Consistent with the previous CSNA and as resources allow, VR is encouraged to provide training for businesses on disability awareness and reasonable accommodation at work.
2. VR is encouraged to continue to emphasize long-term quality career placements as priority for VR and Community Partner placement agencies.

**The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE. This may include but is not limited to the following findings:**

1. Develop creative strategies to address the transportation barrier in rural areas.
2. Build capacity for rural Supported Employment providers and Customized Employment providers.
3. Conduct connectivity assessments for VR participants and provide services/equipment to increase internet access.
4. Ensure counseling staff have access to affordable housing resources that can be shared with participants.
5. Increase access to services such as benefits planning that promote financial literacy and empowerment. Develop strategies to provide these services to youth and students.

**The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

1. Ensure that language barriers and documentation allowing work in the U.S. are addressed.
2. Potentially underserved groups were identified as those in rural areas and the homeless population.
3. Another potentially underserved group is the deaf community. Ensure interpreters and providers fluent in ASL are available.

**The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System.**

1. Recommendations for CareerSource Centers to effectively meet the needs of individuals with disabilities:
    a. Regular cross-training of VR and CareerSource Center staff throughout the state.
    b. Assistance from VR to the CareerSource Centers in installing and using assistive technology so that individuals with disabilities can better access programs and services in partnership with the Florida Division for Blind Services (FDBS).
    c. Continued participation by VR in each of the local Workforce Development Boards throughout the state.
    d. Research VR shared funding of cases throughout the State to encourage replication of these cases.
    e. Increase in the use of the Partnership Plus model as the CareerSource Centers are Employment Networks.
    f. VR is encouraged to continue to work with the workforce system partners to develop apprenticeships and customized training programs in high-demand occupations that include individuals with disabilities. VR is encouraged to partner with employers and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities throughout the State, especially youth.
2. VR is encouraged to work with FDBS to provide training to CareerSource Center staff on how to effectively work with individuals with sensory impairments.

**The needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition.**

1. VR is encouraged to continue to examine and expand Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) across the state and to strengthen its relationship with other partners, including school districts, to provide training and placement opportunities for more students and youth with disabilities.
2. As VR hires more staff and fills vacant positions, VR is encouraged to establish liaison relationships with the disability services centers at the community colleges and other public and private universities to help increase referrals and ensure that participants are connected to needed reasonable accommodations prior to classes beginning.
3. Consider evaluating and obtaining technology to allow staff to communicate via text with transition students.

**The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) in Florida.**

1. VR is encouraged to review rate structure and determine if there is a way to incentivize high-quality placements.
2. VR is encouraged to continue to review and expand communication opportunities with stakeholders and participants. Included in this recommendation are quarterly or semi-annual partner meetings throughout the State to increase and improve communication and improve the working relationship between VR and CRPs.

**(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and SE programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. Vocational rehabilitation agencies must—**

**(1) Describe how the SRC and the vocational rehabilitation agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions.**

Consistent with regulatory requirements, the FRC reviews and analyzes data and documents, including the CSNA, VR performance data and audit and monitoring results, to assist in informing their recommendations to the agency specific to the goals, priorities and strategies for VR. VR and agency leadership review those recommendations, which assist in informing determinations specific to the setting and revision of any VR goals or priorities.

VR is preparing to update its strategic plan (goals, objectives and strategies) in collaboration with FRC and FDOE leadership, to reflect findings and recommendations from the CSNA, FRC recommendations in the state plan and any applicable findings and recommendations from the RSA monitoring activities once received. Once completed and approved, VR will submit a plan amendment which includes new organizational goals, objectives and measurable strategies for achieving the goals, if VR determines a plan amendment is necessary.

**(1) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and SE programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or**

**priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—**

**(A) Support innovation and expansion activities.**
**(B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and SE services.**
**(C) Improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**
**(D) Improve the performance of the VR and SE programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.**

**Goal 1. Enhance employment opportunities through individualized services to meet workforce demands and increase outcomes 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 (SE), Career Counseling and Information and Referral (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 approved, research-based technical assistance.

**Performance Measures**

- Customer satisfaction survey results.
  - Overall satisfaction with VR- increase by 2%.
  - Satisfaction with services- increase by 2%.
- Increased employment outcomes.
  - Employment rate 2nd and 4th quarter after exit- exceed target of 51.6%.
- Increased business engagement and retention (target TBD).

**Objective 1.2 Improve communication with participants.**

**Strategy 1.2.1** Regularly assess the effectiveness of all VR communications with stakeholders and participants using a variety of information (surveys, accessibility audits, etc.).

**Strategy 1.2.2** Use information from communications assessments to drive improvements, where applicable and necessary, of communications to staff, providers, and stakeholders in the form of an annual communication plan.

**Strategy 1.2.3.** Implement a data-driven case review process to verify that contact timeframes are adhered to, as required by state law and federal regulations.

**Performance Measures:**

- Improved customer satisfaction survey results.
    - Counselor responds in a timely manner- increase over prior year's annual percentage.
- Reduced number of "no contact" closures.
    - Unable to locate or contact closure reason- decrease over prior year's annual percentage.
- Increased employment outcomes.
    - Employment rate 2nd and 4th quarter after exit- to meet or exceed state target.

**Goal 2. Increase organizational effectiveness by reducing complexity and streamlining processes, where applicable and necessary.**

**Objective 2.1 Streamline internal systems/processes.**

**Strategy 2.1.1** Examine service delivery electronic system options that manage referrals to providers, documentation of services provided and payment processes.

**Strategy 2.1.2** Examine case management system options that streamline case documentation, accountability and reporting.

**Performance Measures:**

- Reduce time between referral to plan development for VR participants from prior year's annual measure.
- Meet or exceed WIOA negotiated performance levels in employment, credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

**Objective 2.2 Enhance availability and use of data.**

**Strategy 2.2.1** Examine the need to 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.

**Performance Measures:**

- Examine methods to reduce errors in data collection and reporting.
    - Target TBD due to recent implementation of the Aware case management system and data migration. Data team is currently working on a reporting improvement plan and once complete, measurable targets will be set based on the goals identified in the plan.

**Goal 3. Stabilize and improve the VR workforce by increasing VR effectiveness, efficiency and quality.**

**Objective 3.1 Develop the capacity of existing resources.**

**Strategy 3.1.1** Examine the feasibility of increasing the availability, applicability 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 implementation of approved, applicable and research-based technical assistance.

**Performance Measures:**

- Improved employment outcomes.
    - Meet or exceed WIOA negotiated performance levels in employment, credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

**Objective 3.2 Incentivize high quality performance.**

**Strategy 3.2.1.** Continue to evaluate and revise strategies to address recruitment and retention of high performing staff.

**Performance Measures:**

- Reduce time between referral to plan development for VR participants from prior year's annual measure.
- Meet or exceed WIOA negotiated performance levels in employment, credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

**Goal 4. Maximize engagement with partners to enhance access to services for improved service delivery for individuals with disabilities.**

**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 4.1.3.** Continue to facilitate effective partnerships with state agencies that serve individuals with developmental and/or mental health disabilities and other identified subgroups by collaborating on and implementing mechanisms to streamline services for students with disabilities.

**Strategy 4.1.4** Examine the feasibility of hiring liaisons to strengthen partnerships with Florida College System and Florida's Division of Career and Adult Education by having an identified shared contact for each main College or business unit by 2025.

**Performance Measures:**

- Examine methods to increase the number of individuals served via partnerships.
- Meet or exceed WIOA negotiated performance levels in employment, credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

**Objective 4.2 Enhance the effectiveness of partnerships.**

**Strategy 4.2.1** Examine methods to increase the availability and quality of training for partner organizations.

**Performance Measures:**

- Increased capacity of partners.
- By 2026, conduct incentive-based rates as part of an in-depth impact analysis that includes factors identified in the CSNA including transportation in rural areas.
- Meet or exceed WIOA negotiated performance levels in employment, credential attainment and measurable skill gains.

**Use of funds reserved for Innovation and Expansion Activities**

VR will continue to use funds reserved for Innovation and Expansion Activities to support and collaborate with the FRC and FILC as required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. These collaborative efforts strengthen leadership and improve services, which increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In addition, these funds are anticipated to be used to support pilot projects currently in development for improved communication, data management and reporting to support more aligned, data-based decision-making and timely reporting. VR will also explore initiatives to achieve more alignment with K-12 programs and processes already in place through FDOE.

**(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and SE Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to describe—**

**1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and SE Programs.**

VR, in collaboration with the FRC, established four strategic goals for FY 2021. 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 participants, 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. Enhance employment opportunities through individualized services to meet workforce demands and increase outcomes 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 SE, CCIR, customized employment and Discovery.

**Strategy 1.1.2** Enhance services for individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities by expanding IPS to additional areas via strengthened partnerships.

**Strategy 1.1.3** Strengthen the Business Relations program, including implementation of technical assistance provided by the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).

**Performance Measures**

- Customer satisfaction survey results.
- Increased employment outcomes.
- Increased business engagement and retention.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.02**
**Measure of Success: Objective 1.1**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Overall satisfaction with VR | 75.9% |
| Satisfaction with services | 66% |
| Choice of services | 70.6% |
| Choice of service providers | 71.4% |
| Information about choices | 71.7% |
| Second quarter employment rate | 55.2% |
| Median quarterly earnings (after Q2) | $4,708 |
| Measurable skill gains rate | 38.7% |
| Number of employment outcomes | 5,166 |

**Objective 1.2 Improve communication with participants.**

**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.

**Performance Measures:**

- 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.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.03**
**Measure of Success: Objective 1.2.**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Time for VRC to respond | 76.8% |
| Problems with communication | 58.7% |
| Ease of contacting VRC | 74.9% |
| "No contact" closures | 31.5% |

**Goal 2. Increase organizational effectiveness by reducing complexity and streamlining processes.**

**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.

**Performance Measures**:

- Reduced vacancy rates.
- Improved employee survey results. (Survey was not administered during this period.)
- Increased employment outcomes.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.04**
**Measure of Success: Objective 2.1.**

| Measure | PY2022 |
|---|---|
| Vacancy rate | 35.4% |
| Second quarter employment rate | 55.2% |
| Median quarterly earnings (after Q2) | $4,708 |
| Measurable skill gains rate | 38.7% |
| Number of employment outcomes | 5,166 |

**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.

**Performance Measures**:

- Increased compliance with statutory requirements.

- Reduced number of errors in data collection and reporting.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.05**
**Measure of Success: Objective 2.2.**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Compliance rate with 60 days- Eligibility | 99.1% |
| Compliance rate with 90 days- Individualized Plan for Employment | 99.1% |

**Goal 3. Stabilize and improve the VR workforce by increasing VR effectiveness, efficiency, and quality.**

**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.

**Performance Measures:**
- Reduced vacancy rates.
- Improved employee survey results. (Survey was not administered during this period.)
- Improved employment outcomes.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.06**
**Measure of Success: Objective 3.1.**

| Measure: | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Vacancy Rate | 35.4% |
| Second quarter employment rate | 55.2% |
| Median quarterly earnings (after Q2) | $4,708 |
| Measurable skill gains rate | 38.7% |
| Number of employment outcomes | 5,166 |

**Objective 3.2** Incentivize high quality performance.

**Strategy 3.2.1**. Continue to explore options for improving compensation for staff members.

**Performance Measures**:
- Reduced vacancy rates.
- Improved employee survey results. (Survey was not administered during this period.)

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.07**
**Measure of Success: Objective 3.2.**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Vacancy rate | 35.4% |

**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.

**Performance Measures**:

- Increased number of individuals served via partnerships.
- Increased educational employment outcomes.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.08**
**Measure of Success: Objective 4.1.**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Second quarter employment rate | 55.2% |
| Median quarterly earnings (after Q2) | $4,708 |
| Measurable skill gains rate | 38.7% |
| Number of employment outcomes | 5,166 |
| # receiving Job Exploration Counseling | 359 |
| # receiving WBLE | 4352 |
| # receiving Workplace Readiness Training | 1087 |
| # receiving Instruction in Self-Advocacy | 645 |
| # receiving Graduate College/ University Training | 49 |
| # receiving Four-Year College or University Training | 2,435 |
| # receiving Junior or Community College Training | 706 |
| # receiving Occupational or Vocational Training | 508 |

| | |
|---|---|
| # receiving On-the-Job Training | 3,696 |
| # receiving Basic Remedial/ Literacy Training | 52 |
| # receiving Job Readiness Training | 71 |
| # receiving Miscellaneous Training | 668 |
| # receiving Job Search Assistance | 7,298 |
| # receiving Job Placement Assistance | 3,455 |
| # receiving Short Term Job Supports | 102 |
| # receiving SE Services | 2,357 |
| # receiving Benefits Counseling | 1,564 |
| # receiving Customized Employment Services | 3,401 |
| # receiving Transportation | 2,643 |
| # of participants receiving Rehabilitation Technology | 1,779 |
| # of participants receiving Technical Assistance | 141 |
| # of participants receiving Interpreter Services | 944 |
| # of units that are adjacent to CSF | 6 |
| # of CSF offices that have VR presence | 6/3 |
| # of units that are co-located at CSF | 2 |

**Objective 4.2** Enhance the effectiveness of partnerships.

**Strategy 4.2.1** Increase the availability and quality of training for partner organizations.

**Performance Measures**:

- Increased capacity of partners.
- Increased employment outcomes.

**Actual Performance:**

**Figure 9.09**
**Measure of Success: Objective 4.2.**

| Measure | PY 2022 |
|---|---|
| Second quarter employment rate | 55.2% |
| Median quarterly earnings (after Q2) | $4,708 |
| Measurable skill gains rate | 38.7% |
| Number of employment outcomes | 5,166 |
| Discovery/Customized Employment Providers | 111 |
| CBTAC Providers | 43 |
| Project SEARCH Sites | 37 |
| Schools doing WBLE | 76 |
| Schools in STAR Portal | 76 |
| Peer Mentoring Providers | 48 |

**Review of Section (n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI-B Funds in 2022-2023**

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 Florida. VR continues to increase the quality and capacity of the employment providers. VR continues to provide SE services for up to 24 months, if necessary.

VR continues expanding services to Transition Youth with the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Services that were expanded to assist youth in their eventual pursuit of employment are Job Exploration Counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, Work Based Learning Experiences, Instruction in Self-Advocacy which includes Youth Peer Mentoring, and counseling on enrollment opportunities. VR may also offer students extended services for up to four years, as necessary and as funds permit.

- VR continues to provide SE 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 SE services after reserving no more than 2.5% for program administration.
- Provide a variety of training and outreach programs designed to increase the awareness of SE 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.

**Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive SE services.**
SE services were provided to adults and youth who required these services on a statewide basis. SE funds were used to pay for Placement, Stabilization, Transition, and Successful Employment Outcomes benchmarks achieved. Funds were fully expended on services. 5% or less was used to support program administration.

VR increased training opportunities for individuals, youth, counselors, providers and other stakeholders to promote SE 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. 100% of the Title VI B funding was expended on youth aged 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 WIOA. This course provides information that allows individuals to make an informed choice about current and future employment opportunities. Individuals who stated an interest in pursuing vocational rehabilitation services will be provided with the information and support needed to apply for vocational rehabilitation services.

VR staff will continue to collaborate with Employment First partners, APD, Project 10 staff, Local Education Agencies, and other partners to increase work experience opportunities that lead to employment such as Project SEARCH and other programs.

VR staff have also collaborated with the Florida Association for Rehabilitation Facilities and the ARC of Florida to develop a package of vocational rehabilitation services that would assist individuals with the most significant disabilities in pursuing competitive integrated employment opportunities.
VR works with the National Project SEARCH, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, and the University of Wisconsin/Whitewater to develop an Adult Project SEARCH model. This model is designed to encourage and support

individuals in transitioning away from sheltered work or to provide another option for young adults.

**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 SE services as specified in the IPE.
- Purchase SE services based upon established performance benchmarks. The contracts for SE focus on performance and reinforce the focus on successful outcomes.
- Funds may also be used for related customized employment strategies and supported self-employment services.

VR provided SE services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who requested these services. Data below represents VR's performance in serving SE participants.

**SFY 2022-2023 SE Performance Data**

- Number of active cases: 10,536.
- Number of Individualized Plans for Employment (SE only): 3,112.
- Number of Employment Outcomes: 1,249.

VR has increased the number of SE providers throughout Florida. Parent vendors have increased 12.4%, while other vendors have increased 14.6%. Additional training and support have been provided to new employment providers.

VR has streamlined its delivery of Customized Employment by designating a service and fee structure specific to Customized Employment. This structure is designed to optimize the identification of individuals with most significant disabilities who require a customized job placement to achieve employment. This service is closely connected with Discovery Customized Service, a person-centered planning process designed to identify strengths and employment options for individuals with significant and complex disabilities. Training opportunities are being developed for providers and VR staff to build VR's capacity to deliver Customized Employment.

**Goal 3: Increase SE training opportunities for VR counselors, Community Rehabilitation Providers, families and individuals.**

- Increase SE 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 staff and 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 staff.

The SE 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 SE services are designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities. They provide families and participants 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.
- Florida Division on Career Development and Transition's Visions Conference.
- Healthy Minds Healthy Futures Conference.
- Training on Memorandum of Agreement with APD and AHCA.
- Local Workforce Development Boards.
- Florida Behavioral Health Conference.
- Professional Development Trainings.

VR SE Senior Consultant provides technical assistance and consultations on individual cases as requested by supervisors, family members, VR staff and individual participants.

Several 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, including 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.
- Presentations on SE at conferences around the state where audiences included professionals, families and students regarding employment options.
- Representation on the Statewide Employment First Initiative by VR's SE and Transition Consultants.
- The VR SE Senior Consultant coordinated and developed training for providers and staff on Discovery Customized Service and Customized Employment.
- Participation in the National SE Community of Practice (CoP).
- Participation in the National Customized Employment CoP.
- Participation in the National Self-Employment CoP.
- Representation on the Interagency State Review Team, a partnership of the major youth-serving agencies in Florida. The team coordinates services and support for children/youth in Florida and collaborates on developing necessary local and statewide resources for children/youth being served by multiple agencies.
- Participation in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant Advisory Council.

The council advises DCF on the allocation of services and creating a plan that supports the treatments and supports recovery and life in the community.

- Participation in the International IPS Learning Community.
- Participation in the Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE) initiative to promote alignment of policies and practices across state agencies in support of competitive integrated employment for individuals with mental health conditions.
- VR provided training opportunities for adults who were participating in subminimum-wage employment. This service was provided in collaboration with 14(c) employers and community providers.

**2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and**

**Figure 9.10**
**WIOA Performance Indicators**

| Plan Year 2022 | Employment Rate (Q2) | Employment Rate (Q4) | Median Earnings | Credential Rate | Measurable Skill Gains |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negotiated target | 49.3% | 50.3% | $3,780 | 20.0% | 30.0% |
| Actual | 55.2% | 53.8% | $4,708 | 24.8% | 38.7% |

Source: WIOA Statewide and Local Performance Report, Florida, PY2022. OMB Control Number 1205-0526

**Explanation of Performance:**
VR has made a concerted effort to improve performance on Measurable Skill Gains, including refining internal controls and providing intensive training and guidance to staff to ensure that the data reported is accurate and indicative of the progress VR participants are making.

**3.The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).**

**Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities**

VR continues 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 2022-23, a total of 11,847 independent living

plans were developed, and 16,481 independent living goals were set through the network of 16 Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs served a total of 14,847 individuals with significant disabilities. Information and Referral services were provided to approximately 23,668 individuals and Community Transition Assistance was provided to 4,479 individuals.

**Explanation of Performance:**
These collaborative efforts helped strengthen leadership and improve services, which led to increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**(e) SE Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of SE Services.**

**1.Acceptance of title VI funds:**

**(A) Vocational rehabilitation agency requests to receive title VI funds.**

**2. If the vocational rehabilitation agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires vocational rehabilitation agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of SE services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the SE program.**

**Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**
To meet the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, VR collaborates and contracts with community partners to provide SE services. For SFY 2022-23, SE services were funded by Title I funding and Title VI-B funding. These funds are available on a statewide basis. VR uses the majority of its SE expenditures on allowable services to youth with disabilities.

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 the youth turns 25 years of age, whichever occurs first, or another funding source is identified. VR is now also authorized to provide SE services up to 24 months and may extend this time period if necessary.

VR has focused on youth services and has expanded several options designed to help youth achieve employment outcomes. VR actively partners with local school districts and local non-profits to provide multiple opportunities for eligible youth to participate in Extended Services, including pre-employment transition services or Pre-ETS. Included among these offerings are Florida's Career Camp programs, currently being modeled in other states. Career camps can be offered by VR providers, including school districts, when school is out for at least three consecutive days, with providers having the opportunity to create unique and locally responsive offerings that braid in a bundled array of Pre-ETS.

Other Extended Service offerings include Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs (IPSE), High School High Tech and Project SEARCH, all of which will be discussed in detail in other sections. In development currently are special contract types for school districts to provide locally responsive Pre-ETS to pre-apprenticeship pathways for eligible youth.

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 SE 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 SE services.**

**VR will:**

- Continue to provide SE services on a statewide basis through Title I funds. Statewide allocation of funds allows for equal delivery of services throughout Florida. Individuals may receive SE 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 SE as a vocational service for individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR SE Senior Program Consultants will continue to increase outreach activities with a focus on state and local education partnerships. The VR Senior Program Consultants continue to provide training with a focus on sharing information to assist youth, adults and families in their consideration of pursuing SE Services.
- Review pilot and innovative employment practices and assess the feasibility of replicating programs with successful strategies.
- Streamline delivery of Customized Employment by designating a service and fee structure specific to Customized Employment. This structure is designed to optimize the identification of individuals with most significant disabilities who require a customized job placement to achieve employment. This service is closely connected with Discovery Customized Service, a person-centered planning process. These services are designed to identify strengths and employment options to increase the number of individuals with significant and complex disabilities receiving SE services.
- Develop training opportunities for providers and VR staff to build VR's capacity to deliver Customized Employment.
- Increase outreach to adults with disabilities participating in subminimum-wage employment and youth with disabilities who may be considering subminimum-wage employment through its Arts to Competitive Integrated Employment (ArtCIE) program.
- Continue outreach efforts with focus on educating adults, youth and families about opportunities for supported and customized employment, and other supports available through VR.

**Goal 2: Use Title VI, Part B funds for SE services to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities with a focus on youth.**

**VR will:**

- Use Title I funds, supplemented with VI, Part B funds, to provide SE services as specified in the SE Individualized Plan for Employment for youth.
- Purchase SE services based upon established performance required documentation. The contract for SE 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.
- Provide expanded outreach to educators, community providers, individuals, families, community partners and VR staff to promote SE as an opportunity for youth to become

successful in employment and develop a career path.
- Work 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 Bureau of Field Services Programs Unit provides technical assistance and support to a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Provide training to youth receiving subminimum-wage employment to encourage their consideration of competitive integrated employment opportunities. This training is 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 SE training opportunities for VR Counselors, Community Rehabilitation Provider staff, families, and individuals.**

**VR will:**
- Continue to provide SE 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 and collaborate with other state agencies that service individuals with disabilities.
- 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 staff.
- Collaborate with the Department of Children and Families, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and its behavioral health managing entities to offer training to VR staff and providers on evidence-based SE models for individuals with serious mental health conditions (e.g., IPS).

**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; focused 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 and provide training to staff at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to make sure that referred participants 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 potential resources such as Ticket to Work Employment Network partnerships, natural supports

and Social Security Work Incentives.

- Encourage the use of employer and natural supports.
- Enhance relationships with businesses and employers to let them know that on-the-job support for individuals in SE is 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 participants. They will also develop positive relationships with employers to increase employment opportunities.
- Use the Abilities Work Help Desk as a resource to link employers to qualified job seekers with disabilities. VR is a partner in the development and administration of the Abilities Work Help Desk, a collaboration between the state's workforce system, FDBS and APD.
- Continue to work closely with APD to assist VR participants in receiving seamless ongoing support services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR, APD and the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) signed and implemented a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in 2021, which is due to be renewed in February 2024. This agreement specifies the implementation of needed services for mutual participants. VR and APD will continue to collaborate to help identify the appropriate extended services.
- Offer youth extended services for up to four years, as necessary.
- Continue to work with DCF's Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and its behavioral health managing entities to expand access to funding for SE extended services for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness.
- The VR SE Senior Consultant will continue to provide 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.

**3. SE services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of SE services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.**

**Quality**

VR is committed to providing quality SE 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 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 SE outcomes is assessed individually. Each individual with a disability receives individualized services, based on their specific needs. A key component of evaluating the service is the individual's satisfaction with the services and support, 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 for adjusting and improving vocational

rehabilitation services to better meet their needs. Feedback is gathered using formal service surveys, public hearings, and satisfaction surveys. The VR counselor has regular communications with the individual and the SE 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. Employers and providers are encouraged to let VR know if support is needed at any time.

**Scope**

The scope of SE 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 their choice.

Many individuals with the most significant disabilities traditionally do not participate in competitive, integrated employment because of the severity of their disability and the need for ongoing supports to maintain their jobs. SE assists in providing competitive integrated employment for more individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Service limits have recently been increased from 18 months to 24 months. Under special circumstances, the participant and VR counselor may jointly agree in writing to extend the time, in order to 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.
- Stabilization in the workplace.
- Job coaching.
- Assistive technology.
- Specialized Job Training.
- Social Skills Training.
- Discovery Customized Service.
- Customized Employment.
- Supported Self-Employment.
- IPS.

VR offers Discovery Customized Service as a service option for individuals with the most significant and complex disabilities who may need a more customized approach to employment. Discovery is considered the first step in Customized Employment and offers a strengths-based, thorough person-centered approach to employment planning.

VR also offers Customized Employment services for individuals with most significant disabilities who may need a more individualized job development process. Customized Employment focuses on negotiating novel job placement opportunities that meet the needs of both the job seeker and the employer.

**Extent**

VR will continue to expand SE services by educating community members, providers and relevant stakeholders on the need and advantages that SE provides for individuals and

employers. SE services are available for individuals with the most significant needs who are expected to require ongoing support to maintain employment.

VR also plans to expand access to SE services by including a new SE model called ArtCIE. The ArtCIE initiative will create an innovative model that assists individuals with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum wage employment to move towards competitive integrated employment outcomes in the field of Arts, Entertainment and Recreation.

VR is also working closely with DCF, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to expand access to evidence-based models of SE for individuals with mental health conditions (e.g., IPS).

Additionally, VR has increased its focus on youth and expanded its Transition Youth services to begin at age fourteen. VR has also increased several initiatives designed for youth with the 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.

**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**
The VR Transition Youth program collaborates with education officials and partners to offer students 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, when necessary, the opportunity for youth to receive up to four years of extended services funded through VR. This is the only situation where VR is permitted to provide extended services.

**VR will continue to actively engage and partner in order to:**

- Continue to collaborate with APD specific to SE and removing or reducing barriers for employment for individuals with significant disabilities.
- Continue to implement the Employment First 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, AHCA, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Education and other stakeholders.
- Collaborate with community organizations, employers, families and support groups to develop natural support for SE 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 that allows eligible individuals with disabilities to create tax-free savings and

investment accounts which can fund disability expenses that supplement benefits available through other sources.
- 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 SE uses the nationally accepted "best practice" models of SE services and has added new customized strategies as well. The key to the approach is an emphasis on person-centered planning and the 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 environment, has their support needs addressed, and is satisfied with the type of work and work hours. This transition typically occurs at least 90 days after job placement and after at least 60 days of stabilized employment. At the time of transition, the counselor, providers, individual and others, as applicable, agree that the individual is stable in employment and expected to succeed. VR counselors confirm this information with the individual, provider and employer. Counselors 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:**

- Collaborate with community organizations, families, and support groups to develop support as an option for assisting participants on the job site.
- Participate in interagency committees to expand initiatives and increase employment outcomes.
- Seek additional resources for extended services in collaboration with VR partners.
- Emphasize providing services to all individuals with disabilities, regardless of race, ethnicity, or sex, consistent with federal civil rights laws.
- Distribute and provide technical assistance to counselors on the use of Social Security Work Incentives to help with funding extended services.

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 participant needs them.

A program administrator serves as a statewide coordinator who monitors SE 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 SE staff and other liaison duties, objective as requested.

**4.Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the vocational rehabilitation agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange,**

**including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide SE services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

In 2021, VR executed a MOA with APD and AHCA, the state agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid Plan. The agreement establishes 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 significant disabilities. This MOA also includes a data sharing agreement to assist agencies in sharing information needed to provide effective services to mutual participants and to identify the financial requirements for providing SE Services. To support collaborative efforts of the MOA, VR and APD have identified local liaisons to facilitate communication between partners at the local level.

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 significant disabilities, can achieve meaningful employment when provided with appropriate support.

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 the following nine agencies/organizations to participate in the agreement. This order is now law in Florida, chapter 413.80, Florida Statute.

- FDBS.
- VR.
- BEESS.
- APD.
- DCF, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.
- FloridaCommerce.
- CareerSource Florida.
- The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.
- RESPECT of Florida.

Seven roles, responsibilities, and objectives govern the Employment First Interagency Agreement. VR works closely with the partners to continue to make progress on these roles, responsibilities, and objectives.

1. Establishing a commitment by leadership of the state agencies and organizations to maximize resources and coordination to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities who seek publicly funded services.

2. Developing strategic goals and benchmarks to assist the state agencies and organizations in the implementation of this agreement.

3. Identifying financing and contracting methods that will help to prioritize employment for individuals with disabilities by state agencies and organizations.

4. Establishing training methods to better integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce.
5. Ensuring collaborative efforts between multiple agencies to achieve the purposes of this act.

6. Promoting service innovations to better assist individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

7. Identifying accountability measures to ensure the sustainability of this agreement.

**SE Services**
SE services consist of intensive, time-limited vocational rehabilitation services, the first phase and extended services, the second phase. VR is responsible for the first phase of SE services. VR provides intensive vocational services until the individual and employer are satisfied with the SE placement, and then the individual transitions to a plan for extended services.

**Extended Services**
Funding for the second phase of services is provided by other sources that may include, but are not limited to, APD, DCF's Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (via its behavioral health managing entities), employer supports, 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 environment and provide support 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 SE 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 students with significant disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the youth reaches the age of 25, whichever occurs first, if other sources of funding for extended services are unavailable. 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.

**(f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all vocational rehabilitation agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:**

**1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—**

**(A) VR Program; and**

**Figure 9.11**
**Estimates for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY2025)**

| Priority Category (if applicable) | No. of Individuals Eligible for Services | No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program | Costs of Services using Title I Funds | No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category One | 21,978 | 21,978 | $64,727,804 | 0 |
| Category Two | 16,861 | 16,861 | $49,658,412 | 0 |
| Category Three | 845 | 760 | $2,488,784 | 85 |
| Total | 39,684 | 39,599 | $116,875,000 | 85 |

**(B) SE Program.**

**Figure 9.12**
**Estimates for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY2025)**

| Priority Category (if applicable) | No. of Individuals Eligible for Services | No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under SE Program | Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds | No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N/A | 9,865 | 9,865 | $23,943,017 | 0 |

**(g) OOS.**

The vocational rehabilitation agency is implementing an OOS with one or more categories closed.

* Vocational rehabilitation agencies may maintain an OOS policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an OOS.

**Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the vocational rehabilitation agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.**

**(1) For vocational rehabilitation agencies that have defined priority categories describe—**

**OOS**

VR's OOS allows individuals with the most significant disabilities to be selected first for vocational rehabilitation services, those with significant disabilities second and all other eligible individuals selected last. The OOS includes three priority categories that all eligible participants are designated, detailed further below. Priority categories 1 and 2, those participants with the most significant disabilities remain open with no delay in services. Priority category 3, "Other Eligible Individuals," remains closed and is reviewed regularly to determine if those participants may begin services. Below is a table that details the number of eligible participants in Priority Category 3 and their discrete average wait time (as of the date the data was recorded) at the beginning of each plan year.

**Figure 9.13**
**Status of VR OOS, Priority Category 3**

| Beginning of Plan Year | Number of Participants on Priority Category 3 Waitlist | Average Time on Waitlist |
|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 557 | 192 days |
| 2017 | 37 | 60 days |
| 2018 | 280 | 164 days |
| 2019 | 350 | 251 days |
| 2020 | 70 | 30 days |
| 2021 | 1 | 1 day |
| 2022 | 11 | 12 days |
| 2023 | 55 | 90 days |

**A. Justification for the OOS**

Due to current legislative budget authority, caseload and agency expenditure/budget projections, personnel data and VR's current methods of implementation, VR elects to continue its current management of categories under the Order of Selection. This method of managing resources will maximize and prioritize positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Management of categories under Order of Selection continues to be the greatest measure of control over service expenditures to ensure that VR doesn't exceed its current budget authority, which must be secured in Florida a year prior to enable VR to expend funds in areas including client services.

For FFY 2025, VR's approved legislative budget authority for purchased client services totals $137,500,000. Caseload and budget projections indicate a total of 39,684 individuals will be eligible for services under the VR Program and 9,865 individuals will be eligible for services under the Supported Employment Program and the total revenue needed to provide services for all individuals is $140,818,016.89, which exceeds the approved amount of legislative budget authority available. This projected total does not include certain preemployment transition services (Pre-ETS), job retention or contracted expenditures, as these costs are not fully realized and included in caseload and budget projections.

An additional factor influencing VR's decision to continue its current management of wait list categories is limited personnel resources. As of December 2023, approximately 140 counseling and counselor support staff positions were vacant. Over the past year VR has taken deliberate

measures to increase staff retention and recruiting and more closely monitor offices with critical staffing needs. In recent months, VR has seen improvements in staff retention and recruiting data and will continue to closely monitor personnel resources data. Vacancies in counseling and counselor support positions as of April 2024 have decreased to 90 positions.

Each month, the VR Executive Leadership Team reviews expenditure and revenue projections, staff capacity, and current caseload, including the number of potentially eligible students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS services, and the number of individuals on the Category Three waitlist for services to determine the release of individuals from the waitlist. The average wait time for individuals on the Category Three waitlist is ninety days.

VR is preparing to explore options to have all three categories open, with no wait. Before making this decision, VR plans to reach out to other state VR agencies to find out how changes to their OOS status impacted their financials, overall caseload and employees. VR plans to conduct additional financial, caseload and staffing projections prior to changing OOS status. Plans will be reviewed with FRC and their feedback will be taken into consideration. Public input will also be requested prior to making changes. Once OOS decisions are finalized and approved by VR and FDOE leadership, a plan amendment will be submitted detailing the changes.

The OOS remains in effect statewide and does not prioritize type of disability, age, sex, marital status, religion, race, color, national origin, political affiliation or vocational goal of the individual with a disability. Elements that relate to the significance of disability are the only factors used in OOS.

**B. OOS Policies and Category Descriptions**

Individuals needing SE 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 vocational rehabilitation 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 their 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 IPE prior to the implementation date of OOS, or those individuals who are in need of post-employment services.

Individuals on the waiting list are contacted periodically 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.

**OOS Priority Category Description**
**Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities (Priority Category 1)**

An eligible individual with a disability which:

- Seriously limits three or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome.
- Requires three or more primary services.

- Requires services which must be provided over an extended period (at least twelve months); and
- 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:

- Seriously limits one or two functional capacities, in terms of an employment outcome.
- Requires two or more primary services.
- Requires services which must be provided over an extended period (at least six months); OR
- The individual is a recipient of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits (SSDI).

**Other Eligible Individuals (Priority Category 3)**
An eligible individual with a disability which:

- Limits one or more major life activities; and/or
- Services are expected to last less than six months.

**C. Goals for Serving Individuals in Each Priority Category**
At this time, Priority Categories One and Two are open with no wait. Each month, the VR Executive Leadership Team looks at expenditure and revenue projections, staff capacity, and current caseload, including the number of potentially eligible students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS services, and the number of individuals on the Category Three waitlist for services to determine the release of individuals from the waitlist. The average wait time for individuals on the Category Three waitlist is ninety days.

Service and cost projections in *Section f. Annual Estimates* of this plan only includes estimates for the VR and SE programs and does not account for financial and human resources associated with Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities and Job Retention services.

VR officially notifies all individuals of their individual OOS determination. Individuals not immediately activated for the 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.

**Job Retention Services**

In accordance with Section 412 of WIOA, VR has elected to provide Job Retention Services (discretionary services to eligible individuals regardless of the OOS, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment).

**(h) Waiver of Statewideness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the vocational rehabilitation agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the vocational rehabilitation agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."**

Not Applicable

**(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the vocational rehabilitation agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the vocational rehabilitation agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the vocational rehabilitation agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:**

**1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—**

**(A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the vocational rehabilitation agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients.**

**(B) The number of personnel currently needed by the vocational rehabilitation agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and**

**(C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the vocational rehabilitation agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

**Figure 9.14**
**Personnel Projections**

| Personnel Category | Number of Personnel Employed, as of 9/27/23 | Number of Personnel Currently Needed | Projected Number of Personnel Needed in 5 Years |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Full-time Equivalents** | **726** | **159** | **159** |
| Counselor Staff | 394 | 75 | 75 |
| Staff Supporting Counselor Activities | 332 | 69 | 69 |
| Administrative Staff | 161 | 15 | 15 |
| **Total Contracted Field Staff** | **144** | **0** | **0** |
| Contracted Counselor Staff | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| Contracted Other Staff | 69 | 0 | 0 |

To ensure the continuity of quality rehabilitation services VR has contracted for staff. These contracts ensure that qualified personnel are hired to provide necessary rehabilitation services. A state VR counselor analyst reviews each case and performs or authorizes 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.

**D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

- Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: 85.

**E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

- Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: 34,576.

**1. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:**

**(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure,**

**broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

**Figure 9.15**
**Institutions of Higher Education in Florida with Rehabilitation Programs**

| Institute of Higher Education | Type of Program | No. of Students Enrolled | No. of Prior Year Graduates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Florida Atlantic University Graduate-level Rehabilitation Training Program | Med | 33 | 8 |
| Florida Atlantic University Graduate-level Rehabilitation Training Program | PhD | 2 | 1 |
| Florida International University Rehabilitation Counseling Program | MS in Counselor Education | 19 | 4 |
| University of South Florida Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program | MA | 102 | 43 |
| University of South Florida Rehabilitation Counseling and Disabilities Sciences Program | MA | 23 | 0 (first cohort graduates Spring 2024) |

**(B) The vocational rehabilitation agency's plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the vocational rehabilitation agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

VR maintains close relationships with universities including minority institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and disability-specific organizations. VR staff collaborate with universities in securing grant funding, invite university staff to help with training and education activities and provide practicum and internship slots for students.

**(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the vocational rehabilitation agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:**

**(i) Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**

**(ii) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to vocational rehabilitation agency**

**professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

VR's Learning and Development Office efforts will continue to be oriented toward appropriate and adequate training for all staff, with available resources allocated to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (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 at every level. Examples of this work include:

- Webinars on over 20 topics annually are available for new and existing staff and many are being developed in direct response to recommendations from participants.
- Welcome Packets for new counselors. This packet includes information about how to prepare for new counselor training, professional development, the mentorship program, and The VR Counselor's Big Book of Firsts handbook that describes unique situations a counselor may encounter.
- Focused training for field-level supervisors to expand the support and guidance provided to vocational rehabilitation counselors. Efforts include identifying areas to reduce administrative burdens while maintaining a high level of quality assurance and fiscal responsibility.
- Providing webinars and a staff engagement event with focused trainings applicable to vocational rehabilitation technicians, including ways to develop rapport and deliver quality VR services to participants.

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. Staff are evaluated in the context of their knowledge, skills, and abilities within the field of rehabilitation, and on policy about the 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 their 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 IPE development), job placement, rehabilitation technology, ethics, SE, transition from school to work, medical and psychological issues, caseload management, disability disclosure, evidence-based practices, 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 staff, including administrative staff, will continue to receive training in core subjects through distance and on-site learning. As caseloads and participant

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 are encouraged to continue working toward 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. Staff can access the internet to find information about medical and psychological conditions, rehabilitation technology, WIOA State Plan, legislation and regulations and employment-related information.

**3. Description of vocational rehabilitation agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that vocational rehabilitation agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**

**(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and**

**(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Efforts are made to recruit and hire counselors who meet standards for providing counseling and guidance services. There is not a state-approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration of vocational rehabilitation counselors. The individual(s) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university and one year of related experience. Related majors 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 related fields can substitute for the year of required experience.

The State of Florida allows staff 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 programs accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational 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 will continue to use additional programs, as appropriate.

VR staff are encouraged to use the State of Florida Tuition Waiver program as much as possible, as it represents significant savings to VR.

Additionally, support is provided for attainment of certifications like Certified Public Manager (CPM), Florida Contract Manager (FCCM), Florida Professional Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other recognized professional certifications.

**4. Method(s) the vocational rehabilitation agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

VR staff need to be able to effectively work with Florida's population. VR prioritizes the hiring of bilingual staff for positions where this is beneficial to the agency. While bilingual individuals are on staff, qualified interpreters or translators continue to be used when a counselor is unable to communicate directly with a participant in their preferred language. VR will continue to partner with local vendors to offer this service.

American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting needs for participants who are Deaf or Deaf-Blind are met using either staff interpreters (including those hired via 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 participants, if appropriate. VR also has assistive listening devices available in some offices for VR staff 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 (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act Section 508 by providing materials in alternative formats as requested by the participant.

VR staff arrange for bilingual spoken language interpreters/translators or ASL/English interpreters if a bilingual staff member using that language is not available. Training and technical assistance to VR staff on the provision of interpreters/translators is ongoing.

**5.As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

Close coordination and collaboration between VR and BEESS is vital. Training for staff serving transition students with disabilities is provided by VR, 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 Florida Department of Education's (State Education Agency or SEA) and Local Education Agencies' (LEAs) profiles are used to gather important statistical information on graduation rates, dropout rates, Individual Educational Program 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 vocational rehabilitation 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 fourteen, VR Transition Liaisons Contact List, VR Transition Brochures and coordination of the Individual Education Plan with the IPE when served by both agencies. VR endorses evidence-based LEA services that benefit students with disabilities, including educating students in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate 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 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 staff 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 training.

Statewide transition training and resources are provided continually throughout the year. New counselors receive training, which includes resources from the VR Transition Youth Program. Transition Administrators deliver training to school staff, ESE Directors and VR staff at the beginning of every school year. VR staff have access to presentations developed to improve collaboration between VR and the LEAs. At the local level, VR staff participate in interagency groups with a transition focus to improve local coordination and services to students, families, schools, employers and agency partners. Additionally, local VR Transition Liaisons meet regularly with the state-level VR Transition Administrator to discuss their progress and technical assistance needs on Local Education Agency Agreements.

## COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION
**(Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)**

**(j) Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—**

**1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, which are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.**

**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 and better coordinate with local education agencies. Pre-ETS includes career exploration and counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, Work-Based Learning Experiences, counseling on enrollment opportunities, and instruction in Self-Advocacy Training, including Youth Peer Mentoring. Per Section 413.301, Florida Statute, “Preemployment transition services shall be provided to an individual with

disabilities who is between 14 and 21 years of age". 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 vocational rehabilitation services or supports may still obtain Pre-ETS while applying to VR. VR brochures, available electronically and via paper, describe how students and families can access Pre-ETS or other vocational rehabilitation services beginning at age fourteen. Students with disabilities who are at high risk for dropping out of school may be referred to VR. 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.

VR counselors, with assistance from VR technicians, serve as representatives to work with public and private high schools 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 ensure the IPE, SE 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.

**A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services.**

**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. 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 section 413.80, Florida Statute (F.S.). The Act 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 FDBS, and other agencies that offer supports or services during student transition. These agreements address consultation, coordination and 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 personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their IEPs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

Local education agencies work collaboratively with VR, FDBS, 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 IEP meeting will invite representatives from other agencies 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 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 (Title 34, Section 300.324(c)(1), Code of Federal Regulations). To plan effective transition services for students with disabilities, it is essential that all invited partner agencies encourage and support participation in the Transition IEP process.

VR allots necessary statewide staffing resources in transition services to serve students with disabilities in Florida's more than seventy school districts.

VR's new case management system, AWARE, was implemented to improve the collection and analysis of transition student data and to meet WIOA requirements. These enhancements enable VR to conduct analysis to better evaluate agency performance and identify how to best improve service delivery and outcomes for students with disabilities.

**C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services.**

**The roles and responsibilities for each partner agency as required by federal and state regulations are as follows:**

Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services.

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.

VR assists with student transition from secondary school to work through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), postsecondary training, education or direct placement services necessary to achieve a successful employment outcome.

APD focuses on reducing the use of sheltered workshops and other non-competitive employment day activities and promotes 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 participants 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.

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.

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 attain self-sufficiency in 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:

- Provide guidance to the local education agencies, VR, FDBS, APD, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services' front-line staff when serving students transitioning from school to work or postsecondary activities.
- Provide information to parents/students so they know what they can expect from the local education agencies, VR, FDBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services during the transition process.
- Provide parameters to the local education agencies, VR, FDBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services' administrators/managers/nursing supervisors when developing, negotiating and implementing local cooperative agreements.
- 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, FDBS, 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 and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.**

**Outreach and Identification of Students**

Local education agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with VR, FDBS, APD, Children's Medical Services and Mental Health Services staff 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.

All school districts, public and private, have the opportunity to become service providers with VR to deliver five required WIOA Pre-ETS. These Pre-ETS use real work experiences to provide students with disabilities with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to future career options. Participating students with disabilities develop appropriate work and interpersonal skills, including soft skills, behaviors and work tolerance needed to achieve successful employment after high school.

**E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities seeking subminimum wage employment.**

Employers holding a 14(c) special wage certificate are prohibited from employing a youth with a disability twenty-four years of age or younger at subminimum wage, unless the individual has received documentation from FDBS or VR verifying their completion of the required activities, which includes participation in Pre-ETS or Transition Services under IDEA, application for vocational rehabilitation services and completion of the Career Counseling Information and Referral Service. VR ensures compliance through policy and standard operating procedures that require VR staff to record the completion of these activities and supply this documentation to the youth or student with a disability who is seeking subminimum-wage employment.

**F. Assurance that neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5 (d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

The State Education Agency agreement states that the FDBS, state and local education agencies that they cannot enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act to operate a program under which a student or youth with a disability is compensated for work at subminimum wage, in accordance with Section 511 of 34 CFR § 397.31.

**(k) Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the vocational rehabilitation agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.**

VR’s Business Relations program builds and sustains partnerships with business and industry through effective services that are driven by the needs of employers. These partnerships support business participants’ disability efforts and lead to competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR participants.

Business Relations customizes employer services to assist employers with recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining qualified individuals with disabilities. Strategic partnerships that support workforce needs are accomplished through networking with businesses and industry stakeholders and coordinating with core partners to align services to employers' needs. The program's goals, objectives and strategies are as follows:

**Goal 1: Become the foremost recognized and trusted resource for employers' 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 participant satisfaction tool.
3. Staff and train a team that is responsive to business. The team includes the Program Administrator; the AbilitiesWork Help Desk consultant; and three Business Relations Representatives.
4. Expand staffing to include two contracted Business Relations Representatives in each of VR's seven administrative areas.
5. Implement a business participant relationship management tool.
6. Define the services offered to employers and customize them to meet business needs.
7. Create statewide consistency in business relations outreach and services.
8. Use targeted marketing to engage employers across multiple industries.
9. Participate in business-led organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, trade and sector-specific organizations, etc.
10. Create strategic practices that can be replicated across the state.
11. Align services with the Workforce Development Boards and other community partners.
12. 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.
13. Engage with WIOA core partners to share best practices.

**Goal 2: Become a top resource for employers in need of qualified staff.**

**Objective:** Increase referrals of qualified applicants to business partners.

**Strategies:**

1. Facilitate direct access to qualified applicants through business relationships.
2. Promote 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 employment services providers.
5. Provide a seamless connection to vocational rehabilitation 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 to create increased opportunities for VR job seekers and employers recruiting VR job seekers.
8. Collaborate with businesses to create a pipeline of qualified candidates.

**Goal 3: Expand career opportunities for VR candidates.**

**Objective:** In alignment with the REACH Act, 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.
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.
6. Collaborate with WIOA core partners to share resources and best practices.
7. Generate opportunities for worksite training, including apprenticeship and work-based learning experiences, with business partners.
8. Participate in career events with CareerSource, higher education institutions, businesses and community partners.

In 2021 the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1507, the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act to create a more unified workforce education and economic development system to improve Floridians' lives. The law seeks increased collaboration and cooperation among state workforce and education agencies and aims to address fundamental gaps in access to quality training. VR, in coordination with two other offices within the Florida Department of Education (FDBS and Division of Career and Adult Education) collaborate closely to share this vision and promote full participation in the workforce and higher credentialing attainment wherever possible.

The REACH Act seeks to expand the state's talent pipeline through attainment of credentials of value and acquisition of postsecondary certification, industry-recognized credentials and degrees. In addition, the legislation enhances integrated service delivery and integrated case management, requires a participant self-service portal and strengthens access for individuals with disabilities to workforce education and training.

**(l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:**

1. **State programs (designate lead agencies and implementing entities carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.**

**Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (lead)**
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.

2. **Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture.**

VR Area Leaders provide representation on local workforce development boards, allowing them to stay apprised of programs and initiatives related to rural development. Counseling staff are aware of USDA resources and provide this information to participants during intake and as an information and referral service.

3. **Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth.**

Local VR offices collaborate with other local agencies to increase opportunities, share information and receive referrals for out-of-school youth. Below are examples of agencies throughout the state with whom VR collaborates.

- Youth Prevention Coalition
- Minds in Motion
- Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
- Special Needs Advisory Coalition (SNAC)
- Youth Development Council (through CareerSource Polk)
- Hands On Education Computer Boot Up Bootcamp
- Naples Metro Planning Organization
- Bay/Gulf Department of Juvenile Justice Community Re-Entry Team
- ACE Summer Institute (through CareerSource Capital Region)
- Chipola Regional Workforce Development Board
- Department of Corrections Re-Entry Seminars

4. **State use contracting programs.**

**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.

5. **State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);**

**Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)**
VR has developed a MOA with the state agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid Plan AHCA and the agency primarily responsible for providing services to persons with cognitive and developmental disabilities, APD. This agreement focuses specifically on SE 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 formalizes the collaborative processes that have been implemented to improve employment outcomes for mutual participants. It focuses 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, the 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 participants.
- 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.

The MOA between VR, AHCA and APD provides opportunities for collaboration to ensure that youth and adults with developmental disabilities have access to all the services that VR offers to its participants.

**6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

**Agency for Persons with Disabilities**
The agreement between the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), Agency for Health Care Administration and VR contains a detailed and specific focus on collaborative planning and funding of Supported Employment services for individuals with significant disabilities. Specifically, the purpose of the agreement is to provide improved, competitive and integrated employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities. In addition, the agreement seeks to improve interagency communication and increase efficiencies by establishing a data sharing and tracking process that demonstrates the progress of mutual customers served. This should increase the opportunity 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 individuals 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 was updated and executed in February 2021.

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 provided Career Counseling Information and Referral (CCIR) Services to approximately 1,675 people in program year 2022. Most of these individuals are in programs that APD supports such as Sheltered Workshops and other Adult Day Training programs that pay subminimum wages.

CCIR services introduce the many services and options available through VR, including competitive integrated employment and training to expand opportunities. This training opportunity is required by the Department of Labor and WIOA.

VR has been awarded $13.1 million to realize the Florida ArtCIE initiative. We were one of fourteen states selected to participate in this initiative. This ArtCIE initiative will create an innovative model that assists individuals with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum-wage employment to move towards competitive integrated employment outcomes in the field of Arts, Entertainment and Recreation.

Over the five-year grant period, VR will develop and implement a collaborative model with schools, community rehabilitation providers, and businesses to increase opportunities for individuals in subminimum wage to enter competitive integrated employment. ArtCIE will focus on building participants' skills to meet the needs of the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry, one of the fastest growing industries in Florida.

The goals of the project are as follows:

- Increase the number of adults who transition from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment.
- Increase the percentage of students or youth contemplating subminimum wage to enter competitive integrated employment.
- Build system capacity to sustain the model over time through increased competencies, partnerships and renewed business models.
- Design and implement a coordinated model of support for wrap-around services for participants and their families.

**7. State agency responsible for providing mental health services; and**

**Mental Health Program, Florida Department of Children and Families**
VR collaborates with DCF, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health 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 participant's transition from the initial and intense phase of SE to the ongoing and extended service phase of SE services.

Additionally, VR is working closely with DCF, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to expand access to evidence-based models of SE for individuals with mental health conditions (e.g., IPS). VR has piloted the IPS model and is expanding services to assist with the employment and treatment of individuals with persistent and severe mental illness. This initiative is in line with the State of Florida Administration's priorities to improve employment and services for individuals with mental health disorders.

Since 2021, VR and DCF, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health have partnered to participate in the ASPIRE initiative through the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. As one of seven states selected to participate in this initiative, Florida

receives assistance to align policies and practices across state agencies in support of competitive integrated employment for people with mental health conditions. The key state agencies involved in the initiative are VR, DCF, AHCA and CareerSource Florida. Florida's specific goals are to improve interagency collaboration, increase access to IPS services, optimize funding in support of IPS services, and develop policy changes to align with evidence-based SE principles. Since participating in the ASPIRE initiative, VR has assisted with expansion of IPS to four new sites outside of the initial pilot area. Additionally, DCF has provided funding for an IPS state trainer to support continued expansion through training and technical assistance for new and existing sites.

8. **Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system.**

**Local Education Agencies**

VR works with Local Education Agencies, including Florida school districts, and partners to offer youth with disabilities opportunities to gain work experiences that help them prepare for successful employment.

Collaborations such as Project SEARCH and The Able Trust's High School High Tech program 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, including internships and other work experiences, often lead to successful employment with appropriate supports. Additionally, VR works directly with several school districts for the provision of additional services, including pre-employment transition services, specific to youth with disabilities aged 14 to 21.

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 services and other supports needed to prepare for and maintain employment. VR partnerships deliver career development and employment options through direct services to youth who would not otherwise have access to these services.

**The Able Trust**

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, consistent with section 413.615 of Florida Statute, is the identified direct support organization of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Its mission is to support VR by encouraging public-private partnership to enhance vocational rehabilitation and employment of 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. The Able Trust accomplishes 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 and FDOE senior leadership annually for review, and VR and FDOE senior leadership provide necessary approval, as required.

**Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.**
VR's Independent Living Program promotes and supports a philosophy of independent living for persons with significant disabilities who wish to maintain or increase their level of independence. This state/federal partnership funds 16 Centers for Independent Living (CIL) throughout Florida. An essential part of the Independent Living Program is the State Independent Living Council (SILC). In Florida, the SILC is operated by the Florida Independent Living Council (FILC).

VR coordinates with the Florida Independent Living Council, Inc., (FILC) and has established contracts with each identified CIL throughout the state to describe how VR provides funding, outline roles and responsibilities and ensure cooperative planning.

**AgrAbility**
VR supports AgrAbility, a USDA project with the vision to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America. Note: While AgrAbility is a USDA-funded grant program, it is under the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, not the USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development (description L.2.).

**Department of Juvenile Justice**
VR collaborates with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students in Residential Facilities, emphasizing work readiness training and self advocacy. Referrals are managed efficiently through the AWARE portal, with Facility staff submitting electronic referrals. These students receive Pre-ETS either in person or virtually, mirroring the accessibility offered to other students. This process is facilitated by designated Counselor Liaisons in each Florida region and supported by a regularly updated contact list of Facility staff. Additionally, VR engages in quarterly meetings with the DJJ Director and other staff to provide updates and discuss ongoing collaboration efforts.

**9. Other private nonprofit organizations.**

Local VR offices collaborate with private nonprofit organizations to increase opportunities, share information and receive referrals. Below are examples of organizations throughout the state with whom VR collaborates.

- Down Syndrome Foundation
- Hands On Education
- Leisure Access Foundation (through Providence Healthcare)
- Parent to Parent
- Family Initiative
- Promising Pathways
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Sarasota, Manatee and Coller Counties (transportation)
- Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Wakulla, Walton and Washington County Transportation Disadvantaged Boards
- Community Assisted Supported Living (CASL)
- Benefitting Exceptional Students in Transition (BEST)
- Healthy Behaviors Okaloosa
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Salvation Army
- Gold Coast Downs Syndrome Agency
- Sandy Pines

- Dress for Success Miami
- Caring Place
- Relief Therapy
- Homeless Empowerment Project (HEP)
- The Red Tent Women’s Initiative
- St. Pete Works
- Pinellas County and City of St. Petersburg Housing Authorities

**Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) Certifications**

**Florida Department of Education**

**Manny Diaz, Jr., Commissioner** **DATE:**

# SECTION X. PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION – DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES

**(a) State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). All vocational rehabilitation agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a SRC that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):**

The Florida Division of Blind Services (FDBS) has an established SRC. The Council is composed of members representing various areas of the workforce system.

**In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.**

**Figure 10.01**
**State Rehabilitation Council Composition**

| Council Representative | Current Term Number/Vacant | Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr. |
|---|---|---|
| Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Parent Training and Information Center | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Client Assistance Program | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency) | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | Vacant | |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | Vacant | |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Disability Advocacy Groups | 1 | 5/2021 |
| Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services | 2 | 10/2022 |
| Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable) | N/A | N/A |
| State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) | 2 | 10/2022 |
| State Workforce Development Board | 2 | 10/2022 |
| VR Agency Director (Ex Officio) | Ex Officio | Ex Officio |

**If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the vocational rehabilitation agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.**

FDBS communicates with leadership and the Governor's office to assist with the facilitation of appointments when an individual completes an application for appointment. There are seven applicants for appointment/reappointment as of the end of the first quarter of 2024. There is no nominating committee of the Council; however, members and the agency continue to solicit additional applicants.

The FRCB meets in person, each quarter, while allowing virtual/telephonic options for consumers and members who are unable to travel. There is an average of 85% participation at each meeting. A quorum is established by the FRCB's by-laws. Fifty percent plus one (1) of the voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting a meeting.

**In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.**

There is an open relationship between the Director and the Council, which fosters direct and candid communication. The Director provides the Council with information about the status of the state plan and new policies at each meeting of the Council. The Council also participated in the development of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Many of the policy elements that are core components of the state plan have been raised and previously discussed with the Council. Therefore, the Council's input focuses on the state plan in its entirety rather than providing specific recommendations.

The Council endorses the concerns raised by FDBS relating to elements that may require amendments as FDBS drafts new strategic goals. The Council is pleased to have workforce representation, which allows members to understand how each agencies' plans align with the other. The Council interacts with the Rehabilitation Council for the general vocational rehabilitation agency by attending meetings – leading to greater knowledge of the benefits of a combined state plan. Some members of the Council participated in the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) monitoring of FDBS. This deepened the understanding of FDBS and the Council's roles.

The Council believes many of our suggestions translate into specific actions taken by FDBS. The Council's involvement in the state plan process is both effective/valuable to consumers and to the agency.

**Provide the vocational rehabilitation agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.**

**Recommendation:** Consider seeking a satisfaction survey that includes current clients rather than previous clients (closed cases).

**Response:** FDBS agrees with this recommendation.

**Recommendation:** Create a strategic plan to develop, document, and implement internal controls. These should rely on one person or position and have transparency.

**Response:** FDBS agrees with this recommendation.

**(b)CSNA. Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide an assessment of:**

**(1) The vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:**

**(A) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment.**

The Division commissioned a three-year comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) to determine vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with visual disabilities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center on Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) conducted the CSNA in the fall of 2023. The FRCB worked with the Division to develop focus areas and questions to feed the CSNA. The VRTAC-QM interviewed a total of 69 people individually - including six (6) consumers, 14 partners, and 48 employees. A total of 29 interviewed as part of a focus group - including 43 consumers, 42 partners, and 52 employees. The interviews took place July through September 2023. The assessment is driven by the needs in several categories.

- Section I - Overall agency performance
- 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 form 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
- Employer perceptions and fears about the ability of individuals with blindness being able to perform the essential functions of the job were a frequently cited barrier to employment: Employers should be educated more about the blind population to help dispel the fear.
- Transportation: transportation continues to be one of the most pressing needs to individuals with visual impairment especially in the rural area. Assistive technology was also repeatedly identified as a need for DBS consumers.
- Eye medical care: this is a significant service provided by DBS as many individuals rely on DBS to help pay for the cost of eye surgeries for them to obtain and maintain employment. This is due to the absence of or the limited coverage of medical insurance.

- Consumer's fear of losing benefits: The fear of losing benefits due to being employed continues to affect the return-to-work behavior of SSA beneficiaries served by DBS. DBS provides benefits counseling services but most consumers seek part-time employment so that they do not lose medical benefits.
- Affordable Housing: The pandemic's effect on housing prices, especially rent, has resulted in increased homelessness and a need for many DBS consumers to access housing assistance through community programs. The housing crisis is magnified by individuals that experience a loss or damage to their homes because of natural disasters.
- Self-advocacy training: this is a recurring need for DBS consumers. This need is connected to the fact that many employers remain fearful or concerned that individuals with blindness and visual impairments are unable to perform the essential functions of many jobs and they need to be educated about available technology, accommodations and supports. Training is required

**(B) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the Vocational Rehabilitation program.**

The following themes emerged as needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved.

- Rural areas were cited most frequently as potentially underserved: Lack of transportation and internet connectivity contribute to individuals with visual impairment being unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- Minority groups: there is a need for language interpreters and bilingual staff at the agency.
- Homeless Population: Individuals who are homeless were cited as potentially underserved.
- Deaf-Blind: Individuals who are Deaf-Blind were noted as potentially underserved.
- Hispanics and Asians: Interviewed participants indicated Hispanics and Asians were possibly underserved. This was primarily related to cultural mistrust of the government, stigma related to disability, and a "take care of their own" mentality. Agency data suggests there is room for growth in the Hispanic and Asian consumer population if the agency is to achieve parity with the overall population in Florida.

**(C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system.**

The following themes emerged from the individuals interviewed for the CSNA regarding the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System.

- Integration with Workforce Entities: There appears to be variable quality and integration with Workforce entities across the State - some are doing well - others functioning as separate entities. The relationship between DBS and CareerSource Florida remains primarily one of referral, but there are areas where there are shared cases.
- Success at CareerSource Florida Centers: Individuals with blindness and visual impairments have more success at the CareerSource Florida Centers when they are accompanied by DBS staff or CRP staff to help them navigate the available programs

and AT. When these individuals go to a Center on their own, they frequently describe the process as unhelpful and frustrating.

- Co-location of DBS staff: DBS counselors' co-location with CareerSource staff has aided in the overall services provided to the consumers throughout the rehabilitation process. DBS counselors staff utilize CareerSource for job readiness classes, where clients can develop resumes and attend workshops.

**(D) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.**

The following recurring themes emerged regarding the needs of youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services.

- Transportation: Transportation continues to be one of the most pressing needs of youth with blindness and vision impairments, especially in the rural areas.
- Assistive Technology: Assistive technology was repeatedly identified as a need for DBS consumers. DBS is encouraged to reestablish and further develop student and youth programs at the Career, Technology, and Training Center.
- Self-advocacy: Self-advocacy was identified as especially important for students, as were work-based learning experiences. DBS should work together with the CareerSource Florida Youth program to ensure training programs that are developed for youth include individuals with blindness and visual impairments.
- Ability to function independently builds confidence and self-efficacy: Independent Living (IL) services were noted as a critical need for youth as the ability to function independently builds confidence and self-efficacy, which is important for success in employment.
- Benefits counseling: Benefits counseling was a frequently cited need for youth and their parents or legal guardians, as their fear of losing the safety net provided by SSI and the resulting Medicaid coverage affects their pursuit of self-sustaining employment. The fear of benefit loss results in the pursuit of part-time employment to supplement SSI payments and prevents individuals from achieving their highest potential.
- Lighthouse programs were short-staffed and have been since the pandemic.
- Schools lost their TVIs or experienced turnover due to the pandemic: Many schools lost their TVIs or experienced turnover due to the pandemic, which interrupted the referral process in some areas. DBS is working diligently to reestablish these relationships.
- Communication: Staff indicate it would be helpful to have the ability to communicate with youth via texting if technology could be allowed and obtained.

**(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) within the State.**

- Training Providers: There is a significant need to develop more O&M, IL and other adjustment to blindness training providers outside of the Career, Training and Technology Center. DBS is encouraged to develop new service providers in those areas of the State where there is only one option for their consumers.
- Staff Shortages: Staff shortages at the Lighthouses in several areas of the State result in service delays and a lack of services such as job placement and SE. Job coaches were in very short supply in many areas.

- SE Service Providers: There is a significant need for more SE service providers throughout the State. The lack of provider options becomes especially challenging when the single provider is experiencing significant staff shortages due to recruitment and retention issues.
- Job Development: There is a need to increase the quality and types of jobs CRPs develop for DBS consumers. Jobs should be career-level and in-demand as opposed to entry-level service jobs which result in low retention rates.
- CRPs need training: CRPs need training to improve their ability to serve individuals with blindness and visual impairments. High turnover has resulted in many new employees at CRPs, so the training need is greater than ever.

**(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and SE programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. Vocational rehabilitation agencies must:**

**(1) Describe how the SRC and the vocational rehabilitation agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and**

**(2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and SE programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—**

**(E) Support innovation and expansion activities.**

The FDBS launched its Computer Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) Certification training program. CompTIA certifications are recognized and accepted worldwide and cover basic computer maintenance, network support, server administration and data security on local and cloud-based networks. Students who pass the CompTIA A+ certification exam are ready for entry-level IT work providing user support and device connectivity. The FDBS also launched the Web Accessibility Specialist – Registered Apprenticeship, it is a a model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. As an "earn and learn" strategy, Registered Apprenticeships offer job seekers immediate employment opportunities that pay sustainable wages and offer advancement along a career path.

The FDBS based its goals and priorities for operating the VR and Supported Employment Programs on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), FDOE and FDBS strategic plans, Long Range Program plan (state requirement), performance standards and indicators, client satisfaction surveys, and the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The following is a list of goals and objectives for each priority/focus area.

1. Support innovation and expansion activities.

**Finding:** There is a significant need to develop more O&M, IL, supported employment, and other adjustment to blindness training providers outside of the Career, Training and Technology Center.

**Goal:** The Division will explore opportunities to expand options for community rehabilitation providers and services - including supported employment - to increase access throughout the state.

**Finding:** There is a need for more supported employment providers throughout the state.

**Goal:** The Division will utilize the Establishment Authority to expand services in identified areas and provide upgrades and necessary repairs to existing facilities caused by hurricane damage or age.

2. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services.

**Finding:** The vacancy rate and trouble recruiting/retaining staff are the primary issues impacting performance by affecting the Division's ability to serve customers. The main difficulty in these areas is low starting salaries for counselors.

**Goal:** The Division sought and secured approval to increase salaries for VR program staff via a Legislative Budget Request. Further activities to address this finding involve creating and implementing a pay plan to memorialize the new salary amounts and include additional incentives for increased salary potential.

**Finding:** Covering vacant caseloads affects counselors' ability to process casework and to respond to customer requests in a timely manner.

**Goal:** Reduce the amount of time vacancies are open and ensure 100% of new employees receive core onboarding training within 30 days of beginning employment.

- Provide ongoing training to Personnel Liaisons regarding the hiring process and required documentation to reduce time spent on tracking down information.
- Create checklists for different phases of the hiring process.

3. Finding: Customers experience multiple counselor changes, which can be frustrating and institutional knowledge is lost when long-term staff leave.

**Goal:** Increase the number of offices with an employee engagement plan to 100%.

- Assess current districts offices with employee engagement plans and the level of engagement.
- Create a basic employee engagement plan template to assist offices that do not have one in place.
- Provide training to staff on the value of employee engagement to foster great working environment

4. Finding: DBS experienced a 9.2% decrease in applications and the number of customers served from PY 2018 to PY 2021.

**Goal:** Create and implement a comprehensive outreach plan by December 2025.

- Determine what outreach methods best fit populations targeted and develop a work plan to meet needs (Rural, Hispanic, Asian).
- Target outreach to Hispanic and Asian-serving community centers and organizations.
- Create multi-language marketing materials in alternate formats.

5. Finding: There is a need to increase community awareness of DBS and their Career, Technology and Training Center in Daytona Beach.

**Goal:** Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan by December 2025.

- Determine the needs of underserved and unserved populations.
- Develop targeted marketing strategies based on needs assessment data for unserved/underserved populations.

**Goal:** Work with Moore Communications to implement a formal marketing program.

6. Finding: Transportation is often cited as the most pressing rehabilitation need for individuals with blindness and visual impairments, especially in the rural areas.

**Goal:** Identify transportation options in rural areas of the state, including exploration of ride-sharing services.

7. Finding: Assistive technology is one of the top needs for FDBS customers.

**Goal**: Create and implement the Blind Services Accessibility Initiative.

- Research communications accessibility standards and website guidelines for accessible documents.
- Determine which standards should be presented approval.
- Obtain unlimited licenses for assistive technology--JAWS, ZoomTech, etc.

8. Finding: Individuals who are Deaf-Blind, homeless, and minorities were noted as potentially underserved.

**Goal:** Increase the number of individuals from significant and most significant populations receiving services by 5%.

- Conduct needs assessment.
- Analyze, categorize, and prioritize assessment results.
- Review populations, Census data, and associated hindrances.
- Review Transportation options and alternatives.
- Review Assistive Technology needs.
- Review how SSA benefits affect return-to-work behavior.
- Develop work plan to target the significant and most significant populations.

The FDBS will use I&E funds for CompTIA certification program, web accessibility apprenticeship, and continued support of the SRC. The FDBS launched its Computer Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) Certification training program. CompTIA certifications are recognized and accepted worldwide and cover basic computer maintenance, network support, server administration and data security on local and cloud-based networks. core IT certifications are trusted by employers around the world and are designed for entry-level IT professionals. Students attend an intensive five-day a week program. Students who pass the CompTIA A+ certification exam are ready for entry-level IT work providing user support and device connectivity.

The Division of Blind Services created a Web Accessibility Registered Apprenticeship to serve as an entry-level information technology apprenticeship program designed to train individuals with visual impairments on becoming web accessibility specialists and to serve as a formal introduction to the field of Information Technology. Web Accessibility Specialists audit websites and web applications, test user interfaces against Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and provide consultation to most effectively implement remediations. They review and evaluate websites to actively enhance or improve user accessibility and end-user experience. They may contribute to the website design process, recommend user flows, collaboratively work with a larger team to troubleshoot accessibility errors, and fix accessibility compliance issues. Web Accessibility Specialists may also provide oversight, technical leadership, expert guidance, coordination, and support to ensure that accessibility barriers are removed from current or new user interface components.

Planned I&E activities for the next two years include:

- Further develop the availability of supported employment services.
- Provide training to employers.
- Expand resources for benefits planning for SSI/DI recipients.
- Identify transportation options in rural areas.

**(F) Overcome barriers to accessing VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION and SE services.**

**Finding:** The vacancy rate and trouble recruiting/retaining staff are the primary issues impacting performance by affecting FDBS's ability to serve customers. The main difficulty in these areas is low starting salaries for counselors.

**Goal:** FDBS sought and secured approval to increase salaries for vocational rehabilitation program staff via a Legislative Budget Request. Further activities to address this finding involve creating and implementing a pay plan to memorialize the new salary amounts and include additional incentives for increased salary potential.

**Finding:** Covering vacant caseloads affects counselors' ability to process casework and to respond to customer requests in a timely manner.

**Goal:** Reduce the amount of time vacancies are open and ensure 100% of new employees receive core onboarding training within 30 days of beginning employment.

- Provide ongoing training to Personnel Liaisons regarding the hiring process and required documentation to reduce time spent on tracking down information.
- Create checklists for different phases of the hiring process.

**Finding:** Customers experience multiple counselor changes, which can be frustrating and institutional knowledge is lost when long-term staff leave.

**Goal:** Increase the number of offices with an employee engagement plan to 100%.

- Assess current districts offices with employee engagement plans and the level of engagement.
- Create a basic employee engagement plan template to assist offices that do not have one in place.
- Provide training to staff on the value of employee engagement to foster great working environments.

**Finding:** DBS experienced a 9.2% decrease in applications and the number of customers served from PY 2018 to PY 2021.

**Goal:** Create and implement a comprehensive outreach plan by December 2025.

- Determine what outreach methods best fit populations targeted and develop a work plan to meet needs (Rural, Hispanic, Asian).
- Target outreach to Hispanic and Asian-serving community centers and organizations.
- Create multi-language marketing materials in alternate formats.

**Finding:** There is a need to increase community awareness of FDBS and their Career, Technology and Training Center in Daytona Beach.

**Goal:** Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan by December 2025.

Determine the needs of underserved and unserved populations.
Develop targeted marketing strategies based on needs assessment data for unserved/underserved populations.

**Goal:** Work with Moore Communications to implement a formal marketing program.

**Finding:** Transportation is often cited as the most pressing rehabilitation need for individuals with blindness and visual impairments, especially in the rural areas.

**Goal:** Identify transportation options in rural areas of the state, including exploration of ride-sharing services.

**Finding:** AT is one of the top needs for FDBS customers.

**Goal:** Create and implement the Blind Services Accessibility Initiative.

- Implement the Senior Equipment and Training project to provide seniors with assistive technology and other devices to aid with independent living.
- Obtain unlimited licenses for AT –- JAWS, ZoomTech, etc.

**Finding:** Individuals who are Deaf-Blind, homeless, and minorities were noted as potentially underserved.

**Goal:** Increase the number of individuals from significant and most significant populations receiving services by 5%.

- Conduct needs assessment.
- Analyze, categorize, and prioritize assessment results.
- Review populations, Census data, and associated hindrances.
- Review Transportation options and alternatives.
- Review AT needs.
- Review how SSA benefits affect return-to-work behavior.
- Develop work plan to target the significant and most significant populations.

**(G) Improve and expand Vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

**Finding:** The most critical need for students with disabilities (SWDs) is assistive technology (AT).

**Goal:** Continue working with Vispero to purchase license for consumers and providers to have access to appropriate AT.

**Finding:** Work-based learning experiences are important to SWDs and youth.

**Goal:** Increase the enrollment of students and young adults in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by 5%.

- Develop a statewide communications plan to educate the public and potential consumers on the BEP.
- Media Advertisements, PSAs, social media, trade shows, conventions, etc.
- Develop a “Train-the-Trainer” recruitment and education plan to have persons champion BEP and assist in recruiting students and young adults.
- Assess an incentives component for the Bureau of Business Enterprise (BBE).

**Goal:** Increase work experiences for transition students by 10%.

**Finding:** There is a need to develop on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other training and placement programs in partnership with CareerSource Florida career centers.

**Goal:** Assist 100 DBS clients with enrollment and participation in apprenticeship programs by 2025.

- Collaborate with DOE and DCAE to select appropriate apprenticeship model.
- Work with businesses/employers to encourage sponsorship of registered apprenticeship programs.
- Market programs to youth and adults seeking vocational training experiences to increase participation in apprenticeships and on-the-job training.

- Notify and educate stakeholders, students, parents, and the community of the availability of apprenticeship opportunities.

**Goal:** Establish collaborative arrangements with the Division of Public Schools (DPS), Division of Career and Adult Education (DCAE), the Florida College System to expand opportunities for blind and visually impaired consumers.

**(H) Improve the performance of the Vocational Rehabilitation and SE programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.**

**Finding:** There is a need to provide ongoing education to employers about the abilities of individuals who are blind and visually impaired and how to effectively accommodate employees.

**Goal:** Increase the number of employer partnerships by 10%.

- Utilize Statewide Business Consultant and Employment Placement Specialists to seek and develop working relationships with employers throughout the state.

**Finding:** A significant portion of job development occurs through CRPs. The vacancy rates of CRPs since the pandemic affects the number of jobs developed for FDBS consumers.

**Goal:** Recruit and hire more Employment Placement Specialists to establish long-term employer relationships to increase employment options for consumers.

**Goal:** Increase work experience opportunities at the Career, Technology, and Training Center (CTTC) by 10%.

- Develop outreach plans for the CTTC to increase service awareness and referrals.
- Provide information and training to staff regarding who is an appropriate referral to the CTTC.

**Finding:** FDBS consumers benefit from training and placement opportunities.

**Goal:** Create successful job outcomes in the Business Enterprise Program.

- Retain 75% of new vendors in the first 12 months in their facility.
- Ensure all new vendors partner with a peer vendor prior to the start of services.
- Ensure all new vendors receive a quarterly “check in” from the State Office in their first 12 months.
- Create a Vendor FAQ for new vendors.
- Track the minimum net profit for each new vendor to ensure success or determine needed intervention.

**Finding:** CRPs need to increase the quality and diversity of jobs developed for DBS consumers. Jobs should be career-level and in demand instead of entry-level service jobs with low retention rates.

**Goal:** Strengthen contract language to ensure increased contractor accountability, improve resource allocations, address WIOA regulations and encourage maximum achievement of client independence.

**(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: Vocational Rehabilitation and SE Goals. For the most recently completed program year (PY), provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require vocational rehabilitation agencies to describe:**

**(1) Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for Vocational Rehabilitation and SE Programs.**

FDBS modified its state goals and priorities to better align with the agency's strategic plan. All goals for the vocational rehabilitation program were determined using information from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, customer satisfaction survey, program data, leadership strategies, and other documentation. Input from the FRCB, stakeholders, employees, and the RSA monitoring report was also considered during goal development. For the current approved strategic plan period (July 2020-June 2025), the goals described below drive FDBS's activities and service delivery for the vocational rehabilitation program.

**Goal 1: Highest Client Achievement**

**Strategy 1.1: Secure opportunities for students and youth with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills.**

FDBS provides students and youth with disabilities opportunities to participate in Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) via contracts with CRPs and authorizations. Students and youth with disabilities also have 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.**

FDBS collaborates with CareerSource Florida and the DPS to provide opportunities for training, education, and workplace activities. Details of these activities are outlined in the agreement between FDBS of Blind Services, Division of Public Schools (DPS), and Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). In this plan period, FDBS 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 clients.**

VR counselors assist consumers with using the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). Employment Placement Specialist track and report utilization of TAP in a monthly report. 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 job-ready consumers.

**Strategy 1.4: Increase the participation of clients in industry certifications and other post-secondary client outcomes.**

BBE tracks continuing education units, food manager certifications, and vendor licensures.

**Strategy 1.5: Develop and implement an Employment Skills Training Program at the Career, Technology, and Training Center (CTTC) for the Blind and Visually Impaired.**

A team of professional staff determined the Pre-Employment Program (PEP) Model, developed by Dr. Karen Wolffe, best meets the needs of FDBS'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 CTTC. 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. There were 7 PEP graduates in 2023. Of which, four (4) are employed, one (1) is enrolled in college, one (1) is waiting to enter college, 26 are in work experiences, and one (1) is in the CompTIA Certification Program.

**Goal 2: Seamless Articulation & Maximum Access**

**Strategy 2.1: Increase the provision of accessibility tools, awareness, and regular follow-up with clients to ensure equality in educational experiences and vocational opportunities.**

FDBS strengthened its relationship with the Lighthouses to ensure appropriate and client-specific AT is consistent with the needs of all clients and is reflected in the Individualized Plan for Employment. FDBS monitors contracts with Lighthouses and solicits client feedback via satisfaction surveys.

**Strategy 2.2: Create and implement comprehensive communications and outreach plans.**

FDBS began development of a comprehensive communication and outreach plan. FDBS retained this goal for the upcoming plan period and has key staff in place to accomplish this goal. Data from CSNA is currently being used to assist the MOORE agency create marketing strategies to reach underserved and unserved populations.

**Strategy 2.3: Increase the number of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities receiving services.**

FDBS served 4,464 individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. This represents a decrease of 77 from the prior year.

**Strategy 2.4: Increase outreach efforts to underserved and unserved populations.**

Each district identifies the unique underserved populations in the local area. Staff target outreach to the identified unserved/underserved to increase services to these populations. The District Administrators maintain a log of activities relating to underserved populations and include outreach activities in the monthly report submitted to the Program Administrator, who maintains a log for statewide analysis and record keeping purposes. The chart below depicts the number of clients served in all minority categories.

**Figure 10.02**
**Number Served by Target Population**

| Minority Group | SFY 2019 | SFY 2020 | SFY 2021 | SFY 2022 | SFY 2023 | Difference from previous year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| African American | 1332 | 1322 | 1354 | 1342 | 1446 | 104 |
| Hispanic | 989 | 980 | 1034 | 1038 | 1034 | 4 |
| Asian | 53 | 68 | 64 | 73 | 78 | 5 |
| Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders | 5 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 0 |

**Strategy 3.3: Create successful job outcomes in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP).**

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 10.03**
**BEP Program Outcomes**

| | SFY 2018-2019 | SFY 2019-2020 | SFY 2020-2021 | SFY 2021-2022 | SFY 2022-2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gross Sales | $23,539,572 | $20,344,763 | $15,521,679 | $21,208,334 | $24,626,927 |
| Gross Profit | $12,898,188 | $11,059,709 | $8,511,079 | $11,633,811 | $13,548,843 |
| Average Vendor Earnings | $72,838 | $62,357 | $51,175 | $76,099.18 | $89,973.06 |
| Number of new clients licensed | 7 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 2 |
| Number of clients awarded their first facility, regardless of the year licensed | 10 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| Number of licensed vendors assigned | 119 | 117 | 116 | 116 | 112 |
| Number of those which were awarded facilities that were employed in the BEP at least 1 year | 6 of 6 (100%) | 5 of 5 (100%) | 3 of 3 (100%) | 6 of 6 (100%) | Not available until end of SFY 23-24 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of increase from previous year | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | Not available until end of SFY 23-24 |

**Strategy 3.4: Support FDBS clients in becoming self-supporting.**
The Independent Living (IL) and Older Blind (OB) programs 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 consumers. These programs served 514 and 385 individuals respectively for SFY 2022-2023.

**Figure 10.04**
**Number of Clients Served in IL and OB**

| FDBS Clients served under IL and OB Programs | SFY 2019-20 | SFY 2020-21 | SFY 2021-22 | SFY 2022-23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AP-Independent Living | 539 | 427 | 441 | 514 |
| Older Blind | 4155 | 3225 | 3560 | 3855 |
| Total | 4694 | 3652 | 4001 | 4369 |

**Strategy 3.5 Develop mechanisms to maximize job placement effectiveness among FDBS Employment Placement Specialists and contracted service providers.**

The Employment Placement Specialists (EPS) attend Employment Outcome Professionals II (EOP) training conducted twice a year. The EPS are armed with a toolkit of resources on building relationships with employers and other pertinent information. Desk manuals specifically tailored to these positions offer additional training and tools. The Abilities Work Help Desk supports the Employment First initiative. FDBS partners with this resource for referrals from businesses interested in hiring individuals who are blind or visually impaired. FDBS 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.

**Goal 4: Quality Efficient Services**

**Strategy 4.1: Increase staff development and continuing education opportunities for DBS personnel.**

The Florida Division of Blind Services met this goal.

**Figure 10.05**
**Staff Development**

| Date | Training Description |
|---|---|
| July 22-26, 2022 | WINTAC Meeting |
| July 22-26, 2022 | FRCB Meeting and District's Administrator's Meeting |
| August 30-September 2, 2022 | Statewide EPS Training |
| October 26-28, 2022 | FRCB Meeting |
| November 10, 2022 | Client Services Bi-Monthly VR Meeting |
| November 15-17, 2022 | Statewide VR Training |
| December 2, 2022 | DBS Supervisory and HR Meeting |
| February 9-10, 2023 | FRCB Meeting |
| February 21-23, 2023 | New Employee Orientation |
| March 21, 2023 | VRTAC Meeting |
| April 5, 2023 | CSAVR |
| April 20, 2023 | Florida Vision Vocational Evaluation Tool |
| May 4-5, 2023 | FRCB Meeting |
| June 28, 2023 | Time Allocation for Pre-ETS in People First |

**Strategy 4.2: Incorporate elements of the common performance measures into employee performance expectations and evaluations.**
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 establishes 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.

**Strategy 4.4: Decrease federal and state audit findings.**

FDBS 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 a standard compliance rate of 90%. The quality assurance team shares findings from case reviews program staff and offers additional training opportunities as necessary/requested. This process decreases audit findings and allows additional training in areas of quality assurance in all aspects of the case management processes.

**Strategy 4.5: Develop strong fiscal policies and procedures to promote responsible stewardship of available resources and address WIOA requirements.**

FDBS has a case service allocation protocol which determines district allocations and ensures dollars are spent appropriately. To ensure appropriate allocation disbursements, the fiscal unit evaluates historical expenditure data (e.g., number of clients served, services provided, contractual agreements in regions, self-employment opportunities, and social change). FDBS updated policies for prior approval and internal controls in 2023. Federal regulations require VR program staff to track and report time spent providing and arranging Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities (SWD). FDBS created and implemented internal controls/processes to track Pre-ETS activities provided and/or coordinated by staff via People First. This allows FDBS to charge part of its annual wages to the 15% minimum reserve as allowable costs.

**Strategy 4.6: Strengthen contract language to ensure increased contractor accountability, improve resource allocations, address WIOA regulations and encourage maximum achievement of client independence.**

As a result of RSA audit in July 2023, FDBS added language to contracts with CRPs requiring employer outreach activities and work experience. CRPs may include services that may be provided prior to plan creation. Implementation of changes to the rates is in progress.

**Strategy 4.7: Strengthen contract monitoring activities and procedures/protocol to reflect new requirements.**

FDBS's contract section has a monitoring process in place for both on-site and desk reviews. This process is reviewed annually for improvements and updates. Contract managers conduct reviews in the Aware case management system by taking a sample of transition consumers to compare services rendered to services listed on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This is an on-going process.

**(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels;**

**Figure 10.06**
**Performance Accountability Indicators**

| Annual Report Measures | PY2017 | PY2018 | PY2019 | PY2020 | PY2021 | PY2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Participants | 49,466 | 52,524 | 53,718 | 50,500 | 49,118 | 46,628 |
| Total Career Services | $108,304,670.21 | $130,164,250.25 | $127,424,410.27 | $117,145,974.74 | $134,415,570.15 | $139,717,250.84 |
| Career Service Avg. per Participant | $2,235.85 | $2,584.57 | $2,505.05 | $2,604.46 | $2,969.20 | $3,279.59 |
| Total Training Services | $32,702,931.48 | $35,752,824.83 | $35,575,221.39 | $32,470,385.22 | $29,743,652.75 | $28,672,908.50 |
| Training Service Avg. per Participant | $2,229.24 | $2,752.97 | $2,628.39 | $3,183.68 | $2,696.86 | $2,746.97 |
| Percent Co-Enrolled | 8.66% | 13.31% | 12.20% | 11.74% | 10.22% | 9.71% |
| Common Performance Measures | | | | | | |
| Employment (Q2) Number | N/A | 7,302 | 8,436 | 7,440 | 7,554 | 8,709 |
| Employment (Q2) Rate | N/A | 47.3% | 53.8% | 48.6% | 53.5% | 55.2% |
| Employment (Q4) Number | N/A | N/A | 7,483 | 7,499 | 7,259 | 8,012 |
| Employment (Q4) Rate | N/A | N/A | 50.7% | 47.9% | 50.3% | 53.8% |
| Median Earnings | N/A | $3,460.00 | $3,626.00 | $3,750.00 | $4,454.00 | $4,708.00 |
| Credential Number | N/A | N/A | 425 | 876 | 1,261 | 1,295 |

| Annual Report Measures | PY2017 | PY2018 | PY2019 | PY2020 | PY2021 | PY2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Credential Rate** | N/A | N/A | 6.4% | 9.0% | 20.8% | 24.8% |
| **MSG Number** | N/A | 148 | 844 | 2,255 | 4,958 | 5,499 |
| **MSG Rate** | N/A | 3.6% | 15.7% | 28.2% | 40.6% | 38.7% |

The Division exceeded the negotiated levels for employment second quarter after exit and significantly exceeded negotiated levels for median earnings second quarter after exit. The remaining performance indicators fell short of RSA's expectations. The change in prohibiting post-employment services after case closure may play a role in the decrease in employment after the fourth quarter. The Division continues to work with the Division of Career and Adult Education to increase enrollment in apprenticeship programs that lead to industry credentials. The Divisions of Blind Services and Vocational Rehabilitation are working on an initiative that targets clients who receive Pre-ETS. The initiative aims to introduce and engage students between the ages of 16 to 21in pre-apprenticeship opportunities to enhance their ability to gain competitive integrated employment immediately after high school, or after graduation from college and/or technical training. The Divisions agreed to focus on programs in cybersecurity, technology, medical assistants, and pharmacy.

For PY 2022, the negotiated level of performance for Employment Q2 after exit was 49.1% and the actual level for Employment Q2 after exit was 55.2%. The reason is attributable to the training provided to the consumers which resulted in employment retention. The negotiated level of performance for Employment Q4 after exit was 44.8% and the actual level of performance for Employment Q4 after exit was 53.8%. This is also attributed to the same reason of job retention. The negotiated level for median earnings was $5,986 and the actual level was $ 4,708. The decrease of the median earnings was attributed to the rebound effects after COVID in addition to that FDBS did not have a clear understanding of the methods for capturing this data in the Aware database. FDBS is currently working on implementing methods for accurately capturing this data in the Aware database. The negotiated credential attainment rate was 31.3% and the actual credential attainment rate was 24.8%. The decrease in credential attainment rate was due to rebound effects after COVID and that DBS did not have a clear understanding of the methods for capturing this data in Aware. The negotiated MSG rate was 49.6% and the actual MSG rate was 38.7%. The decrease in the MSG rate was due to the lack of clear understanding in capturing the data in the Aware database.

PY2023 data is not available until September-October. It is submitted to RSA by DVR no later than September 30th each year. Then DVR provides DBS with a copy of the WIAO Annual Report in October

**Figure 10.07**
**WIOA Common Performance Measures**

| WIOA Annual Report Key Measures Over Time<br>*Aggregated VR & FDBS Totals | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | PY2017 | PY2018 | PY2019 | PY2020 | PY2021 | PY2022 |
| **Annual Report Measures** | **Total Participants** | 49,466 | 52,524 | 53,718 | 50,500 | 49,118 | 46,628 |
| | **Total Career Services** | $108,304,670.21 | $130,164,250.25 | $127,424,410.27 | $117,145,974.74 | $134,415,570.15 | $139,717,250.84 |
| | **Career Service Average per Participant** | $2,235.85 | $2,584.57 | $2,505.05 | $2,604.46 | $2,969.20 | $3,279.59 |
| | **Total Training Services** | $32,702,931.48 | $35,752,824.83 | $35,575,221.39 | $32,470,385.22 | $29,743,652.75 | $28,672,908.50 |
| | **Training Service Average per Participant** | $2,229.24 | $2,752.97 | $2,628.39 | $3,183.68 | $2,696.86 | $2,746.97 |
| | **Percent Co-Enrolled** | 8.66% | 13.31% | 12.20% | 11.74% | 10.22% | 9.71% |
| **Common Performance Measures** | **Employment (Q2) Number** | N/A | 7,302 | 8,436 | 7,440 | 7,554 | 8,709 |
| | **Employment (Q2) Rate** | N/A | 47.3% | 53.8% | 48.6% | 53.5% | 55.2% |
| | **Employment (Q4) Number** | N/A | N/A | 7,483 | 7,499 | 7,259 | 8,012 |
| | **Employment (Q4) Rate** | N/A | N/A | 50.7% | 47.9% | 50.3% | 53.8% |
| | **Median Earnings** | N/A | $3,460.00 | $3,626.00 | $3,750.00 | $4,454.00 | $4,708.00 |
| | **Credential Number** | N/A | N/A | 425 | 876 | 1,261 | 1,295 |
| | **Credential Rate** | N/A | N/A | 6.4% | 9.0% | 20.8% | 24.8% |
| | **MSG Number** | N/A | 148 | 844 | 2,255 | 4,958 | 5,499 |
| | **MSG Rate** | N/A | 3.6% | 15.7% | 28.2% | 40.6% | 38.7% |

FDBS exceeded the negotiated levels for employment in the second quarter after exit and significantly exceeded negotiated levels for median earnings in the second quarter after exit. The remaining performance indicators fell short of RSA's expectations. The change in prohibiting post-employment services after case closure may play a role in the decrease in employment after the fourth quarter. FDBS continues to work with DCAE to increase enrollment in apprenticeship programs that lead to industry credentials. FDBS and Vocational Rehabilitation are working on an initiative that targets clients who receive Pre-ETS. The initiative aims to introduce and engage students between the ages of 16 to 21 in pre-apprenticeship opportunities to enhance their ability to gain competitive integrated employment immediately after high school, or after graduation from college and/or technical training. The Divisions agreed to focus on programs in cybersecurity, technology, medical assistants, and pharmacy.

**(3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).**

FDBS will continue to use funds that support innovation and expansion to sustain activities of the FRCB. This includes sponsoring travel and administrative costs, meeting space, advertisement, interpreters, and client satisfaction surveys.

The following table illustrates operational expenditures for the council.

**Figure 10.08**
**Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind Expenditures**

| Expense Category | Amount |
|---|---|
| Travel | $23,322.87 |
| FSU Research | $20,625.00 |
| Supplies | $195.73 |
| Telephone Services | $280.74 |
| Publications | $292.18 |
| Meeting Room Rental | $10,535.50 |
| Registrations | $1,120.00 |
| Total Expenditures | $126,624.75 |

FDBS secured a license agreement with Vispero to provide access to AT. The license allows FDBS to supply consumers and workforce partners with JAWS, ZoomText, and Fusion. In partnership with the Blind Services Foundation, FDBS spearheaded the Senior Equipment and Training project in 2023. Through this project, seniors receive AT and devices to aid with independent living. Seniors may receive training on how to use the equipment when necessary.

FDBS contracted with Career Counseling & Consultation, LLC. to establish the Florida Vision Vocational Evaluation Tool - a contemporary career exploration and job preparedness assessment tool designed specifically for people who are blind or have low vision. This tool provides evaluators with meaningful information regarding a consumer's competence and employability prospects as an individual with a visually impairment. It also provides discussion points for evaluators, counselors, and other service providers to discuss relevant and viable career options with clients.

**(e) SE Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of SE Services.**

**(2) Acceptance of title VI funds:**

N/A

**(3) If the vocational rehabilitation agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires vocational rehabilitation agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of SE services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the SE program.**

The Florida Division of Blind Services does not elect to receive Title VI funds and understands supported employment services must be provided under Title I.

**(4) SE services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of SE services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.**

The Division contracts with the CDC for the provision of Supported Employment Services. The CDC provides comprehensive Residential Supported Employment services to eligible adults and youth who are blind and have at least one other most significant disability. Qualified clients receive training and support towards obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment, including customized employment. The CDC offers an on-site residential evaluation, intensive individual employment based training, and integrated community- based supported employment services.

**(5) Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the vocational rehabilitation agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide SE services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

FDBS uses Title I funds to provide extended services to youth - including those with the most significant disabilities - not to exceed 4 years or until the youth turns 24, whichever occurs first. FDBS works with public and private entities for the provision of extended services and SE– including youth/employers within the community to develop natural support systems.

**(f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all vocational rehabilitation agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:**

FDBS estimates the number of individuals eligible for Title I services in the state is approximately 5,500; while the number of individuals eligible for Title VI services in the state is approximately 550. These numbers are based on estimates of trends, spending patterns, and data projections using 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 federal fiscal year 2023-2024, FDBS plans to serve 5,255 under Title I and 300 under Title VI.

**(1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year**

**(C) VR Program; and**

**Figure 10.09**
**Estimated Number of Clients Served in VR Program**

| Priority Category (if applicable) | No. of Individuals Eligible for Services | No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program | Costs of Services using Title I Funds | No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N/A | 5,500 | 5,500 | $28,000,000 | 0 |

**(D) SE Program.**

**Figure 10.10**
**Estimated Number of Clients Served in SE Program**

| Priority Category (if applicable) | No. of Individuals Eligible for Services | No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under SE Program | Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds | No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N/A | 500 | 500 | $1,600,000 | 0 |

**(g) OOS.**

FDBS is not implementing an OOS and all eligible individuals will be served.

**(h) Waiver of Statewideness.**

FDBS is not requesting a Waiver of Statewideness for this plan.

**(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the vocational rehabilitation agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the vocational rehabilitation agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the vocational rehabilitation agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:**

**(1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including:**

**(D) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the vocational rehabilitation agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients.**

**(E) The number of personnel currently needed by the vocational rehabilitation agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and**

**(F) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the vocational rehabilitation agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

**Figure 10.11**
**Personnel by Category**

| Personnel Category | No. of Personnel Employed | No. of Personnel Currently Needed | Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bureau Chief | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Program Administrator | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| District Administrator | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Assistant District Administrator | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Clerk | 9 | 20 | 20 |
| Employment Placement Specialist | 6 | 12 | 12 |
| Government Operations Consultant | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Program Consultant | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Rehabilitation Technician | 20 | 26 | 26 |
| Staff Assistant | 5 | 9 | 9 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor | 40 | 53 | 53 |
| Word Processor/Senior Word Processor | 13 | 18 | 18 |

**(G) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

FDBS served 5,203 individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in FFY 2022-2023. This represented 43 more individuals than the prior FFY. The average ratio of clients per counselor was 45 to 1. A comparison of the previous five years indicates a statistically insignificant change in the ratio of clients served per counselor. This data is tracked and maintained in the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (Aware) case management system.

**Figure 10.12**
**Client to Counselor Ratio**

| Federal Fiscal Year | Number served | Ratio (person served/counselor) |
|---|---|---|
| 2022-2023 | 5,203 | 45 |
| 2021-2022 | 5,160 | 46 |
| 2020-2021 | 5,123 | 48 |
| 2019-2020 | 4,984 | 47 |
| 2018-2019 | 4,994 | 49 |

**(H) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

FDBS had a 4.19% increase in the number of individuals served in the employment program over the past five years. Rounding this to a 1% increase each year, FDBS plans to serve the 5,468 individuals five years from now (PY 2028).

**(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:**

**(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

FDBS offers a financial incentive and pays for courses/exams to become a certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). CRC is an industry recognized credential and having VR staff who hold this certification should deliver an elevated level of performance and service to consumers. There are 12 employees with a CRC. FDBS encourages counselors to seek certification as Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) to increase knowledge of Social Security benefits and the effects employment has on such benefits. This allows counselors to provide benefits counseling during the vocational rehabilitation process. There is a competitive selection process for participation in these training courses and applicants must successfully complete an introductory course. There are two certified CWICs in FDBS.

The Florida Department of Education or Rehabilitation Services Administration sponsored 39 students in the educational programs shown below. There are other graduate level counseling related majors at public state universities that qualify graduates for certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

**Figure 10.13**
**Rehabilitation Programs by Educational Institution**

| Institute of Higher Education | Type of Program | No. of Students Enrolled | No. of Prior Year Graduates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Florida Atlantic University | Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling | 34 | 9 |
| Florida International University | MS in Counselor Education: Rehabilitation Counseling | 17 | 4 |
| University of South Florida | Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Sciences (RCDS) | 23 | N/A – First graduates Spring of 2024 |

**(B) The vocational rehabilitation agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the vocational rehabilitation agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

FDBS uses People First for recruiting qualified personnel using the minimum qualifications. FDBS is an equal opportunity employer and hires individuals with and without disabilities at all levels of employment. VR program staff encourage consumers who meet the minimum qualifications or with a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling to apply for vacant positions, and some are current employees. FDBS shares information regarding the hiring process, recruitment, and retention with students at Florida State University during onsite visits.

VR program staff receive lower salaries when compared to other state agencies, which plays a significant role in retention. FDBS successfully obtained approval from the legislature to increase starting salaries for new employees and salaries for current employees. VR counselors with credentials (CRC at present, exploring CWIC and others) beyond college degrees receive a pay additive as an incentive.

**(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the vocational rehabilitation agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:**

**i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.**

N/A.

**ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to the vocational rehabilitation agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for**

**providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by WIOA.**

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. FDBS provides bi-monthly and annual training to VR program professionals to relay updates to policies, procedures, or other program changes based on information from RSA via Training and Employment Guidance Letters, Technical Assistance Circular, and Policy Directives to ensure federal compliance. The policy team meets at least quarterly (more often when necessary) to review new or revised federal guidelines and to research best practices or other topics that may improve program performance. As appropriate, the policy team revises current or drafts new policies/procedures to support state and/or federal mandates.

FDBS plans to incorporate a Learning Management System (LMS) into its training process. The LMS will be 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, FDBS determined this system is the best fit for VR program.

**(3) Description of vocational rehabilitation agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that vocational rehabilitation agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:**

**(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.**

FDBS encourages employees providing vocational rehabilitation services to obtain certification in the appropriate areas based on the position classification. This may include CRC, CWIC, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COM), Certified Visual Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT), and Certified Vocational Evaluator (CVE). There are two COMs, 12 CRCs, two CWICs, two CVRTs, and one CVE in FDBS. Each of these credentials are nationally recognized.

**(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

The Florida Department of Management Services establishes the education and experience requirements for all positions in the state. FDBS ensures these requirements align with those required by section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. In fact, FDBS's requirements exceed this standard for some VR program staff. The human resources unit tracks and maintains education and experience requirements, including tracking employees holding advanced credentials. Due to difficulties hiring individuals who meet current CRC certification standards, FDBS routinely hires those who meet the academic standards. The following table outlines the minimum qualifications for employees performing work under the VR program.

**Figure 10.14**
**Personnel Requirements**

| Class 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 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/Personnel Liaison** | 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 a public vocational rehabilitation program |
| **Human Services Program Specialist (working title Employment Placement Specialist)** | Master's degree + 2 years of professional experience in health, social, economic or rehab programs, health care or hospital administration or planning; or bachelor's degree + 3 years of professional experience in health, social, economic or rehab programs, health care or hospital administration or planning; or 7 years of professional or nonprofessional experience in health, social, economic or rehab programs, health care or hospital administration or planning |
| **Human Services Program Consultant I (working title Vocational Rehabilitation 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 |

**(4) Method(s) the vocational rehabilitation agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

FDBS 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. FDBS purchases 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).

**(5) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

FDBS has a cooperative agreement with DPS to coordinate activities for students who are blind and visually impaired. Under this agreement, FDBS provides training for teachers and personnel who work with students who are blind and visually impaired.

**COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)**

**(i) Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**(1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.**

FDBS created new policies on Post Employment Services and updated policies on Pre-ETS, Supported Employment, and Individualized Plan for Employment. There is a State Education Agency (SEA) agreement between FDBS, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), DPS, and VR to assist students with disabilities in successfully transitioning to postsecondary training programs, education, and competitive integrated employment. FDBS and VR offer Pre-ETS to prepare students with disabilities (ages 14-21) for success in 21st century careers. The LEAs provide transition services under IDEA that meet Pre-ETS requirements. Students may receive Pre-ETS from VR or FDBS without completing an application (potentially eligible). Pre-ETS are also available to students with disabilities who apply for partner services.

**(2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the vocational rehabilitation agency and the State educational agency.**

**Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**

**(A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services.**

FDBS and VR will assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including Pre-ETS. 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 public regarding policies and procedures related to transition services, including Pre-ETS. The agencies provide technical assistance through various means, such as conference calls, video conferences, and in-person training opportunities. The partners work together to build capacity within 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 training or the cross-training of staff to ensure operational activities continue to meet the needs of all partners involved.

**(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

VR program staff attend meetings for the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when invited, with appropriate consent from the consumer. In collaboration with LEAs, FDBS will provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS to all students with disabilities who may need these services. Counselors develop an IPE- in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 - as early as possible during the transition planning process - but no later than exit from the school setting. The development of the IPE must occur within 60 days of eligibility determination.

**(C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services.**

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. FDBS, VR, and DPS will use the following criteria for determining financial and programmatic responsibilities:

**Financial Responsibility -** Each partner has a financial responsibility for delivering services identified under the respective student plans (e.g., the IPE, IEP, 504). FDBS sets aside a minimum of 15% of the yearly federal allotment for client services to fund Pre-ETS for students with disabilities.

**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?

**Personnel** - FDBS employs a Program Consultant as the central point of contact for the Transition Program. The Program Consultant serves as the liaison for 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Transition Counselors serve as representatives who work directly with students, school officials, parents, and others involved in transition services to coordinate outreach and transition services. The Program Consultant and transition counselors require a bachelor's degree, plus four (4) years of experience or eight (8) years of experience without a degree.

**(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.**

FDBS identifies and provides outreach to students with disabilities by participating on interagency councils and coordinating with LEAs, state and community partners, CareerSource, and postsecondary institutions to disseminate information on available services and resources for students with disabilities. Counselors present information about services and programs at education conferences and other transition-focused training sessions. Schools, students, family members, and other interested parties receive printed materials about services.

**(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.**

Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, 14(c), states businesses referred to as "employers" are prohibited from employing individuals with disabilities 24 years of age or younger at subminimum wage. Under the SEA agreement, educational agencies will not enter into an agreement or contract with entities holding a special wage certificate under sec.14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and provide work experience at or under subminimum wage. The LEAs must provide documentation to FDBS of the provision of transition services under IDEA or Pre-ETS for students who may be seeking subminimum wage employment.

To implement Florida statutes and federal laws/regulations, FDBS will 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.

**(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

Under a 14(c) Special Wage Certificate, employers are prohibited from employing a youth with a disability 24 years of age or younger at subminimum wage, unless the individual has documentation from FDBS verifying completion of the required activities, which includes applying for vocational rehabilitation services, participation in Pre-ETS or Transition Services, and information to support informed choice.

**(k) Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the vocational rehabilitation agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.**

Under the interagency cooperative agreement referenced above, 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 efforts with the statewide workforce systems, FDBS Director serves on the statewide workforce board, and the District Administrators collaborate with their local boards during visits to workforce centers and other venues. FDBS utilizes the following strategies to increase partnerships with the workforce development system, foster equal access and increase the number of employers hiring FDBS consumers, generate program awareness, and strengthen barriers in Florida.

- Work with employers to encourage sponsorship of registered apprenticeship programs.
- Increase utilization of online job portals to expose employers to jobseekers who are ready for employment.
- Develop and strengthen employer partnerships 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 and/or
- Identify baseline employment outcome data for individuals with disabilities and set targets for improvement.

**(I) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:**

**(1) State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.**

In accordance with the Assistive Technology Act, FDBS ensures access to assistive technology is available and promoted through statewide policy development, advocacy at state and federal levels, planning of statewide resource allocations and via a contract with Vispero to purchase a license for JAWS and ZoomText. FDBS works with the CRPs to ensure AT is consistent with the needs of consumers. The counselors must document the type and need for AT in the Individualized Plan for Employment. FDBS provides assistive technology demonstrations at the district level and has loan programs. Through the loan program, consumers learn to use different technologies and choose which is the best fit.

**(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;**

FDBS does not collaborate with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) on a routine basis. While FDBS does not have any direct funding arrangements with FDACS, staff are aware of the Rural Development Program and can provide this resource to clients who are interested in home ownership. FDACS offers other programs that provide capital, equipment, space, job training, and entrepreneurial skills to help individuals start and/or grow a business. FDBS aims to increase collaboration with employers in rural communities to promote job development and increase the likelihood that consumers thrive in the communities where they live and work.

**(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;**

FDBS provides services to out-of-school youth via contracts or authorizations with the community rehabilitation providers. Transition services include assessments and career counseling; work-readiness skills training; work-based learning experiences; and guidance on education options. FDBS partners with the Centers for Independent Living for administering independent living skills and benefits counseling for blind and visually impaired clients.

**(4) State use contracting programs;**

FDBS has a state use contracting agreement with Respect to provide cleaning services at the Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

**(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);**

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) provides Medicaid eligibility services for qualified individuals. FDBS collaborates with the AHCA to ensure shared consumers receive quality medical services through the Medicaid program. VR program staff work with local AHCA contacts when working with consumers who have Medicaid to ensure FDBS is the payer of last resort. FDBS works with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) who also provides eligibility services for children in the state of Florida. FDBS is currently working in partnership with several state agencies to create a portal that allows the agencies to actively communicate about clients that are served by multiple agencies.

**(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

FDBS collaborates with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to coordinate services for consumers with visual impairments and other developmental disabilities.

**(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;**

FDBS collaborates with DCF as a core partner and via the Employment First Collaborative team and the Employment First Act. The Employment First Act requires agencies to assist individuals in achieving independence by breaking down barriers to employment that inhibit their opportunities to compete fairly in the labor force. As FDBS staff work with consumers and determine the need for mental health services, the collaborative efforts with DCF enable interagency cooperation in the provision of services to both the client and employer to ensure effective treatment and training.

**(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and**

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) provides free access to information, referral services, educational programs, and publications on extensive topics related to disability rights, laws/policies, and funding opportunities for assistive technology. FDBS coordinates training with the FAAST by referring consumers for assistive technology. FAAST demonstrates, trains, and allows consumers to test equipment under a temporary loan.

The Florida Independent Living Council (FILC) - FILC is a federal and state mandated council that collaborates with FDBS on planning and evaluating independent living services, preparing annual reports, and conducting public forums.

The Florida Rehabilitation Association (FRA), State Chapter of National Organization works to advance rehabilitation of all persons with disabilities by exercising leadership and identifying the needs of individuals with disabilities, interpreting these needs to society, planning, and promoting programs designed to meet these needs, and translating such programs into services at the community level. FDBS works with FRA to facilitate removal of environmental barriers and other barriers that may prevent consumers from successful employment.

**(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.**

FDBS has contracts with 20 Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and values the services they provide to our clients. FDBS'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 one (1) contract for supported employment. The CRPs provide education; independent life skills; job training; and job development, retention, and placement services to consumers who participate in vocational rehabilitation programs.

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES)**
**CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES**

**Figure 10.15**
**Certifications**

| States must provide written and signed certifications that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | FDBS is authorized to submit the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA,[5] and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act; |
| 2. | In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the vocational rehabilitation program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, FDBS agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[6], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[7], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of Vocational rehabilitation services and the administration of the vocational rehabilitation 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 SE services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State SE Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[8], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[9], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of SE services and the administration of the supplement to the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; |

[5] Public Law 113-128.

[6] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[7] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State vocational rehabilitation services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

[8] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved SE supplement to the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[9] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as SE program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

| States must provide written and signed certifications that: | |
|---|---|
| 4. | The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c); |
| 5. | The State legally may carry out each provision of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. |
| 6. | All provisions of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. |
| 7. | The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; |
| 8. | The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for SE services; |
| 9. | The agency that submits the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. |

**ASSURANCES**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the vocational rehabilitation 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 vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

**Figure 10.16**
**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 Vocational Rehabilitation 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 vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State SE Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140. |
| 3. | **Administration of the vocational rehabilitation 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:<br>(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(c) consultations regarding the administration of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(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 vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).<br>(e) as applicable, the local administration of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(h) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(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. |

| The State Plan must provide assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| | (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 vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).<br>(m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 4. | **Administration of the Provision of vocational rehabilitation services:** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:<br>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation 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.<br>(c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an Order of Selection (OOS), in accordance with criteria established by the State for the OOS as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(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.<br>(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.<br>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(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.<br>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State:<br>(i) has developed and will implement,<br>(A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and<br>(B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and<br>(ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15),101(a)(25), and 113). |

| The State Plan must provide assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| | (iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services. |
| 5. | **Program Administration for the SE Title VI Supplement to the State plan:**<br>(a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving SE services under title I and individuals receiving SE services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 6. | **Financial Administration of the SE Program (Title VI):**<br>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out SE services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide SE 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 SE services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 7. | **Provision of SE Services**:<br>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide SE services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.<br>(b) The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act. |

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES)**
**CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES SIGNATURE PAGE**

**Florida Department of Education**

**Manny Diaz, Jr., Commissioner** **DATE:**

# APPENDIX 1: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

Include the state's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

| | Title I – Adult Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 2024 | | Program Year: 2025 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | 86.3% | 86.3% | 86.7% | 86.7% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | 73.5% | 73.5% | 73.5% | 73.5% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $10,120 | $10,120 | $10,215 | $10,215 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 75.2% | 75.2% | 75.3% | 75.3% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 65.0% | 76.0% | 65.0% | 76.0% |

| | Title I – Dislocated Worker Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 2024 | | Program Year: 2025 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | 85.0% | 85.0% | 85.0% | 85.0% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | 80.2% | 80.2% | 80.2% | 80.2% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $10,575 | $10,575 | $11,125 | $11,125 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 82.7% | 82.7% | 82.7% | 82.7% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 65.0% | 68.6% | 65.0% | 68.6% |

| | Title I – Youth Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 2024 | | Program Year: 2025 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) [1] | 81.4% | 81.4% | 81.4% | 81.4% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)[2] | 78.2% | 78.2% | 78.8% | 78.8% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $4,558 | $4,558 | $4,795 | $4,795 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 73.4% | 73.4% | 73.4% | 73.4% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 65.0% | 68.0% | 65.0% | 68.0% |

| | Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 2024 | | 2025 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | 24.80% | 30.0% | 25.00% | 31.0% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | 28.00% | 28.0% | 28.20% | 28.2% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $5,562 | $5,839 | $5,368 | $5,840 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 21.60% | 21.6% | 21.80% | 21.8% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Measurable Skill Gains | 31.30% | 35.6% | 31.50% | 35.7% |

| | Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 2024 | | Program Year: 2025 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | 66.0% | 68.2% | 67.9% | 68.2% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | 64.2% | 65.8% | 64.2% | 66.0% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | $7,420 | $7,420 | $7,571 | $7,571 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Measurable Skill Gains | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |

| | Vocational Rehabilitation Program | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Year: 07/01/23-06/30/24 | | Program Year: 07/01/24-06/30/25 | |
| | Expected Level | Negotiated Level | Expected Level | Negotiated Level |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) [22] | 55.2% | 56.0% | 55.2% | 57.0% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) [22] | 53.8% | 54.0% | 53.8% | 55.0% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit [3] | $4,708 | $4,800 | $4,708 | $4,900 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 24.8% | 25.0% | 24.8% | 26.0% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 38.7% | 39.0% | 38.7% | 43.0% |