

FIRST PLANNING DISTRICT LWDA #10

STATEMENT OF CONCURRENCE

Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this is to certify that the Chief Elected Official of the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), the local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), and the WIOA Grant Recipient/Administrative Entity concur in the attached Modification to the Regional/Local plan from 2020 through 2024.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEES AND PLAN SIGNATURES

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**FIRST PLANNING DISTRICT
PLAQUEMINES, ST. BERNARD AND ST. TAMMANY PARISHES
LWDA #10
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LOCAL PLAN
For the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024**

Introduction

The First Planning District Workforce Development Area, in partnership with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 programs and partner agencies, is providing a Modification to the WIOA four (4) year plan for 2020 through 2024, as required by federal law.

This strategic plan was developed for the period of four years beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30th, 2024. It describes the Workforce Development Board's (WDB) approach to meeting WIOA mandates, and offers guidelines to support these efforts in analyzing the needs of employers for skilled workers, and in finding ways to meet those training and education needs on behalf of both workers and employers. The role of the WDB, as presented in this document, is to align the local area's educational and training investments with the practical needs of the workplaces in which our residents will find employment. An equally important function of our work is to ensure the continued economic viability of our region for current and potential employers; those businesses which depend upon, but who cannot stay here if the workforce cannot fulfill their needs.

The WDB is a partnership of local workforce, education, government and business leaders who work together to ensure that the residents of the tri-parish area of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes have the skills necessary to meet present and future needs of employers. To do so, the WDB oversees investments in training and education for residents, aligning these investments with emerging employment opportunities. Because the WDB is always seeking to ensure that the area's residents have the skills necessary for tomorrow's workforce, it is critically important that the board think strategically about how to invest and manage limited training resources.

The regional plan component (also required under WIOA) was developed in coordination with the three additional boards that encompass the Greater New Orleans labor market region and include Orleans Parish WDB, Jefferson Parish WDB and the River Parishes WDB (St. James, St. John and St. Charles parishes).

Through this plan, the FPD WDB embraces the Governor's workforce goals, and sets forth a road map to meet them. The Board shares the same priority in envisioning a workforce system that will provide pathways for all Louisianans, including individuals who are receiving public assistance, the unemployed and underemployed, those who are deficient in basic skills, as well as persons with disabilities, including disabled veterans, and others who have significant barriers to employment. We also fully support the State's vision that all will have access to education, training and supportive services needed to prepare for and secure high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

COVID Response and Impact

When this strategic plan was originally written in early 2020, the country as a whole was in the early states of the Covid pandemic which changed the economic and workforce landscape dramatically. With the pandemic hitting in March of 2020, the economy of the United States was temporarily shut down for the purpose of flattening the curve of new cases to help the healthcare system cope and prevent deaths. This took time and in spite of massive stimulus packages from the U.S. Government, over 30 million new unemployment claims had been filed. The national unemployment rate had risen from 4.4% in March to 14.7% in April.

In spite of this unprecedented occurrence, the First Planning District's American Job Centers (known locally at Tri-Parish Works) did not close, but rather quickly and effectively pivoted to providing much needed services in a virtual format to the citizens of the local area.

The WDB and other stakeholders in the workforce development system are rose to the challenge as "frontline responders" in this economic crisis for those individuals and businesses seeking immediate help, while also providing long-term career guidance and assistance for workers and businesses alike. The Tri-Parish Works Centers utilized numerous approaches to skill development including; assessing skill needs, formal academic instruction, on-the-job training, apprenticeship and customized skilling. Delivery of services remained agile so Centers could operate at peak capacity to help the labor force either retain employment or reduce their period of unemployment, while at the same time, providing business with the skilled laborforce they needed. Our workforce development staff fielded thousands of calls during the early months of the pandemic. During this time, they answered questions about unemployment benefits and assisted individuals in completing claims. Center leadership also mobilized systems to move services virtually and connect businesses and job seekers with community resources.

As we have now entered the recovery phase of the pandemic, new challenges exist for businesses, who by the beginning of 2022 were faced with a scarce labor market of candidates with high expectations around salary, benefits, flexibility and who often required some on-the-job training to gain the skills businesses actually need to remain competitive. In addition, many issues affected the return to work for individuals, such as childcare, reopening of schools, and in some cases, businesses shutdown entirely.

As unemployment rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels and our economy finds a "new normal", the FPD WDB remains steadfast and committed to helping our local area adapt to the rapidly-evolving landscape and to restore vitality and prosperity for businesses and workers impacted by the pandemic.

Thankfully, our public workforce system continues as an effective and integral part of our communities positioned to help workers and our economy recover from this crisis, whether those recovery efforts are needed today, tomorrow, or years down the line.

Public Comment

Copies of the Modification to the Regional/Local plan are available to the public for comment on the FPD's website (www.triparishworks.net).

A comment period of thirty (30) days will be provided. Formal comments will be received from members of the public, partner agencies, and representatives of business and labor organizations. Any comments concerning the WIOA plan should be addressed to Mrs. Melissa Kirsch, Workforce Development Board Executive Director, 317 North Jefferson Avenue, Covington, LA 70433 or by email at firstplanning@bellsouth.net. Any comments received will be submitted to the Louisiana Workforce Commission as an attachment to the plan.

Contact Information

If you or your organization would like to know more about how the WDB will accomplish their goals, or you would like to help achieve these goals by participating in WDB activities, please contact Melissa Kirsch, WDB Executive Director, at 985-875-9275 or firstplanning@bellsouth.net.

CHAPTER 4. OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES – LOCAL COMPONENT

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

The FPD serves the workforce needs of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes, which together comprise the eastern part of the greater New Orleans region starting north of Lake Pontchartrain and extending out into the Gulf of Mexico. The tri-parish area boasts a wide range of industries from Healthcare, Manufacturing and Retail in St. Tammany Parish to Oil and Gas Manufacturing and Maritime Transportation in Plaquemines and St. Bernard. The economy is diverse, vibrant and growing due to the parishes' quality of life, top-notch K-12 education systems and close proximity to the culture and entertainment of New Orleans.

The Regional Plan contains a detailed analysis of the regional economic conditions, the knowledge and skills needed to meet industry demands, current labor force data/trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce. The charts below provide an additional snapshot of the tri-parish area.

BY THE NUMBERS

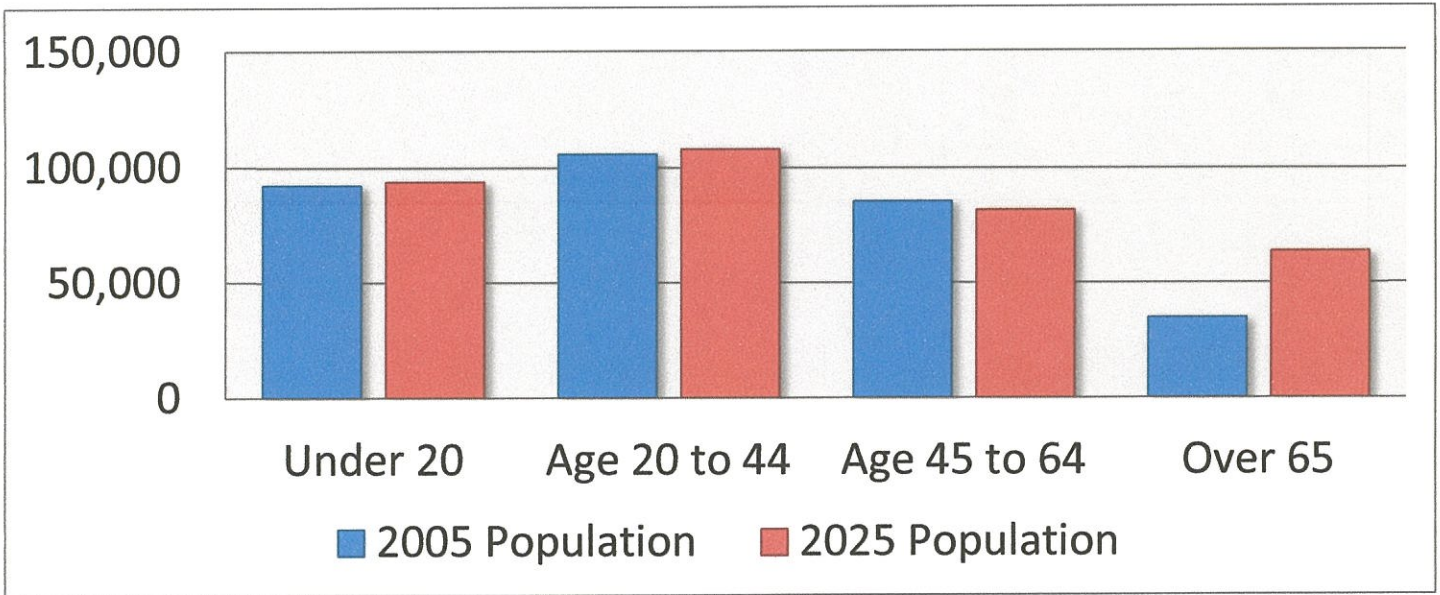
340.4K 2022 Population	+2% Population Growth	346.7K Projected 2024 Population
130,229 Total Jobs (2022)	+3.7% Projected growth	135,024 Total Jobs Projected by 2024
Average Earnings (2022)	\$66,000	
Unemployed (7/2022)	4,207 or 2.77%	

TOP OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Description	2020 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2020 - 2024 Change	2020 - 2024 % Change	Avg. Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Pct. 10 Hourly Earnings
General and Operations Managers	1,892	2,498	606	32%	350	\$45.88	\$23.31
Stockers and Order Fillers	1,571	1,761	190	12%	333	\$13.72	\$10.51
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,821	1,875	55	3%	300	\$13.91	\$9.28
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,917	2,069	152	8%	286	\$16.93	\$10.85
Office Clerks, General	2,018	2,076	58	3%	275	\$13.44	\$8.33
Customer Service Representatives	1,321	1,507	186	14%	248	\$14.31	\$10.90
Registered Nurses	2,663	2,977	314	12%	247	\$35.12	\$27.39
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	990	1,181	190	19%	219	\$13.38	\$10.49
Nursing Assistants	1,062	1,134	72	7%	187	\$12.74	\$10.36
Light Truck Drivers	859	1,119	260	30%	183	\$15.88	\$10.77
	16,115	18,198	2,083		2,628	195	132

•The top 10 occupations paying greater than \$12/ hr represent 10% of openings expected over the next 5 years.

Tri-Parish Demographic Shift



- In 2005, the 65+ population was just 34,848; 45,680 in 2015, 56,191 by 2020 and projected 62,659 by 2024.
- As indicated in the regional plan, the significant increase in the 65+-population will have impacted the workforce, creating a potential shortfall of available workers. This phenomenon is winding down and will be complete by 2024.

Workforce Development Board

The FPD WDB was established in compliance with the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the parishes of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany. In partnership with the Chief Elected Official (CEO), the Board develops the local plan, sets policy and conducts oversight of the tri-parish areas workforce development system and activities. A current WDB membership list is included in this document as Attachment #1. Also included as Attachment #2 are the WDB Bylaws.

By mutual agreement of the Chief Elected Officials of the three parishes of the First Planning District Consortium, one official serves as the Chief Elected Official (St. Tammany) to the Workforce Board, and another parish acts as the Administrative Entity/Grant Recipient (St. Bernard) of the WIOA funds. Attachment #3 is the Multi-Jurisdictional Agreement between the three parishes.

The Board serves as strategic leader and convener of employers, workforce professionals, education providers, economic development agencies and other stakeholders to drive innovation and build workforce alliances that can provide services to meet the needs of businesses. This group is also the Quality Assurance Agent for public funds ensuring that the public workforce system is demand-driven, efficient and effective, and is of value and has impact in our local communities. The Board strives to lead the development of strong, vibrant economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work. The WDB is committed to creating a shared vision with its partners of how the local workforce development system should meet the needs of a demanding workforce. FPD's plan drives the delivery of workforce services and allows flexibility in developing and improving strategies to meet local needs.

Business sector members are appointed from individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations. Public sector members are appointed from individuals nominated by their respective agencies or organizations and/or the Chief Elected Official of the respective parish. The CEO

has final approval of all appointments to the board and membership requirements are in accordance with the WIOA law and regulations.

The WDB elects a Board Chairperson from the private sector members. The Board Chairperson presides over all meetings, as well as establishes and appoints committees and assign duties and responsibilities to the committees as deemed appropriate.

The Board has embraced their role and responsibilities under WIOA, and regularly evaluates their mission and strategic priorities in order to fulfill goals that align with the Governor's priorities and include:

- Creating and fostering business partnerships that bring the best return on investment back to the tri-parish area, the region and the State of Louisiana.
- Building sound partnerships to collaborate with workforce, education and economic development efforts to ensure economic vitality to the region.
- Creating an efficient and effective platform for servicing job seekers and the hardest to serve populations
- Building a solid infrastructure that can exceed the demands and needs of business/industry, job seekers and partners within our region.

The Workforce Development Board is responsible for:

- Selecting the One-Stop system operator with the agreement of the Chief Elected Official;
- Identifying and selecting eligible providers of adult, dislocated worker and youth career and training services, and maintaining and approving a list of eligible providers with performance and cost information;
- Negotiating and reaching agreement on local performance measures with the Chief Elected Official and the Governor;
- Coordinating workforce activities with economic development strategies and developing employer linkages;
- Carrying out regional planning responsibilities required by the State and in accordance with WIOA; and
- Reviewing and evaluating the Tri-Parish Works Center activities for effectiveness and compliance with the Act.

The Board utilizes data in new and more effective ways to drive strategic planning, determine operational efficiency, and monitor performance outcomes. The WDB works together with other boards within the region, as well as LWC to collect data and conduct analyses. This is done to identify employer needs for talent, as well as to determine which industries anticipate growth and/or to determine to what extent the talent pool meets employer requirements. Relevant workforce intelligence is critical to evaluating the workforce system as a whole and is a basis for continuous improvement opportunities. The Board uses data from multiple sources, including but not limited to: Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS), Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE), EMSI, Future Works (LA Performs), economic development agencies, and direct contact with employers.

The WDB makes available to the public, on a regular basis through open meetings and on their website (www.triparishworks.net), information regarding the activities of the Board, including information regarding the local plan, board membership, meeting minutes, the designation and certification of the One-Stop operator, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers.

The Board has a staff that functions in conjunction with the Administrative Entity/Grant Recipient and includes the Executive Director, Fiscal Manager, Monitor and a Program Liaison to the Centers. The Executive Director is responsible to the Administrative Entity/Grant Recipient and communicates

regularly with the Board and CEO for reporting purposes. See Attachment #4 for the FPD Organizational chart. The WDB staff performs functions related to the Board, including duties associated with Board meetings, correspondence, planning recommendations, monitoring, fiscal reporting and other related responsibilities.

The Board is dedicated to identifying and promoting workforce development strategies that positively impact the economic wellbeing of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes. The Board supports the governor's statewide vision for "Putting More Louisianians to Work" by creating an environment in which our businesses can grow and our people can prosper.

OUR VISION is sustainable employment through strategic human capital investments that produce positive economic returns for our businesses and our communities.

OUR MISSION is to serve as "THE VOICE OF BUSINESS" to communicate employment needs and to influence the direction of all workforce development programs and services in order to ensure a business-driven system.

OUR VALUES: Members of the FPD WDB honor the following Core Values:

- Visionary Leadership that advocates human capital development
- Service Excellence grounded in professionalism and respect
- Innovative responses to workforce need that drive economic vitality
- Stewardship of assets and resources focused on local and regional community priorities
- Collaboration with regional and local workforce, education and economic development partners
- Dedication to building and sustaining a strong regional economy, and the well-being of our industry base
- Results that are best-in-class and provide a high rate of return on public investment

OUR FOCUS AND GOALS: The FPD WDB currently has three areas of focus. These areas include: **Business Engagement, Partnership Development and Quality and Effective Center Services.** The Workforce Board's committee structure was developed to support these areas of focus and will provide information and assist in carrying out activities under the WIOA law. The work of these committees will enable the local area to strategically invest in human capital to sustain economic vitality, while maintaining a concentration on serving the hardest to serve, vulnerable populations or priority service groups as defined in local policy.

Business Engagement has, and will continue to be a priority for the Board. The Workforce Board has priorities in place to: broker new relationships with businesses, communicate board purpose and direction and create a consistent information loop with businesses and stakeholders, as well as collaborate with businesses to engage industry leaders in workforce development solutions and sector strategies and career pathway development.

The FPD WDB continues its efforts to create a one-stop delivery system that brings together workforce development, education, and other services in a seamless customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services with the goal of improving long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. **Partnership Development**, collaboration among service providers and the integration of activities to the fullest extent possible is a main priority for the Workforce Board.

The main objective in engaging job seekers is to provide the resources and tools through the Tri-Parish Works Centers for which an individual can drive their career path and gain talent development opportunities to obtain and retain employment. The Board wants to ensure that the Centers provide **quality and effective services** within the local communities, as well as support a talent pipeline to fuel

the growth of priority industry sectors by providing skill access pathways that create opportunity to entry into long term employment.

The FPD WDB's goals under this four (4) year plan reflect a belief that staying the course on the long term priorities that have been proven effective for many years, will continue to pay dividends during the current tumultuous times and beyond, while acknowledging that the Covid crisis will have lasting impacts on the employment landscape and on workforce service delivery.

A. Strategies and Services

The strategies and services the FPD WDB will utilize to facilitate employer engagement and deliver career services within the Tri-Parish Works Centers, springs from its already strong partnerships with local and regional economic development entities, chambers of commerce, industry associations, K-12 education system, post-secondary education, local and state government entities and non-profits.

1. The WDB has the responsibility of ensuring that Center services are customer focused and outcome based. The Tri-Parish Works Centers fall under the authority of the WDB, who already has administrative personnel in place to adequately provide guidance and direction to personnel within these centers. Customers can access a variety of services at three Centers within the local area:
 - St. Tammany Tri-Parish Works Center, 520 Old Spanish Trail, Slidell (comprehensive center)
 - St. Bernard Tri-Parish Works Center, 3700 LaFontaine Street, Chalmette (affiliate site)
 - Plaquemines Tri-Parish Works Center, 333 F. Edward Hebert Blvd., Bldg. 100, Belle Chasse (affiliate site)

The process by which the WDB and Chief Elected Official made the Center designations involved mutual agreement by the partners, the Chief Elected Official and the WDB, who subsequently approved the designations of the centers for FPD.

An additional part-time location was recently added to a marginalized area of St. Tammany Parish and is located in the United Way Prosperity Center. A WIOA staff member will be on-site one to two days a week to serve individuals unable to access the Comprehensive Center in Slidell.

FPD incorporates the principles of Universal Design into its Centers service delivery to most efficiently and effectively facilitate access to services using the following guiding principles:

- **Customized.** FPD oversees the delivery of high-quality career programs and services for all eligible individuals based on their individual needs and through a network of partner agencies that work together to deliver customized career services.
- **Accessible.** FPD's programs are designed to be universally accessible to individuals with a diverse range of skills, abilities, life experiences, as well as individuals with disabilities.
- **Equitable and Flexible.** Programs are designed to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities that provide individuals with choices in the method of use and/or delivery (e.g., the option to complete a form via a computer, paper, or over the phone).
- **Simple and intuitive.** Programs and services are easy to understand and accessible to individuals with a wide range of knowledge, skills, abilities and experience.

FPD used the mandated Center closures to the public due to Covid into an opportunity to pilot test strategies for providing virtual services to residents across the local area and found that virtual service delivery mechanisms increased access to career services for many customers.

Due to this proven success, FPD will continue to use a hybrid delivery model, as offering customers the choice of remote and in-person increases access to services for residents.

As required in WIOA law, the WDB engaged in a competitive procurement for the role of the One-Stop Operator for the local area in early 2021. A contract was awarded in June of 2021 to Castles of Dreams, LLC. The contractor began in this role in July of 2021 and has assisted the board with partnership development tasks. The contract was renewed July of 2022 and has two more potential renewal opportunities based on the 4-year contract limit requirement of WIOA.

The FPD currently has WIOA staff co-located with Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans Employment program staff in the comprehensive center located in St. Tammany parish. This center has integrated some program functions which has resulted in a more proactive exchange between staff and customers and maximizes staff's knowledge and abilities and results in a more effective and efficient operation. This Center moved to a new location to allow space for Vocational Rehabilitation staff and to also be in the same building as the Community Action Agency which handles the CSBG and HUD programs for St. Tammany. Additionally, the St. Tammany Adult Education programs will be providing Hi-Set classes at the Center on a part-time basis in the very near future.

The St. Bernard location serves as an "affiliate site" and is located on the Nunez Community College campus. This center is co-housed with Carl Perkins staff, as well as the Adult Education programs for St. Bernard Parish. A location was re-established in Plaquemines Parish in the Government Complex to be more accessible to the local residents.

While local workforce development boards are required to ensure Centers meet the minimum state certification criteria, they are also able to include additional criteria. The WDB's intent is to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of services and activities delivered in and through the Centers. In addition to the criteria implemented by the LWC, the Board identified additional criteria, such as higher levels of quality, performance and service coordination. The Board will certify the Centers within the tri-parish area utilizing a locally developed criteria every two to three years.

Central to FPD's workforce development initiatives is the continued enhancement of the Centers. Through physical co-location of partners, the local centers serve as convenient access points for employers, the community-at-large, and for groups targeted for services under the mandated partners. The principles that support the FPD's service delivery model includes:

- Guidance of investments by business demand to high wage, high growth local industries
- Streamline services through integration of partner staff;
- Development of new business and job seekers services in response to customer demand;
- Improvement of Center tools to enhance and increase the efficiency of service delivery;
- Improvement of outreach efforts to all customer segments, especially those hardest to serve vulnerable populations;
- Implementation of meaningful system-wide performance measures; and
- Establishment of a continuous improvement program to drive program activities and performance expectations.

The FPD, through coordination with partner agencies, created a Memorandum of Understanding which includes a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce systems as required by the WIOA

rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan (Attachment #5). An additional description of the Core and Mandated Partners and the service coordination efforts can be found in Chapter 4.D. This MOU is in the process of being reviewed by partner agencies and will be updated by June 30, 2023.

2. The FPD utilizes a **service delivery model** which includes two areas of concentration: Business Services and Career Services. WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other co-located staff work side-by-side in an integrated setting to provide service delivery to job seekers and businesses.

The service delivery model is designed to accomplish the following:

- Ensure that the business needs of hiring, retention, training, and advancement of workers is the driving force
- Connect businesses that are looking for qualified workers and individuals seeking employment;
- Ensure universal access for all job seekers to Basic Career Services
- Ensure quality services are provided to job seekers and incorporate customer choice
- Create seamless processes and ensure all job seekers get the information necessary to obtain required services
- Eliminate duplication to maximize resources for improved service delivery

The Tri-Parish Works Centers offer a range of services to assist jobseekers in their job search including: employer referrals and recruitment, job placement, referrals to support services or other providers and programs, as well as access to a computer lab and resource library equipped with printers, faxes, and phones.

Professional staff serve customers through a holistic approach that addresses not only customers' employment and educational needs, but also their basic needs to help customers achieve economic self-sufficiency. Staff conduct an interview and assessment, identify appropriate linkages to programs and services for which customers may be eligible, assist customers to apply for services, follow-up to ensure that customers receive the needed services, and actively support each customer as they pursue their goals with a focus on helping them learn to help themselves. Staff incorporate services for customers with disabilities, helping them navigate the challenges of seeking work.

Each center has a self-help resource area as the central core. Those customers needing assistance accessing service have knowledgeable staff available to provide help on use of Internet, software programs, resume development, etc. All center staff are trained to recognize customer needs for facilitated self-help and will direct customers to Individualized Career services as required. All job seekers have access to job listings and on-line resume services.

- a. **Services to Job Seekers**

To ensure that job seekers get to “the right service the first time,” FPD WDB is providing a standardized framework for how customers enter the system, how they are assessed for services needed, how they access services and how offices are designed and staffed to meet the needs of job seekers. We have incorporated eight principles into our delivery model:

- System design starts with economic drivers and backs into services
- Job seekers have access to a minimum set of services that are promised and delivered
- Services are designed and driven by identified needs and wants of employers

- Job seekers receive a service without having to know the funding stream
- All services are designed and delivered to meet high quality standards and customer satisfaction
- Improve job seekers job readiness through implementation of assessment, remediation and certification
- There is a continuous improvement strategy for service delivery within Center activities
- Expand access to Center Services utilizing virtual methods
The pandemic forced the Centers to reach customers where they were – in their homes – with career resources. As the Centers re-opened their doors to the public, it became clear that service delivery may never return to a pre-Covid “normal.” Center leadership turned this crisis into an opportunity to apply virtual service delivery lessons learned to permanently adjust the way they deliver services to make them more accessible to all job seekers.

It is the intent of FPD and its partners to provide a progressive delivery system of workforce development services, contained within a single point of contact, in a customer-friendly, accessible environment. The partners share a vision of how these centers should serve the needs of customers in a user-friendly environment.

The following targeted populations are considered to have priority of service under the WIOA Adult funding stream:

- Veterans and eligible spouses
- Recipients of public assistance
- Low-income individuals
- Individuals with a Disability
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient
- Unemployed and underemployed

Dislocated Workers, as defined in WIOA law, are also targeted for re-employment services and activities through the Dislocated Worker funding allocation.

Additional groups include: Ex-offenders, Individuals with multiple barriers to employment, Displaced Homemakers, Homeless, Individuals with limited English proficiency, and Older Workers. Center leadership was successful in obtaining grant funding from AARP in the fall of 2022 to provide specialized workshops and career counseling to the 50+ population including group coaching sessions, virtual interview tips, a job seeker guide and online tools as well.

The LWC Re-employment initiative has served as a catalyst to drive more qualified job seekers to the Centers and create a pipeline of qualified workers with the skills, credentials and attitudes employers are seeking in applicants to fill vacancies in demand occupations. Services at the centers are delivered through facilitated self-help and group activities. In addition, customers not needing staff assistance can access services outside of the centers through LWC’s internet-based HiRE system. Through HiRE, the centers can maximize customer choice, providing the ability to directly enter the labor exchange process by either self-identification or through staff assistance. The system provides job seekers direct access to employer listings through the self-service component, as well as the ability to complete skill-based resumes.

This delivery model implements an ongoing “assessment process” that includes both “initial” and “comprehensive” assessments. Assessments are conducted to ascertain the academic levels, skill levels and service needs of participants. This process includes a

review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interest, aptitudes, supportive services needs and developmental needs of individuals.

At a minimum, job seeker services include initial registration, orientation to Center services, and, when applicable, WIOA enrollment, with the appropriate staff-assisted first service.

Career Services shall include both Basic Career and Individualized Career services as appropriate based on job seeker need. The Basic career services available to all Center customers may include, but are not limited to: orientation, intake, eligibility determination, skill assessment, job search and placement assistance, labor market navigation and job referrals. Career Specialist staff deliver basic career services such as learning how to apply for jobs using the Internet, developing resumes that match specific jobs, analyzing job skills, determining life-long training needs, etc. By matching customers with identifiable services, staff can quickly determine customer needs and direct customers through the system to other services as required.

Those customers needing additional assistance have access to individualized career services and training opportunities. Staff-assisted individualized career services include, but are not limited to comprehensive assessments, counseling, case management, and pre-vocational services.

Training services can be critical to the employment success of many adults and dislocated workers. Based on availability of funding, these services are accessible to individuals who are WIOA eligible and assessed as in need of these specific services and demonstrate an ability to benefit. These services will focus on targeted populations, which include Veterans and eligible spouses, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, individuals with disabilities, unemployed/underemployed, and Dislocated Workers. All services are coordinated with relevant agencies and co-enrolled if participating in multiple program activities, whether concurrent or sequential. Available training activities include, but are not limited to: occupational-skills training, individual training accounts, on-the-job training, customized training, work experience, internships, apprenticeship programs, and transitional jobs.

The selection of training services is conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance.

UI beneficiaries must report to the Center at specified "Service Points" as a requirement of continued eligibility to receive UI benefits. UI recipients entering a Center shall receive an orientation to the Center services. Special emphasis is placed on those claimants most likely to exhaust their benefits. Re-employment Services offered to claimants focuses on better integration and connection between the UI claimant and center services. Early connectivity between the claimant and employment and training opportunities yields rapid re-employment and a reduction in claim duration.

When an initial assessment indicates no significant barriers to employment, and that the job seeker has skills, credentials, certification, education, soft skills, previous experience, or a combination of these factors that qualifies them in a "Demand Occupation," they are sent to Center staff performing recruitment and placement services for job referral.

Career Specialists review the job seeker's skills comparing them to specific demand occupation job vacancies, match those skills to the job vacancies, and make a staff referral. The Specialist who makes the referral, or who is case managing the job seeker, conducts a follow-up process, such as a 30,60, 90-day cycle, with documented reassessment.

Center staff conduct robust and effective follow-up, reassessing as necessary. This is critical because continued failure to achieve employment may indicate the existence of a barrier to employment that was not identified earlier in the assessment process.

Should follow-up for any job seeker on the Workforce Ready track show continued unemployment, more individualized career services may be indicated.

When an initial assessment indicates a job seeker is workforce ready, but not in a demand occupation, the job seeker will be referred to self-service and offered assistance as needed with informational services. These services may include guiding the job seeker to labor market information including jobs in demand, wage rates, education requirements, work search tools, skills and interest assessments, etc.

Career Specialists will provide follow-up reassessing as necessary. Continued failure to achieve employment may indicate the existence of a barrier to employment not identified earlier in the assessment process. Should follow-up show continued unemployment, more individualized career services may be indicated.

Job seekers who have poor or large gaps in their work history, limited, obsolete or unknown skills, limited education, lack credentials, lack soft skills, have significant barriers to employment or a combination of any of these factors; and any job seeker determined most likely to exhaust their UI benefits are considered "not workforce ready".

Job seekers who are "not workforce ready" are provided Individualized Career Services, consisting of a minimum of a comprehensive assessment and development of an individualized employment plan (IEP) in the context of case management. A comprehensive assessment is done as a client centered approach to evaluating the needs of a participant without regard to services or training program availability; the purpose being not to match the job seeker to what is available, but rather to determine the job seeker needs. The assessment process includes behavioral observations and may also require the use of structured assessment tools. Other information gathered may include detailed work history, family support available, social service affiliations, offender status, and a detailed education history.

The comprehensive assessment is the foundation for development of an IEP. This is an ongoing process that identifies the job seekers employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and the right combination of services to assist in achieving goals and objectives. Training activities may be determined necessary during the provision of the individualized career services, and, at a minimum will be discussed with job seekers receiving individualized career services.

Case management requires a regular follow-up and review or revision of the IEP, until such time as the job seeker becomes workforce ready or enters a training program. In either case, follow-up is critical until the job seeker attains employment.

Primarily, the Centers use the HiRE system which provides job seekers, businesses and workforce development staff with access to workforce information, job openings, training providers, ONET data, resumes, transferable skill matching, assessment tools and other features, helping them make informed career decisions.

b. Services to Employers

Under Business Services, the FPD has taken a strategic approach to develop and maintain relationships and partnerships with the business community. FPD ensures services and service delivery methods meet business demands, including improvement of existing services and development of new business services. The goal is to move to exceptional high-quality standards for delivery of employer services, focused on: 1) job vacancy processing from receipt to follow-up, 2) recruitment services, and 3) optimum connections between the business and job seeker community.

The FPD WDB, in collaboration with the other Workforce Boards in Region 1, is committed to pursuing a regional workforce development strategy in order to maximize and leverage the broad array of resources available in the Greater New Orleans region to ensure a skilled workforce for business and industry. The focus is on employers as the primary customer. The Region 1 WDB partnership has established strategies to bridge the gap between job opportunities and the pool of qualified workers. This regional approach to workforce development is very effective in addressing workforce issues and shared goals. Together, the Boards are minimizing redundancies and gathering more clout and resources. The partnership action agenda includes a focus on industry sector strategies, targeting of high demand, high growth and high pay occupations, integration of services and resources within a single point of contact for employers with seamless processes, forms and requirements, and the development and/or support of career pathway initiatives. The Region 1 Boards have created partnerships with critical workforce stakeholders, such as LWC, economic development entities, post-secondary institutions, local unions and private industry to obtain feedback necessary to create business services that will better meet businesses' demand occupations in key industry clusters.

With these regional partnerships in place, the Boards plan to create a coordinated framework that includes a variety of strategies that are planned and responsive to economic drivers, rather than reactive. This will enable the regional system always to be ready to respond regardless of the economic climate.

The Business Services team develops and executes workforce development strategies that meet the employment and training needs of the regions' employers, to increase the market penetration rate in the community. Members on this team will deal directly with employers to identify employer needs, propose solutions to employment and training problems and to promote the services and programs. This team will analyze industry, employer and labor market data and research the best policies, procedures and programs in order to develop recommendations for appropriate business solutions. Additionally, they forge on-going relationships with businesses and solicit hiring information based on current and future employment needs.

Within each local area Career Center is Recruitment and Placement staff. In order to become more responsive to employers and meet their immediate and long-term needs, it

is essential that these staff members understand the skills that are in demand and market services to a more diverse job seeker pool through more aggressive outreach and recruitment.

The Recruitment and Placement staff is the bridge between the business community and job seeker. This team coordinates with the Business Service Representatives and the Career Specialists to actively recruit and refer job seekers who meet the specified qualifications of employer job openings.

FPD is identifying and targeting high growth/high demand occupations that are vital to the economy by:

- Analyzing economic indicators, labor market information, census and educational data and discussions with businesses;
- Developing strategic partnerships with agencies such as economic development entities, chambers of commerce, unions, industry groups, and technical and community colleges to help identify industries that may benefit from OJT and/or customized training;
- Targeting and marketing to these identified industries; and
- Implementing business services activities

FPD is working with other critical stakeholders, such as LWC's Industry Sector Coordinators and Economic Development partners, to identify and market to those industries with high growth, high demand occupations for potential OJT, customized and incumbent worker training projects. Other business services offered by the Centers include: employer recruitment events, job fairs, information on tax credits and labor market information.

The FPD entered into a cooperative endeavor agreement with the St. Tammany Corporation for the purpose of creating a seamless, business-focused service delivery network that enhances access to program services. It establishes a structure for a mutually beneficial relationship in order to reduce redundancy, increase cost efficiency, and continuously improve services to businesses. Through these types of partnerships, the Region 1 WDBs have been able to create integrated business services that will better meet businesses demand occupations in key industry clusters.

The FPD uses a number of methods to determine the needs of businesses on both a local and regional basis. These methods include: 1) use of various labor information from LWC and other national sources; 2) employer focus groups and survey loops; 3) strategic regional partnerships with critical stakeholders including economic development entities and chambers of commerce. These methods provide up-to-date information on job requirements, skill shortages and training needs, assistance in the development of training curriculum and a compilation of system needs and other services needed by businesses.

The WDB is a critical partner in a Healthcare Sector initiative that launched in May of 2022. The goal of this sector partnership is to effect tangible outcomes to directly increase workforce and talent capacity, understand competitive advantages and opportunities for improvement, and proactively engage partners and resources to better address the most pressing needs for sustainable economic vitality.

The FPD WDB has become very engaged in ensuring the success of the Business Services activities within the tri-parish area and the region. The Board's Business Engagement Committee is involved in the oversight of these activities and is working closely with Center staff to improve services to the business community.

B. Use of Technology

The FPD WDB is willing to help develop technology improvements that will reduce waste and increase efficiency across all core and mandatory partner programs. Unfortunately, changes to the case management systems are outside the control of the local board and partners and require state funding and decisions. However, the partners are currently discussing other ways that we can share information using technology, especially for those individuals that are co-enrolled in multiple programs. The regional boards have utilized an on-line pre-screening application process for better coordination with apprenticeship and training programs. This use of technology has been duplicated and utilized across local programs, such as On-the-Job training, Customized Training and Individual Training Accounts. The Tri-Parish Works website has a customized pre-screening application that any individual can access through the internet. When the virtual application is completed, it is automatically sent to the Center where staff review the information provided and reach out to the individual for next steps.

The Tri-Parish Works Centers are easily accessible for residents of the tri-parish area. In order to reach remote areas, the Centers utilize technology such as the Louisiana's management information system (HiRE) for individuals to register for assistance and access online learning and assessments. Case managers can communicate and facilitate service delivery virtually, when appropriate. This creates greater access to services as well as efficiency in case management practices. The Centers also allow other partners located across the tri-parish area, such as Adult Education and Community Action Agencies, to provide WIOA applications to their clients and then send to appropriate staff for the provision of next steps in service delivery.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the FPD quickly adapted the Centers to the use of multiple technology platforms to continue in serving the community. Center leadership has been thought "outside the box" in how to effectively deliver services during these difficult times. This has allowed us to have a much better process in place for serving individuals who are unable to easily access the Center services and participate in meaningful activities. Partner agencies have also adapted their processes and services to ensure appropriate access.

With WIOA's increased emphasis on services to most in need populations and with the partnerships that have been forged between WIOA, Wagner Peyser, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation, it is vital that the entire one-stop system is aware of its responsibilities to provide access to programs and facilities that do not discriminate against individuals and that reasonable accommodations are always provided when feasible.

To this end, the FPD WDB will support efforts to continuously monitor the centers compliance with Section 188, whether that be an annual evaluation of accessibility of facilities or regular reviews of program requirements or updating staff about how to provide programs and services that are in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA.

Each Center location has been monitored for accessibility for individuals with disabilities and meets the requirements of ADA regulations. Every effort is made to accommodate individuals who have special needs and to offer services to individuals who are assessed as in need of services and to coordinate available services between relevant agencies.

C. Strategies and Services

Strategies and services identified to reach the Boards' strategic priorities and aligned with the State Plan include:

- Focus on serving the hardest-to-serve, vulnerable populations or **priority service group** as defined in WIOA law. The Board is developing more creative outreach efforts to **individuals with barriers to employment**, and more effective strategies in preparing those individuals for success in employment through expanded partnerships. A concerted effort is needed to engage previously “untapped talent” in career pathways in in-demand industries that truly emphasize the asset and value these individuals bring to the workforce. The focus will be on the hardest to serve, vulnerable populations (“untapped talent”) within our communities. The Tri-Parish Works Centers are maximizing current partner relationships and expanding the resource network to ensure interested job seekers and priority populations are aware of the WIOA program and services. Center staff work with community partners to provide a clear and efficient pathway through the orientation, certification, and enrollment while also expanding and enhancing the service array for job seekers across the local area. In addition, the Board has also reinforced outreach efforts through the inclusion of highlighting success stories, increase in social media campaigns, and attendance at community events.
- Active participation in regional leadership events and other work groups for the purpose of **streamlining services offered to employers**, tracking employer service delivery, aligning business outreach efforts with other partners. This ongoing effort has helped workforce areas work together much more effectively to assist sector partnerships and individual employers.
- Board membership reflects its commitment to serving its key industry clusters. This ensures that its outreach activities are well aligned with key sectors. Currently, the tri-parish area's **demand sectors** align with the region's and include: Manufacturing (including Oil and Gas), Healthcare, Transportation and Logistics (including Maritime), Information Technology and Construction.
- The Workforce Board is facilitating the guidance and information for sectors to support and develop **apprenticeship opportunities**. Additional efforts include expanding coordination with apprenticeship programs within the region to recruit and assist individuals in entering these programs.
- The Board intends to continue to build a solid reputation as a “go-to” resource for economic developers seeking timely labor force data and analysis, as well as seamless staffing services.
- The Board continues to participate in forums and other structured educational activities that help employers address current employment life cycles issues. This includes, but is not limited to involvement in K-12 Jump Start initiatives and other **career pathway activities** involving our community and technical college system and industry associations.
- Business Service Representatives (BSRs) have been assigned to targeted sectors as well as given specific responsibilities for communicating business needs to and working with the various partner programs.
- Participation in the regional business services team allows the BSR's to develop regional relationships and work with staff in other workforce areas to provide seamless services to business throughout the region.

- Align local Center policy and service delivery with the Workforce Board strategic priorities, defined targeted industry sectors and real time labor market data.
- Develop and implement strategies with all core partners that place the customer at the center of all activities.
- Develop, implement and support **talent development strategies** such as career pathway options, sector strategies, registered apprenticeships, work experiences and on-the-job and customized training activities to meet the needs of job seekers and business/industry in our local area and region.
- Establish and support **Career Pathways** as a model for skill, credential and degree attainment for participants to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability.
- Review Center activities to **ensure quality and effective services** and provide certification status.

D. Local Coordination Strategies

The FPD WDB is working diligently to reinvigorate and further establish existing working relationships with the **core and mandatory partners** as required under WIOA law, which include:

- ▶ WIOA Title I
- ▶ Wagner Peyser
- ▶ Adult Education
- ▶ Vocational Rehabilitation
- ▶ Trade Adjustment Assistance
- ▶ Carl Perkins Career & Tech Education in Community and Technical Colleges
- ▶ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ▶ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- ▶ Community Services Block Grants (CSBG)
- ▶ Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs
- ▶ Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

With that said, the Board **continues to host** regular meetings with many of these partners for the purpose of developing a comprehensive workforce system that enhances access to the program services with the goal of administering separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers. All partners involved acknowledge this activity as a “work in progress” that will take some time to fully develop and recognize its complete potential.

These efforts will create a true one-stop delivery system by bringing together required partners in order to have a seamless customer-focused service delivery network. An integrated system will allow partners to improve services, maximize resources, avoid duplication, and enhance outcomes for all customers. The intended results are the development of meaningful MOUs and the integration of services and resources to the fullest extent possible.

Most partners have been very cooperative in coming together to create a seamless system of programs. Those core programs currently involved in this process include: Title I WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, Wagner Peyser, Title II Adult Education, CSBG, HUD, Veterans Employment Programs, UI, TAA, **TANF** and Carl Perkins programs under the Community and Technical College System. With additional federal guidance, an MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement was developed and signed by the required partners. Still, many partners are struggling to understand these WIOA mandates regarding the “paying their fair share” of the One-Stop Center infrastructure costs. It is the Board’s hope that LWC, with its state partners, will ensure that relevant information is disseminated down to the local level entities in support of these efforts. The Board will continue to educate and work with all partners in understanding and following the federal directives.

The partners, through the guidance of the WDB, have adopted the following mission and guiding principles to support their collaboration:

Mission: The preparation of a skilled, successful workforce aligned to the needs of business and industry.

Guiding principles:

- **Services will be comprehensive.** All job seekers, students and employers will be served comprehensively in a seamless system that addresses their needs, coordinates services across programs, and minimizes duplication.
- **Services will be integrated.** Program activities will be coordinated and integrated where feasible. This will be accomplished through partner agencies jointly serving common customers, supporting interagency in-service training to one another, and providing information and services that most directly meet the customers' needs.
- **Services will be made accessible regardless of entry point into the system.** This will be accomplished by providing all customers access to the full range of services available in the community, whether they are looking to find jobs, build basic educational or occupational skills, earn a postsecondary certificate or degree, or obtain guidance on how to make career choices, or are employers seeking skilled workers.

Partners are currently exploring the following opportunities: the creation of a system orientation provided by every partner, an electronic common intake and other technology related linkages, referral and co-enrollment processes, extensive cross-training of all partner staff, and potential opportunities to share space and resources.

The partners recognize that cross-informing staff in the various programs will strengthen the system and better serve the customers. This crucial function lends itself to enhanced performance, with additional resources, talents and options, and allows the operation to constantly evolve and respond to demand from customers. It also helps to support customer satisfaction and accountability through common performance measures and to respond to an ever-changing labor market.

Another top priority of the partners is to improve access to services and establish a sound and effective referral and co-enrollment process. Co-enrollment will allow partners to leverage resources, while providing more comprehensive service delivery strategies that meet the needs of customers with barriers to employment. Additionally, partners agree coordination of services in a customer-focused manner, minimizes the possibility of subsequent re-entry into the public workforce system in cases where needed services were not provided or possible barriers not addressed. Conversations continue on the use of a virtual referral platform (Unite Us) to help all agencies in connecting their customers to other partner agency services.

Contributions of One-Stop Partners - The following table summarizes information about the required core and mandatory partners including the primary target groups and a summary of services provided.

One-Stop Partner	Primary Target Groups	Summary of services provided
WIOA Adult Program	Low income and Basic Skills Deficient Adults Age 18 and over with Barrier to Employment	Comprehensive re-employment and training services
WIOA Dislocated Worker Program	Laid-off individuals with limited re-employment opportunities	Comprehensive re-employment and training services
WIOA Youth Program	Disconnected, low-income youth aged 16-24	Comprehensive employment and training services
Wagner Peyser Act Program	Job Seekers legally permitted to work in the U.S.	Job search assistance and universal career services
Adult Education and Family Literacy Program	Basic Skills Deficient Non-high school completers	Adult Education, HiSET preparation and instruction
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Adults and youth with a documentable disability that can't obtain employment	Comprehensive re-employment and training services
Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Programs	Community College career and technical education students	Financial support for training programs
Community Services Block Grant Program	Low-income individuals and families	Emergency food and shelter programs as well as employment and training services
Housing and Urban Development Program	Low-income individuals and families	Housing assistance
Jobs for Veterans Program	Veterans with barriers to employment	Comprehensive case management and career services
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	Low-income individuals and families	Cash payments for living expenses
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	Low-income individuals and families	Cash payments for food

SERVICE COORDINATION EFFORTS

1. Adult Education

The FPD WDB has relationships established with Adult Basic Education providers in the tri-parish area. As partners in the One-Stop system, we continue to explore how we can streamline our service delivery for shared clients. The common focus is on creating enhancements in the coordination and access of services as well as developing a system of services that are non-duplicative, human centered, easy to access and enriched through the use of technology. Plans are underway to have Adult Education classes conducted on-site at the comprehensive Center in

Slidell a few days a week. This co-location should be in place by March 2023. Adult Education partners are represented on the Workforce Board.

The FPD has fully supported the State of Louisiana’s restructuring of the Adult Education programs (now known as “WorkReady U”) and its primary focus of putting adults to work by providing quality basic skills instruction, in addition to wrap-around student services that lead to a seamless transition to postsecondary enrollment, technical skill training, credentialing and sustainable employment. With these shared goals and the common performance metrics, the Adult Education providers will be a major asset to the One-Stop System partners and will assist the Centers in providing industry with a skilled, trained workforce.

The FPD WDB has embraced the new WIOA requirement for reviewing applications for the provision of adult education and literacy activities to ensure consistency with the local plan. The Workforce Board is handling this activity through its committee structure and coordinates efforts with the entity handling the procurement of these Adult Education programs and services.

2. **Wagner Peyser**

The co-location of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services in the Tri-Parish Works Comprehensive Center has been in place now for many years. Wagner Peyser funded staff provide relevant career services including job search navigation, labor exchange, career counseling and labor market intelligence. Jobseekers, including Unemployment Insurance recipients, can also receive eligibility assessments and referrals to an array of education and training resources through the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program. Wagner Peyser has representation on the Workforce Board. Full integration of Wagner Peyser staff in the Centers has not been as prevalent since prior to the pandemic, but efforts are underway by the Board and One-Stop Operator to negotiate with LWC for its full return.

3. **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is a One-Stop system partner with the FPD WDB in the tri-parish area. LRS is co-housed with the St. Tammany Tri-Parish Works Center. Through this effort, leveraging of resources and co-enrollment of clients has been more easily accomplished. LRS is also represented on the Workforce Board.

The LRS Program Coordinator for rehabilitation technology provides consultation to Center staff and affiliate locations to improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues. In addition, the agency’s Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists serve as LRS liaisons for all Centers and affiliate locations within the region, providing public awareness and services to consumers such as building job-seeking skills and employment development. LRS, as a One-Stop system partner, is committed to the success of individuals with disabilities and assists with collaboration effort across partner programs. The primary focus of LRS’ collaboration is to identify and address barriers (e.g. policies, eligibility process, resource allocation), assure effective service provision through support of local interagency core teams, provide cross-agency training, outreach, engage in capacity building of young adults and family outreach efforts, provide continued support of innovative models and practices related to transition and provide information and technical assistance.

4. **Secondary and Post-Secondary Education**

The focus of the FPD WDB is on maximizing tools, communication, and partnerships in support of strategic initiatives to serve clients. The Board supports Business Services, Sector Partnerships, Career Pathways, and Work-Based learning by engaging with business partners to provide organized, evidence-based information to the Board and education/training partners. This allows the Centers to guide job-seeking clients to in-demand occupations, growing industries, and opportunities for career identification, development, and growth. The WDB is committed to promoting youth career development opportunities by connecting with education partners to ensure integration and seamless services to youth around educational opportunities for in-demand occupations, including soft skills training and work-based learning positions.

Through the more robust partnerships with the K-12 Jump Start initiative, Adult Education and community and technical colleges, strategies have been developed that assist individuals in moving through the education continuum toward sustainable careers. These collaborative relationships help to build a strong, systematic approach through the development of local Career Pathways and each partner will help support student career development through education and work-based learning opportunities.

Workforce development programming, activities and investments are designed and created based upon current local labor market and business demand. The Workforce Board utilizes economic reports, EMSI data, and local board knowledge in order to inform the development of services, investments in secondary and post-secondary training and identification of industry areas for work-based learning opportunities.

FPD is participating in an Industry, Workforce and Economic Development initiative with our K-12, community and technical college and economic development partners. This partnership provides a platform for each entity to stay up-to-date on all workforce related activities, as well as the implementation and quick responsiveness to industry/employer needs. Through this effective partnership, the partners have participated in many effective and creative projects, such as: multiple customized training contracts, joint presentations to Chambers and other employer groups, Future Focus Camps and Career Expos for K-12 students and parents, as well as regional Perkins partner meetings.

5. **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

The FPD fully supports the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program as a required partner in the Center's service delivery system. The delivery of services and benefits under the Trade Act Programs will be coordinated with the WIOA programs and partners.

The reemployment services that are provided to trade-affected workers under the Trade Act programs also fall within the WIOA career and training services and activities. The TAA program can provide valuable resources that trade-affected workers may access in order to facilitate training, job search, relocation assistance, and other resources. By utilizing the TAA funds for those eligible participants, the WIOA formula funds may then be leveraged to serve other non-eligible TAA individuals in need of services.

Trade affected workers will access reemployment services in the same manner as other dislocated workers. They will be registered in HiRE and co-enrolled as WIOA Dislocated Worker participants. State-Merit Staff will complete all applicable forms and assessments. If

training services are approved, the Trade Act program resources will be utilized to pay for the cost of training.

WIOA staff will initiate enrollment of eligible laid off employees for case management in the local centers. Once trade impacted workers are certified, local state merit staff will approve and enter the TAA program budget obligations and expenditure records in HiRE and complete the co-enrollment of these participants in TAA training.

6. **Apprenticeship Programs**

FPD recognizes Apprenticeship Programs as an important component of our talent development strategies and has developed partnerships with this system in order to increase the quality of services to both employers and workers and enhance activities in support of current workforce system priorities. The FPD has educated center staff about Registered Apprenticeship in order to increase access to workforce education and training. Referrals to apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are routinely integrated into the career guidance and career exploration services offered through the local Centers, both virtually and as a part of staff-assisted services. In addition, centers are encouraged to co-sponsor career fairs and other outreach activities with the Apprenticeship system, as well as market these opportunities to both employers and workers.

7. **Re-Entry Programs**

The FPD has been at the forefront of re-entry initiatives underway in the local area. Leadership participates with various taskforces and activities relative to these efforts. The full spectrum of comprehensive services has been made available to re-entry program participants. These services include, but are not limited to job search and placement, resume/application preparation, interview skills, career assessments/counseling, tuition for occupational skills training, on-the-job training opportunities, as well as supportive services. In addition, the Center has dedicated up to ten percent of available training funds to provide transitional employment, which is ideally designed for these returning citizens.

The Centers have an on-going partnership with the Prisoner Re-entry initiative to assist those being released from prison with job search and other employment and training related activities. Center leadership has also provided in-service training to re-entry volunteers and staff on various workforce resources and is committed to continuing this practice.

8. **Supportive Services**

The FPD may provide supportive services and needs-related payments to support the employment and training needs of WIOA eligible participants. Supportive Services may include, but not be limited to: transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and other services that are necessary to enable an individual, who is unable to obtain the services from other programs, to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. Needs-related payments may be provided to adults who are unemployed and do not qualify for or have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation for the purpose of enabling such individuals to participate in training services.

The FPD maintains policies, vetted and approved by the Board, addressing the use of supportive services and allowances therein. Center staff conduct an assessment to determine supportive service needs of WIOA participants. Coordination of supportive services with partner agencies is an important part of this process to avoid duplication of resources and ensure that participants are receiving all needed resources that will contribute to successful outcomes. A strong

relationship with the Community Action Agencies in the tri-parish area allows us to leverage resources to best serve the needs of our joint participants.

E. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

1. A description of how the FPD provides adult and dislocated worker services can be found in Chapter 4.A.2. and is the Service Integration Action Plan.

Not every customer will need, nor be eligible for, all program elements thus each job seeker’s path is customer focused and tailored to their individual needs.

Basic Career Services: Individuals seeking few services or individuals that are not eligible to be enrolled in WIOA may receive Basic Career Services. These services are universally accessible defined as self-services, and are delivered with minimal supervision. Centers maintain a publicly accessible resource area (including access for person with disabilities) as part of our services. This public space and the resources available within it will include computers with Internet access; tutorials for career exploration, job searching and resume writing; job postings; information on services and financial aid for non-WIOA training, labor market reports, educational programs and information on partner programs. Individuals may receive self-service or informational activities without an eligibility determination. The resource area is staffed with knowledgeable staff to assist with customer questions. The following are key components of Basic Career Services:

Outreach	Intake & Orientation to WIOA	Eligibility Determination
Initial Assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities	Workforce & Labor Market statistics, including job vacancies	Local In-demand occupations & earnings information, skills requirements & career pathways
Job search, resume development and placement assistance	Online job search tools and resources for free financial literacy/job skills course	Provision of information on programs and services and program referrals
Information on education and training programs	Assistance with filing a claim for unemployment compensation	Information on the availability of supportive services

The FPD will provide WIOA Individual Career Services to those who are deemed eligible. These services include:

In-depth interview and evaluation to determine barriers and employment goals	Development of an individual employment plan	Comprehensive assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs
Group/Individual counseling and career planning	Short-term pre-vocational services to prepare for employment	In-demand industry sectors and occupations and non-traditional employment information

Internships and work experiences linked to careers	Workforce preparation activities	Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance
Financial Literacy services	English language acquisition and integrated education/training	Follow-up services

Training services will be provided to eligible individuals that are:

- unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency, and
- is in need of training to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency, and
- is unable to obtain assistance from other sources to pay for the costs of the training.

Training services include:

Occupational skills training including non-traditional employment	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction	Job readiness training in combination with occupational, OJT or transitional jobs
On-the-Job Training	Incumbent Worker Training	Customized Training
Skill upgrading and re-training	Adult Education and literacy activities including ESL	

2. The FPD participates with the LWC Rapid Response Unit to provide the necessary intervention services to affected employees when required. Designated staff from the Centers are available and knowledgeable in dealing with Rapid Response activities.

Upon notification of layoff from the Rapid Response unit with LWC, Tri-Parish Works staff are directed to participate in the Rapid Response efforts. Staff members, in coordination with the Rapid Response team members, share the workload involved in the process. Intervention services/strategies are designed based on the immediate needs of the employer. Based on information from worker orientation meetings, the team begins assessing, coordinating and planning services, allowing for maximum flexibility in each layoff.

To accommodate worker schedules and enable more employees to access services, every effort is made to negotiate on-site services and company paid time-off. When possible, Worker Transition Centers are established on-site prior to lay-off date to provide the most convenient services.

To leverage the greatest number of resources, a variety of community partners are included in rapid response services. An array of core services and, as necessary, Trade Adjustment Assistance services are provided within the established Worker Transition Centers. These temporary centers are established on-site or at a convenient location within the community to meet the immediate needs of workers prior to layoff and continue to operate until the layoff is completed and all participants' needs are met. Services include: workshops tailored to the specific dislocation event, assistance filing U.I. claims, job search, career counseling, career

assessment, job and career fairs, and referrals to community and faith-based resources. To ensure seamless service delivery, the affected workers are transitioned to the local Centers as appropriate for additional services.

The Rapid Response functions are also a part of the business services that are provided by the Regional WDBs. This includes the partnerships that exist with important stakeholders, such as economic development agencies and industry groups. Every effort is made to match the affected workers with companies that are growing and/or in need of skilled workers. Rapid Response events are promoted through the local television and radio networks, local newspapers, brochures and presentations at business meetings and community job and education fairs.

3. It is FPD's policy to offer priority of service to veterans and spouses over non-veterans for all available services, based on assessed need and availability of funding. The term "priority of service" means, with respect to any qualified workforce and training program, that a covered veteran/spouse shall be given priority over nonveterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under that program, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Such priority includes giving access to such services to a covered veteran/spouse before a non-covered person or, if resources are limited, giving access to such services to a covered veteran/spouse instead of a non-covered person.

Veterans are identified at the point of entry, whether the person walks into a center as a new customer or self- registers in HiRE so that all veterans can be informed of their right to Priority of Service. The Veterans' representative located within the comprehensive Center works closely with staff to coordinate and offer a full array of networked and/or direct services for veterans.

The Local Veteran's Employment Representative (LVER) is directly involved with Center staff to offer direct services, and coordinate services to veterans. They are available to assist, advise, inform, and train Center staff, and fully network with all partners, employers and community providers. The LVER conducts outreach to employers to develop jobs or training opportunities for veterans, as well as coordinate with Center partners to assist, facilitate, or act directly to serve the needs of veterans.

F. Youth Activities

1. The WDB and educational institutions, along with other groups interested in youth, work in a collaborative effort to create a system of knowledge and skill attainment for youth. Youth programs are designed to broaden and enhance youth's connection to comprehensive, integrated services which have as a strong focal point, the completion of school through achievement of a diploma or HiSET, the strengthening of basic skills, employment, internships, post-secondary training and beyond, as well as apprenticeships when feasible. Local technical and community colleges work in partnership with businesses to align their curriculum and teaching methods to adapt to the needs of the employers in the community.

FPD's effort is to work with special populations, such as homeless, runaway, foster children, pregnant or parenting teen, youth offenders and youth in single parent households, to provide guidance and mentoring services to influence entry into educational and skill training. The WDB requires local centers to develop effective relationships with local Juvenile Justice Systems to meet the needs of youth within that system.

The WDB understands the importance of preparing youth for the workforce through education and training. The FPD is concentrating on developing stronger partnerships with organizations that have an interest in the development of out-of-school youth, such as Adult Education, community action agencies and other community-based organizations. Working with organizations that embrace disadvantaged out-of-school youth, such as LRS, will assist the Board in connecting with these youth and identifying their needs.

The FPD has put major emphasis on out-of-school youth, both dropouts and those who have a high school diploma or HiSET and who are unemployed, underemployed, basic skills deficient, or have significant barriers to obtaining employment. Focus has been on assisting those youth with obtaining training in high growth/high demand occupations to meet the critical needs of the local labor market. Our goal is to ensure that all local Community and Technical Colleges and the public-school system are aware of the WIOA services offered to youth. FPD will outreach to youth considering enrollment in a Community or Technical College and graduating high school seniors, who qualify as an out-of-school youth and need additional assistance to obtain their career goals.

The Centers have created multiple partnerships with many critical stakeholders within the local area to ensure quality programming for the “hardest to serve” youth, as well as providing an opportunity for numerous agencies to leverage resources. Examples of these creative and effective partnerships include:

- An out-of-school Job’s for America’s Graduates program in partnership with Northshore Technical Community College
- Utilization of United Way of Southeast Louisiana’s financial literacy training
- Coordination and sharing of resources by Tri-Parish Works and the Community Action Agencies to co-sponsor summer youth work experience activities
- Development and implementation of a Career Exploration Academy to better expose young people to multiple career options which included: introductions to over 20 careers, interaction with employers during lunch and learns and field trips, support from a mentor, and assistance and support in registering and completing technical/education programs. This included a multi-prong partnership and leveraging of resources of Tri-Parish Works Centers, community colleges, community action agencies, Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation, and private companies.

The FPD welcomes opportunities to collaborate with Job Challenge, Job Corps and other youth programs. Efforts have been made periodically in the past through contacts and presentations to provide opportunities for partnering with these entities should an occasion present itself to work with youth who are interested in these types of activities.

FPD assists youth in gaining access to skills needed to be successful in a career, which can ultimately result in contributing to the community’s economy.

- a. The youth programs are designed to provide an objective assessment which includes a review of the academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs of each youth. An Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is developed for youth registrants to identify career goals. Each registrant completes and pursues a plan to further educate and assist in an attachment to work. Through partnerships with education, technical and community colleges, advance placement at the next level of education/training is available to registrants. Industry based certification may be achieved through a collaborative effort of educational entities and training providers.

- b. Through out-of-school, in-school and summer activities youth can experience positive interactions with peers and knowledgeable, caring adults in a success-oriented environment. This fosters holistic educational, employment and leadership skills. FPD's youth services offer the following program elements required by WIOA:
- Tutoring, studying skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies or for a recognized post-secondary credential;
 - Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services;
 - Paid and unpaid work experiences, that have an academic and occupational education component and may include summer employment or year-round employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internship and job shadowing, and on-the-job training;
 - Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area;
 - Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
 - Leadership development opportunities including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
 - Supportive services;
 - Adult mentoring, for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, which may occur both during and after program participation;
 - Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation;
 - Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of individual youth;
 - Financial literacy education;
 - Entrepreneurial skill training;
 - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services;
 - Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.
- c. Youth program designs will emphasize the following areas:
- to collaborate with education and training entities to provide academic learning opportunities with a solid academic core linked to career preparation;
 - to recruit and engage dropouts and out-of-school youth in pursuing those opportunities;
 - to develop a career plan and/or Individual Service Strategy for every youth;
 - to seek industry-based certification as a goal for every youth;
 - to document youth/student progress through integrated MIS system; and
 - to promote innovative and quality program practices through partnering for youth activities.
- d. Career pathways are developed through services offered in the Centers and in partnership with Adult Education, the community and technical colleges, and local K-12 school systems. The activity is designed to focus on job related competencies, career plan development, job search assistance, building of motivation and self-esteem, personal counseling opportunities and post-employment services.

- e. Local educational agencies refer out-of-school youth and students who are at risk of dropping out of school to the local Centers for services. Partnerships have been established with Adult Education providers to offer out-of-school youth an opportunity to acquire a HiSET. An out-of-school Job's for America's Graduates (JAG) program has also been implemented to serve those youth who have dropped out of secondary school.
- f. Summer and year-round work experience programs are offered to encourage participants to take responsibility for their learning, to understand and manage their career options, and to develop social skills and a maturity level that will help them interact positively with others. FPD is emphasizing to worksites the importance of introducing and reinforcing the rigors, demands, rewards, and sanctions associated with holding a job, as well as to impart measurable communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and learning skills. Educational/Job Preparation workshops are offered regularly to all those participating in work experience activities and include topics such as career exploration, financial literacy, leadership, volunteerism, customer service, life skills, etc. A combination of public and private sector worksites is utilized, including some project-based community service-learning opportunities.
- g. Policies have been developed which cover specifics pertaining to eligibility, allowable activities, incentives, etc. These policies include:
- i) The definition of "basic skills deficient" as 1) having English, reading, writing or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or 2) are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. This may be determined by observation and/or written documents obtained during intake/eligibility determination for enrollment in specific youth activities.
 - ii) The definition of the youth barrier "an individual who requires additional assistance" includes the following:
 1. **Is at risk of dropping out of school** (any one of the following) as documented by, but not limited to, school records or self-attestation:
 - Is in the 11th or 12th grade and has not yet passed the required standardized testing, if any.
 - Is at least two semester classes behind the rate required to graduate on time with their high school class as documented by a school official.
 - Has a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0
 - Has repeated at least one secondary grade level
 - Previously dropped out of school, but has since returned to high school.
 2. **Has aged out of foster care** as documented by, but not limited to, court documentation or verification from a social services agency.
 3. **Has experienced recent traumatic events, is a victim of abuse, or resides in an abusive environment**, as documented by a school official or professional on official letterhead, by a written statement from a parent or through self-attestation.
 4. **Has a significant disability** which creates a significant impediment to employment, as documented by, but not limited to, a school Individual Education Plan (IEP), medical professional, receipt of Social Security Insurance (SSI) or through self-attestation.
 5. **Has limited English Proficiency** as documented by, but not limited to, the TABE test or through self-attestation.

6. **Poor or no employment history** (out-of-school youth only) as documented by, but not limited to, wage records, employment records or through self-attestation.
 - Has not had the opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to find and maintain full time stable employment (for more than 13 consecutive weeks) and/or has only been able to access part-time, temporary or seasonal employment.
 - Has been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to application.
7. **LGBT Barriers** Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals experience unemployment and employment discrimination at significantly higher rates compared to the rest of the American population, making it particularly important that they have full access to the services provided by the public workforce system, to help overcome the employment related barriers they encounter.
8. **Family Barriers** (any one of the following) as documented by, but not limited to, wage records, letter from government assistance office or through self-attestation:
 - Has a family history of long term unemployment, i.e. parents/guardians have been unemployed for seven of the past twelve months,
 - During the past two years, parents/guardians have been unable to find and maintain full time stable employment; these multiple breaks in employment may have required reliance on unemployment, food stamps or other government assistance, or
 - Is a food stamp recipient or a member of a family receiving food stamps.
 - Resides in a non-traditional family setting (any one of the following) as documented by, but not limited to, court records or through self-attestation: member of a single parent household, being raised by a guardian, relative or non-parent responsible for the youth's care, or parent is currently in jail or has been in jail for six months of the past two years.
9. **Is an emancipated youth** as documented by, but not limited to, court records or through other reputable sources.

The FPD may award grants for some of the fourteen youth elements, through an RFP process and an evaluation of proposals based on four criteria: program design, demonstrated ability, budget and partnership development. The results of all RFP evaluations are submitted to the WDB for review. Upon approval by the Board, staff negotiates the contract with the service provider.

The Community Development Committee continues to offer expertise in youth policy and assist the Board in:

- Developing and recommending local youth employment and training policy and practice;
- Broadening the youth employment and training focus in the community to incorporate a youth development perspective;
- Establishing linkages with other organizations serving youth in the local area; and
- Reviewing a range of issues that can have an impact on the success of youth in the labor market.

2. The FPD puts emphasis on the out-of-school youth population and regularly monitors the 50% expenditure requirement to ensure compliance. The Covid pandemic caused additional strains on serving this population, although new strategies and programs have since been put

in place. Efforts have been underway to re-invigorate youth work experience activities since they were decimated during the pandemic. In addition FPD has opened up WIOA services to in-school youth (especially for Individual Training Accounts and work experience activities) based on the recent waivers obtained for Louisiana which include: 1) moving back to the 50/50 percent expenditure requirement for in- and out-of-school youth; and 2) waiver to allow for Individual Training Accounts for in-school youth.

G. Serving individuals with barriers to employment

Strong collaborative partnerships are critical to both recruiting effectively and to ensure priority populations benefit from WIOA services. Frequently, community partners are the most valuable referral source, and a formal referral process has strengthened our capacity to manage and follow-up on partner referrals. Core partners have implemented a referral process with agency contacts to ensure a warm hand-off occurs as participants transition from one agency to the next. Tri-Parish Works Center staff are trained to deliver the appropriate message ensuring that potential job seekers understand WIOA services. They highlight eligibility requirements and functional program expectations, so job seekers are well positioned for education and employment success. Board and Tri-Parish Works staff attends community events in targeted neighborhoods with higher instances of unemployment and poverty and work with partner agencies that refer participants such as local organizations and agencies for recruitment. FPD has hosted and attended many community roundtables that help connect multiple non-profits and community-based organizations. FPD has maximized current relationships and expanded our resource network to ensure interested job seekers and priority populations are aware of the WIOA program, understand available resources, and have multiple access points to facilitate enrollment.

The Board and Centers reaffirm that we serve the job seekers and employers of our community respectfully. In the wake of current social disturbances, it is important that we make our mission clear to all. Our mission is to influence the direction of all workforce development programs to ensure that the needs of employers and employees are met. We will continue this mission, as we always have, in an inclusionary way. The Board and Centers do not tolerate racism in any shape or form. Any acts of racism, discrimination, and hatred are strongly condemned by all of our staff. We will provide customer service that changes lives, to all people and at all times.

H. Training Policies and Activities

1. The WDB is very diligent in its oversight of training expenditures in comparison to Center overhead costs. Board staff track expenditures monthly and provide bi-monthly updates to the board on the level of these expenditures.
2. The WDB recognizes the need to guide WIOA training investments to high-wage, high growth industries to truly accomplish its mission. A key investment principle for the Board is that resources need to be utilized in a manner that moves workforce system clients into high-wage, higher growth pathways that support a greater likelihood of individual and family self-sufficiency. In order to do this, a shift to become more employer focused in our approach to service delivery was undertaken a few years ago. The WDB continues to support efforts to more directly connect specific employers to jobseekers through job training that meets the employer's needs in order to increase the likelihood of a resulting placement with that employer.

The following goals were developed to assist the Tri-Parish Works Centers in aligning the above priorities of the WIB with their training activities.

- Utilize 40% of available formula training funds on Employer-based training activities, such as On-the-Job and customized training, internships, and classroom training attached to a specific employer need.
- Target businesses that are currently hiring or are anticipating hiring workers including businesses that have openings that have been hard to fill.
- Identify critical human resource challenges that must be addressed for businesses to succeed and thrive.
- Assess business willingness to aggregate its training needs with other employers sharing similar skill gap needs.
- Assess the education and training resources that could respond to the skill gap needs resulting from the ongoing dialogues with employers.
- Increase Career Exploration opportunities for the youth of our local area

Efforts thus far have paid off with a significant increase in employer-based training contracts from previous years. Forty percent (40%) of training dollars spent annually have been through direct training with employers, whether OJT, customized, work experience or transitional jobs activities yielding a ninety-two percent (92%) placement rate. The pandemic initially impacted our employer-based training activities, however, efforts have been underway to get back to pre-covid levels.

3. The Act establishes that the Individual Training Account (ITA) shall be one of the methods for eligible participants to access training services. Training services are provided in a manner that maximizes informed customer choice. Participants can choose from a variety of training programs offered by various providers located both in and outside the regional area.

An ITA will be offered to eligible participants in order to afford them the opportunity to access training determined to be necessary to achieve their employment and career goals. Employed individuals are eligible to receive an ITA if the individual is not earning a self-sufficient wage as determined by FPD policy and the ITA is for occupational training that is introducing new skills and will result in an increase in pay leading to self-sufficiency.

Each ITA initiated is based on labor market demand and an earning potential of at least \$12.00 per hour in the occupation for which the member is to be trained. The training program must be for an in-demand occupation with a star rating of 3, 4 or 5 in the region as evidenced by LA Star Jobs or Demand Occupations in labor market information

The individual must be an eligible Adult or Dislocated Worker (as stipulated in policy 110-16) and have demonstrated that employment could not be obtained, or the individual could not achieve self-sufficient employment.

In order for an ITA to be issued, the training program must be on the State Eligible Training Provider List. Training providers who are identified as “not in compliance” by the Louisiana Workforce Commission may not be used for training purposes.

4. The FPD WDB notifies providers in the local area of the opportunity to apply for status as an approved training provider on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Since WIOA training opportunities are limited to demand occupations, every effort is made to identify and conduct outreach to appropriate programs. The Board approves new schools and programs consistent with State and local policies. The ETPL is the primary source of skill training and education for WIOA eligible participants. Training Contracts may also be

utilized to provide groups or individuals with occupational training when indicated by employer demand and not available on the ETPL. It is anticipated that such training will yield higher outcomes and reduced costs. Consistent with WIOA, using the ETPL, participants will have an informed choice of which school they want to attend using their WIOA funding. The FPD's decision to also offer contractual training opportunities from time to time will not limit or impact participants choice to attend other educational programs.

Every effort is made to work collaboratively with postsecondary institutions to ensure that the coursework being offered is relevant to industry needs. Both Nunez Community College and Northshore Technical & Community College serve on the Workforce Board and participate in one-stop system partnership meetings.

In addition to classroom training, the FPD offers a significant array of work-based training opportunities for eligible participants. They include: on-the-job and customized training, incumbent worker upgrade training, internships, and work experience. The FPD has also added Transitional Job training to the mix of services as it is an allowable activity under WIOA. The goal of this activity is to establish a work history for an individual that demonstrates success in the workplace and develops the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment.

I. Transfer of WIOA Title IB Funds

1. The FPD WDB may use its authority to request a transfer of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams if determined necessary for successful program operations. If such decision is made, the FPD shall make a request to the State based on LWC's requirements. The request will be made in writing upon approval from the Board and not be for more than 50% transfer amount in the first year in which funds are made available. FPD may request up to an additional 25% in the second-year funds are available. Any transfer requests shall include the following information:
 - a. Why is there a need to transfer funds? (Example: Economic conditions such as high/low unemployment, business closures, etc.)
 - b. How will the transfer of funds affect the participant levels in both the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs? Include an estimated number of Adult and Dislocated Workers expected to be served if the transfer is granted.
 - c. Explain the impact on jointly funded employment and training programs in the Local Service WIOA Delivery System.
2. FPD may reserve and use no more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds allocated to the local area to pay for the Federal share of the cost of providing incumbent worker training as outlined in Section WIOA Sec. 134(d) and 20 CFR 680.790
3. Transitional Jobs will be made available to eligible individuals and will not exceed 10% of the available Adult and Dislocated Worker funds as specified in WIOA Sec. 134 (d)(5).
4. FPD may use up to 10% of the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds for adult training services and/or youth activities for Pay-for-Performance contract strategies.

CHAPTER 5. PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION - LOCAL COMPONENT

- A. The FPD has consistently met and/or exceeded the federal performance measures. The following performance standards are negotiated with the Louisiana Workforce Commission on an annual basis:

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

- Entered Employment rate 2nd quarter after exit
- Entered Employment rate 4th quarter after exit
- Median Earnings 2nd quarter after exit
- Credential Attainment rate
- Measurable Skills Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

See Appendix 1 for specific negotiated levels for each category listed above.

- B. The FPD WDB will continue to act as a convener and strategic leader for the tri-parish area under WIOA. As such, the WDB will work with Center staff, local elected officials and regional and state partners to support job seekers success in the labor market by providing access to employment, education, training, and support services while matching employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The WDB will ensure that the Center is employing proven and promising practices, and where the opportunity exists, creating some proven and promising practices that may be replicated elsewhere. The Board will work to continue to build relationships with the economic development community and will align service delivery to the realities of the regional economy. The Board will continue to support sector strategies, career pathways and work-based learning and will ensure that the needs of targeted populations are being met. The WDB will focus on being informed by sound data and will create and support evidenced-based programs that will positively impact the local area and region. The Board will strive to create a top-flight local workforce system that actively supports the needs of the job seeking population and the business community.

FPD accesses WIOA quarterly reports and data from La Performs and the HiRE system to conduct regular evaluations of Center activities. The WDB evaluates overall performance based on the common and LWC performance measures. If performance falls short of expectations, the WDB works with the local Centers to develop a corrective action plan. The Board staff also provides technical assistance and training to those Centers that experience difficulty meeting or exceeding the measures. Regular and on-going training is provided to front-line staff in order to help the staff improve the quality of services delivered to customers.

The FPD WDB has revised and updated local policies to fully maximize the delivery of employment and training activities with the highest return on these federal investments. The Board staff will continue to provide technical assistance and support to the centers in the implementation of federal, state and WDB policies. When necessary, the Board staff will request additional technical support from the outside sources.

Programmatic monitoring reviews are conducted on a regular basis to ensure center activities are in compliance with state, federal and WDB policy directives.

CHAPTER 6. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES - LOCAL COMPONENT

A. Fiscal Management

1. The St. Bernard Parish Government Workforce Programs department is responsible for the administration of the WIOA federal award and all related financial transactions. A top priority of the department is to ensure compliance with the applicable Acts, Federal Registers, Uniform Guidance, State Directives, WDB policies and generally accepted accounting principles. Records are kept that adequately identify each Federal grant fund and contain

information pertaining to the grants including authorizations, obligations, unobligated balances, assets, liabilities, expenditures and income. Current financial systems allow for effective fiscal and internal control and accountability for funds, property, and other assets to guarantee they are used solely for authorized purposes.

A budget is prepared annually for all WIOA formula and supplemental monies, including all discretionary grants for programs, services and projects, in alignment with WDB priorities and Federal and state requirements. The Board priorities take into account the responsibilities to meet performance standards, operation of the Tri-Parish Works Centers, and the expending of funds appropriately and in a timely manner to comply with WIOA requirements. The Board Director provides budget oversight, direction, and coordination in alignment with applicable parish government budget processes and cycles.

The Workforce Programs department has formulated criteria to ensure that funds are equitably charged to the titles and activities that actually benefit from these funds. Direct costs are identified specifically for a program and directly charged to that program. Shared direct costs are readily assigned to multiple programs and are consolidated into a cost pool and subsequently distributed using an appropriate allocation method. The Fiscal Manager reviews cash balances and orders funds to meet immediate cash disbursement needs. Expenditures are calculated by funding source and cash ordered to cover these payments to be made at a date closely coinciding with receipt of the funds. These requests are made via email and funds are wired to the bank.

In addition to the above processes, the Executive Committee regularly reviews expenditure reports, monitoring activities and audits to ensure the fiscal agent is operating effectively and efficiently and within the appropriate laws. This information is also shared with the CEO and the Administrative Entity/Grant Recipient. Any inappropriate or unacceptable findings would be discussed by the Executive Committee and CEO and brought to the full board for action if necessary.

2. FPD has processes for both competitive and non-competitive awarding of contracts for activities under Title I of WIOA. The Board may award contracts on a competitive basis to providers of adult and/or youth workforce development activities, taking into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the specific program. The Board may also choose to award grants or contracts on a sole-source basis if it is determined that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers of workforce activities in the local area and/or public service providers are available and able to adequately deliver the necessary services.

All contracts are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis as indicated by FPD policy. Any inappropriate or unacceptable findings would be discussed by the Executive Committee and CEO and brought to the full board for action if necessary.

The Board, as required under WIOA law, released a Request for Proposals to competitively procure the One-Stop System Operator function in March of 2020. A contract was awarded prior to the start of the 2022 Program year. This process will be conducted again in 2025 as required by law.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

The FPD ensures their policies, procedures, programs, and services are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments, in order to provide equal access to all customers with disabilities. Additionally, FPD agrees to fully comply with the provisions of WIOA, Title VII of the civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the aforementioned laws.

FPD continues to ensure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages and education. Program accommodations include, as appropriate, the provision of interpreters for individuals with language barriers and/or hearing impairments who require such assistance in order to participate in center programs, large print materials and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, earphones with enhanced sound for individuals with hearing disabilities, etc. HiRE is JAWS enabled to assist individuals with visual disabilities to access employment and training services via the Internet. Each Center has identified staff and/or local contacts who can assist with service delivery for job seekers of other languages. Referrals to appropriate community-based organizations are made for those in need of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Strong linkages exist with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services to ensure Centers are trained and able to serve customers with disabilities appropriately.

In addition, FPD has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all mandated system partners which outlines the integration of, and access to the services available in the local area. This MOU includes a section relative to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (Refer to Attachment #5 for the MOU)

C. Plan Development, Modifications & Public Comment

1. The Board views this plan as a starting point in the development of more effective and collaborative partnerships that will only enhance this working document as mutual trust and teamwork is established between all partners over the next few years. The further advancement of these partner relationships will allow the opportunity for a truly coordinated plan that all embrace and support in an effort to create an effective integrated system. All partners have been given an opportunity to provide comments and feedback to the plan. The regular meetings held with partner agencies are utilized to gather feedback and input for development of the local plan as well as coordination with our economic development partners to ensure both agencies plans are aligned and are coordinated appropriately. The FPD sends out a copy of the plan to all partner agencies as soon as an initial draft is prepared and requests any input, feedback, and additional comments for inclusion in the final draft.
2. At the end of the first 2-year period of the regional/local plan, FPD in partnership with the CEO and Workforce Board, will review, prepare and submit plan modifications that reflect changes to:
 - a. Labor market and economic conditions, and
 - b. Other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan including:
 - significant changes in the local economic conditions;
 - changes in available financing to support WIOA Title 1-B and partner-provided WIOA services;
 - changes to WDB structure;
 - the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals

- c. Any significant changes to service delivery in the regional/local area.

Any modifications to the plans will follow the same requirements for public comment as mandated for each 4-year plan and described below.

- 3. A comment period of thirty (30) days will be provided and formal comments may be received from members of the public, partner agencies, and representatives of business and labor organizations. The local and regional plan will be available to view on the FPD's website (www.triparishworks.net). A public notice is placed in local newspapers of the tri-parish area notifying the public of the availability to view the plan and provide comments. All comments received are submitted to the Louisiana Workforce Commission as an attachment to the local plan.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The First Planning District Workforce Development Board will continue to serve as the WIOA strategic leader for the local tri-parish area of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany. The Board will work in partnership with the Governor, Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, and local elected officials to facilitate public/private partnerships and support talent development strategies that advance opportunities for all job seekers, including low-skilled adults, young adults, veterans, long-term unemployed, low-income households, dislocated workers, recipients of public assistance, and individuals with disabilities. The Board will work to foster innovation, engage stakeholders, and guarantee streamlined operations and service delivery excellence.

The Board will collaborate with all partners and local elected officials to ensure that a common vision and workforce system design is shared among key stakeholders. The Board will provide oversight for the system through creating a unified regional and local plan while integrating education, training, support services and other workforce services across the core programs.

Appendix 1: Local Workforce Development Area Performance Goals

Include the local area’s expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

WIOA Title I Measures	Negotiated PY21	Actual PY21	Negotiated PY22
Employment 2nd quarter after exit			
Adult	67%	83.3%	72.0%
Dislocated Worker	67%	79.2%	72.0%
Youth	70%	87.1%	75.0%
Employment 4th quarter after exit			
Adult	67%	69.3%	68.5%
Dislocated Worker	68%	62.5%	65.0%
Youth	72%	\$69.6%	72.0%
Median Earnings 2nd quarter after exit			
Adult	\$6,200	\$7,956	\$6,400
Dislocated Worker	\$7,600	\$7,772	\$7,500
Youth	\$2,900	\$4,902	\$3,100
Credential Attainment Rate			
Adult	78%	84.1%	83.1%
Dislocated Worker	78%	93.3%	83.0%
Youth	58%	53.3%	52.0%
Measurable Skill Gains			
Adult	62%	82.8%	76.5%
Dislocated Worker	69%	86.2%	76.5%
Youth	45%	76.4%	52.0%