

# WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

# UTAH'S PLAN

## 2024-2028



**WORKFORCE SERVICES**  
REHABILITATION



Utah State Office  
of Education



STATE WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



DEPARTMENT OF  
**WORKFORCE SERVICES**

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Note: Requirements for Combined State Plan partner programs are available in a separate supplemental document.

## OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

## OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are —

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA);
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I);
- the Youth program (Title I);
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II);
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III); and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as

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the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are —

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))<sup>1</sup>

#### HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation;
  - State Operating Systems and Policies;

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- Assurances;
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs; and

- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>1</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission, if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

## I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a combined plan

#### COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.



Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

No

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)

Yes

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

No

## B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MAY INCLUDE AN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. THIS ELEMENT IS OPTIONAL.

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The vision of WIOA is to achieve and maintain an integrated, job-driven workforce system that links our diverse, talented workforce to U.S. businesses and improves the quality of life for citizens. This is accomplished by:

- The needs of businesses and workers driving workforce solutions.
- The workforce system supporting strong regional economies.
- One-Stop Centers (AJCs) providing first-rate customer service to job seekers, workers and businesses.

This is reflected in WIOA's overarching goals:

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

### Utah's Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, need to succeed in the workforce.

### Partners

The role of the core partners is to ensure services are coordinated, aligned, and complementary so job seekers can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs.

Core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs

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- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs

- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

Utah's WIOA partners are responsible for workforce and economic development through the collaboration of programs, initiatives, and services that create a seamless, customer-focused one-stop delivery system. Utah's required partners collaborate and align their services to enhance access for job seekers and businesses.

Required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- National Farmworkers Jobs program
- YouthBuild
- Indian Training Program

### Statewide Input

Utah's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), through the work of its committees, led the development of Utah's Combined Plan. The board members directly participated in the development of Utah's vision and goals providing the base for the strategies, activities and services outlined in the plan. Input for the plan was solicited from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, local government, employers and elected officials. Utah's plan was presented at a virtual town hall meeting and available online for public comment. Utah's State Workforce Development Board and agency partners have worked closely together to implement the goals from the 2020 plan. The relationships and connections that have been built since Utah implemented its first plan in 2016 have influenced the development of the 2024 plan. All partners have established a clear understanding of their roles and collaborative strategies to continually improve services and have a positive impact on Utah's workforce system.

### Strategic Plan

Utah's plan includes strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships and its resources to implement strategies that support operations in providing services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's workforce partners receive annual updates about Utah's economic condition.

Workforce development activities include:

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- Identifying targeted industry sectors and occupations; aligning programs and services to support them; and ensuring involvement from business and education partners

- Setting collaborative performance goals, sharing information and data and working together to resolve problems and address gaps
- Collaborating and coordinating training, marketing and feedback
- Utilizing existing committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate
- Holding regular SWDB and committee meetings as required by Utah's plan

## II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE A STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS SECTION THAT ANALYZES THE STATE'S CURRENT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND IDENTIFIES THE STATE'S OVERALL VISION FOR ITS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM. THE REQUIRED ELEMENTS IN THIS SECTION ALLOW THE STATE TO DEVELOP DATA-DRIVEN GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE AND TO IDENTIFY SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR ALIGNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS APPLY TO COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN AS WELL AS TO CORE PROGRAMS. WHERE REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFY THE TERM "POPULATIONS", THESE MUST INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3. THIS INCLUDES DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS; LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS; INDIANS, ALASKA NATIVES, AND NATIVE HAWAIIANS; INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; OLDER INDIVIDUALS; EX-OFFENDERS; HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS, OR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS; YOUTH WHO ARE IN OR HAVE AGED OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM; INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LOW LEVELS OF LITERACY, AND INDIVIDUALS FACING SUBSTANTIAL CULTURAL BARRIERS; FARMWORKERS (AS DEFINED AT SECTION 167(I) OF WIOA AND TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 35-14); INDIVIDUALS WITHIN 2 YEARS OF EXHAUSTING LIFETIME ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM; SINGLE PARENTS (INCLUDING SINGLE PREGNANT WOMEN); AND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS. ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS INCLUDE VETERANS, UNEMPLOYED WORKERS, AND YOUTH, AND OTHERS THAT THE STATE MAY IDENTIFY.

### A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, AND LABOR MARKET IN WHICH THE STATE'S WORKFORCE SYSTEM AND PROGRAMS WILL OPERATE.

#### 1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

##### A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING SUB-STATE REGIONS AND ANY SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AREAS IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE. THIS MUST INCLUDE—

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Utah's strategic plan and vision are based on analysis of the state's current, post-pandemic economy and workforce. The state's economy has recovered from the pandemic and exhibits similar characteristics to the pre-pandemic economy. Some

structural changes remain from the pandemic, like an increased amount of teleworking, but that does not significantly alter the need for and distribution of occupations. Telework changes the location of a work environment, but not necessarily the functions expected from the work environment.

Utah identifies four major economic areas within the state: the Wasatch Front (Utah's principal urban area), the Bear River Area, the Eastern Region, and the Central/Southwest Area. The latter three have enough distance or dissimilarity from Utah's urban core to warrant their own regional identifications.

Since 83% of the state's employment is embodied in the Wasatch Front, the overall state profile serves as a proxy for the profile of that urban core. Analysis is provided for the other three areas where appropriate.

### Economic Summary

The 2023 Utah economy operated as a full-employment economy, having recovered from the interruptions of the COVID pandemic. Finding available labor in substantial numbers can be a challenge for employers. The unemployment rate was at 2.4% and employment growth averaged around 3.0%, which equals Utah's long-term annual growth average. Above average wage gains have emerged within the past two years, speaking to a tight labor market. This is an expected outcome within a full-employment economy.

The available labor supply is limited as 2.4% unemployment would suggest. Yet the economy has still found enough new labor to maintain above average employment growth for the past several years. Labor in-migration plays a primary role in keeping the job growth above what a 2.4% unemployment rate might otherwise constrain. Yet the labor market is tight, causing employers to be aggressive, and sometimes frustrated, in seeking labor. This situation creates job opportunities. As a result, this is an excellent environment for people with barriers to employment to find a job.

To provide perspective on Utah's economic achievements, Utah has out-performed all other states since the onset of the COVID pandemic in early 2020. When looking at each state's percentage employment gain compared to February 2020, Utah is second in the nation in percentage growth. Utah's employment level is 9.6% higher than it was before COVID hit. Only Idaho has had greater job gains, at 9.9%.

Utah's employment gains and trajectory is not unusual for this state. Between 1980 and 2000, Utah's employment base grew by 100%. Between 2000 and mid-2023 it has grown by 63% for an average annual rate of 2.1%; and this includes time spent within three major recessions. Collectively, for seven years those recessions added no net new jobs to the Utah economy. Therefore, that 63% growth occurred across a collective 16-year period.

Internal population growth is Utah's foundation for employment expansion and success. Utah has the youngest median-age in the nation giving it the nation's youngest labor force. Utah's large average family size makes for a continuous flow of new workers aging into the labor force. There are more young workers in the state than old. Therefore, the economy is always expanding to accommodate this continuous maturing of the population into the labor force.

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Additionally, Utah lies in the middle of America's strongest in-migration region, the underpopulated Rocky Mountains. For most of America's development the mountain states

were under-utilized as mountains were a barrier to an industrial economy's development. Flat land, rivers, lakes and oceans transported the era's industrial physical products. Mountains presented a challenge for this type of activity. But with the advent of the technological economy, barriers are removed and the economic door is wide open for the mountain states to experience their long-delayed permeation and economic potential.

By mid-2023, the labor force participation rate in Utah returned to its pre-pandemic level as workers idled by the pandemic reentered the workforce. Abundant job openings and low unemployment rates contributed to wage growth and a seller's market for labor, where employees had significant bargaining power with employers.

The high inflation of 2022 and early 2023 began to abate, pushed down by Federal Reserve interest rate hikes. The high interest rates also drove the level of job openings downward, helping to bring labor demand and supply closer to equilibrium. However, the ratio of openings to unemployed workers in Utah remains elevated by historical standards at 2.3 jobs per unemployed worker in the state.

### Economic Outlook

High inflation and rapid interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve have stoked concerns about a potential recession, although thus far the Utah and national labor markets have shown remarkable resistance with a strong performance. The expectation is that if a recession were to occur in the near term, it would be mild and shallow with minimal job losses.

In the longer run, evidence indicates that Utah's economic position is favorable and forwardly optimistic. It has shown itself to be one of the nation's best performing state economies across the past 30 years. There are internal and external drivers of this performance and both are expected to remain as primary Utah economic influences moving forward.

The internal factor is that Utah has the nation's highest birth rate. Utah's internal demographics do not mirror the national trends. The national profile has the baby boom generation as a major portion of the labor force, and that segment will be exiting during the next 20 years. Behind that is a dearth of incoming labor because of low birth rates. The nation is rapidly approaching zero labor force growth because of this demographic deficiency. Utah, on the other hand, across the next 20 years can largely age two children into its labor force for every one baby boomer who leaves the labor force. This demographic statistic is Utah's internal economic driver.

The external support is centered around Utah's geographic location. Utah is located in the middle of America's strongest in-migration region; the relatively underpopulated Rocky Mountains. For most of the United States' historical development, the mountain states were sparsely populated as mountains were a barrier during the Industrial Revolution's economic progression. Flat land, rivers, lakes and oceans were assets for that era's industrial output's distribution. Mountains, on the other hand, presented a challenge for growth. Then, post-WWII industrial advancements helped find ways around these obstacles. Additionally, and more forcefully, the emergence of the technology economy has completely broken through this barrier. Those mountains that previously presented an economic barrier have now shifted to presenting an economic attraction. Across the past 30 years, four Intermountain West states,

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Arizona, Idaho, Nevada and Utah, have seen their economies grow by 100% or more. There is a collective economic synergy surrounding this region, and Utah lies at the center of it.

### Economic Overview

Utah's economy has returned to a state that characterized its pre-pandemic era, with annual job growth hovering around 3% accompanied by low unemployment rates. As of June 2023, the unemployment has remained below 2.5% for nearly two years, indicating a full-employment economy making for tight labor markets.

The post-Great Recession Utah labor force participation rate, (the percent of all persons ages 16 and older who are either working or looking for work), declined due to structural demographic forces and is unlikely to return to the highs of the pre-Great Recession era. In Utah, the rate was around 72% for the 20 years prior to the Great Recession. The participation rate lowered to 67% during the recession as workers became discouraged or disassociated from the weakened job market. Yet over the 10 years from 2010 to 2020, as the economy significantly improved, the participation rate incrementally rose to only 68.5%. The natural aging of the population is the force behind Utah's lower participation rate. Prior to the Great Recession, only 11% of Utah's over 16 population was 65 years and older—that being a segment of the 16-and-over population that naturally has a low participation rate. With that age group's percentage increasing to 16% of the 16-and-older population by 2020, the Utah labor force participation rate's potential is likely to remain below the previous 72% level going forward. With the extraordinarily tight labor markets present in the post COVID economy of 2023, the labor force participation rate has inched up to nearly 70%, a level not seen since 2009, driven by increased participation among prime age workers, ages 25-54. But this level is thought of as being "normally" unsustainable. Very strong wage gains coupled with abundant employment opportunities seem to have pushed elements of the entrenched, non-participatory segment of the working age population into activity and obtaining a job. But given a recession or any other economic condition that would reduce current high wage offerings and plentiful employment opportunities, the participation rate is expected to work its way back down to around 68.5% – a rate that is considered "normal" given Utah's age makeup.

Utah's employment-expansion industrial distribution is as broad as it is strong. Mining is largely the only sector with a less than rosy outlook going forward, although mining employment grew by 15% from 2017-2023. The oil and gas segments ebb and flow with that industry's seemingly perpetual volatility. The coal industry is on a much less volatile, but determined path downward. The utilities sector contracted from 2017-2022, while educational services, administrative support, public administration and retail trade have grown minimally.

The remaining industrial sectors have grown significantly across the five years from 2017-2022, ranging from 14% for leisure and hospitality to 34% for construction and 36% for professional and technical services. A sector like manufacturing, nationally considered to be in decline, expanded its Utah employment footprint by 17%.

Utah has experienced the same urban-centric post-Great Recession expansion experienced nationally. Utah has an urban-dominated economy as 92% of the state's employment is found within its metropolitan statistical areas (including Logan and St. George).

The economic and social disruptions of the pandemic provided an opportunity for many workers to relocate. Often this meant leaving larger cities for smaller cities and rural

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areas, a migration further enabled by the rise of remote work during the COVID and post-COVID era. As a result, Utah's regions with smaller populations saw high rates of

growth. The scenic southwest and central region experienced growth of 23.5% in its employment base, and the Bear River region expanded by 15.4%, both of which outpaced the state's 14.6% rate. The highly urban Wasatch Front region expanded by 13.9%, while the rural eastern region did not benefit from as much in-migration and saw its employment base expand by 8.9%.

### Regional Profiles

#### Bear River Area

The Bear River Area comprises Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties along the state's northern border. It makes up 5.4 % of Utah's employment base. Cache County has the largest employment base in the area and is the main core of the Logan Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that includes Franklin County, Idaho. Cache County makes up 74 % of the Bear River Area's employment base.

The Bear River Area contributes to the states' overall strong economic environment. The employment base has grown by 9.3% over the past two years (2021 and 2022), and by 15.8% in the last five years (2017-2022).

Box Elder County is a part of the Ogden-Clearfield MSA. It composes 25% of the Bear River Area's employment base. Rich County is a small, rural county that includes one percent of the Bear River Area's employment base.

An economic feature of this area is its significant manufacturing presence. Manufacturing makes up 23% of the area's employment. While manufacturing is somewhat of a declining industry at the national level, this region's manufacturing employment has increased by 24% from 2017 to 2022. Since this area also has a strong agricultural presence, much of the manufacturing employment is in food production, a segment of manufacturing that tends to be economically more stable than non-food manufacturing.

The education sector is another significant employer, accounting for 15% of the employment base. Utah State University, an agricultural-founded university, is the backbone of this employment.

Retail trade, healthcare, leisure and hospitality, construction, and professional and technical services round out the other top employment sectors. Across 20 major industry sectors, only the administrative support/waste management, information, and agriculture sectors have lost jobs from 2017-2022.

The economic impact from the pandemic was somewhat tempered in this economic region.

Manufacturing, a significant portion of this region's employment base, was not heavily impacted by the pandemic. In fact, manufacturing employment has increased by 24% from 2017-2022. The region has enjoyed big job gains in several manufacturing industries over this time period, including plastics and rubber products, transportation equipment, food, paper, and computer and electronic equipment.

#### Eastern Region

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Utah's Eastern Region spans the north-south axis mostly along the border with Colorado. It is a seven-county conglomeration whose commonality is geographic isolation from Utah's urban

center. It has vast areas of uninhabited land, extensive public land ownership, several Native American reservations, stunning landscapes yielding national parks, monuments and recreation areas, and a general lack of industrial diversity.

The area has two micropolitan centers; Vernal, in the geographic area called the Uintah Basin, and Price near the center of the state. Moab is another town that serves as the regional center for the area's southeastern corner.

While the geography spans nearly half the state, the Eastern Region makes up only 2.7% of Utah's employment base. This is down marginally from 9% in 2017, and 3.2% in 2015. Despite its declining share of overall state employment, the region has still grown, albeit at a slower rate than the state, expanding its employment base by 8.9% from 2017-2022.

The region's economic performance is tied to the energy sector. Oil, natural gas, and coal production are significant economic features. The Uintah Basin segment, comprising Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties, is centered in Vernal and produces oil and natural gas. Oil and gas employment in the Uintah Basin is down 45% over the five years from 2017- 2022. This decline contributed to a slow rate of overall employment growth in the Basin, which expanded by 7% over the five years from 2017-2022. Changes in oil and gas employment affect other sectors such as construction and trucking, as these industries are linked to, and support, the region's energy production. Trucking jobs are down 6% over the last five years, while construction jobs rebounded in 2022 after sliding from 2017-2021.

The Eastern Region's Castle Country segment, spanning Carbon and Emery counties and the city of Price, continues to be a coal and electricity-production economy. The five years from 2017 to 2022 saw the overall employment level increase by around 900 jobs, for an average annual jobs growth rate of 1.5%. This rate is slower than the state's 2.8% but is weaker since coal mining and coal-burning power plants have not been on a favorable trajectory given the escalating concerns related to climate change.

The region's two southern counties, Grand and San Juan, are heavily tourist-dependent economies. The COVID-19 pandemic treated each differently. Grand County is home to two national parks and is more easily accessed than San Juan County. San Juan is less known and less visited because its landscape has only recently been designated as a national monument. Visitor centers and corresponding infrastructure are not in place, and major highways are far away. Therefore, Grand County rebounded fully from the pandemic downturn, with job levels in 2022 higher than pre-pandemic. San Juan County has had a slower recovery from COVID. Job numbers have not yet surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with the leisure and hospitality sector still quite a bit smaller than it was in 2019.

Overall, the leisure and hospitality industry, a proxy for tourism, is the region's dominant employment focus with 14%. It is not a particularly well-paying industry and the employment is often seasonal, but it is vibrant. Retail trade accounts for another 13% of employment and works in concert with tourism activity. Healthcare and education account for 12% and 10% of the region's employment base, respectively. These tend to be stable and exhibit less seasonal employment as their clientele is largely

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the local population. Due to the area's national parks and monuments, the public administration sector has an outsized, but positive presence of 9% of the employment

base.

The region's mining employment trend is noteworthy. Prior to COVID the mining industry accounted for 11% of the region's employment base in 2019. Declines in this industry's employment during 2020 and 2021 dropped it to 9%. Most of this occurred within the Uintah Basin's oil patch. The employment decrease is primarily due to transitory workers who follow work across the nation's oil patches, so many of the dislocated workers do not remain in the region. The industry recovered in 2022, adding around 500 jobs in support activities for mining, to account for 10% of the region's total 2022 employment base.

The pandemic had a negative impact on the Eastern Region. The initial shut down of the movement of people largely brought the oil industry to a standstill. This resulted in the shutdown of the oil patch of the Uintah Basin, and oil and gas jobs there remain well below pre-pandemic levels. The coal country in the area's central portion was relatively untouched by the pandemic. The area's two southern counties are heavily tourist dependent. For the first several months, the pandemic virtually closed these economies. When people began traveling by car to the national parks, things changed from bad to good, particularly in Grand County. In the COVID era, Grand County benefited from significant in-migration to the area and now has an employment base 13% above its pre-COVID level. San Juan County's isolation played against it as it did not see the tourism volumes that Grand County did. It is still waiting to see a full rebound, with total employment 2% lower than 2019 levels.

### Central/Southwest Region

Utah's Central/Southwest Region spans a large portion of geographic Utah, consisting of the state's center southward to the Arizona border, along with a middle-to-southern portion of the western half of the state bordering Nevada. It consists of 10 counties and includes the St. George MSA and the Cedar City Micropolitan Statistical Area. Apart from these cities, the remainder is extensively rural, but it does have four regional communities including Delta, Kanab, Richfield and Ephraim. Like the Eastern Region, a commonality is isolation from Utah's metropolitan heart, vast areas of uninhabited land, extensive public land ownership, three national parks, national monuments and recreation areas, and a general lack of industrial diversity (except for the St. George MSA).

The region comprises 8.3% of the state's employment base, up from 7.7% in 2017. The area has shared in the state's strong employment growth of the past five years, largely but not exclusively from the strength of the St. George MSA (Washington County). This is one of the nation's fastest-growing counties. Its warm, sunbelt climate and desert red rock scenery are major attractions.

The region's economy has grown by 12% over the past two years, and by 23% over the past five years. The growth is primarily in the region's southwestern portion, but the mostly rural central portion is faring better than the neighboring rural Eastern Region because it does not rely on the volatile energy sector.

Leisure and hospitality (tourism) is the region's leading industry, comprising 15% of the employment base. Paralleling that is another 13% in retail trade employment. Healthcare (14%) and education (11%) are also large employment areas, with an additional strong presence in construction (10%).

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The St. George MSA accounts for 58% of the region's employment base. The Cedar City

micropolitan area adds another 17%. Together they account for 75% of the region's employment base. Employment expanded by 27% in the St. George MSA in the five years from 2017-2022, and by 31% in the Cedar City micropolitan area.

The pandemic had mixed effects upon this area. Tourism initially shut down the area during the pandemic's first three months, then it came roaring back. With its close proximity to California, the region's natural beauty and national parks, the nation's domestic travelers came to this region in large droves.

#### I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH THERE IS EXISTING DEMAND.

##### Industry Demand

Industry demand in Utah is broad based because employment growth has occurred across all industrial sectors, with the exception of the mining industry. In evaluating 97 industrial sectors within Utah, only 13 contracted employment during the five years ending in 2022.

For industries that have expanded employment, several prominent sectors are related to construction. This coincides with Utah's strong economic expansion. However, construction can be volatile when the economy softens. This industry is more sensitive to ups and downs of the business cycle than many other sectors.

Healthcare has its share of industry units represented among the best performers. As the population increases, healthcare expansion is a natural consequence. Computer sectors also have a strong presence. The national post-Great Recession technology expansion is very urban-centric, as the young labor force that fuels it seems to prefer an urban setting. Since Utah is highly urbanized, it naturally follows that Utah would have a healthy and vibrantly expanding technology sector.

##### Occupation Demand

The occupational mix is somewhat different from industries. There is more churning and dynamics within the occupational spectrum. Occupations are found throughout the industries and are more numerous than the industries. While an industry may be shedding particular types of occupations, it may be making gains through other occupations.

When evaluating 566 occupations in Utah from 2017 to 2022, there are 207 with lower employment than five years ago, and 17 with employment unchanged. That leaves 342 with increases. Across the 22 major occupational classifications, only three had significantly less employment in 2022 than in 2017: personal care and service occupations declined by 12,000 jobs; sales and related occupations declined by 7,700 jobs; and office and administrative support occupations declined by 5,400 jobs. Much of this displacement is related to automation.

While the construction industry is growing in Utah, it does not mean individual construction-related occupations cannot be declining. This is the case with production occupations within Utah's growing manufacturing sector.

One theme emerging for most declining occupations in Utah is that they require only a basic

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amount of education — not particularly requiring high levels of advanced education or training.

This makes it expedient upon public workforce agencies to be aware of such declines and to caution those they serve and advise about such occupations.

The following list of occupations have increased their employment base by 2,000 or more positions from 2017 to 2022.

List of Highest-Growth Occupations

- 11-1021 General and Operations Managers
- 43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks
- 47-2061 Construction Laborers
- 53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
- 13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
- 47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
- 43-9061 Office Clerks, General
- 13-2011 Accountants and Auditors
- 43-4051 Customer Service Representatives
- 53-3033 Light Truck Drivers
- 35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food
- 13-1071 Human Resources Specialists
- 43-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
- 35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant
- 35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
- 25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
- 47-2031 Carpenters
- 11-3031 Financial Managers
- 51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- 11-2021 Marketing Managers
- 53-7051 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
- 37-3011 Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
- 13-2052 Personal Financial Advisors
- 31-9092 Medical Assistant

Regional Analysis

Bear River Area

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Industry Demand

The area's strong employment growth has created an array of industries that are currently in demand. There are a handful of industries that have lost employment over the five years from 2017 to 2022 including administrative and support services, nursing and residential care facilities, chemical manufacturing, and truck transportation. Large gains in plastics, paper, and food manufacturing, retailers, professional and technical services, specialty trade contractors, and transportation equipment, have countered these losses.

Professional and technical services are making gains in the region. Scientific research and information technologies are expanding, largely in the Logan MSA.

The region's economic growth is also spurring construction gains, particularly among the specialty trades like carpentry, framing, painting, HVAC, and electrical.

Education employment is trending upward, at both the university and K-12 levels as the population increases.

#### Occupation Demand

Given that nearly 40% of the area's employment is found in manufacturing and education, it is not surprising that much of the occupational distribution is centered around these two industries. The area has a higher than average occupational presence (based on location quotients) in the production and education occupations. Production occupations have added new employment over the past several years, while educational occupations have remained stable over the last 5 years.

Areas with average or slightly above average occupational presence include architecture and engineering occupations, construction and extraction, building and grounds maintenance, life, physical and social sciences, office and administrative support, management occupations, and arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations. All have added jobs over the past several years, with the exception of life, physical and social sciences.

One area where the region does not have a strong occupational presence is in the healthcare practitioners and healthcare support occupations. The lower paying healthcare support occupations have grown in the region over the last five years, while the number of healthcare practitioners and technical occupation jobs have remained essentially unchanged. Another area where the region has relatively low occupational presence is sales and related occupations. The region has actually shed jobs in this category in recent years.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 150 or more positions from 2017 to 2022.

#### List of Highest-Growth Occupations

53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-9061 Office Clerks, General

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37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners

35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers  
51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers  
53-3033 Light Truck Drivers  
41-4012 Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products  
43-4051 Customer Service Representatives  
47-2061 Construction Laborers  
13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists  
43-4171 Receptionists and Information Clerks  
47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers  
51-3021 Butchers and Meat Cutters  
47-2111 Electricians  
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education  
35-2021 Food Preparation Workers

### Eastern Region

#### Industry Demand

The slow employment growth over the five years from 2017-2022 is related to the contraction in the important mining sector. With mining employment contracting, related sectors also shed jobs over the last five years, including public administration, wholesale trade, utilities and information. With population growth limited, jobs in education were flat over the last five years as well.

The industry areas producing gains are led by retail trade and leisure and hospitality, with leisure and hospitality playing a significant part in the southern part of the region's economy. Manufacturing grew by 36% over the five years from 2017-2022, counterbalancing some of the contraction in the mining sector. Healthcare also expanded as taking care of one's health does not stop when the economy goes bad.

Other sectors showing growth are related to the leisure & hospitality industry, which plays a significant part in the southern portion of the area's economy.

#### Occupation Demand

The region had an overall employment gain across the five years from 2017-2022, albeit at a slower rate than the state. Most occupational classes gained employment, although there were notable contractions in oil and gas occupations, heavy equipment operators, heavy truck drivers, welders, machinists and manual laborers, reflecting the contraction in the oil-producing Uintah Basin region. Some service occupations also contracted considerably, including waiters and waitresses, cashiers, and secretaries. There are more occupations that have gained employment than those that have lost; but the

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handful of occupations that contracted lost a lot of employment.

Noted gains are categorized within management occupations, construction, business

and financial occupations, and transportation and material moving.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 150 or more positions from 2017 to 2022.

List of Highest-Growth Occupations

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-45051 Customer Service Representative

35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant

49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General

37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners

47-2061 Construction Laborers

35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers

43-9061 Office Clerks, General

25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education

35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food

47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers

47-2111 Electricians

27-2022 Coaches and Scouts

35-3011 Bartenders

47-2031 Carpenters

53-3033 Light Truck Drivers

33-9092 Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service Workers

43-4081 Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks

49-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers

11-2021 Marketing Managers

37-3011 Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers

43-4171 Receptionists and Information Clerks

43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks

41-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers

Central/Southwest Region

Industry Demand

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Due to the region's robust employment growth, led largely by the St. George area, nearly all industrial sectors have added jobs. The lone exception is the utilities sector, which is

not a large industry sector in this area.

Given St. George's expanding economy resulting from, or causing, a rapid population increase (it is difficult to tell which leads), healthcare and construction are the two fastest-growing industries. These are sensitive to, and expand with, increasing population. Retail trade is another rapidly growing industry. Local population growth fuels the retail trade expansion, but so does neighboring-area population growth and tourism activity as St. George is southwest Utah's regional fortress.

St. George is surrounded by sparsely populated rural areas, so consumers from surrounding and even far-flung Utah communities come to St. George for retail purchases. In addition, a major interstate highway runs through the community and provides a steady stream of travelers consuming retail amenities. The interstate highway is not just an economic feeder for St. George, but is an economic lifeline for various smaller communities as the interstate moves northward through rural territory toward Salt Lake City.

The interstate travel, coupled with three national parks in the region, has contributed to accommodation and food services being both a prominent industry and adding significant jobs over the period.

Driven by the population increase, the education industry is also adding noticeable numbers of jobs. Education and manufacturing jobs have expanded by 1,700 and 1,900 positions from 2017-2022. The remaining industries have also added sizable job gains, including the profession and technical services sector which increased by nearly 1,700 jobs.

#### Occupation Demand

Of Utah's 164 occupations available for occupational measurement, 134 showed some growth statewide over the five years from 2017 to 2022.

The state's occupational growth contains a mixed message. Of the major occupation groups identified with the most new jobs added, the strongest growth is in occupational groupings with average wages that are not on the high side. These include transportation and material moving, production occupations, food preparation and serving, office and administrative support, and healthcare support occupations. Higher paid occupational groups that have large job gains in the region include management, business and financial, and healthcare practitioners. Construction occupations had large gains as well; these jobs tend to pay a wage on par with the region wide average.

The following list includes occupations that have increased their employment base by 250 or more positions from 2017 to 2022.

#### List of Highest-Growth Occupations:

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-4051 Customer Service Representatives

53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

47-2031 Carpenters

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29-1141 Registered Nurses

- 47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
- 47-2061 Construction Laborers
- 37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
- 49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- 13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
- 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
- 43-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers
- 13-2011 Accountants and Auditors
- 43-4171 Receptionists and Information Clerks
- 31-9092 Medical Assistants
- 43-9061 Office Clerks, General
- 13-1111 Management Analysts
- 37-3011 Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
- 47-2111 Electricians
- 43-5061 Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks
- 35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
- 53-3033 Light Truck Drivers
- 13-1151 Training and Development Specialists

## II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH DEMAND IS EMERGING.

### Emerging Industries

Economies are continually ebbing, flowing and churning. As some industries or occupations wane, others emerge. One technique to evaluate emerging industries or occupations is to look for an increase in an industry or occupation's share of the all-industry or all-occupation total over time.

Summarizing the data for Utah shows that the professional, scientific, and technical services industry, and several construction segments lead the way. Emerging construction industry segments include specialty trade contractors, construction of buildings, and heavy and civil engineering construction.

Other industry segments that have increased their employment share by 0.1% or more over the last five years include ambulatory health care services; couriers and messengers; publishing industries; merchant wholesalers in durable goods;

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manufacturing of food, plastics and rubber products, and transportation equipment; health and personal care retailers; and financial securities and investments.

### Emerging Occupations

Occupations ebb and flow within the various industry sectors. While some occupations may fade or actually be replaced by computerization or automation, other occupations emerge to counter the void. Overall, the occupational mix grows and some occupations emerge to more or expanding prominence than others.

Focusing on emerging patterns, the major occupational categories that show noticeable growth include transportation and material moving occupations, management occupations, business and financial occupations, construction and extraction, computer and mathematical, and healthcare support occupations.

The following list of occupations have increased their share of the state's total occupational mix by 0.1 percentage points or more from 2017 to 2022.

### List of Emerging Occupations

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks

47-2061 Construction Laborers

13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists

47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers

35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food

53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

13-2011 Accountants and Auditors

53-3033 Light Truck Drivers

13-1071 Human Resources Specialists

25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education

11-2021 Marketing Managers

13-2052 Personal Financial Advisors

35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers

35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant

### Regional Analysis

#### Bear River Area

##### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as those whose share of the area's employment base is growing rapidly, and in the Bear River area 15 industries meet the criteria.

Bear River's largest employment gains have come in plastics and rubber products

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manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, and specialty trade manufacturers. The manufacturing sector has a big presence in this area, and other

emerging manufacturing segments include transportation equipment, paper, and electrical equipment. Other emerging industries in the goods domain include wholesalers in durable goods, and building construction. In the services domain, management of companies, social assistance, and couriers and messengers have all added substantially to their share of employment. Food services and general merchandise retailers have also expanded their regional employment share.

### Emerging Occupations

Occupations conform to the industry mix in the Bear River area. Manufacturing is a large part of the region's industry base, it is not surprising that production occupations account for several of the emerging occupations, as do transportation and material moving occupations. Other major occupational categories with several emerging occupations are construction and extraction, management, food preparation and serving, and business and financial operations occupations.

The List of Emerging Occupations have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.1% or more from 2017 to 2022.

#### List of Emerging Occupations:

53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-9061 Office Clerks, General

51-3021 Butchers and Meat Cutters

35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers

13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists

47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers

53-3033 Light Truck Drivers

47-2111 Electricians

51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers

35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food

51-4081 Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic

43-4171 Receptionists and Information Clerks

41-4012 Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products

11-3031 Financial Managers

41-2022 Parts Salespersons

35-2021 Food Preparation Workers

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17-2112 Industrial Engineers

13-1071 Human Resources Specialists

47-2061 Construction Laborers

17-2141 Mechanical Engineers

13-1151 Training and Development Specialists

11-9199 Managers, All Other

43-6013 Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

13-1020 Buyers and Purchasing Agents

37-3011 Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers

### Eastern Region

#### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as industry sub-sectors whose share of the area's employment base is growing rapidly. This encompasses 20 industries in the Eastern Region.

Collectively, leisure and hospitality, manufacturing, professional and business services, construction, and financial services are the major sectors making gains in overall employment share. Within these large supersectors, food services and drinking places, specialty trade contractors, ambulatory health care services, general merchandise retailers, accommodations, support activities for mining, and hospitals have seen the largest job gains. This represents mostly industries that serve demand from the local population, and are not based on customers or demand derived from outside the region. Apart from this, only mining, leisure and hospitality, and a few small but growing manufacturing industries emerge within the major industry sectors.

#### Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupation gains can be categorized within management, business and finance, construction and extraction, transportation and material moving, healthcare support occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, and maintenance and repair.

Occupations on the following list have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.15% or more from 2017 to 2022.

#### List of Emerging Occupations:

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

43-4051 Customer Service Representatives

35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant

49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General

37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners

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35-2011 Cooks, Fast Food

35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers

27-2022 Coaches and Scouts

47-2111 Electricians

47-2061 Construction Laborers

35-3011 Bartenders

11-2021 Marketing Managers

33-9092 Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service Workers

25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education

47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers

43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks

53-3033 Light Truck Drivers

49-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers

### Central/Southwest Region

#### Emerging Industries

Emerging industries are identified as industry sub-sectors whose share of the area's employment base is expanding measurably, comprising roughly 17 industries.

Given the large and rather balanced industry growth, emerging industry segments are scattered across the industry spectrum. Construction, professional and business services, and manufacturing supersectors lead the way on gaining employment share in the region. With the significant population growth the region has experienced in the last five years, it is unsurprising that construction is identified as an emerging industry. Within the construction sector, specialty trades contractors and the construction of buildings industries experienced the biggest gains in employment share. Building materials dealers have also expanded considerably.

The high-paying professional, scientific, and technical services industry added nearly 1,700 jobs in the region over the last five years and expanded its employment share by 0.6%, reflecting an influx of professionals relocating to the area.

Manufacturing segments that have expanded their employment share over the last five years include food manufacturing, primary and fabricated metal manufacturing, and electrical equipment manufacturing.

Other industries that have expanded their employment share by at least 0.1% include administrative and support services, ambulatory health care services, wholesalers of durable goods, social assistance, amusement and recreation, couriers and messengers, repair and maintenance, and management of companies.

#### Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupations in the region are primarily in the transportation and material

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moving, construction and extraction, management, business and financial, and production occupations. Healthcare support occupations and computer and

mathematical occupations groupings round out the top emerging occupational groupings. The variety of emerging occupations reflects a regional economy expanding broadly across sectors and occupations.

Occupations on the following list have increased their share of the region's total occupational mix by 0.1% or more from 2017 to 2022.

List of Emerging Occupations:

11-1021 General and Operations Managers  
43-4051 Customer Service Representatives  
47-2031 Carpenters  
53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand  
47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers  
13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists  
13-1111 Management Analysts  
13-2011 Accountants and Auditors  
43-5061 Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks  
49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General  
13-1151 Training and Development Specialists  
31-9092 Medical Assistants  
43-4171 Receptionists and Information Clerks  
43-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers  
43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks  
13-1071 Human Resources Specialists  
29-1141 Registered Nurses  
51-9111 Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders  
35-3011 Bartenders  
53-7061 Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment  
47-2111 Electricians  
37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners  
43-5032 Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance  
47-2061 Construction Laborers  
27-2022 Coaches and Scouts

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51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers

37-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers

21-1012 Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors

29-1171 Nurse Practitioners

### III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

WITH REGARD TO THE INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED IN (A)(I) AND (II), PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES REQUIRED, INCLUDING CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES.

#### Employers Employment Needs

One of the most important occupational groupings, not just to Utah but any state economy, is STEM-based occupations. The common theme is the need for elevated education, high intellect, dynamic thinking, problem solving, good management and organization skills, proficiency in the mathematical and science disciplines, superior communication skills with clear and detailed expression, and attention to detail. These attributes can take years to obtain and expend extensive economic resources. These are skills and occupations that put an economy on the leading edge of innovation, growth, relevance, and opportunity.

Given Utah's robust growth across industries that employ a significant amount of STEM occupations, this implies the state is generally finding its needed labor supply. There is a general dialogue from the employer community that it would like to have more available workers, which implies that the Utah job growth rate has the potential to be even higher if there was an all-satisfying labor pool of workers with STEM-based skills and proficiencies.

Yet there are occupational classifications (based upon lower education requirements) that have their own critical needs and perceived shortages. These may largely be considered the greater economy's support or infrastructure occupations. Their appeal is offering living-wage compensation to people whose aptitudes are not built for higher education, or who don't have the means to achieve higher education.

Due to the immediate economic need of those seeking social assistance, some job training programs are designed to rapidly move people into any occupation. Other training is designed for workers who have the luxury to make the next step: to move up the wage ladder with jobs that can pull them toward a more middle-income existence. These are jobs that generally pay between \$30,000 and \$49,000 per year. Occupational projections are produced every two years by the Department of Workforce Services' Workforce Research and Analysis Division along with occupational median wage measures. This information serves as the primary tool for sorting occupations by pay, educational requirements, and job outlook. Specific targeting of various training programs or initiatives can be analyzed and supported with this traditional labor market information.

Traditional labor market information can be augmented with what is known as "real-time" labor market information. This entails reviewing electronic job board postings and compiling summary statistics. Help Wanted Online® is the real-time labor market information tool utilized by the Department of Workforce Services. This offers a look into the quantity and types of jobs employers are currently offering. Advertised occupations can be sorted by quantity of job ads, geographies, income levels, educational requirements, certifications, and desired skills (both hard and soft skills). Some of these variables are not assessed within the traditional labor

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market information tools provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment

and Training Administration, so these real-time labor market tools have added value to this type of analysis.

Utah gains insight from Help Wanted Online® into the skills, credentials and licenses that Utah employers are currently seeking through job postings. These can be isolated to the job advertisements in Utah's various regions, and also upon specific industries and occupations. Utah's utilization of this information makes it possible to include skills, credentials and licenses in Utah's WIOA plan evaluation.

The following are the top skills and certifications for Utah as analyzed from Help Wanted Online® across the first six months of 2023. Given the large amount of time soft skills are counted in relation to hard skills, one could conclude that soft skills are often more critical to employers than hard-skill credentials.

#### Soft Skills

Communications

Customer Service

Management Sales

Operations

Leadership

Detail Oriented

Problem Solving

Writing

Planning

Self-Motivation

Interpersonal Communications

Coordinating

Multitasking

Time Management

Professionalism

Research

Merchandising

Scheduling

Organizational Skills

Project Management

Marketing

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## Verbal Communication Skills

Teamwork

Hard Skills

Lifting Ability

Microsoft Office

Microsoft Excel

Computer Literacy

English Language

Auditing

Accounting

Mathematics

Warehousing

Microsoft Outlook

Microsoft PowerPoint

Finance

Fine Motor Skills

General Mathematics

Billing

Office Equipment

Data Analysis

Typing

Workflow Management

Clerical Works

Invoicing

Inventory Management

Data Entry

Computer Science

Forklift Truck

Loading And Unloading

Certifications

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Valid Driver's License

Registered Nurse (RN)  
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification  
Food Handler's Card  
Secret Clearance  
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification  
Security Clearance  
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS)  
Certification Commercial Driver's License (CDL)  
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)  
First Aid Certification  
Master Of Business Administration (MBA)  
CDL Class A License  
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)  
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)  
Top Secret Clearance  
Forklift Certification  
Teaching Certificate  
Board Certified/Board Eligible  
Neonatal Resuscitation Program Certification (NRP)  
American Red Cross (ARC) Certification  
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)  
Project Management Professional Certification  
Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP)  
Basic Cardiac Life Support

#### B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT WORKFORCE IN THE STATE AND VARIOUS STATE REGIONS. PROVIDE KEY ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS IN AGGREGATE AS WELL AS DISAGGREGATED AMONG POPULATIONS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DISPARITIES IN EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND UNDERSTAND LABOR FORCE CONDITIONS FOR ITEMS (I) - (III) BELOW. POPULATIONS ANALYZED MUST INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT DESCRIBED IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF SECTION II. ANALYSIS MUST INCLUDE

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## WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

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Type	Quantity	Source
Poverty	205,571	Poverty and below; 18+Population ACS Table S1701
American Indians	47,401	ACS Table B02017
Alaska Natives	1,345	ACS Table B02017
Native Hawaiian	2,211	ACS Table B02016
Individuals with Disabilities	342,378	ACS Table S1810
Youth with Disabilities	35,433	0 to 17 Population; ACS Table S1810
Older Individuals	699,697	WIOA definition of "Older" is 55 and over, ACS S0101
Homeless Individuals	3,557	HUD 2022 Point-In-Time Homelessness, Annual Assessment Report
Foster Care	10,602	ACS Table B09018
English Learners	24,322	ACS Table S1602, number of Households
Low Levels of Literacy	330,505	National Center for Edu. Statistics PIAAC (14%) and the ACS for ages 16-74
Substantial Cultural Barriers	4,509	Department of Workforce Services, number of clients self-identified as having cultural barriers at time of enrollment / initial service
Farmworkers	833	WIOA definition is migrant farm workers 2017 Ag Census Table 7

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Individuals within 2 Years of TANF Exhaust	4,243	Department of Workforce Services, number of clients who enrolled in a WIOA program or received an initial Wagner-Peyser service between October 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022 and are within two years of exhausting TANF benefits at time of enrollment / initial service
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Single Parent	70,647	ACS Table B11003
Single Parent - male	21,769	ACS Table B11003
Single Parent - female	48,878	ACS Table B11003
Long-term Unemployed	4,500	Six months or longer, Current Population Survey data
Displaced Homemaker	69,903	Single female in the labor force ACS Table S2302
Veterans	114,803	ACS S2101
Veterans - male	106,682	ACS S2101
Veterans - female	8,121	ACS S2101
Veterans - Gulf War (2001+)	35,323	ACS S2101
Veterans - Gulf War (1990)	29,528	ACS S2101
Veterans - Vietnam	37,507	ACS S2101
Veterans - Korea	6,951	ACS S2101
Veterans - WWII	1,577	ACS S2101
Veterans 18-34	11,206	ACS S2101
Veterans 35-54	27,086	ACS S2101
Veterans 55-64	19,771	ACS S2101
Veterans 65-74	28,029	ACS S2101
Veterans 75+	28,711	ACS S2101
Veterans with any disability	32,708	ACS S2101

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Education - Less than high school	137,248	ACS S2101
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Education - High School	444,633	ACS S2101
Education - Some College/Associates	685,809	ACS S2101
Education - Bachelors Plus	737,760	ACS S2101
Labor Force	1,743,054	BLS LAUS 2022
Labor Force - Participation Rate	68.7%	BLS LAUS 2022
Labor Force - Employed	1,702,674	BLS LAUS 2022
Labor Force - Unemployed	40,380	BLS LAUS 2022
Unemployment Rate	2.3%	BLS LAUS 2022

ACS = American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

CPS = Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

BLS LAUS = Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT DATA, INCLUDING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, AND TRENDS IN THE STATE.

Employment and Unemployment

Utah’s strategic plan and vision are based on analysis of the state’s current economy and workforce, which has fully recovered from the pandemic. The pandemic was a temporary interruption for Utah’s economy that did not alter the underlying trend variables that have influenced the Utah economy through its recent economic history. There appear to be some structural changes remaining from the pandemic, like an increased amount of teleworking, but that does not significantly alter the need for and distribution of occupations. It will change the location of a work environment, but not necessarily the functions expected from the work environment.

Since the low point after the Great Recession, the size of the Utah labor force has been on a steady climb. The labor force measures around 1,809,200 in July 2023. Over the previous 10 years, the labor force has increased steadily at a rate of around 2.7% per year, adding a total of 419,279 potential workers.

The Utah labor force is the youngest in the nation. Utah has the nation’s lowest median age and correspondingly the youngest labor force. A young labor force implies a greater percentage of

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the population active in the labor force. This also implies that Utah generally has a lower unemployment rate than the national average, and that is generally the case across the last several decades.

The Utah employment-to-population ratio is at 68.1%. This means that of the 16-and-older population (which is considered the age range of the potential labor force), 68.1% is employed, representing a full recovery from the COVID-induced low of 60.7% in April 2020. Utah's current rate is also higher than the national average of around 60%, but is lower than Utah's pre-Great Recession rate of 70%.

The Utah labor force is currently characterized as fully employed. Its mid-2023 unemployment rate stands at 2.4% and has been trending downward since, reaching a COVID-recession high of 10.0% in April 2020. The state's unemployment rate has been below 4.0% since November 2020, and below 3.0% since May 2021.

Utah's low unemployment rate is occurring during a period of elevated labor force participation. With the extraordinarily tight labor market present in the post-COVID economy of 2023, the labor force participation rate has inched up to nearly 70%, a level not seen since 2009, driven by increased participation among prime age workers ages 25-54. But this level is thought of as being "normally" unsustainable. Very strong wage gains coupled with incredible employment opportunities seem to have pushed elements of the entrenched, non-participatory segment of the working age population into activity and obtaining jobs. But given a recession or any other economic condition that would reduce current high wage offerings and considerable employment opportunities, the participation rate would likely work its way back down to around 68.5% – a rate that is considered "normal" given Utah's age makeup.

The elevated level of labor force participation can be found in both the male and female populations. The male participation rate has increased from 75.7% in 2019 to 77.7% in 2023. The corresponding female participation rate has increased from 58.6% to 61.8%.

The Utah labor force is predominantly male at 56%, with females at 44%. The white population is the largest racial group in the labor force at 92%.

The Hispanic community has a 14% presence in the Utah labor force. That cohort has a 74.4% labor force participation rate. The male Hispanic participation rate is 84.2% compared to the overall Utah all-male rate of 77.7%. The female Hispanic participation rate of 64.4% is also higher than the all-female participation rate of 61.8%. Both of those male and female Hispanic participation rates are higher than they were pre-pandemic in 2019. The male rate has gone from 82.7% in 2019 to 84.2% in 2023, and the corresponding female rate change is from 58.9% to 64.4%.

Increased labor force participation can be seen across all major age groupings. The biggest increase came in the youngest age category, 16-19 year olds. Teenage labor force participation increased from 50.2% in 2019 to 56.8% in 2023, although this group only makes up 7% of the total labor force.

Employers have offered substantially higher wages for the group of youngest and least skilled workers in recent years amidst historically tight labor markets. Labor force participation among prime age workers (25 to 54 years old) has increased 3.2% from 2019 to 2023, going from 81.8% to 85.0%. Older workers, age 55 to 64, edged up their labor force participation from 68.7% to 71.3%. Two age categories showed only marginal increases in labor force participation, 20 to 24 year olds (79.9% increased to 80.4%), and those aged 65 years or more (20.2% to 20.9%).

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The largest percentage of the Utah labor force at 23% is the 25 to 34 year old grouping. The 35 to 44 year old group comprises 22%, the 45 to 54 year old group makes up 18%, 20 to 24 year

olds comprise 13%, and those age 65 or more comprise 5% of the labor force. Teens aged 16 to 19, as mentioned above, make up 7% of the labor force. The overall Utah labor force is young in comparison to the national average. Fifty-eight percent of the labor force is between 20 and 44 years old, while that same percentage at the national level is 53%. The older workers of 55 years and older are 16.5 percent of Utah's labor force and 23.3% of the national labor force.

Unemployment rates across demographic groups are very low. The increased labor availability due to elevated labor force participation is quickly being employed in the expanding state economy. The statewide unemployment rate in mid-2023 is 2.5%. By selected demographic groups, the values are 2.6% for males, 2.3% for females, 2.5% for white males, 2.2% for white females, 2.9% for Hispanic males, and 3.8% for Hispanic females.

## II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF KEY LABOR MARKET TRENDS, INCLUDING ACROSS EXISTING INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Throughout U.S. history, the economic labor supply has expanded nationally with above-replacement internal population growth coupled with new in-migrants to produce an ample labor supply. For the first time in the nation's history, the strong labor supply is running out of steam.

As the nation's aging Baby Boom generation exits the labor force, it is leaving in its wake a smaller labor pool. Couple this internal labor shortfall with a recent reduction in international in-migration and the U.S. finds itself on the cusp of an economic future with a diminished labor supply. This decline dynamic is already in motion. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the tip of that iceberg. This demographic pivot is the basis for the nation's current labor shortage. The pandemic's disruptive force exposed its emergence.

The forces producing the nation's current labor shortfall began more than 70 years ago when the Baby Boom generation emerged. At this time, the U.S. population was nearly four-to-one pre-labor age population to retirement-age population. The Baby Boom generation was a sizable mass, and the nation was about to experience a large injection of youthful labor.

The working-age population largely establishes the size of economic activity. As the Baby Boom generation began to enter the labor market, both the United States and Utah economies needed to expand to absorb and employ this group. The Baby Boom generation was poised to make both economies significantly larger.

By 1980, the Baby Boom generation had aged into the U.S. economy and the expected economic expansion was underway. However, economies don't expand overnight, and initially the unemployment rate was high and available unskilled labor was substantial. Utah's experience has been different from the nation's experience because of its population dynamics. Utah's Baby Boom generation was supplemented by large population echo booms, which were less pronounced nationally. That contrast set the stage for Utah's young labor force and the nation's current labor shortage.

By 2020, the Baby Boom had stretched the U.S. economy to its fullest extent. In order to maintain the economy at this expanded size after the Baby Boom's departure, there must be a sufficient trailing quantity of youthful labor.

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An economy's size is correlated with the available labor-force size. With sufficient additional

labor, an economy can grow. Conversely, an insufficient labor supply will pressure an economy to contract. If more labor ages out more workers than it adds, the labor supply reduces. When this situation occurs, the initial stage is announced with a low-skill labor shortage. The backfill of available labor is insufficient. This is currently the case in the United States.

The overall United States population has largely reached no-growth. Recently, the United States Census Bureau reported that the nation's population only grew by 0.1% in 2021, "the slowest rate since the founding of the nation." Corresponding with the Baby Boom generation's aging, the nation's annual deaths are about to outpace annual births. That combination results in population decline. Congruently, international in-migration has turned downward since 2016. Therefore, there is no counter from the outside to override the population decline from the inside.

The size of the Baby Boom generation pushed the United States' labor market and economic output to an historical peak. A labor shortfall was destined to arrive once that generation started to exit from the economy's production side. Many exiting Baby Boomers are still spending money, sustaining the economy's consuming side. But economic production needs to support economic consumption. In growing numbers, Baby Boomers are no longer contributing to production yet are still pushing economic consumption. When demand (consumption) outpaces supply (production), a production (labor) shortage emerges. The pandemic pulled back the curtain upon this drama.

Given the factors outlined, national labor shortages are likely to continue. In the past, "labor shortages" were spoken of only in the labor hierarchy's high and specialized-skill segments. "Offer better wages" was the prescribed solution. That worked when there was an ever-growing supply of additional labor. But with ancillary labor now drying up, the labor-shortage narrative has descended to the labor hierarchy's lowest-skilled arena, a segment where bodies and not dollars are the solution.

Labor is a churning reservoir. It follows the money upward. The U.S. has always found an adequate supply of low-skilled labor to backfill this upward kinesis. The nation's current demographic profile implies that such a backfill will lessen with time and shortly regress. Professionals will not be in short supply; manual and service laborers will. Labor shortages have rapidly descended from the labor-tree's higher branches to its lower, even affecting the roots. Options are before us. They will be determined by the nation's collective approach.

### III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

#### PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE.

The most recent five-year estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey report the Utah population ages 25 and over is educated in the following proportions:

- Less than high school: 7.0%
- High school: 22.6%
- Some college, no degree: 25.1%
- Associate's degree: 9.9%

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- Bachelor's degree: 23.5%

- Graduate/professional degree: 12.0%

A past headline of an internet article stating More People are Underemployed Now than in 2000 is not a surprising conclusion. The main reason is that the overall labor force in Utah (and the nation) is actually overeducated in relation to the economy's occupational mix and the minimum education requirements. This is a good mismatch (over education) to have as the alternative would hinder the economy. For the underemployed this can be a frustrating situation, but for the economy as a whole, it is not an economic drag.

Pairing the percentage of Utah occupational employment with the same educational classifications shows the educational disparity:

#### Statewide

<b>Education</b>	<b>Percentage of Population</b>	<b>Occupational Mix</b>
Less than high school	7.0%	23.7%
High school	22.6%	40.0%
Some college, no degree	25.1%	6.9%
Associate's degree	9.9%	2.1%
Bachelor's degree	23.5%	23.5%
Graduate/professional degree	12.0%	3.8%

These percentages indicate there could be a large cohort of underemployed people. For example, in Utah the occupational mix currently asks for 4% of the Utah population to carry a graduate or professional degree to meet the hard skills of the occupational mix. Yet 12% of the Utah population carries a graduate or professional degree. All of the levels of educational attainment other than the bachelor's degree level show an over-education of the workforce related to the demands of the occupational mix. One can see that a sizable percentage of the population must fall "backward" from their education attainment in order to find a job.

#### Bear River

<b>Education</b>	<b>Percentage of Population</b>	<b>Occupational Mix</b>
Less than high school	5.9%	27.7%
High school	24.4%	40.0%
Some college, no degree	27.4%	6.9%
Associate's degree	8.3%	0.6%

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Bachelor's degree	22.7%	21.9%
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Graduate/professional degree	11.3%	2.1%
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Eastern

Education	Percentage of Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	10.1%	33.8%
High school	33.0%	38.0%
Some college, no degree	27.6%	7.0%
Associate's degree	11.3%	0.4%
Bachelor's degree	12.2%	19.5%
Graduate/professional degree	5.7%	1.3%

Central/Southwest

Education	Percentage of Population	Occupational Mix
Less than high school	6.9%	29.0%
High school	24.6%	40.4%
Some college, no degree	27.5%	9.4%
Associate's degree	12.5%	0.8%
Bachelor's degree	18.5%	17.8%
Graduate/professional degree	9.9%	2.7%

Across these areas and the education attainment, it is those with the graduate/professional degrees who display the largest mismatch between education attained and the education required. Only in the Eastern region does the demand of the occupational landscape for workers with bachelor’s degree or higher (20.8% of jobs) exceed the educational attainment of the regional workforce (17.9% with bachelor’s degree or higher).

This general “over education” of the labor force would imply that the skills needed to fuel the

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overall Utah economy are there. It is also hard to argue with Utah's economy which is the fastest growing economy in the nation post-Great Recession and is not finding enough workers or

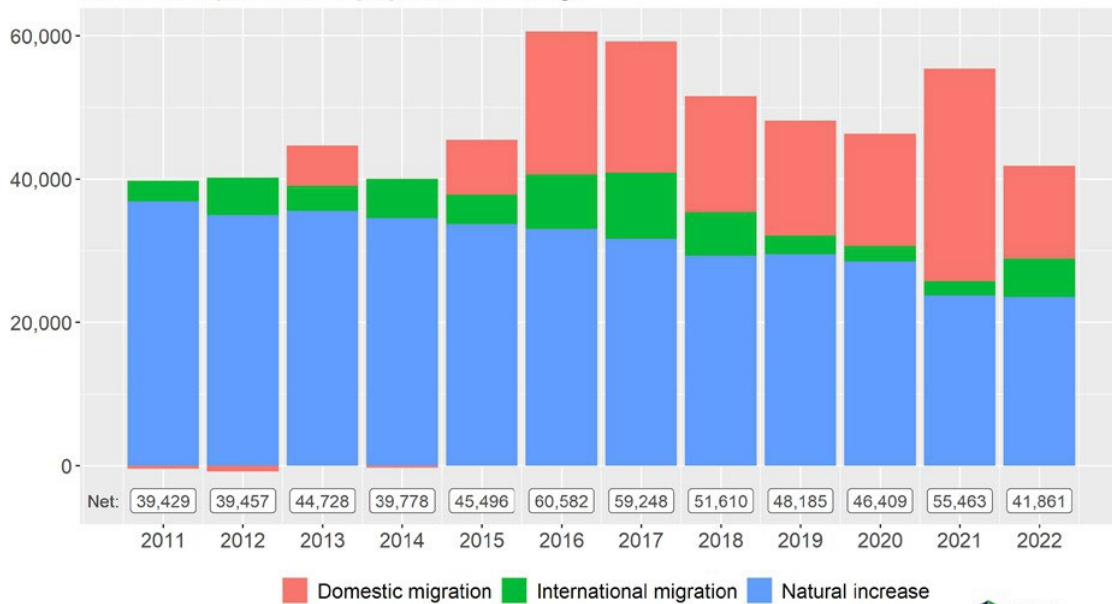
enough skills to satisfy the economy’s desire.

IV. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION.

COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.

Utah’s high rate of jobs growth, averaging 3% annually, is a testament to a high level of success in meeting the hiring, education and skills needs of the economy. High levels of in-migration from other regions – mostly other U.S. states but also some international migration – has been instrumental in expanding the state’s supply of labor. Where any shortfalls of the workforce exist in meeting the economy’s needs for hiring, education and skills, the state has generally been able to attract new labor from other regions, as shown in the figure below.

Utah: Components of population change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division



At a more detailed level of analysis focusing on individual occupations, skills and education, shortfalls can exist. Examining changes in earnings per occupation is one means of identifying such shortfalls. Occupational earnings reveal preferences of the labor market for different types of educational and skills attainment, and the rate of change in occupational earnings reflects the relative balance of supply and demand for these skills.

The law of supply and demand tells us that when labor market demand for an occupation outstrips available labor supply, that occupation’s earnings will increase. When an occupation’s pay grows at a pace faster than the average statewide pace, this signals a relative scarcity of labor for that occupation. As such, occupations with high rates of pay gains are indicative of areas of opportunity for workforce skills and education development.

Following this logic, ranking occupations by rates of pay increases is a reasonable way to assess areas of opportunity for skills and education development to meet the economy’s needs. For

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572 occupations in Utah, rates of pay increase from 2017-2022 were calculated and ranked. The top 20% of occupations were retained as a set of occupations most likely constrained by labor

scarcity issues. Expanding the labor supply for these occupations would bring supply closer to suspected labor market demand.

The skills and education requirements of these labor-scarce occupations skew heavily toward the lower end of the educational-requirement spectrum. Two-thirds (67%) of the occupations on the list have either no formal educational requirement, or require only a high school education. In contrast, only 17% require a bachelor's degree while 10% require a professional or graduate degree.

For the occupations with lower educational requirements, on-the-job training is often sufficient to competently perform occupational duties. However, often the main constraint is a lack of available workers more than a lack of skill and education. To meet the demand for these occupations, the state just needs more workers, not necessarily a substantial increase in workforce skill and education attainment.

For higher-skilled occupations on the list, a large proportion are in the education, health care and STEM fields, reinforcing the importance of expanding workforce skills and education in these domains.

Following the method described above, selected labor-scarce occupations by educational requirement levels are listed below. Areas of opportunity exist for meeting the hiring needs of the economy by expanding the skills and educational attainment of the state's workforce for these labor-scarce occupations.

#### Professional and Graduate Degrees

21-1013	Marriage and Family Therapists
21-1019	Counselors, All Other
21-1023	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary
25-1192	Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers, Postsecondary
25-1193	Recreation and Fitness Studies Teachers, Postsecondary
29-1011	Chiropractors
29-1131	Veterinarians
29-2091	Orthotists and Prosthetists

Mental health, educational, and STEM fields dominate the list of labor scarce occupations with high educational requirements. Notable on this list are the multiple therapist, counselor, and social worker occupations, as well as postsecondary teaching occupations.

#### Bachelor's Degrees

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11-2011 Advertising and Promotions Managers

11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers
11-9039	Education Administrators, All Other
13-1075	Labor Relations Specialists
13-1141	Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval
17-2071	Electrical Engineers
19-1012	Food Scientists and Technologists
19-2032	Materials Scientists
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School
27-2012	Producers and Directors
27-3011	Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys
27-3043	Writers and Authors
27-4032	Film and Video Editors

A theme of occupations related to education and STEM fields can also be seen in this list of labor scarce occupations requiring a bachelor's degree.

Associate's Degrees or Some Post-secondary Training and Certification

27-4014	Sound Engineering Technicians
29-2053	Psychiatric Technicians
31-9011	Massage Therapists
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists
39-5094	Skincare Specialists
49-2021	Radio, Cellular, and Tower Equipment Installers and Repairers

Services related to personal care predominate on this list of labor-scarce occupations with moderate educational requirements. Additional occupations on the list require STEM competency or a health care focus.

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High School or less

13-2082	Tax Preparers
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
35-3011	Bartenders
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmasons
47-2022	Stonemasons
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers
47-2061	Construction Laborers
47-2181	Roofers
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers
51-6031	Sewing Machine Operators
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators

This list of labor-scarce occupations with low formal educational requirements has been selected to reflect jobs requiring specialized skills that are often learned on the job. Occupations in the food service and construction industries are prominent.

## 2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE STATE, TO ADDRESS THE EDUCATION AND SKILL NEEDS OF THE WORKFORCE, AS IDENTIFIED IN (A)(1)(B)(III) ABOVE, AND THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS, AS IDENTIFIED IN (A)(1)(A)(III) ABOVE. THIS MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF—

### A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EDUCATION AND

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TRAINING ACTIVITIES OF THE CORE PROGRAMS, COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, AND REQUIRED 4 AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS.5

[4] REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS: IN ADDITION TO THE CORE PROGRAMS, THE FOLLOWING PARTNER PROGRAMS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ACCESS THROUGH THE ONE-STOPS: CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (PERKINS), COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT, INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS, HUD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS, JOB CORPS, LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM, NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM, SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) (UNLESS THE GOVERNOR DETERMINES TANF WILL NOT BE A REQUIRED PARTNER), TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAMS, AND YOUTHBUILD.

[5] WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS, INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, AND HUMAN SERVICES.

Utah's Combined State Plan includes an analysis of its workforce development activities, including education and training in the state, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers as identified above.

Utah's workforce development activities include the education and training activities of the core programs, one-stop center (AJC) required partner programs and other partners.

Utah's Governor, Spencer Cox, has established the One Utah Roadmap to highlight his team's goals and strategies that support and address the state's workforce development needs. The roadmap is updated when needed. Below is the second version of the roadmap which outlines six areas of development that will be prioritized. Those areas are:

- Economic advancement: Achieve economic success that lifts all of Utah.
- Education innovation and investment: Every Utah child receives a high-quality education. Prioritize at-risk learners.
- Rural matters: Rural Utah matters and deserves a voice in the economic future of Utah.
- Health security: Improve health by combating Covid, expanding healthcare access, reducing costs, increasing quality, and focusing on social determinants of health.
- Equity and opportunity: All Utahns must have an equal opportunity to prosper.
- Streamline and modernize state government: Upgrade Utah state government to be more efficient, innovative and responsive to residents.

Governor Cox is committed to ensuring Utah's economy and its residents remain strong and resilient. He understands the government's role in the economy and works to keep taxes in check, support business-friendly policies and regulatory reform, and focus on workforce development.

He recognizes that the state's future depends on the well-being and education of children. Every investment made in Utah schools will pay dividends, not only for individual success, but for society as a whole. In addition, the governor is focused on creating new pathways for students entering the workforce. By expanding access to college and technical classes in high school, apprenticeships, and relevant workforce aligned programs at technical colleges and universities, Utah can prepare today's students for the jobs of tomorrow.

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Governor Cox is focused on promoting innovative ways to cut health care costs, addressing the social factors that can adversely affect health, preventing disease through healthy lifestyles, and increasing mental health resources and suicide prevention efforts.

He is committed to bringing residents in every part of Utah access to the supports necessary for prosperity. He advocates for more investments in water conservation and supports farmers and ranchers by investing in more efficient agriculture water systems and promoting Utah agriculture.

He endorses an “all of the above” approach to energy policy, pushing for more oil and gas production, more mining of critical minerals, more charging stations for electric vehicles and more development of wind, solar, geothermal and nuclear power sources.

Utah has been a long-time leader in expanding broadband, which will help create jobs and new economic development opportunities, and the governor will find ways that aid rural businesses, schools and residents.

Families are a key social institution and Gov. Cox understands that when we nurture families, we build stronger communities and improve our quality of life for all. Governor Cox formed a new Office of Families and hired a senior advisor tasked with finding ways to strengthen families so children have better outcomes.

### Education & Training

#### Utah System of Higher Education

The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) consists of 16 public colleges and universities, which include:

- Eight technical colleges providing technical education certificate programs and occupational skills: Bridgerland Technical College, Davis Technical College, Dixie Technical College, Mountainland Technical College, Ogden-Weber Technical College, Southwest Technical College, Tooele Technical College, Uintah Basin Technical College
- Two community colleges, providing technical education certificate and associate degree programs, occupational skills, and academic programs leading to transfer certificates and associate degrees: Salt Lake Community College, Snow College
- Four regional universities, providing academic certificates, associate and bachelor’s degrees, and limited master’s degrees: Southern Utah University, Utah Tech University, Utah Valley University, Weber State University
- Two research universities, providing bachelor’s and graduate degrees, and research: University of Utah, Utah State University (Utah State University also provides technical education and community college roles in southeastern Utah)

These public institutions provide the majority of higher education programs and services within the state. They serve as economic levers for the state through research, teaching and service, and career and technical education. Institutions work closely with local business and industry leaders to develop and deliver career and technical education certificate and associate degree programs specifically tailored to local workforce needs, utilizing employer advisory committees and employer partnerships for internships and placement, equipment or program support and

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more. Institutions are focused on workforce development, career counseling, internship services, apprenticeships, and career employment. Institutions maintain close association with

each other and with high schools to ensure pathways and educational opportunities are available to students. Collectively, these Utah System of Higher Education institutions serve over 215,000 students.

USHE's technical colleges are accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Each program is accountable for meeting benchmarks annually for student completion (60%), placement (70%) and licensure (70%), validating relevance and alignment with industry needs. Most programs are offered in a competency-based format, providing opportunities for students to receive credit for prior learning experience. This increases the efficiency and affordability of training for students. Many programs include pathways, which support transfer opportunities to encourage students to continue their education between secondary and post-secondary educational institutions.

In addition to institutional accreditation, institutions offer programs that require, or electively seek, programmatic accreditations and approvals. Such programs are held to rigorous standards of compliance, performance, and student outcomes. Many programs prepare students for industry credentials, including certification and/or licensure. These approvals and student attainment of credentials provide third-party validation of program quality and alignment with industry needs.

Utah System of Higher Education institutions provide opportunities for secondary students to access and progress in post-secondary education while in high school. Students can complete college coursework tuition-free with nominal fees through dual enrollment in a technical college or concurrent enrollment in a degree-granting institution.

Under the direction of the Utah Board of Higher Education, the Utah College Advising Corps has expanded to serve 89 high schools during the 2021-2022 school year, with the intention to expand to support every high school with high-quality college advising by 2024-2025.

USHE's technical education institutions administer a state funded program titled Custom Fit, which provides and supports training designed to aid in retention and expansion of Utah companies, attract new businesses to the state, and meet employers' specific educational needs. Companies pay 50-70% of the costs for short-term employee training. In fiscal year 2022, 1,894 companies and 20,180 employees were served by Custom Fit training.

### Utah Adult Education

Utah Adult Education plays an important partnership role in workforce development. Utah Adult Education provides three core services, including:

- Literacy instruction for students with academic levels below the ninth grade
- High school completion through a 24-credit secondary diploma or completion of the GED®
- English Language Acquisition for multilingual students

Adult education empowers out-of-school individuals ages 16 and above to become self-sufficient by gaining the skills necessary for postsecondary education and training, employment, and personal success. Utah Adult Education assists adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, employment, and self-sufficiency while completing a secondary education and basic literacy instruction. Utah Adult Education also partners with community

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resources to ensure students have access to needed resources.



Utah Adult Education provides services to over 20,000 students annually through 40 programs located across the state. Thirty-seven programs reside in school districts and three programs are community based organizations. Adult education services are provided to students residing in the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison and the Utah State Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City. In addition, adult education services are offered to students in 25 county jails located across the state

Utah Adult Education providers partner with employers to provide services tailored to the needs of employers. Partnerships with BD Medical, Daily Bacon, and UTA are all examples of effective partnerships that aid workforce development. Adult Education pre-apprenticeship and Integrated Education and Training programs accelerate students' pathways to sustainable wages and personal success.

### Utah State Board of Education (K-12)

Public secondary education (K-12) is a vital partner in meeting the state's overall education and training objectives. Educating the children of Utah prepares them for post-secondary education and the workforce. In addition, there are programs and partner programs that directly support this transition, including:

- College and Career Awareness: Explores and prepares students for college and career pathways, focusing on jobs that are high skill and high demand as well as satisfying and financially rewarding
- Career and Technical Education: Creates pathways to lifelong career success for every secondary student by providing him or her with the technical skills and academic knowledge needed to prepare for future employment and/or a successful transition to post-secondary education
- Work-Based Learning: Provides sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.
- Career and Technical Education Pathways: A pathway is a sequence of courses within a student's area of interest. A pathway connects from high school to college for a certificate, a degree, and/or career. Pathways help students prepare for college and career by offering appropriate academic and skill development, concurrent enrollment courses that meet degree requirements, and earn state and industry certifications
  - Primary Years Program (Ages 3-12)
  - Middle Years Program (Ages 12-16)
  - Diploma Program (Ages 16-19)
  - International Baccalaureate program: Consists of three programs that encompass ages 3-19

The programs require study in a broad range of subjects, including content in cultural education, and place special emphasis in acquiring and developing language, developing skills of learning and creating opportunities for individual and collaborative planning as well as a

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community service component requiring action and reflection to complement the course of study.

- Concurrent Enrollment and agreements with post-secondary institutions: The purpose of Concurrent Enrollment is to provide a challenging college-level experience for students in their last two years of high school. Course offerings in math, science, social studies, language arts, fine arts, humanities, world languages, career and technical programs, and education have been implemented in high schools throughout the state.
- Advanced Placement program: Offers high-school students worldwide the opportunity to take college-level courses while attending secondary school. Advanced Placement courses are invariably more rigorous than other high-school offerings.

## **Department of Workforce Services Divisions**

### Workforce Development Division

The Department of Workforce Services' employment exchange system supports workforce development. Whether a job seeker is in the beginning phases of choosing a career or needs a better job, the Department of Workforce Services offers an array of online and in-house services. This employment exchange system fuels Utah's economic engine by supporting the workforce with training, education and other resources. The department's top priority is to align the skills and knowledge of Utah's citizens with the needs of employers. The Workforce Development Division continues to provide a variety of virtual resources for individuals to utilize, including online workshops and virtual job fairs. Additional workforce development tools and activities include:

- Career planning
- Job readiness tools
- Job matching
- Online portal
- Business development and partnerships
- Economic data

### Utah Office of Rehabilitation

The Department of Workforce Services, Office of Rehabilitation, provides specialized services designed to support individuals with disabilities in reaching their career and educational aspirations. This encompasses a broad range of tailored interventions including counseling, training, and other supportive measures. Through these services, individuals are empowered to navigate challenges, enhance their capabilities, and confidently enter into the workforce or academic settings. Services offered include vocational counseling and guidance, aiding in acquiring secondary and post-secondary credentials, equipping individuals with workplace readiness skills, providing on-the-job training, aiding in job development and placement, as well as offering supported and customized employment pathways. At the heart of these initiatives is a commitment to nurturing independence and promoting economic self-reliance. The primary objective is to foster independence and economic self-sufficiency, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their disability, has an equal opportunity to thrive in their chosen field.

## **Department of Workforce Services Programs**

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Employment First Initiative

The Utah Employment First Partnership represents a unified commitment from the Department of Workforce Services' Office of Rehabilitation, and several divisions within the Department of Health and Human Services, along with other community stakeholders. This partnership aims to refine state-provided services tailored for individuals with disabilities, facilitating their integration into competitive, community-based employment. The Employment First Initiative champions workforce development by not just promoting, but also supporting and fostering integration in the workforce. It prioritizes competitive, integrated employment as the foremost desired outcome for working-age youth and adults with disabilities, ensuring they receive at least minimum wage or higher. This initiative particularly emphasizes supporting those with significant and complex disabilities who, historically, have found limited opportunities or have been traditionally overlooked in job placements.

### Choose to Work

Choose to Work is a program designed to meet the expanding needs of Utah employers by providing them with qualified and job-ready individuals. Choose to Work's employment specialists provide statewide job development and placement service to Utah job seekers with disabilities. Choose to Work specialists provide services and support employers statewide to help them understand the support and services available to recruit, hire, retain, and promote individuals with disabilities. Applicants' skills range from entry level to professional in all job categories.

### Work Success

The Work Success program has been streamlined to better navigate a rapidly changing job market and better serve the needs of all Utah job seekers. The goal of the program is to empower participants with the necessary skills and practical tools to secure meaningful employment, leading to self-sufficiency and success. This will be accomplished by providing comprehensive support and guidance through:

- Career Assessments
- Career Exploration
- Career Action Plan
- Ongoing Support and Resources

### Veterans Initiatives

Veterans receive Priority of Service as they transition from the military or any time they seek employment services from the Department of Workforce Services to gain or improve their employment status. Veteran and Military Employment Services, a partner of this Combined plan, supports veterans in their reintegration process as they leave the military and rejoin the civilian workforce. The Job for Veteran State Grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Veteran Employment and Training Services, provides individualized career services for veterans that have significant barriers to employment. The Department of Workforce Services monitors and engages veteran customers in an effort to reduce the duration of veterans on the unemployment rolls and to help veterans on state-provided Medicaid seek Veterans Administration medical

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benefits. The Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) helps veterans, National Guard members, Reserve members, and spouses gain licenses, certifications, tools, and equipment

leading to new employment or maintaining existing employment. The Utah Patriot Partnership program is an employer recognition program for those employers who actively seek to employ and retain veterans, currently serving military members, and spouses.

#### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)

Utah has the advantage of integrating programs such as TANF and SNAP in its one-stop delivery system. These programs help provide access to a greater number of job seekers who can meet employers' immediate workforce needs. Connecting recipients of these programs with career and training services increases their employment opportunities.

Utah's SNAP Employment and Training program (SNAP E&T) is a combination of career services through our online labor exchange system and case management by employment counselors throughout the state. During a job seeker's first month of participation in SNAP E&T, they complete an online evaluation to determine their job preparation needs and attend a SNAP E&T virtual workshop presented by the SNAP E&T Employment Counselors. The online evaluation determines workshops to assist them with their job preparation such as, identify transferable skills, build a resume, create well-crafted answers to interview questions, draft a marketing message, etc. The virtual workshop orients participants to the requirements of the SNAP E&T program. Participants have virtual appointments with their employment counselor in order to create an employment plan, learn to use the online labor exchange system to search for employment opportunities and discuss their needs. The employment counselor will assist the job seeker with community resources, training opportunities and job referrals as appropriate. The goal of this dual approach is to assist the participants to reconnect with the workforce and increase their employability through training services.

#### Medicaid Programs Offered to the Community

On December 23, 2019, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services authorized the Utah Department of Health to implement full Medicaid expansion in the State of Utah. The expansion extended Medicaid eligibility to Utah adults whose annual income is up to 138% of the federal poverty level (\$19,392 for an individual or \$39,900 for a family of four).

Medicaid is working on expanding continuous eligibility for children for twelve months of uninterrupted coverage and twelve months of continued postpartum coverage for pregnant women beginning January 2024.

#### The Utah Data Research Center

The Utah Data Research Center conducts research to inform public policy initiatives, providing the platform for policymakers, practitioners and the general public to make data-informed decisions. Data are integrated from:

- The Utah Department of Commerce
- The Utah Department of Health
- The Utah Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education

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- The Utah State Board of Education



The data provided from partner agencies constitute the "P20W" pipeline. P20W captures the behavior of individuals starting in early childhood, continuing through primary and secondary schools and higher education, and lastly as they enter and move about the workforce. The data is stored on an annual basis and are considered, as a longitudinal set, allowing for the study of long-term patterns.

The research provides objective insights into public policy queries to help decision makers find meaningful and impactful solutions to the issues facing the state of Utah. The Utah Data Research Center leverages technology resources to create efficiencies in the exchange and release of data between agencies and external requestors.

### Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs

The Utah Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs is part of the Department of Workforce Services. The duties of the Commissioner include promoting and educating the public about apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, coordinating and collaborating with key stakeholders and providing an annual written report of apprenticeship program activities and recommendations for improving apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, and pre-apprenticeship programs to the legislature.

The overall goals are to:

- Increase awareness of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults as being a valuable pathway to success
- Promote apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship opportunities to employers as a valuable talent recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy
- Identify high-quality apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs and best practices that can be shared

By identifying, expanding and promoting high-quality industry driven apprenticeship programs, the department will assist in developing a qualified workforce to meet the hiring demands of Utah employers.

Utah Code 35A-6-102 defines registered apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and youth apprenticeship. Standardized definitions ensure that key stakeholders use a common language and message, resulting in development and expansion of high-quality programs. Standardized definitions support the state's goal of promoting apprenticeship programs as a viable career pathway to success for both youth and adults. To ensure that there are a wide variety of programs available, the Commissioner of Apprenticeship Programs continues to work with key stakeholders to further diversify industry representation.

### Housing and Community Development

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Division serves communities across the state, aiming to bolster local capacity, finance essential services and infrastructure, and maximize resources for vital community initiatives. Whether it's funding a rural water system project or aiding low-income households with utility expenses, HCD's objective is to support communities and their economies by backing local infrastructure endeavors, affordable housing projects, and

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the delivery of fundamental community services, including utility aid, weatherization, emergency food assistance, and assistance for local anti-poverty initiatives. HCD oversees a

diverse range of federal and state grants, thereby extending funding opportunities to numerous Utah communities while also providing the requisite training and technical support to help these communities access funding.

### Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a joint state and federal program that provides economic stability to Utah's workforce. Contributions are collected from Utah employers through the state unemployment program to exclusively pay benefits to unemployed workers.

Through the program, individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own may receive temporary cash benefits to help bridge the gap between jobs. In addition, unemployment insurance keeps money circulating in the economy during a downturn, keeps workers out of poverty and lessens the pressure on other state social services programs.

#### Help for Employers

- Register employers and monitor compliance
- Determine if employer accounts are subject to unemployment contributions
- Collect employer contributions and overpayments for unemployment benefits
- Post jobs and report new hires online
- Identify worker misclassification

#### Help for Claimants

- File claims and collect information
- Determine eligibility for benefit
- Assess liability for employers
- Monitor compliance
- Facilitate re-employment

### **Workforce System Partners, Programs and Initiatives**

#### STEM Action Center

Created in 2013, the Utah STEM Action Center is Utah's partner in promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education through the identification and support of best practices and leveraging of resources across education, industry, government and community partners to support economic prosperity. Their vision is to bring STEM to every Utah home, school and community to build a brighter future for Utah.

#### State Workforce Development Board

Utah's governor has created specific, attainable goals that are relevant to the economy of today and tomorrow. In doing so, he created priorities and action items to guide and challenge his cabinet. The Department of Workforce Services executive director and the State Workforce

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Development Board accept leadership roles in this call to action. Collaboration and partnership are the keys to achieving these goals. Department of Workforce Services executives, agency

staff, community and business partners, and State Workforce Development Board members serve on various boards, committees and workgroups that target the governor's goals. This includes partnering and contributing to the One Utah Summit.

### Career Pathways

Career pathways are the culmination of partnering agencies and educational institutions in Utah working together to create a world-class workforce. Key characteristics of career pathways include:

- High-quality education and training that aligns with the skill needs of industry
- Contextualized instruction for a specific occupation or occupational cluster that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual
- Clear goals for individuals seeking to improve their situations
- Stackable credentials
- Necessary supports that remove barriers and allow individuals to move towards earning a family-sustaining wage
- Multiple entry and exit points that allow flexibility as individuals explore educational and career opportunities

### Data Systems & Warehouses

An important part of the workforce development system is collecting and reporting data to measure outcomes and performance. Utah agencies, including the Department of Workforce Services, Adult Education, and the Utah System of Higher Education collect and analyze data to produce required state and federal reports.

### Talent Ready Utah Program

The Talent Ready Utah Program is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry, education, and economic development to better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. It is a collaborative partnership among:

- The Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education
- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- The Utah State Board of Education
- The Utah State Legislature

Talent Ready Utah provides funding to public post-secondary educational institutions to develop, implement or expand educational programs that are responsive to regional and statewide industry needs serving high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. Talent Ready Utah also provides support to public schools to develop, implement or enhance work-based learning partnerships and connect them to post-secondary institutions. Some Talent Ready Utah programs are:

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- Pathway programs, a partnership between education and industry, prepare students with credentials needed to advance quickly in various industries, opening doors to

successful careers and continued educational opportunities. Pathways participants develop skills to start their career in a growing industry, earning a sustainable family wage while continuing their education debt-free.

- Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection (TRAC) is a youth apprenticeships program that provides meaningful work experience for students engaged in learning the skills they need for a successful career. Students split their time between the classroom and workplace, applying knowledge through a hands-on learning routine. As part-time employees of our TRAC partners, students earn a wage pursuing their education toward a high-paying career. By linking the efforts of industry and education, the TRAC program creates a model that is beneficial to both students and businesses. The TRAC program engages students beginning in high school.
- Utah Works provides short-term training for companies who need to hire employees quickly. Industry partners design the program and select which courses and training are required. In partnership with the Utah System of Higher Education, Talent Ready Utah provides the custom designed training to fill those in-demand positions.
- Utah Adopt a School offers businesses opportunities to engage dynamically in Utah's K-12 schools to foster an ecosystem of support, innovation, and career exploration for student success and access to opportunity.

#### The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity works to retain and recruit companies and bring more high paying jobs to Utah. In addition, they work with industries, Utah regions, communities and nonprofits to implement strategic economic development plans and reinforce Utah's diverse, prosperous economy. They utilize federal and state resources, and private sector contracts to cultivate economic prosperity for all Utahns. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity manages programs and initiatives supporting:

- Business Incentives
- Federal Opportunity Zones
- International trade and diplomacy
- Rural Utah communities
- Tourism and film production
- Utah entrepreneurs and businesses

Additionally, this office works to create sustainable advantages around emerging and mature sectors. The state convenes constituents and organizes strategies to support and build specific industries in its robust and diverse economy. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity has identified five Targeted Industries. They include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Defense

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- Financial Services



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- Life Sciences and Healthcare
- Software and Information Technology

### The Indian Training Center

The primary program design of the Indian Training Education Center includes investing in participant services that promote talent development for long term employment and greater earnings potential rather than quick placement in a minimum wage job with no opportunity for advancement. The Indian Training Education Center focuses on education and training because it is the best way to prepare participants to enter the workforce and enable individuals to find and keep jobs that provide a living wage, allowing them to support themselves and their families. Services include:

- Adult Basic Education
- Occupational Skills Training
- High School Services
- Job Search Assistance
- Self-Service Activities
- Supportive Services
- Follow-Up Services

### Futures Through Training - Utah Farmworker Program

The Utah Farmworker Program, facilitated by Futures Through Training, seeks to provide comprehensive support to eligible agricultural workers and their dependents in order to enhance quality of life. This is accomplished through a variety of services, including education, training, and financial aid, with a primary focus on supporting and guiding the agricultural community to improve employment skills and credentials, leading to higher wages, job growth, and retention. The program offers a range of assistance, such as financial aid for high school diploma/GED and bachelor's degree programs, as well as aid for essential items like clothing, tools, and transportation. Additionally, the program provides career counseling, job readiness, job search assistance, and mentoring services to further promote and enhance the success of its participants.

### Senior Community Service Employment Program

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Participants also have access to employment assistance through one-stop centers (AJCs).

Senior Community Service Employment Program participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. The program provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. Participants work an average of 20 hours per week and are paid the highest of federal, state or

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local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Participants must be at least 55, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the America Job Center system.

### Job Corps

Established in 1964 by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Job Corps is mostly a residential program with an open entry and exit. There are 123 Job Corps across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Approximately 50,000 are served each year in ages 16-24. Job Corps' Mission is to educate and train highly motivated young people for successful careers in the nation's fastest-growing industries. Key Benefits include:

- Career technical training in high-growth industries
- Students can earn a high school diploma or the equivalent, or college credits
- Tuition-free to eligible individuals, including housing, meals, basic medical care, a living allowance, hands-on training, and career preparation
- Transitional support services, such as help finding employment, housing, and transportation
- Graduates enter the workforce or an apprenticeship, go on to higher education, or join the military

### YouthBuild

The Ogden-Weber Technical College YouthBuild has been in operation since 2011. It is a pre-apprenticeship program that serves 40 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 per year. It is funded by a competitive Department of Labor YouthBuild grant. It is one of 260 programs nationally and internationally overseen by YouthBuild USA. To qualify for the program a youth must be a high school drop out or be referred by a high school counselor. Additionally, a youth must fit a qualifying factor which includes low-income, youth or adult offender, child of an incarcerated parent, youth in or aging out of Foster Care or youth with a disability.

YouthBuild is a workforce development program that provides students with the opportunity to gain a high school diploma or equivalent and obtain training in construction or health care. All students are also AmeriCorps members and complete 450 hours of community service while they are in the program, this qualifies them to earn a Segal Education Award and enables them to pursue further postsecondary education.

YouthBuild students receive wrap-around services including case management, transportation, childcare subsidies, incentives and pay for their time in training. Many students are co-enrolled with the WIOA youth training program, the Ogden-Weber Technical College, Weber Adult Education and AmeriCorps.

The focus of YouthBuild is to prepare youth to be leaders in their own lives and to contribute to their communities while they prepare for placement in employment, apprenticeship, post-secondary education, military, or a full-time AmeriCorps service term. Program services

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continue for one year after a student leaves the YouthBuild program. Case management stays in

contact with students to provide job placement services, supportive services, resources, and mentoring.

#### Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program

Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program helps seniors 55 years of age and older achieve economic independence and improve their lifestyle through job training and employment services. The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a community service and work-based job training program. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program offers free job placement services through paid individualized training opportunities. Participants gain experience and skills they need to stay active, supplement their income and contribute to their communities while the workforce gains a pool of highly motivated, reliable workers with useful skills and valuable life experience.

The program provides services to employers and local community agencies as well, through access to pre-screened candidates, assistance with workplace diversification and tax credits along with job-related follow-up and coaching. Employers can partner with the program for possible reimbursement of the first 30-days of wages for program participants through On the Job Experience.

#### Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)

The mission of the Utah Division of Child and Family Services is to keep children safe from abuse and neglect through the strengthening of families. This is accomplished with individualized, trauma-informed, community-based services that are both safety driven and family driven, and the funding of domestic violence shelters and outreach services.

#### Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction

Utah workforce system partners work together to support reentry efforts for intensive and high-risk offenders, both male and female, ages 18-35 since this population accounts for 60% of returns to prison. This program is funded by a Second Chance Act grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Partners include Utah Courts, Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Utah Governor's Office and community support.

#### Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative

The Department of Workforce Services participates in Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative (UAMMI). This group brings together public, private, community, industry and education partners to assure growth and sustainability of one of Utah's most important manufacturing clusters. The Utah Legislature recently provided an investment to formalize the UAMMI structure and begin programming for and building of the UAMMI solution/innovation centers.

The Department of Workforce Services coordinates with local jails and the state prison to provide workshops on job searching and career exploration to individuals within one year of release. CleanSlate offers expungement classes and services in one-stop centers (AJCs) along the Wasatch front. Workforce Services also participate in drug courts including a veteran treatment courts.

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B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A), DIRECTLY ABOVE.

Utah's WIOA plan has been successfully implemented over the years because it was built upon the state's strong workforce development system. State leaders from the governor's office, the state legislature, government agencies, public education, adult education and higher education entities at the state and local levels strive to improve Utah's economic environment. These entities continue to communicate and share information with one another in a variety of ways. Working together to implement the WIOA plan has enhanced and strengthened existing partnerships that were already strong and collaborative.

Strengths include:

- Successful re-certification of comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) and affiliate one-stop centers (AJC).
- Active and committed State Workforce Development Board and committee members.
- The Department of Workforce Services' ability to successfully deliver integrated services statewide, including many of the core and mandatory programs under WIOA.
- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation housed within the Department of Workforce Services and has staff co-located in several comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC).
- Strong collaboration among all the core partners, including all WIOA programs housed within the Department of Workforce Services and Adult Education.
- Continual improvement of an integrated workforce system that shares information and data among key partners such as Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Online, 24 hour access, to many services.
- A high level of expertise at the operational level via the core partners' staff, which, along with the commitment to help people, provides a strong base to build and develop partnerships
- The Department of Workforce Services and many of its partners developed virtual tools and resources during the pandemic that are, available for individuals that need them.
- Increased career pathway opportunities that accommodate the needs of individuals with barriers such as single parents, low income individuals, English language learners, individuals who have been incarcerated, and individuals with disabilities.

Utah foresees certain challenges in this implementation, including:

- Establishing sufficient resources and funding sources.
  - Increased pressure on the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC).
  - Level of effort required to develop and maintain strong partnerships.
- Achieving the emphasis on transition-age youth and the 15 percent funding requirement.

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- Attaining the Eligible Training Provider performance data required from education and training providers.



- Lacking diverse education opportunities at the operational level for customers outside the Wasatch Front economic corridor.
- Helping partners with the implementation of WIOA related initiatives at the operational level.
- Educating the general public on WIOA resources for those who need services.
- Raising awareness of Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) services available to Veterans.
- Staff turnover.

### C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAPACITY OF STATE ENTITIES TO PROVIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A), ABOVE.

Utah's state workforce system partners continually evaluate and analyze their capacity to meet state needs. While most of this analysis is accomplished by individual organizations reviewing their own capacity, core partners in the local comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) have started to evaluate their capacity, as partners, as they coordinate and align services. When gaps are identified, they reach out to required partners or other community partners to ensure that job seeker, student, client and business customer needs are addressed.

### B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE THE STATE'S STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS FOR DEVELOPING ITS WORKFORCE AND MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY. THIS MUST INCLUDE—

#### 1. VISION

DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIC VISION FOR ITS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Utah's combined plan includes the state's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting business needs to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

#### 2. GOALS

DESCRIBE THE GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THIS VISION BASED ON THE ANALYSIS IN (A) ABOVE OF THE STATE'S ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE—

(A) GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, INCLUDING PREPARING YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT <sup>6</sup> AND OTHER POPULATIONS.<sup>7</sup>

(B) GOALS FOR MEETING THE SKILLED WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS.

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[6] INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT INCLUDE DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS; LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS; INDIANS, ALASKA NATIVES, AND NATIVE HAWAIIANS; INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; OLDER INDIVIDUALS; EX-OFFENDERS; HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS, OR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS; YOUTH WHO ARE IN OR HAVE AGED OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM; INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LOW LEVELS OF LITERACY, AND INDIVIDUALS FACING SUBSTANTIAL CULTURAL BARRIERS; ELIGIBLE MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS (AS DEFINED AT SECTION 167(I) OF WIOA AND TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 35-14); INDIVIDUALS WITHIN 2 YEARS OF EXHAUSTING LIFETIME ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM; SINGLE PARENTS (INCLUDING SINGLE PREGNANT WOMEN); AND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

[7] VETERANS, UNEMPLOYED WORKERS, YOUTH AND ANY OTHER POPULATIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE.

Utah's goals focus on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations. Utah's goals support meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers. The goals align with the Utah Governor's priorities to build a sustainable future for current and future generations of Utahns, giving equal opportunities for all. They address the State's challenges with growth, with an emphasis on enabling a future with Utah's children and grandchildren nearby.

#### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic opportunity, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities.
- Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate, and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), to continually improve service to individuals and ensure those seeking assistance receive a service or an effective referral.
- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to ensure current labor market information and performance data are utilized to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that ensures support of diverse local economies throughout the state.

#### Goal Focus: Employers

Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by utilizing and leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to

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improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources.

- Reaching out to employers to help design career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and post-secondary education.
- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of training opportunities.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector.
- Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement.
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and a well-trained talent pipeline for employers in order to increase their competitiveness.

#### Goal Focus: Education and Training

Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate clear connections for students to join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors.
- Ensuring all partners are aware of the educational offerings available and are recruiting and making referrals for WIOA targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment.
- Developing programs and strategies that help high school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to post-secondary Career and Technical Education programs and ensuring that all partners are aware of the programs.
- Utilizing short-term post-secondary Career and Technical Education certificate programs that link to recognized industry credentials, including a subset of certificate or degree programs (stacked and latticed credentials) to provide efficient pathways for students to achieve additional educational credentials.
- Ensuring core and required partners align, coordinate, and collaborate as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC).
- Providing work based learning experiences in safe and professional settings that can better prepare individuals to access postsecondary and workforce opportunities.

#### Goal Focus: Workforce

Utah will provide education and training options that provide the skills and competencies required to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships will enable job seekers to find sustainable employment and employers to recruit and retain quality employees. This will

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involve:

- Increasing awareness for the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing competency-based supplemental preparation and/or training that is accessible in dynamic ways for current workers seeking to upskill or access training.
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting and developing workforce-aligned skills for individuals' future success.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development, including apprenticeship, work-based learning, customized training including established pathways through post-secondary education systems that highlight competency and reduce repetition.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to employed, underemployed, and unemployed individuals.
- Ensuring current labor market information is accessible to individuals and assists them in making decisions related to skill and credential attainment, occupational wages, and jobs in demand.

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that at-risk populations have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Ensuring partners have strong relationships at the local level so education partners connect targeted populations to community services that support them
- Partnering to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that connect targeted populations to services and ensure best practices are implemented to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and messaging to target populations
- Ensuring partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies in serving targeted populations
- Providing support for vulnerable families so children have better opportunities for success.
- Expand homeless prevention efforts through workforce partner coordination, leveraging resources, and supporting the process for individuals to attain affordable housing opportunities

### 3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

USING THE TABLE PROVIDED IN APPENDIX 1, INCLUDE THE STATE'S EXPECTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE RELATING TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A) OF WIOA. (THIS STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENT ONLY APPLIES TO CORE PROGRAMS.)

Utah's performance goals will be established in the state combined plan as required.

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#### 4. ASSESSMENT

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ASSESS THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE STATE IN RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS STATED ABOVE IN SECTIONS (B)(1), (2), AND (3) AND HOW IT WILL USE THE RESULTS OF THIS ASSESSMENT, WHICH MAY INCLUDE EVALUATION FINDINGS, AND OTHER FEEDBACK TO MAKE CONTINUOUS OR QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS.

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

The overall effectiveness of Utah's workforce development system in relation to its strategic vision will be assessed through performance measures, meeting its negotiated outcomes, and recertification of affiliate and comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC). Specifically, the performance measures related to employment, education and training and supportive services:

#### Employment after second quarter exit

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

#### Employment after fourth quarter exit

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

#### Median earnings second quarter after exist

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education

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- Vocational Rehabilitation

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

#### Credential attainment rate

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Measurable skills gains

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Effectiveness in serving employers

- Adults
- Dislocated workers
- Youth
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Effectiveness will also be assessed in terms of the membership of the State Workforce Development Board and its committee members. Each committee will maintain an action plan with goals that support Utah's state plan. Committees will report activities and accomplishments to the Board. In general, committee goals will focus on collaboration, partnering and building connections and relationships among partners and businesses in key industries throughout the state. The committees will incorporate economic information, individual agency goals, and performance data into their action plans.

#### Goals

##### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic development, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

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- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to ensure current labor market information

and performance data are utilized to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that ensures support of diverse local economies throughout the state.

- Assessed by: Completion and distribution of the data driven economic assessment of statewide workforce needs and performance measure outcome reports from core partners. The Operations Committee will oversee the development and completion of the annual economic assessment and performance measure reports. This is an ongoing activity since labor market information and performance measures are presented to the State Workforce Development Board and its committees annually.
- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Agencies and partners assess their projects and programs related to supporting and promoting key occupations and industries to inform decision making and program improvement. They share this information at the state and local levels to inform decision making and program improvement. Part of the overall assessment includes effective partnering and leveraging resources. This is an ongoing activity.
- Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC), to continually improve service to Utahns and ensure that anyone who comes to the office for assistance receives a service or an effective referral.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will be required to demonstrate progress related to this goal. State Workforce Development Board committees will have goals in their action plans that relate to this goal and they will show the work they are doing to support it. This is an ongoing activity.

#### Goal Focus: Employers

Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by utilizing and leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process and Employment Engagement Workgroup. One-stop centers (AJCs) will be required to demonstrate how they are collecting and sharing feedback from surveys and reports and using the information to make decisions and implement

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improvements. This is an ongoing activity.

- Reaching out to employers to help design career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and post-secondary education
  - Assessed by: The education system in Utah, at all levels, is supported by Occupational Advisory Committees that provide guidance regarding the education system's classes, programs of study and career pathways in terms of employer needs. This information may be shared with partners at the local level. In addition, the Utah State Board of Education is working with a contractor to analyze job market and job outlook data to be used in aligning educational programs with economic needs. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of training opportunities.
  - Assessed by: Agencies and education partners assess their ability to promote work-based learning and recruit organizations to provide these experiences. The partners will share this information with State Workforce Development Board committees. This will also be assessed by the one-stop (AJC) certification process. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector
  - Assessed by: The State Workforce Development Board will describe recommendations or steps taken to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and marketing to the business sector. The core and required partners will work toward aligning marketing and outreach activities. The recommendations will be implemented and measured using individual agency standards all partners currently have in place. This is an ongoing activity.
- Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement
  - Assessed by: The Operations Committee will oversee the quality and quantity of survey responses and other feedback received. Implementation of the new business customer survey began in December 2023. Outreach to existing and potential employer customers is ongoing. The survey questions will be reviewed by Fall 2027 to ensure they are providing needed information for improvement. This is an ongoing activity.
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and a well-trained talent pipeline for employers in order to increase their competitiveness
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process. One-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate that they understand labor market information and how they provide the information to individuals.

Goal Focus: Education and Training

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Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate clear connections for students to join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors
  - Assessed by: All partners assess their projects and programs related to supporting and promoting talent pipelines in targeted industry sectors. They share information at the state and local levels to inform decision making and program improvement. It will also be assessed through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification process in terms of how partners are working together to align, collaborate and support talent pipelines in targeted industry sectors. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring all partners are aware of the educational offerings available and are recruiting and making referrals for WIOA-targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through Utah's Partner Referral System. The system tracks referrals and outcomes for each office and includes all core and required partners. One-stop centers (AJCs) can use the system reports to provide insight about the effectiveness and appropriateness of partner referrals. This is also assessed through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification processes. This is an ongoing activity.
- Developing programs and strategies that help high-school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to post-secondary Career and Technical Education programs and ensuring that all partners are aware of the programs
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed by the number of students concentrating and completing Career and Technical Education programs. It will also be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) -recertification process where partners demonstrate that all staff are trained and understand where to find information about partner programs. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring core and required partners are aligning, coordinating and collaborating as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC)
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the recertification process. Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate how they are aligning, coordinating and collaborating to implement and support career pathway initiatives. They will show how they are connecting to and supporting projects that support targeted occupations and industries. This is an ongoing activity.

Goal Focus: Workforce

Utah will provide education and training options that provide the skills and competencies required to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships will enable job seekers to

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find sustainable employment and employers to recruit and retain quality employees. This will involve:



- Increasing awareness for the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing supplementary preparation and/or training
  - Assessed by: Utah will explore utilizing performance measurement options such as the number of core partner customers who receive supplementary training and have successful job placements. These reports will be presented to the State Workforce Development Board annually when they become available.
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting
  - Assessed by: The required performance measures will be used as a tool to assess the effectiveness of partners working together to help job seekers understand what they need to do to meet employer needs. In addition, assessment will be provided through the recertification process as comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) show the work partners are doing related to this goal. These reports will be presented to the State Workforce Development Board annually.
- Partners will coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development including apprenticeship, work-based learning, customized training
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) demonstrate how they are coordinating and collaborating to develop career pathways that support skill development. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach to employed, underemployed, and unemployed individuals
  - Assessed by: Surveys and other feedback tools and methods partners use to ensure individual needs are met. These reports will be shared during one-stop center (AJC) partner meetings and recertification. Partners will share information with the State Workforce Development Board. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring current labor market information is accessible to individuals to inform them about skills, credentials, wages, and jobs in demand
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) certification process. One-stop centers (AJCs) are required to demonstrate that they understand labor market information and how they provide the information to individuals.

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that at-risk populations have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Ensuring partners have strong relationships at the local level so education partners connect these populations to community services that support them.

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- Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) demonstrate how they are

working together to ensure education partners connect the priority population to needed services. This is an ongoing activity.

- Partnering to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that connect these populations to services and ensure best practices are implemented to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and messaging to target populations.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) describe strategies they are using to connect these populations to services. They must also show how they are developing and implementing best practices to provide access to services, coordinate outreach methods and messaging to target populations. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make adjustments to outreach strategies in serving at-risk populations.
  - Assessed by: This will be assessed through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process as one-stop centers (AJCs) describe their processes of continuous improvement which includes program efficacy to make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies for at-risk populations. This is an ongoing activity.

### C. STATE STRATEGY

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE ITS STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS. THESE STRATEGIES MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE STATE'S ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND ANALYSIS PROVIDED IN SECTION (A) ABOVE.

INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF POPULATIONS PROVIDED IN SECTION (A).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

Utah's strategies take into account its economic, workforce, workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in the section above. Utah's Combined Plan includes strategies to achieve its overall vision and goals for its workforce development system. The strategies are flexible to accommodate the state's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a). The plan includes specific strategies to address the needs of populations described in Section (a). The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships, and its resources to implement strategies that support operations to provide services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has standing committees to ensure Utah's goals and vision are met. These include Youth, Apprenticeships, Services to Individuals with Disabilities,

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This draft is for consideration during the Board Meeting held on February 1, 2024.

Career Pathways, and Operations.

## Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

## Goals

### Goal Focus: All-Encompassing Partnerships

Utah will partner across the WIOA core and required partners, education, economic development, businesses, organizations and other programs to coordinate, align strategies, leverage resources and work together to develop Utah's workforce and create opportunities for sustainable employment. Utah will strengthen its partnerships by:

- Working with workforce system partners, particularly core and required partners and the State Workforce Development Board, to ensure current labor market information and performance data are utilized to inform the development of an effective and integrated workforce system that ensures support of diverse local economies throughout the state.
  - Strategy: The economic assessment of statewide workforce needs will be used by the State Workforce Development Board committees to ensure that their recommendations are based on Utah's workforce needs. The State Workforce Development Board and its committees will receive a report on Utah's statewide and regional economies and partner performance measures annually. The Department of Workforce Services staff provides current information on its website, presentations and training, and responds to data requests for workforce system partners as needed. Labor market information is incorporated into staff training for all core partners. Labor market information and performance data are available to and used by partner leaders at all levels to make decisions.
- Leveraging state funding resources to support the promotion of key occupational clusters and industry sectors identified through economic analysis and input from employers, and utilizing these resources to support the state workforce development activities.
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee, which has representation from business and all core and required partners, has incorporated this into the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process. The committee supports the maintenance of the WIOA Partner infrastructure MOU and to leverage resources to promote this goal. The MOU was updated in November 2021 and will be reviewed and updated by July 2024. Core partners coordinate at the local level to support mutual at-risk individuals in education and employment goals that align with key industries and occupations. Committees and partners support and promote opportunities in these sectors through sharing information about initiatives and projects during meetings and networking. This is an ongoing activity.

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- Promote and participate in opportunities to align, collaborate, and leverage resources among core and required partners, particularly in the comprehensive one-stop centers

(AJCs), to continually improve service to individuals and ensure that anyone who comes to the office for assistance receives a service or an effective referral.

- Strategy: Overall strategies include setting collaborative performance goals, sharing information and data, and working together to resolve problems and addressing gaps. It also includes collaborating and coordinating on training, outreach and feedback. Partners will utilize existing committees, workgroups, and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate. The State Workforce Development Board and its committees hold regular meetings, as required by Utah's plan. Partner responsibilities are clearly outlined so they can be held accountable or responsibilities can be adjusted as needed. These are ongoing activities.
  - The SWDB committees provide a forum for workforce system partners to share information, promote best practices, and develop recommendations. Information is shared with the full State Workforce Development Board.
  - Comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) partners continue sharing information and refining the current referral process
  - The Data and Reports Workgroup, functioning under the Operations Committee, will continue to identify and pursue opportunities to streamline the application process and reduce redundancies, facilitating a smoother experience for customers.
  - Core partners will continue to explore opportunities to co-locate core program partners and services
  - Workforce system partners will work together to set performance goals, share information and work together to resolve problems and address gaps.
  - State Workforce Development Board committees and comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) leadership support processes for sharing information among partners to provide a more holistic experience for the at-risk populations and provide seamless services.
  - State Workforce Development Board committee members visit one-stop centers (AJCs) to help identify best practices and gaps in services and make recommendations for alignment of partner resources.
  - Core partners continue to collaborate and align procedures for one-stop center (AJC) recertification.
  - The core partners, housed under the Department of Workforce Services, continue to meet monthly to coordinate, align, and integrate policies. In addition, the Workforce Development Division coordinates policy with the Eligibility Services Division.
  - The Operations Committee assesses and provides feedback on partner coordination and streamlined service delivery.

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Goal Focus: Employers



Utah will involve employers directly in the workforce development system by utilizing and leveraging existing partnerships and expanding opportunities for them to participate in developing new partnerships and aligning programs. This will include:

- Ensuring business needs are met by collecting information from partner surveys, reports, and business or industry groups and identifying gaps or opportunities to improve services, including building stronger collaboration, alignment and leveraging resources
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee employer engagement workgroup will review the core partners employer engagement practices. They will explore ways to meet employers' workforce needs and to work on goals of industry partners, including:
    - Partner alignment and coordination in educating employers about individuals with barriers, with a focus on targeted industries
    - Partners are engaging with employers and high demand industries needs are being addressed within each of the economic regions
    - Partners leverage Utah Office of Rehabilitation's coordination with employers
    - Identifying ways all partners can participate in supporting industry boards at the secondary (K-12) and post-secondary education levels
    - Identifying ways partners can coordinate, align with and utilize Workforce Development Division workforce development specialists, Utah Office of Rehabilitation business relation specialists, labor market information and UWORKS labor exchange system to support employer needs
    - Developing recommendations for a process to coordinate efforts to understand employer needs from a full workforce development system point of view, coordinating all partner efforts as well as considering new methods
    - Exploring developing a plan for coordinating and collaborating core, education, and economic development partners' outreach to employers
  - Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee gathers information on activities regarding career pathway projects and makes recommendations for replicating successful activities, sharing information and providing support when gaps are identified. The committee works to help partners align and coordinate with existing employer education pathway efforts such as Technical Education Advisory Committees. This is an ongoing activity.
    - The Career Pathways Committee will support partners' outreach to employers for assistance in designing career pathways for use in secondary education (K-12), Adult Education and post-secondary education
  - Workforce Services participates in regular meetings discussing the state's

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implementation of the federal Broadband Equity Access & Deployment Program (BEAD). Workforce Services presented a brief overview of the employer

resources available to meet the BEAD program & federal hiring requirements. The actual infrastructure implementation will not occur in Utah until 2024 at which point Workforce Services will assist employers meet the program recruitment process for the qualified workforce through utilizing the job board and other employer resources.

- Partnering to promote and support current work-based learning opportunities and coordinate to recruit more organizations to provide these types of training opportunities
  - Strategy: Leveraging partner communication channels to promote available internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training that companies provide as well as contacting companies interested in providing these types of training opportunities. Examples of current strategies include:
    - Supporting workforce system partner conferences such as Women in Trades
    - Collaborating and aligning outreach to at-risk individuals and companies
    - Workforce system partners and State Workforce Development Board supporting organizations that promote work-based learning such as the Electrical Training Alliance
    - Workforce system partners sharing information and promoting events such as job fairs, mentoring activities and training workshops
    - Training partner staff to refer job seeker customers to work-based learning opportunities and to refer interested employers to partners who can help them establish work-based learning opportunities
    - Core and required partners coordinating and collaborating outreach and marketing to the business sector
    - Encouraging employers and other workforce system partners to post work-based learning opportunities on [jobs.utah.gov](https://jobs.utah.gov)
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee will review current employer work-based learning strategies. They will explore new ways to meet employers' workforce needs through work-based learning opportunities, including:
    - Ensuring all partners are aligned and coordinated in educating employers about work-based learning opportunities including engaging individuals with barriers in these opportunities.
    - Exploring ways all partners can leverage Utah System of Rehabilitation's current coordination with employers to educate them on work-based learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
    - Identifying ways all partners can coordinate, align with and utilize the Workforce Development Division's workforce development specialists, Utah Office of Rehabilitation business relations specialists, labor market information, and UWORKS labor exchange system to support employer needs through work-based learning opportunities.

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- Involving State Workforce Development Board members in promoting business customer surveys, encouraging participation on board committees, and utilizing the business services available so they can provide feedback and ideas for continual improvement.
- Providing quality labor market information, sector-based approaches and a well-trained talent pipeline for employers in order to increase their competitiveness
  - Strategy: The workforce system partners, under the guidance of the Operations Committee, will continue their efforts to align, coordinate, and leverage resources related to employer outreach. The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will extend these efforts to the local level so partners can work together to provide these services to employers in their communities.

#### Goal Focus: Education and Training

Education and training partners will establish programs that meet both the current and emerging needs of businesses and organizations, including an emphasis on real-life applicability of skills development. Partnerships will facilitate connections for students to join Utah's workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors
  - Strategy: State Workforce Development Board committees, working with partners such as the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, will support steps for developing a talent pipeline in targeted industry sectors. Committees and partners support state legislative efforts in targeted industry sectors, such as Utah Works and Silicon Slopes. This is an ongoing activity.
- All partners are aware of educational offerings available and are recruiting and making referrals for WIOA-targeted populations, specifically those with barriers to employment
  - Strategy: The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will develop strategies at the local level that support this goal, including utilizing and supporting the Partner Referral System. This is an ongoing activity.
- Developing programs and strategies that help high-school students connect to concurrent enrollment, high school Career and Technical Education, and other partnership pathways to post-secondary Career and Technical Education programs and ensuring that all partners are aware of the programs
  - Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee works with the Youth committee to identify ways to support comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) efforts to connect high school students to education and career pathways. The committees work together to establish best practices and make recommendations to local partner leadership. This is an ongoing activity.
- Ensuring core and required partners are aligning, coordinating and collaborating as career pathway initiatives are developed and implemented, particularly in areas where there is a comprehensive one-stop center (AJC)
  - Strategy: The Career Pathways Committee coordinates with Talent Ready Utah Program initiatives to share information with partner staff and educate them on

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how they can support these initiatives.

## Goal Focus: Workforce

Utah provides education and training options that build the skills and competencies to meet employer and job seeker needs. Strong partnerships enable job seekers to find sustainable employment and employers to recruit and retain quality employees. This will involve:

- Increasing awareness of the job-readiness skills necessary for competition in the workforce and providing supplemental preparation and training
  - Strategy: Through the comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) recertification process, core partners demonstrate alignment and coordination of job readiness skill building activities and resources for customers. The State Workforce Development Board reviews efforts through the recertification process and makes recommendations for improvement. This is an ongoing activity.
  - The Department of Workforce Services, Utah State Board of Education, Division of Services to People with Disabilities, and community providers collaborate to support students with the most significant disabilities to access work readiness training and employment prior to graduating from high school. This is an ongoing activity.
- Leveraging core and required partner programs to increase awareness of the workforce skills employers are requesting
  - Strategy: The comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) develop strategies at the local level that support this goal. Business customer surveys are distributed and shared with partners. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partners will coordinate and collaborate to develop career pathways that support ongoing skill development including apprenticeship, work-based learning, customized training.
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, as well as the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), provide a forum for sharing information, aligning and collaborating, and developing best practices. Career Pathway committee members plan to visit comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) to gather information regarding best practices that can be shared statewide. This is an ongoing activity.
- Partnering to coordinate and collaborate in outreach and to employed, underemployed, and unemployed individuals
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, as well as the comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs), provide a forum for sharing information, aligning, collaborating, and developing best practices. Career Pathway committee members plan to visit comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) to review best practices that can be shared statewide. This includes encouraging individuals to create an account on jobs.utah.gov as part of their job search activities. This is an ongoing activity.
- Labor market information is accessible to individuals to inform them about skills, credentials, wages, and jobs in demand

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- Strategy: The Department of Workforce Services staff provide information on its website, presentations and training, and respond to data requests for all workforce system partners as needed. It is incorporated into staff training for all core partners. This is an ongoing activity.

#### Goal Focus: Populations with Barriers to Employment

Government and community partners will leverage and align resources to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment so that at-risk populations have greater opportunities in the workforce. This will be accomplished by:

- Partners have strong relationships at the local level so education partners connect these populations to community services that support them
  - Strategy: The State Workforce Development Board committees enhance partnerships by convening stakeholders, sharing ongoing efforts during regularly scheduled meetings, and compiling comprehensive one-stop best practices regarding strengthening partner relationships and connecting at-risk populations to community services. This is an ongoing activity.
    - Partner staff, statewide, use the Partner Referral system for direct referrals and follow up.
    - Partner staff are educated on programs and services offered at the one-stop centers (AJCs)
- Partners developing and implementing comprehensive strategies that connect at-risk populations to services and ensure best practices are implemented to access services, coordinate outreach methods, and messaging to target populations
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee will oversee the Partner Referral System. The committee will:
    - Oversee improvements to the referral pathways and processes to ensure one-stop centers (AJCs) provide consistent and seamless services for mutual customers. This will be an ongoing activity accomplished through the one-stop center (AJC) recertification process.
  - Comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) will: encourage referrals and client interventions at any point of entry, refine career pathways to meet the needs of at-risk populations through engagement with employers, focus on high demand industries, and strengthen connections with post-secondary and training institutions. These are ongoing activities.
- Partners develop a cycle of continuous improvement to assess program efficacy and make real-time adjustments to outreach strategies in serving at-risk populations
  - Strategy: The Operations Committee oversees the evaluation of core and required partner performance expectations and makes recommendations for continuous improvement that will be implemented and assessed through required performance measures. This is an ongoing activity.

## 2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED

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STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY



INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

Utah's strategies take into account its economic, workforce, workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in the section above.

Utah's Combined Plan includes strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The strategies are flexible to accommodate the state's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a). The plan includes specific strategies to address the needs of populations described in Section (a). The foundation of Utah's plan is built upon utilizing data, partnerships, and resources to implement strategies that support operations to provide services to individuals and employers. Utah is committed to changing and/or adjusting its strategies as needed to meet the state's workforce needs. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has standing committees to help meet Utah's goals and vision. These include Youth, Apprenticeships, Services to Individuals with Disabilities, Career Pathways, and Operations.

Utah's Career Pathway Committee's goals and activities include:

- Providing a forum for partners from around the state to exchange ideas and share best practices, explore how they can align, share resources and collaborate.
- Making recommendations that include the Six Key Elements of the Career Pathways Toolkit and requirements by WIOA Section 101(d)(3)(B), (D) to the State Workforce Development Board regarding how the Board can best support a coordinated and collaborative state career pathway system.
- Supporting Utah's sector strategies aligned with Governor's Office of Economic Development's industry clusters, including supporting career pathway initiatives that align with targeted industries and occupations in demand and coordinating these initiatives with comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) career pathway efforts.
- Referring to and using the definitions of "career pathway" in WIOA Section 3(7) and "industry sector or occupation" in WIOA Section 3(23).
- Establishing workgroups to explore and provide recommendations to the State Workforce Development Board regarding the potential benefits of cohort training program models that support key occupational clusters and industry sectors.
- Providing ongoing support of one-stop center (AJC) activities including partnering with education to meet the needs of individuals living in rural areas.
- Coordinating and sharing career pathway information with the local school districts, Youth and Apprenticeship committees and promoting services available to youth at one-stop centers (AJCs).
- Coordinating with Career and Technical Education partners to support one-stop center (AJC) access to Career and Technical Education programs and pathways, including promoting work experience opportunities and providing outreach for these programs to partners, businesses, students, and job seekers.

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Utah uses a variety of strategies to align the core programs, one-stop center (AJC) partners and other resources to achieve integrated customer services consistent with its strategic vision and goals. The Operations Committee oversees these strategies, their goals and activities include:

- Creating workforce development activities in response to gaps identified in the state's workforce analysis, including creating workgroups as appropriate.
- Setting collaborative performance goals, sharing data and working together to resolve problems, and address gaps.
- Collaborating and coordinating on training, outreach and feedback by utilizing existing committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when appropriate.
- Supporting the one-stop recertification process and overseeing the recertification criteria.
- Ensuring all core and required partners have representation on the committee, as well as representation from State Workforce Development Board business members.
- Supporting the maintenance of the WIOA Partner Infrastructure MOU.
- Overseeing strategies to engage education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.
- Overseeing core partners' efforts to utilize a braided funding model to leverage existing resources in providing services for common customers.
- Common performance outcomes are reported to the State Workforce Development Board annually.
- Overseeing core partners efforts to explore sharing information and refining referral processes. This includes working toward development of a common point of entry for individuals to access a universal collection application that connects to all core partner systems with the intent of streamlining the process and eliminating duplication.
- Overseeing efforts to explore additional opportunities for co-location of core program partners and services.
- Coordinating with other committees.

Utah's Youth Committee provides information and assists with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The committee includes employers and community-based organizations with demonstrated records of success in service-eligible youth. The committee's goals and activities include:

- Sharing information and providing best practices for one-stop centers (AJCs) related to placing at-risk youth in internships, work-based learning, apprenticeships, and supporting their employment goals.
- Establishing a workgroup to explore ways to improve employers' participation in work-based learning forums and developing innovative ways to inform at-risk youth, including youth with disabilities, of opportunities available to them.

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- Holding regular committee meetings to create a forum for sharing information, collaboration, and connecting with external committees working to serve youth so groups can align their efforts.
- Committee members regularly receive current information on career and education planning resources and Career and Technical Education pathways.
- Inviting core and required Career and Technical Education partners to report efforts to enhance, align, and coordinate partnerships, best practices and recommendations for improvement, so they can be shared with comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs).
- Sharing information about opportunities to increase access to pre-employment transition services and other work readiness programs geared toward youth with disabilities and other barriers.

The Apprenticeships committee's goals and activities include:

- Supporting State Apprenticeship Five Year Plan Goals.
  - Increasing utilization of apprenticeship among employers.
  - Expanding access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations and underserved communities.
  - Developing infrastructure to effectively support long-term growth.
  - Modernizing data tracking, reporting, system integration and utilization.
- Contributing resources to Utah's [apprenticeship website](#).
- Supporting and participating in Utah's Apprenticeship Week activities, K-12 summer/winter conferences, and other partner events.
- Leveraging partner funding resources to support participants in apprenticeships.
- Supporting comprehensive one-stop centers (AJC) with apprenticeship program resources.
- Supporting participation in the National Governors Association Policy Academy to Advance Youth Apprenticeship.
  - Reducing logistical, regulatory and financial barriers to employer participation.
  - Leveraging existing resources and identifying new resources for youth apprenticeship program development, growth and sustainability.
  - Using data to inform program development, implementation and accountability for continuous improvement in outcomes for students and employers.
  - Solidifying a statewide governance structure for youth apprenticeship.
- Providing a forum for partners to share information, identify best practices, and collaborate, including employers, education partners such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), Talent Ready Utah, Utah System of Higher Education, and community based organizations.

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The Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee provides information and assists with operational and other issues related to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

The population of individuals with disabilities is broad including all spectrums of physical and mental disabilities and specific populations like veterans. The committee goals and activities that support the population of individuals with disabilities and Utah business partners include:

- Supporting programmatic and physical access to the services, programs and activities of the one-stop delivery system.
- Supporting delivery of one-stop center (AJC) staff training regarding accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Making recommendations to one-stop center (AJC) staff for providing job search assistance for individuals with disabilities.
- Coordinating with other committees to provide mentoring events for youth with disabilities, job fairs, and state sponsored internships.
- Aligning partnerships such as Business Relations and Choose to Work.
- Improving connections with Career and Technical Education partners to share resources and support initiatives that increase opportunities for youth and work-based learning.
- Exploring opportunities to further align, connect, and collaborate on current services provided to employers such as educating employers about barriers to employment that individuals with barriers face.

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS SECTION THAT SUPPORTS THE

STATE'S STRATEGY AND THE SYSTEM-WIDE VISION DESCRIBED IN SECTION II(C) ABOVE. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS APPLY TO COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN AS WELL AS TO CORE PROGRAMS.

THIS SECTION MUST INCLUDE—

#### A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE—

##### 1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL IMPLEMENT ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 101(D) OF WIOA (I.E., PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF BOARD OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES TO ENSURE SUCH FUNCTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT).

### **III. Operational Planning Elements**

#### State Strategy Implementation

##### **(1) State Board Functions**

Utah's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) continues to actively implement Utah's

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WIOA plan. The successful implementation is primarily due to the enthusiastic, active chair and the Executive Committee members. The Utah SWDB members and committees have a strong

supportive structure established through Utah law, bylaws (<https://jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/swdbbylaws.pdf>), and support from partner agency leadership and staff. In addition to Guiding Principles, Statutory Requirements, application processes, etc. the SWBD has the opportunity to:

- Implement innovative strategies by focusing on employer engagement, strengthening core programs, dissemination of best practices, and promoting effective use of technology to enhance service delivery.
- Establish and maintain standing committees. The two required committees are Youth and Services to Individuals with Disabilities. There are three additional committees which include a Career Pathways Committee, Operations Committee, and an Apprenticeships Committee.
- Improve system alignment and connections by serving youth with disabilities and aligning career pathways and industry and sector partnerships.
- Support established and new career pathway initiatives as well as industry and sector partnerships, using its influence on secondary education reform initiatives where career pathways are emerging, and in leveraging business and industry groups to establish sector partnerships.
- Support skills development programs through a representative of a joint labor-management partnership in the SWDB contingent to validate pre-apprenticeship and skills development bridge program offerings for entry into state-approved apprenticeship training.
- Access local labor market analysis. The SWDB is responsible for completing a comprehensive analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor market trends, educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.
- Define criteria and recertify one-stop centers (AJC). One-stop centers (AJCs) are the public face of the workforce system. They are the central connecting point for all of the programs and services that must be coordinated and aligned to successfully meet the goals of Utah's Plan.
- Engage community systems by convening, brokering, and leveraging with business, community, education, and agency partners.
- Evaluate performance measures designed to measure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the one-stop and youth service delivery systems.
- Explore ways to leverage and partner with opportunities brought about from the IIJA, CHIPS and IRA.

The SWDB led the development of Utah's Combined Plan and is guided by the vision, strategy, and goals of the plan, which are below.

### Vision

A strong economy, now and in the future, depends on a world-class workforce. Utah will enhance and expand collaborative efforts with businesses and organizations, educational

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institutions, community partners, and government agencies through business development and partnerships related to key industry sectors and occupations. Utah will increase access to and



opportunities for employment, education, training and support services that individuals—particularly those with barriers to employment—need to succeed in the workforce.

Strategies:

- Focus on achieving Utah's vision and goals.
- Utilize data, partnerships and resources as a foundation to implement strategies to support operations in providing services to individuals and employers.
- Commit to adjusting strategies to meet the state's current workforce needs.
- Workforce development activities include:
  - Identify targeted industry sectors and occupations; align programs and services to support them; and ensure involvement from business and education partners.
  - Set collaborative performance goals, share information and data and work together to resolve problems and address gaps.
  - Collaborate and coordinate on training, marketing and customer feedback.
  - Utilize existing and external committees, workgroups and programs while working to align and share resources when it is appropriate.
  - Hold regular Board and committee meetings as required by Utah's plan.

The State Workforce Development Board utilizes the agency, community, education and employer partnerships:

Partnerships

Core partners coordinate employment and training services to help compliment services so that individuals can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs.

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs
- One-Stop Partners

Comprehensive one-stop center (AJC) partners are responsible for creating a seamless, individual-focused delivery system; collaborating and aligning services to enhance access for individuals and businesses.

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

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- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities

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- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
- Indian Training Education Center
- YouthBuild

There are clear responsibilities outlined for State Workforce Development Board members:

The Board members shall act in the best interests of the State of Utah. The following are outlined expectations and commitments of each member:

- **Attendance and Punctuality:** Members attend quarterly Board meetings and designated committee meetings. The State Workforce Development Board and committee chairs shall start and conclude each meeting in a timely fashion. A minimum of five hours each quarter is the expected quarterly commitment of each member. The implementation and maintenance of the state's Combined Plan may require more hours from committee chairs and active committee members.
- **State Workforce Development Board Meeting Schedule:** The meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each quarter.
- **Committee meetings:** The committee chairs schedule meetings as often as necessary. The frequency depends on the work the committee is engaged in. The committee meetings could be held monthly for periods of time or a minimum of one meeting each quarter.
- **State Workforce Development Board Meetings:** One of the quarterly committee meetings is typically held on the day of the State Board meeting, usually between 10:00 a.m. and noon, and the board meets from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated. The location of the SWDB meetings is announced and meeting materials are sent to members in advance and posted on the website at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/index.html>
- The Executive Committee meets at least quarterly, usually on the day of the full Board meeting.

The State Workforce Development Board members join committees and workgroups:

#### Committees

There are five committees under the State Workforce Development Board:

- Youth
- Services to Individuals with Disabilities
- Operations
- Career Pathways

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- Apprenticeships

The chairs from all five committees serve on the Executive Committee.

The committee chairs have clear expectations:

- Attend State Workforce Development Board Meetings and report on committee work.
- Become familiar with the Combined Plan, specifically sections and goals that relate to the committee work.
- Attend Executive Committee meetings, held prior to the Board meetings, to assist with agenda items, receive information and reports from partners, approve proposals, report on committee work, and coordinate with other chairs.
- Hold at least one committee meeting quarterly.
- Oversee committee workgroups and monitor progress on assignments.
- Utilize agency staff to answer questions and provide support to the committee.
- Reach out to colleagues and associates in their organizations, networks and communities to promote, collaborate, and attain feedback on committee work.
- Represent their committee members.

The State Workforce Development Board committee members have clear responsibilities:

- Provide reports and make recommendations to the Board, the Board will approve recommendations and provide feedback to the committee.
- Determine whether a workgroup should be established to complete a goal. If a workgroup is created, the committee will ensure the workgroup understands the assignment(s), provide instructions and deadlines. The committee will also receive feedback and approve work on assignments and recommendations.
- Attend and participate in committee meetings.
- Utilize their networks to promote, collaborate and attain feedback on committee work.

Committees can create temporary work groups of experts, operations staff, employers, and other stakeholders to assist them in meeting their goals.

- Workgroups can be short term or long term.
- Workgroups can overlap across committees.
- Workgroup members can be anyone from the public, private or nonprofit sectors as appropriate.

#### Utah's Workforce Development System

The governor, in accordance with Section 106(d) of WIOA, retains and designates Utah as a "Single State Local Area." Utah is well situated and prepared to continue delivering integrated workforce services and will align its governance and administrative structure to set policy direction and establish realistic performance goals. The SWDB serves as the advisory body to provide guidance, oversight and evaluation to ensure programs remain fully responsive to Utah's economic development and labor market needs. State agencies with core and required

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programs will continue, in a coordinated approach, to implement specific workforce development programs through the integrated services delivery systems within local areas.

In terms of section 101(d) of WIOA, the State Workforce Development Board will assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the Combined Plan through committees overseen by the SWDB and chaired by SWDB members that fulfill assignments related to these activities. The Board reviews and approves Utah's Combined State plan, including all modifications during committee meetings, full Board meetings, and email communications.

The SWDB leads the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in Utah through its regular meetings and its Board led and core and required partner staffed committees by:

- Identifying barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
- Developing strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.
- Creating strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system.
- Developing and expanding strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Developing and continuously improving the one-stop delivery system, which includes providing assistance to one-stop operators, one-stop partners, and providers with planning and delivering services. This also includes training services and supportive services to ensure effective delivery of services to workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- Developing strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system.
- Establishing and updating comprehensive state adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state as required under section 116(b).
- Identifying and disseminating information on best practices, which includes:
  - The effective operation of one-stop centers (AJCs) relating to business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment.
  - Training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis and the effective use of direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure an individual's prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences, and evaluate such skills, and competencies for adaptability, to support efficient placement into employment or career pathway.
- The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state's one-stop delivery system described in section 121(e), including the development of policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions

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of entities carrying out one-stop partner programs within the one-stop delivery system, including approaches to facilitating equitable and efficient cost allocation in the system.

- The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to—and improve the quality of—services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system including such improvements to:
  - Enhance digital literacy skills as defined in section 202 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20U.S.C. 9101); referred to in this Act as “digital literacy skills”).
  - Accelerate the acquisition of skills and recognized post-secondary credentials by participants.
  - Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals.
  - Technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas.
- The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measurement and reporting processes to improve coordination of services across one-stop partner programs.
- The preparation of annual reports described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 116(d).
- The development of statewide workforce and labor market information system described in section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. ~~(29 U.S.C. 491-2(e))~~
- The development of such other policies that may promote statewide objectives for, and enhance the performance of, the workforce development system in the state.
- Explore ways to leverage and partner with opportunities brought about from the IJJA, CHIPS and IRA.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

DESCRIBE HOW THE LEAD STATE AGENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF EACH CORE PROGRAM OR A COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN WILL IMPLEMENT THE STATE’S STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN II(C) ABOVE. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

### A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE’S STRATEGY

DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS WILL FUND TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE’S STRATEGIES. ALSO, DESCRIBE HOW SUCH ACTIVITIES WILL BE ALIGNED ACROSS THE CORE PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN AND AMONG THE ENTITIES ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING USING CO-ENROLLMENT AND OTHER STRATEGIES, AS APPROPRIATE.

#### Core Program Activities to Implement the State’s Strategy

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The lead state agencies responsible for administering each core program included in Utah's plan will implement the outlined strategies.

#### A. Core Program Activities to Implement Utah's Strategy

Utah's core partners are funding activities to implement the state strategies. The activities are aligned across core programs. Core partners are committed to:

- Continuing to maximize existing infrastructure to explore opportunities to further a common registration and data repository. This is a long-term project that will be developed and implemented as resources and opportunities are available.
- Utilizing a braided funding model to leverage existing resources in providing services for common customers. These efforts will be ongoing including referrals and client interventions at any point of entry (Workforce Development Division, Office of Rehabilitation or Adult Education), refinement of career pathways to meet the needs through engagement with employers, high demand industry and post-secondary and training institutions with a focus on at-risk clients. This is an ongoing activity.
- Providing cross training to core and required partner staff to increase awareness of programs and services that are available to continue increasing co-enrollment. Utah will continue to explore expanding case management system interfaces with core partners to identify common or mutual clients. Staff training will be ongoing and recommendations for expanding case management system interfaces will be reported to the Operations Committee by the Data and Reports Workgroup.
- Supporting the criteria for the certified one-stop centers (AJCs) by serving on the Operations Committee which oversees the recertification criteria. This is an ongoing process as one-stop centers (AJCs) are recertified every three years and the recertification criteria is reviewed and updated every two years (the latest update was January 2023).
- Core partners are represented on all State Workforce Development Board committees.
- Exploring opportunities for additional co-location of core program partners. The Operations Committee will lead the efforts to explore additional opportunities for co-location of core program partners and services and make recommendations to the State Workforce Development Board.
- Utilizing the Partner Referral System to enhance partner referrals. Partner staff will use the system to make referrals and new employees will receive training on the system.
- Identifying existing career pathway initiatives to foster collaboration and alignment. Career pathway development and initiatives for the key occupations and target industries are the priority.

#### B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

DESCRIBE HOW THE ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A) WILL BE ALIGNED WITH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND OTHER OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED UNDER EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING (INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS), EDUCATION (INCLUDING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION), HUMAN SERVICES AND OTHER PROGRAMS NOT COVERED BY THE PLAN, AS APPROPRIATE, ASSURING COORDINATION OF, AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION AMONG THESE

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ACTIVITIES.

**Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

The strategies outlined in (A) will be aligned with the programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other partners as appropriate, facilitating coordination of and avoiding duplication among these activities. Workforce system partner activities, including those outside the plan, will be aligned as part of the recertification processes.

The State Workforce Development Board committees have representation from business, and core and required partners. These committees are responsible for ensuring that one-stop programs and services are aligned, coordinated, and non-duplicating. The committees are also responsible for identifying issues and making recommendations to work toward resolving them. This includes:

#### Education & Training

- Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) which includes post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Adult Education
- Utah State Board of Education (USBE) which includes CTE

#### Department of Workforce Services Divisions

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workforce Development Division
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)

#### Workforce System Partners, Programs & Initiatives

- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- STEM Action Center
- Utah State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)
- Representation from the SWDB Career Pathways Committee
- Veterans and Military Initiatives
- Employment First Initiative
- Choose to Work (CTW)
- Work Success
- Talent Ready Utah
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplement Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)
- Community Services Block Grant
- Job Corps
- YouthBuild

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- National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program

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- Easterseals-Goodwill Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Indian Training Program
- Medicaid Community Engagement

### **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**

Utah has awarded many grants with funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The grants awarded support the goals of Utah's WIOA plan by investing in the state's workforce infrastructure. Utah's State Workforce Development Board will work towards receiving information on the grant awards that involve a workforce needs and where partner with recipients as appropriate. The WIOA partner network, including the Board, will offer support to employers who are pursuing grant money. Opportunities to explore or utilize are:

- Offer assistance to employers to access training and employment opportunities to provide opportunities to underrepresented populations and those with barriers to employment.
- Where appropriate, provide funding to offset the cost of employment, education and on-the-job learning expenses for apprentices participating in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Share best practices for increasing job quality and accessing wraparound services provided by partners.
- Align efforts with economic development partners, including the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity.
- Engage with the activities of the National Semiconductor Technology Center as it develops apprenticeships and other workforce development programs and replicate best practices.
- Monitor the activities being funded by the Workforce and Education Fund at the National Science Foundation and replicate best practices as appropriate.

### **American Job Centers**

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) will focus on at-risk populations to assist them with career opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities which, overall, increases the available local workforce talent.

The Utah Commissioner of Apprenticeship prompts and educates the public on apprenticeship opportunities, coordinating and collaborating with the department and key stakeholders and providing an annual written report of apprenticeship program activities to the legislature.

Overall goals are: to increase awareness of apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults as being a valuable pathway to success; promote apprenticeship opportunities to employers as a valuable talent recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy; and share best practices.

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By identifying, expanding and promoting high-quality industry driven apprenticeship programs, we will assist in developing a qualified workforce to meet the hiring demands of Utah employers.

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) offer annual cross training opportunities to the core and required partner staff who work directly with the public. Training will be scheduled, such as the referral process, when a need is identified by any of the partners. Recommendations for enhancements or expanding the case management system interfaces that relate to the functions of the local one-stop centers (AJCs) will be submitted to the state Data and Reports Workgroup.

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) will continue to work closely with local career pathway development efforts and initiatives. This includes working closely with Career and Technical Education partners. In addition, the one-stop centers (AJCs) are developing strong partnerships through existing workgroups to ensure that local and high demand industries' needs are coordinated with post-secondary institutions.

The local one-stop centers (AJCs) hold coordination meetings with partners at least twice per year, to ensure that all referrals have accurate and timely information for targeted populations. In addition, local one-stop centers (AJCs), coordinating with local partners, train new staff to utilize the referral system effectively.

#### C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, AND REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY, CUSTOMER-CENTERED SERVICES, INCLUDING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (E.G. TRANSPORTATION), TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THOSE POPULATIONS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(1)(B), AND INDIVIDUALS IN REMOTE AREAS THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.

#### **Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Partners will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, individual-centered services, which include access to transportation, referrals to physical and mental health assistance, housing assistance, child and dependent care, and income support including supportive services to individuals and populations identified in Section II(a)(1)(B). The activities will conform to the statutory requirements of each program. This will occur through one-stop center (AJC) partnerships, other partnerships, recommendations from State Workforce Development Board committees, and additional assignments sponsored by the Board as outlined throughout this plan.

Utah's core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

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Utah's required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)



- Veterans job counseling, training and placement services (JVSG)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)
- Job Corps
- YouthBuild
- National Farmworkers Jobs program
- Indian Training Program

All core and required partners have a representative who serves on the Operations Committee which is charged with implementing the recertification process and collecting and analyzing information for the one-stop requirements. Through committee work, the partners identify and act on opportunities to align and coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality customer centered services, as well as supportive services, to at-risk individuals including populations identified in section II.a.1.B of this plan. The Operations Committee is also charged with recommending training and outreach strategies that are further developed and implemented by the partners as appropriate. Training core partner staff and developing outreach strategies to targeted groups will help services be received by individuals in need. In section II(a)(1)(B) Utah has identified the following:

- Utah will focus on disengaged individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Utah will work to increase training opportunities for English language learners. The number of refugees entering the state is expected to continue to rise during the next few years. This has resulted in an increase in the number of ELL students enrolling in Adult Education programs and more employers reaching out for help in providing English training for individuals, which has increased ELL services across the state.

The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Partner Referral System for one-stop centers (AJC). One-stop center (AJC) partners (which includes all core, required and additional partners) have the ability to create information sheets that include descriptions of the services they provide, basic eligibility requirements, and referral processes related to their programs. The information sheets are accessible, through the system, to all partner operations staff. They can also make, receive, and monitor referrals. Partners can create reports to evaluate processes and track referrals. The system supports coordination to ensure comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services.

Utah's one-stop centers (AJC) have all been certified and will go through the recertification process every three years. An important part of this process includes evaluating how well the one-stop center (AJC) partners, in each office, are coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B),

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and individuals in remote areas. The one-stop center (AJC) demonstrates how they are achieving these goals for State Workforce Development Board members.

Utah's Job Corps, Adult Education and Senior Community Services Employment Program have staff co-located in some one-stop centers (AJC) across the state. This enables staff for these programs to provide "warm handoffs" and effectively coordinate resources. One-stop centers (AJC) continue to explore ways to have partner staff present at the physical location. For example, in some offices Adult Education has a staff member spend time at the one-stop center (AJC) on a specific day each week to meet with customers or core partner staff meet regularly to ensure they are coordinating services for specific customers. In addition, each one-stop center (AJC) has partner meetings at least every six months to ensure all partner staff at the local level are coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B).

Utah's governor, State Workforce Development Board, and WIOA partners utilized the 2024 planning process to facilitate partners in leveraging and aligning efforts and resources as Utah awards and implements grants received from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Many of the jobs that may be created through the grants will require some type of postsecondary credential and the state's WIOA partners are well-positioned to assist workers in accessing the good jobs created by IIJA investments and businesses in attaining workers. Utah's SWDB and other WIOA partners continue to proactively explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships with education, economic development, state and regional transportation and energy agencies, community-based organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors, and the business community. This will help ensure consideration of opportunities to leverage the state's WIOA funding to support the activities of the partnerships.

Utah's workforce development partners understand that these grants can help improve job quality in clean energy industries and incentivize the expansion of workforce training pathways into these types of jobs because the law includes requirements for the grants such as prevailing wage and Registered Apprenticeships and investment in manufacturing and domestic content requirements for electric vehicles. Utah will assess how the investments may expand the manufacturing and clean energy industry sectors in the state and consider plans for sector-based strategies that incorporate career pathways into related jobs for the current workforce and youth entering the workforce.

The Utah Office of Rehabilitation has partnered with the Utah State Board of Education (this includes Career and Technical Education partners), the Workforce Development Division and the Division of Services for People with Disabilities to implement "School to Work" sites in several school districts in Utah. The "School to Work" pilot teams utilize the Customized Employment process to assist students with disabilities with competitive, integrated employment prior to graduation from high school or post high school. Teams work collaboratively to serve students and braid funding so students can access services needed to become employed and independent.

The Utah Office of Rehabilitation continues to present webinars and at conferences, collaborating with partners from the Workforce Development Division, Division of Services for People with Disabilities, the Utah State Board of Education (this includes Adult Education and Career and Technical Education partners), and the Divisions of Substance Use and Mental Health in an effort to enhance and demonstrate partnerships and collaboration among agencies

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serving transition age youth across the state.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services partners with the Utah Department of Corrections to support the implementation of the Second Chance Grant. At the local level Vocational Rehabilitation, the Workforce Development Division, Adult Education, and other partners participate in the discharge phase. Workforce Services staff participate in prison Release Day to provide information about services and resources available for offenders and their families.

The Utah Homelessness Council was enacted by law in 2021, as outlined in Utah Code. The Council, supported by the Utah Homelessness Coordinator and the Utah Office of Homeless Services, is responsible for providing final approval for the homeless services budget, strategic plan and award of funding for the provision of homeless services. Members are identified in Utah Code or appointed by the Governor. Funding for homeless services comes from multiple state and federal sources. In addition, the Council is responsible for the review of local and regional homelessness plans, and cooperates with the Local Homeless Councils as designated by the Utah Homeless Network.

The Council ensures that services provided to individuals experiencing homelessness are utilized in a cost-effective manner and works to facilitate a better understanding of homelessness. Funding is devoted to programs who provide resources and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Contracts are awarded to providers based on need, diversity of geographic location, coordination with or enhancement of existing services and the use of volunteers.

Utah's Invest in You Too pathway is designed for single mothers interested in obtaining training in the medical device manufacturing field. The 12-week certificate program complements the classroom training provided by Salt Lake Community College with soft skills instruction by the Department of Workforce Services in a cohort model. Additionally, on-site tours of the industry's employers occur for the participants. This partnership between the Department of Workforce Services, Salt Lake Community College, and medical manufacturing employers provide individuals with the skills needed to succeed in this in-demand industry.

The Department of Workforce Services provides access to Licensed Clinical Social Workers for all of the one-stop centers (AJCs). Individuals who need these types of services set up appointments to meet with social workers.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services contracted with subject matter experts to deliver three modules of youth career counseling training to Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Division staff. Training topics included mentoring, coaching, motivational interviewing, techniques to address barriers, engaging with youth and trauma informed care.

The Workforce Development Division provided Careeronestop.org training to staff through a webinar and made a video of the training available for staff. The training focused on ways to use the valuable tools and resources to assist virtually every customer. It also highlighted the benefit of creating an individual account to save and access helpful information.

The Workforce Development Division provided domestic violence training to all employees who work directly with customers. Their supervisors and managers also received the training. The training was provided virtually for the Eligibility Services Division and in person for staff in our one-stop centers (AJC). The training included general domestic violence information, statistics, intervention techniques, victim support strategies, and reporting responsibilities. The training was conducted by the Workforce Development Division, Clinical Services leadership team.

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To reduce barriers and assist TANF cash assistance recipients to obtain higher paying jobs, the Upward Mobility Project was created by the Workforce Development Division. As part of the

project, participants attend school full-time in targeted high demand occupations that pay high wages. While attending school, participants receive holistic support from their employment counselor including assistance in pay for housing and utilities. After completion of their training, participants are aided in obtaining employment.

#### D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS TO MEET THEIR CURRENT AND PROJECTED WORKFORCE NEEDS AND TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERS IN THE STATE. THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.

#### **Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Partners will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services, to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities will conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Operations Committee will coordinate with the other committees to develop recommendations for aligning the Workforce Development Division, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and other required partner services for employers.

The Operations Committee will receive reports on partners' current employer engagement processes. They will explore ways to better meet employers' workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry partners, including:

- Partners are aligned and coordinated in educating employers about individuals with barriers, with an emphasis on the targeted industries.
- Core, required and optional one-stop partners collaborate.
- Core, required, and optional one-stop partners are not duplicating services.
- Partners are engaging with employers and high demand industries needs are being addressed within each of the economic regions.
- Exploring ways all partners can leverage Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's business relations services and resources.
- Identifying ways all partners can participate in promoting employer boards utilized by Career and Technical Education at the secondary (K-12, Utah State Board of Education) and post-secondary education levels (UTECH, Utah System of High Education).
- Developing recommendations for a process to coordinate efforts to understand employer needs from a full workforce development system point of view, coordinating all partner efforts as well as new methods.
- Facilitating coordination and collaboration among core partners, education partners, and economic development partners, for effective outreach to employers.

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- Reporting to the State Workforce Development Board on the status of recommendations, implementation of recommendations and review of performance measures



The Operations Committee provides recommendations to the appropriate agencies, groups, and the State Workforce Development Board.

#### E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENGAGE THE STATE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES, ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDERS, AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS, PROVIDERS ON THE STATE'S ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST, AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS, AS PARTNERS IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO CREATE A JOB-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM. WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(B)(IV). INCLUDE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENABLE THE STATE TO LEVERAGE OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL INVESTMENTS TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT THESE INSTITUTIONS.

#### **Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Utah's strategies will engage its community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Utah's strategies engage state education and training providers, including the Utah System of Higher Education and its eleven technical education institutions as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The Department of Workforce Services serves as a resource to its Utah System of Higher Education partners. Department of Workforce Services employees serve on education advisory boards. Utah educational institutions rely on the Department of Workforce Services labor market information and employer outreach efforts to inform their decisions regarding curriculum and program adjustments.

Career centers exist at every Utah System of Higher Education institution. The institutional career centers offer job posting services, workforce development training, career advice, workplace readiness training and more. Many of these institutional programs supplement their services through collaboration with the Department of Workforce Services. Agency colleagues sit on center advisory boards, share updated résumé or job search practices and curriculum materials, serve as guest speakers and frequently partner at every institution on activities from career exploration days and high school leadership workshops to college and community job fairs and outreach events to veterans, minorities and other under-served populations. Utah will explore ways to build stronger connections between core partner counselors and post-secondary career resource counselors, including Disability Resource Centers, to provide opportunities for access to all services the partners offer.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and the Utah System of Higher Education will collaborate to enhance post-secondary education access for individuals with disabilities. Each district office of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and the Disability Services Office at higher education institutions will continue to appoint staff liaisons. These liaisons will act as agency representatives, organize local coordination initiatives, address challenges, and identify best practices. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Services Office liaisons will meet throughout the school year to organize cross-training and ensure the established referral pathways between programs are functional and utilized. Disability Services Office staff and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation counselors exchange information, according to applicable laws, to

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facilitate evaluating individual client needs, providing appropriate accommodations or auxiliary aids and engaging in educational goal planning.

## Talent Ready Utah Program

Talent Ready Utah is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry, education, and government to better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. It is a collaborative partnership among:

- The Department of Workforce Services
- The Utah System of Higher Education
- The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- The Utah State Board of Education
- The Utah State Legislature

Talent Ready Utah provides funding to public post-secondary educational institutions to develop, implement or expand educational programs that are responsive to regional and statewide industry needs serving high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations. Talent Ready Utah also provides support to public schools to develop, implement or enhance work-based learning partnerships and connect them to post-secondary institutions. Some programs that operate from Talent Ready Utah are Pathways, Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection and Utah Works.

The Talent Ready Utah is intended to increase the number of individuals who earn industry-recognized credentials, develop career pathways with multiple entry and exit points for students along the post-secondary education continuum and create systemic change by establishing processes and programs that better connect education, the workforce and employers.

Utah has awarded grants with funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). A grant awarded to the Workforce Expansion for Electric Vehicles (WeEV) Project supports the goals of Utah's WIOA plan by investing in the state's workforce infrastructure. Weber State University (WSU), Utah Clean Air Partnership (UCAIR), Utah Clean Cities Coalition, WSU, OED, UDOT, Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Government Operations are developing an Electric Vehicle (EV) technician program.

Program partners are pursuing federal infrastructure funding through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Vehicle Technologies Office Program Wide Grant program. Local funds will be leveraged with federal funds to expand the reach of the program. The WeEV project is based on a "train the trainer" model, curriculum, and proof of concept for working with disadvantaged communities and industry. Through WeEV, WSU plans to scale its EV technician program to include more students and expand to other campuses. This training pathway allows students to familiarize themselves with EV maintenance and repair, helping prepare them for when they enter the workforce. Tools, EVs and safety equipment will be purchased for participating training programs in order to provide students with practical hands-on training using current equipment.

### IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS.

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES LEADING TO RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES. THIS INCLUDES CREDENTIALS THAT ARE INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATES, LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS, AND THAT ARE PORTABLE AND STACKABLE.

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## Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Aligning, coordinating and establishing collaboration among the core and required partners will increase customer access and referrals to programs, leading to completion of stackable and marketable credentials as well as post-secondary opportunities. This includes supporting educators to leverage technology for innovative and personalized instruction and increasing access to the internet and devices for students and families. Utah's secondary, post-secondary, Adult Education, Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, and other core and required partners are working together to provide opportunities for individuals to have access to post-secondary education and training. The strategies outlined in this plan will enhance and support those efforts, such as coordinating data systems, working with members of the Education and Training Provider List, coordinating career pathways projects and continually improving integrated service delivery including improving access for the rural areas of the state.

The Department of Workforce Services currently serves as a resource to the Utah System of Higher Education partners. Department of Workforce Services employees serve on advisory boards throughout the state. Utah educational institutions rely on the Department of Workforce Services' labor market information and employer outreach efforts to inform their decisions regarding curriculum and program adjustments. The one-stop center (AJC) partners, including Workforce Development Division staff, receive information about federal and state scholarships, grants and student loans. They know who their education partner contacts are to assist individuals with these resources.

Career centers exist at every Utah System of Higher Education institution campus. The institutional career centers offer job posting services, workforce development training, career advice, workplace readiness training, and more. Many of these institutional programs supplement their services through collaboration with the Department of Workforce Services. Agency colleagues may sit on center advisory boards, share updated résumé or job-search practices and curriculum materials, serve as guest speakers and frequently partner at institutions on activities from career-exploration days and high-school leadership workshops to college and community job fairs, and outreach events to veterans, minorities and other under-served populations.

The Utah Board of Higher Education oversees 16 state aid programs to improve access and affordability for students. State aid programs include needs-based programs, scholarships awarded based on academic achievement, and industry-specific awards. The Board also works with industry to provide a needs-based Promise Partner scholarship to employees and dependents of contributing companies. The Board extends the use of state aid funds by leveraging company funds to make higher education more affordable for students throughout the state.

The Utah State Board of Education continues to engage with and provide funding to other education and training providers through the competitive funding process. Local community-based organizations partner with school-based programs to consolidate efforts while providing coursework and workforce preparation activities to eligible participants.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation collaborates with post-secondary training programs to eliminate programmatic and accessibility barriers for individuals with disabilities. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation staff receives cross training and information from local higher education institutions about credential attainment requirements. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation provides counseling on post-secondary opportunities to individuals with

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disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to improve access to credential attainment. Utah State Office of Rehabilitation offices and each institution of higher education Disability Services Office will designate staff liaison assignments to serve as agency

representatives, organize local efforts, communicate problems and develop best practices. These liaisons will meet throughout the school year to organize cross-training and encourage staff use of established referral pathways between programs. Disability Services Office staff and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation counselors exchange information, according to applicable laws, to facilitate evaluating individual client needs, providing appropriate accommodations or auxiliary aids and engaging in educational goal planning.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation maintains partnerships with private training providers and supports private training programs. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has a system for approving private training programs in order to fulfill client informed choice for selection of training services and training program providers. Private training providers continue to be an invaluable source of niche subject education that helps Office of Rehabilitation clients reach their individual employment goals commensurate with their abilities, interests, strengths, and priorities.

Partners engage other education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. The Education and Training Provider List supports education and training providers as partners in the workforce development system by publicly disseminating the list of approved providers with information on quality, job-driven training programs. It supports informed consumer choice by providing provider costs and performance outcomes

Through the State Workforce Development Board committee work, Utah will continue to explore and identify ways to build stronger connections between core partner counselors and post-secondary career resource counselors/professions, including Disability Resource Centers, to ensure customers have access to all services the partners offer.

The Apprenticeship Committee is working to improve access to registered apprenticeship programs and expand the types of apprenticeships available to job seekers and students. The committee's top priorities include expanding awareness and expanding apprenticeships in education services, healthcare, manufacturing, cybersecurity and information technology. Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship efforts in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act implementation are also a priority. In addition, the committee is coordinating with the Career Pathways Committee to ensure their recommendations align. This is an ongoing activity.

The Career Pathways Committee plans to connect with local one-stop center (AJC) partners to identify best practices and gather information to explore opportunities for improving alignment, collaboration and gaps. This information will be used to support recommendations for developing career pathways that support Utah's targeted industries. This is an ongoing activity.

The Career Pathways Committee will include in its ongoing analysis, a description of the state's strategies that engage education and training providers, including training providers on the state's Eligible Training Provider List as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. This includes sharing and discussing Career and Technical Education state plans between state workforce and education agencies.

The Talent Ready Utah Program is represented on the Career Pathways Committee. The Talent

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Ready Utah program is designed to strengthen collaboration between industry and education to



better respond to the needs of regional and statewide high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations.

The Talent Ready Utah Program is intended to increase the number of individuals who earn industry-recognized credentials, develop career pathways with multiple entry and exit points for students along the post-secondary education continuum and create systemic change by establishing processes and programs that better connect education, the workforce, and employers.

The Career Pathways Committee will explore opportunities to develop strategies to increase access to postsecondary credentials working with all of Utah's workforce development partners:

- Education
  - Utah System of Higher Education (includes post-secondary Career and Technical Education, and Talent Ready Utah)
  - Adult Education
  - Utah State Board of Education
- Department of Workforce Services
  - Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Unemployment Insurance
  - Workforce Development Division
  - Workforce Research and Analysis
  - Department of Workforce Services programs and initiatives
  - Veterans and Military Initiatives
  - Employment First
  - Choose to Work
  - Work Success
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
  - Community Services Block Grant
- Other state agencies and organizations
  - The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
  - Unified Economic Opportunity Commission
  - STEM Action Center

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- Required partners

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- Job Corps
- National Farmworkers Jobs program (Futures Through Training)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- YouthBuild

#### G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

#### **Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**

Activities defined in (A) will be coordinated with the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Economic Development Corporation of Utah, Governor's Unified Economic Opportunity Commission, and local economic development organizations' activities and strategies. The Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity is an active member of many of the committees, workgroups and projects described throughout this plan. They serve on the State Workforce Development Board, which ensures their participation in coordinating activities between the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, core partners, and required partners.

#### **Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors Act**

Utah's workforce development policymakers and partners consider the following principles recommended by federal partners when developing an application for the Semiconductor Incentives program:

- Regional collaboration potential, including developing partnerships responsive to employer needs, employer commitments to hire and provide on the job training, worker equity and inclusion, and industry-recognized competencies and registered apprenticeship.
- Supplementary state investment.
- Stakeholder and community engagement.

Utah plans to identify employers in pursuing incentives such as:

- Leveraging business outreach efforts to raise employer awareness about the workforce requirements and services that can help them access, establish, or improve training programs to better meet demand.
- Providing funding to offset the cost of employment, education and on-the-job learning expenses for apprentices participating in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Helping employers access training and employment opportunities so underrepresented populations and those with barriers to employment can benefit from opportunities.
- Sharing best practices for increasing job quality and access to wraparound services .

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- Aligning proposals with activities and principles from successful Good Jobs Challenge grant applications, including regional competitiveness and inclusive economic growth; equitable job opportunities for underserved populations and communities; worker-centered, employer-led workforce training systems; and integrating diverse, local stakeholders into workforce training partnerships.
- Aligning with economic development partners.
- Engaging with the activities of the National Semiconductor Technology Center as it develops apprenticeships and other workforce development programs and replicate best practices.
- Monitoring the activities funded by the Workforce and Education Fund at the National Science Foundation and replicate best practices.

Utah has been actively promoting the goals of initiatives such as CHIPS and plans that benefit its workforce development system including education, business, and job seekers.

Utah's Intermountain Critical Materials Consortium (ICMC), a collaborative group of industry partners led by the Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative (UAMMI) which is developing a regional strategy to advance the production and manufacturing of critical minerals needed for clean energy technologies, many of which lack any domestic production presence. This group has received a Strategy Development Grant (SDG) which has been awarded as a part of the Tech Hubs program authorized by the passage of the CHIPS and Science Act. Led by UAMMI, ICMC is made up of 43 private industry partners, 8 universities, workforce entities, and several local and state entities. This consortium will be a top global leader in processing critical materials which are essential components of emerging technologies.

The University of Utah launched the Utah Network for Integrated Computing and Semiconductor Research and Education (UNICOS), an organization that consists of state-wide partnerships between higher education, government agencies, and business to help develop Utah's semiconductor workforce and increase its access to key technological infrastructure.

Partnerships enabled through UNICOS will expand access to tools and subsidize operating costs, reducing the need for local academic institutions and industry members to independently purchase and maintain expensive equipment. The goal of UNICOS is to become a research platform that fosters collaboration between academic and private sector scientists and engineers across the state. The University of Utah's Utah Nanofab, a lab space that serves researchers and companies, will support UNICOS' educational arm, the Utah Semiconductor Training Center. Students and employees across Utah will have opportunities for hands-on learning with Nanofab faculty and technical staff. Before training onsite, UNICOS will offer a certificate program, with "stackable" classes aimed at providing a solid foundation for students interested in careers in this area, as well as for professionals without semiconductor backgrounds who are looking to transition into the industry.

UNICOS' academic partners will also develop curricula with content beginning in high school

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through Ph.D. level classes that will help prepare the next generation of Utah's semiconductor workforce. The academic partners include Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University,

Utah State University, Utah Tech University, Brigham Young University, Salt Lake Community College, Snow College, Weber State University, and Mountainland Technical College.

Industry partners that will participate in the UNICOS network, including Micron, Lockheed Martin, L3Harris, Merit Sensor, Silicon Technologies, Inc., and Blackrock Neurotech.

Utah supports workforce and economic development in the semiconductor industry with state funds as well as federal funds. The Utah Legislature created the Economic Development Tax Increment Finance (EDTIF) corporate incentive program in 2005 and the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity utilizes federal, state, and private sector resources to administer programs.

New guidelines from the 2022 legislative session focus on creating jobs throughout Utah while recognizing the unique challenges in the state's urban and rural areas. The Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors Act (CHIPS) is dispersed through the EDTIF corporate incentive program in Utah.

The Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity awarded Texas Instruments Incorporated (TI) a post-performance tax reduction for its new semiconductor factory in Lehi, Utah. The corporate incentive is part of the state's Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) program. As part of the agreement, TI plans to add 800 new, high-tech jobs. The Department of Workforce Services is working with Texas Instruments to develop registered apprenticeship programs.

### **IIJA Grant Awards**

Utah will explore ways to partner with entities awarded grants through IIJA. A qualified workforce is necessary to complete the projects funded by the grants. Much of the work will be performed by subcontractors. The Department of Workforce Services has made it a priority to support pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs to develop the workforce needed. There are currently a large number of infrastructure related apprenticeship programs in the state and the department is working with key stakeholders to develop more as needed to support these workforce needs.

## **B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES**

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE STRATEGY DESCRIBED IN SECTION II STRATEGIC ELEMENTS. THIS INCLUDES—

1. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.)

### **State Operating Systems and Policies.**

Utah's Combined State Plan includes an Operational Planning Elements section that supports Utah's strategy and system-wide vision described in Section II(c).

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Utah's operating systems that support coordinated implementation of state strategies include:

- Labor Market Information

The Workforce Research and Analysis Division gathers data regarding the economy. Its mission is to generate accurate, timely and understandable data and analyses to provide knowledge of ever-changing workforce environments that inform sound planning and decision-making. Staff collect information describing the Utah labor market, including wages; employment projections by industry, occupation and area; cost of living; employment and unemployment; labor force characteristics; career trends; and industry trends. The Department of Workforce Services, the State Workforce Development Board, core partners, and other partners utilize the workforce information collected in planning and decision-making to determine job growth areas, skill gaps, income and wage data, migration, demographics, cost of living and career-exploration opportunities. This information is critical in determining the targeted industries and occupations while working with partners in business and education to ensure needed skills training is available.

Additionally, information collected is used to assist individuals to help them make informed career choices. This information is available to customers through the Workforce Research and Analysis page of the Department of Workforce Services website at [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). The Department of Workforce Services works closely with individuals, employers, and workforce system partners to make the information meaningful and practical for end-users.

- Data Collection Systems:

- UWORKS is an integrated case management system. It is a web-based system used by the Department of Workforce Services to support self-service individuals by providing access to information and services that help them obtain employment. It tracks mediated staff services, allowing employment counselors to easily manage cases and assist individuals in reaching their employment goals. This system captures funding source requirements, training-provider details and youth-provider information, allowing for program accountability and resource scheduling. The system supports both self-service and mediated job seekers and employers. Because of the different types of users supported, the system accommodates multiple system entry points, multiple levels of security and the ability to seamlessly transfer job seekers or employers from self-directed to staff-assisted.
- The Electronic Resource and Eligibility Product (eRep) is the system used to determine supportive service program eligibility for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.
- eShare is Utah's data repository system that collects information from several systems and allows for one central location for service providers who are determining intensive and training service eligibility through UWORKS to gather required customer information.
- eClient is an electronic imaging system used to hold and view documents for all customer types.
- myCase is an Internet-based system that allows customers to ascertain the status of their case.

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- Interactive self-service and mediated-service systems called Contributions Automated Tax System (CATS) and Comprehensive Unemployment Benefits

System (CUBS) are used to collect data and process all services offered by the Unemployment Insurance Division, including the collection of wage data and new hire information from employers.

- eReports is the data reporting system the Department of Workforce Services uses to provide detailed information about customer activities and outcomes, providing administrators, managers, front-line staff and program staff with supplemental tools to ensure performance outcome attainment. The eReports system has access to the following systems: CUBS, CATS, UWORKS, and eRep.
- The Department of Workforce Services' Data Warehouse contains data and could house additional data used to support the strategies of the State Plan.
- Adult education data are collected through a relational web based database. As students move throughout the state (currently 40 program sites with multiple sites), their data follows them in real time. All reporting elements defined by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) to meet the needs of WIOA reporting are built into the database and will be shared with and made accessible to core partners through secure portals. The statewide adult education student information system provides adult educators and the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services staff with effective and valid data to enhance program improvements, ensuring successful student outcomes.
- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation utilizes the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) for data collection. AWARE is a fully integrated, comprehensive case-management system the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation utilizes for documentation, caseload management, budget and expenditures, and outcome reporting. It collects client information covering the life cycle of a case: application, trial work experiences, eligibility, plan, job ready, employment and closure. AWARE is continually updated to reflect the required WIOA requirements for the Rehabilitation Service Administration's Case Service 9-11 Report. All data collected in AWARE is readily available for automated reporting. In addition, AWARE currently interfaces with the UWORKS case management system to enhance collection and integration between core programs and activities.
- The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Partner Referral System for comprehensive one-stop partners. All partners have the ability to create information sheets about their programs that are accessible to operations staff. They can also make, receive, and monitor referrals. Partners can create reports to evaluate processes and track referrals.
- The Utah Data Research Center houses data from multiple state agencies to enable the longitudinal research of Utahns. It is the only entity that can match identities in cross-agency data of this magnitude. This allows researchers to analyze Utahns over time as they enroll and graduate from school and participate in the workforce.

## 2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (FOR

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EXAMPLE., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS'

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ONE-STOP PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS.

Utah's policies support the implementation of its strategies. In addition, Utah has created one-stop criteria and an Infrastructure MOU that provides guidelines and requirements for one-stop partner contributions to Utah's one-stop delivery system. Utah's Infrastructure MOU was updated in 2020. Partners met and reviewed the documents providing the opportunity to discuss changes and updates. The Infrastructure MOU was updated again in November 2021 to include new co-location agreements between the Department of Workforce Services and the Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education. The partners will meet and conduct the four year review to update the Infrastructure MOU by July 1, 2024. The Operations Committee of the State Workforce Development Board, which includes representation from all core and required partners oversees the development of one-stop criteria, so all partners have the opportunity to participate in the process. All core and required partners participate in maintaining information for the Partner Referral System that is used in one-stop centers (AJCs). Attachments include: Utah's current MOU IFA and one-stop certification criteria.

Each of Utah's core partner programs encourage program co-enrollment to meet the holistic needs of participants. Participants who may be eligible for any of the partner programs are referred to the appropriate programs through the partner referral system. Also staff are encouraged to contact the partner agency to inform them of the referral, accompany the participant to an initial meeting and continue to collaborate with the partner program to coordinate services. All core partner programs encourage participants to complete a registration on Utah's labor exchange system. Through using this universal intake, the registration information, other data including services provided is then shared behind the scene with each program to help improve the quality of services and reduce duplication.

### **Utah's Partner Referral System Requirements**

#### Overview

The Partner Referral System was created to support and improve one-stop centers (AJCs) ability to refer individuals to partners and track outcomes. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires all partner staff to be trained and knowledgeable about all programs and services offered in the one-stop centers (AJCs).

The Partner Referral System is used by the partners of local one-stop centers (AJCs) that have been certified as an affiliate or comprehensive one-stop center (AJC). This includes all WIOA core and required partners and any additional partners as defined by the local office. The additional partners participate in the certification process, receive Partner Referral System training, and agree to attend local partner meetings. Partner responsibilities related to the system include:

- Maintain Partner Information Sheets
- Maintain staff access to system and update information
- Make referrals to other partners
- Receive and respond to referrals from partners
- Review reports

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- Maintain the organization's contact information

The Partner Referral System supports staff knowledge about partner programs by providing information sheets for each partner that display:

- Partner name and description
- Services provided
- Eligibility criteria
- Referral process
- Contact information
- Notes (additional information)

The Partner Referral System supports “warm hand-off” referrals because individuals receive information about the referrals they receive, the referrals are accepted by a partner, and the referrals can be tracked. One-stop centers (AJCs) can access reports to help them continually improve referral processes. They can review the reports at their partner meetings.

#### Partner List

The role of the core partners is to coordinate and align complimentary services so job seekers can acquire the skills and credentials that meet employer needs.

Core partners include:

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Program
- Youth Program
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

Utah's WIOA partners are responsible for workforce and economic development through the collaboration of programs, initiatives, and services that create a seamless, customer-focused one-stop delivery system. Utah's required partners collaborate and align their services to enhance access for job seekers and businesses.

Required partners include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans job counseling, training and placement services
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Unemployment Compensation programs
- Programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV, Part A (TANF)

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- Job Corps

- National Farmworkers Jobs program
- YouthBuild
- Indian Training Center

Additional partners include:

- Any partners that participate in the certification process, train their staff on all of the partner’s services and programs, and attend the one-stop center’s (AJC) partner meetings.

### 3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

#### A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS FOR THE PROGRAMS COVERED IN THE PLAN, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. INCLUDE AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.

#### State Program and State Board Overview

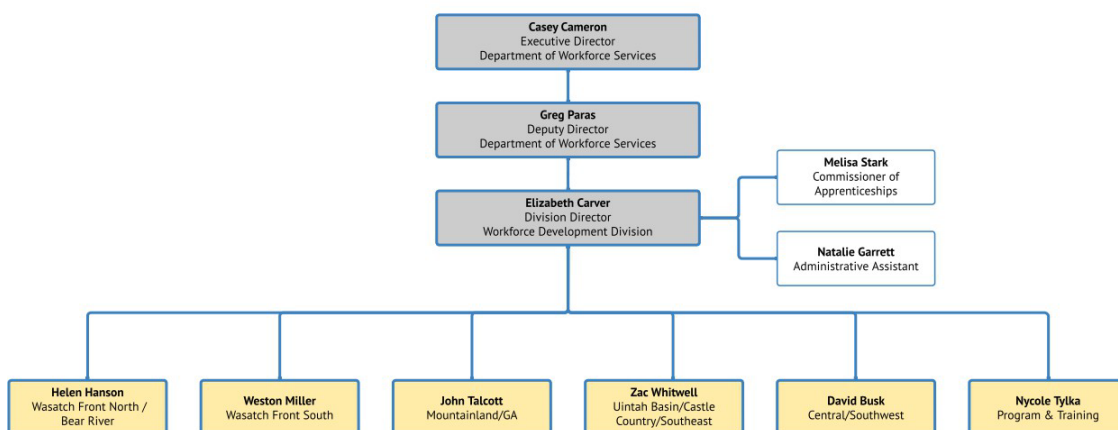
##### State Agency Organization

Utah’s Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs are housed with the Department of Workforce Services and delivered through the state’s one-stop centers (AJCs). The Utah State Board of Education provides administrative authority over adult education. See organizational charts below.



#### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION ORGANIZATION CHART

Workforce Development Division Administration - November 2023



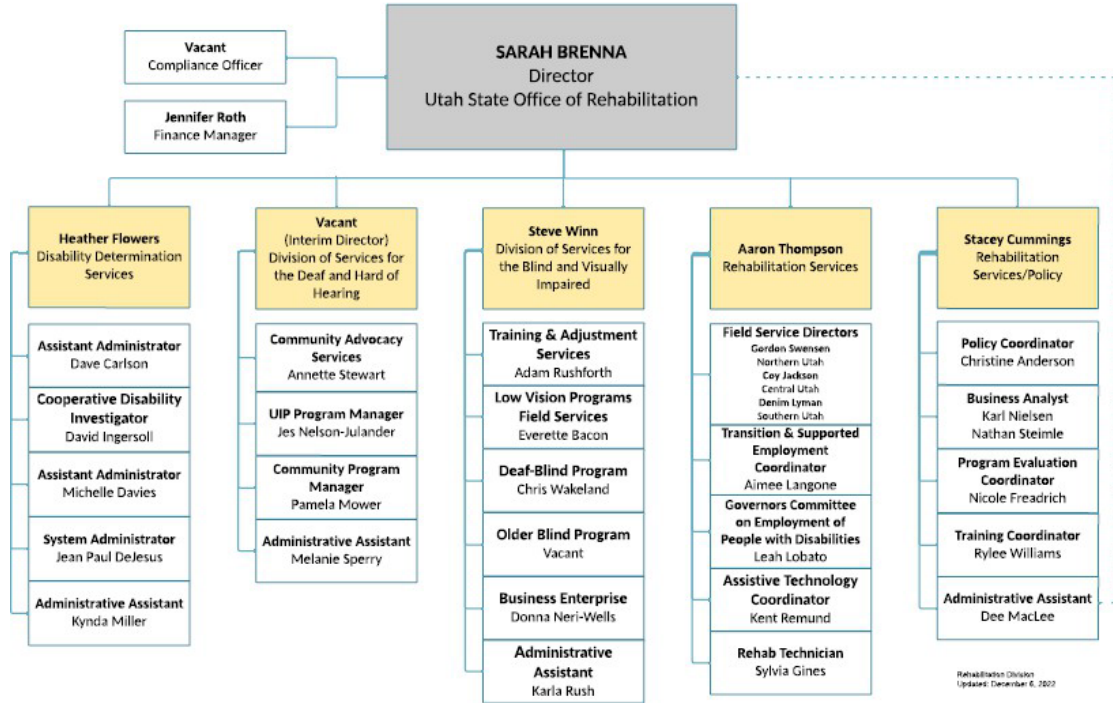
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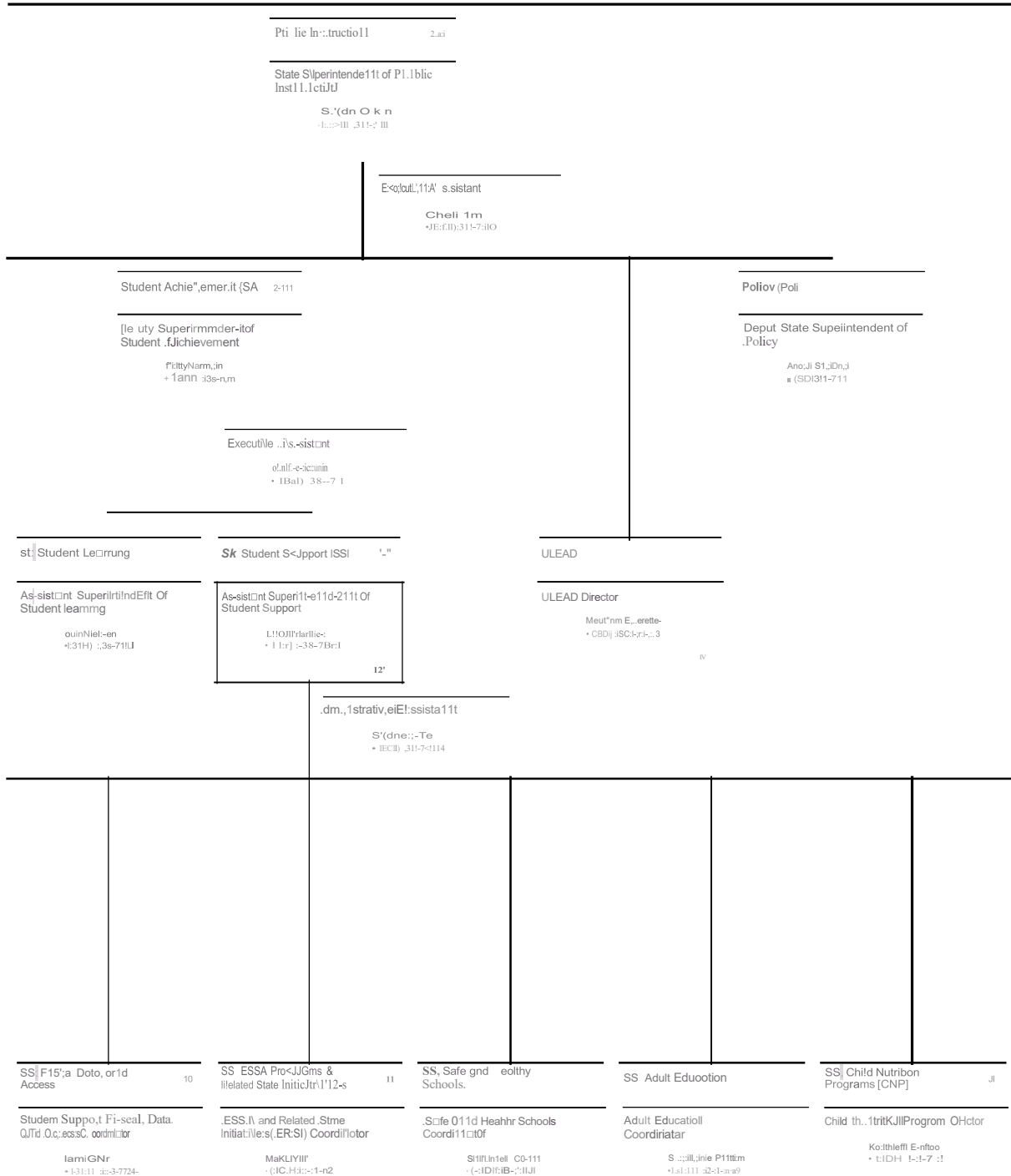


REHABILITATION DIVISION  
ORGANIZATION CHART



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## B. STATE BOARD

PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE BOARD ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ASSIST STATE BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF IN CARRYING OUT STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY. ALSO, PROVIDE A MEMBERSHIP ROSTER FOR THE STATE BOARD CONSISTENT WITH 20 CFR 679.110-120, INCLUDING MEMBERS' ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND POSITION TITLES.

### State Board

#### Utah State Workforce Development Board

##### Introduction

On July 22, 2014, H.R. 803 the "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" was signed into law. This replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amended the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This also created the State Workforce Development Board.

The Utah State Workforce Development Board's principal assets are its informed and dedicated members. Partner organizations are grateful for the business, community and government leaders who volunteer their time, knowledge and expertise to Utah's workforce development efforts.

##### Governor's Vision and Board Mission

Governor Cox and the State Workforce Development Board's vision anticipates a dynamic state with a richly diversified economy that is attractive both to employers who create and sustain jobs, as well as individuals who bring knowledge and skills to those jobs. The Board supports its vision, mission and commitment to taxpayers through its partnership of state and local government, business, economic development, and community organizations. Based on direct partner input and data, the board guides the strategic alignment of programs, resources, and services with employer needs creating a strong workforce development system for Utah.

##### Governor's Vision for Utah

Be a state where residents are happy, safe, healthy and successful. A place where we can grow old surrounded by the people we love and live peaceably in the most beautiful state in America. A place where we realize the good that comes from doing things together as ONE UTAH.

##### State Workforce Development Board Mission

To strengthen Utah's workforce development system to meet employer needs through innovative strategies that keep pace with economic change.

##### Commitment to Taxpayers

To provide quality, accountable and streamlined services that connect a world class workforce with employment.

##### Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the Board in lending support to the vision, mission and commitment to taxpayers:

- The State Workforce Development Board understands the key current and future

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workforce needs of business and industry.

- Workforce partnerships are formed between business, local government, education, community partners and economic development organizations to address and identify key needs.
- The Board serves as a convener of diverse stakeholders who will actively participate and collaborate with all partners, both public and private. Solid partnerships are keys to success.
- The Board will adopt a common set of key workforce development data elements, goals, measures and a continuous improvement process among the six core programs.
- Training resources focus on programs that prepare and connect unemployed workers with high quality training to get good jobs, stay employed and meet the needs of employers.
- The Board, led by business, focuses a significant portion of its workload on labor market demand trends and issues, which shape the jobs of today and influence the opportunities of tomorrow.

### Statutory Responsibilities

The State Workforce Development Board oversees strategic direction for the six core partners of WIOA. Board members are appointed by the Governor and have the following statutory functions:

- Provide leadership in the development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, job seekers, through industry and sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the Combined State plan.
- Assist in the development of strategies to support the use of career pathways to include low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.
- Review the statewide policies and programs and make recommendations on actions that should take place to align workforce development programs in the state with the six core programs.
- Coordinate the planning and delivery of workforce development services with the six core programs and other mandatory partners.
- Assist in the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system and one-stop delivery system in the state.
- Designate one-stop operator (the Department of Workforce Services is currently Utah's designated one-stop operator).
- Assist in the development and updating of comprehensive state performance accountability measures to assess the effectiveness of core programs in the state. This includes approving criteria and eligibility of training providers, as well as publishing performance outcomes on training providers.

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- Develop an annual report.

- Assist in the development of strategies for technological improvements to improve the quality of services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system.
- Improve the understanding and visibility of state workforce service efforts through external and internal marketing strategies.
- Perform other responsibilities within the scope of workforce services as requested by the Legislature, the Governor or Governor's designee.

#### Member Responsibilities

The State Workforce Development Board members shall act in the best interests of the State and the following is expected of each member:

- Attendance and Punctuality

Attend quarterly State Workforce Development Board meetings and designated committee meetings. The State Workforce Development Board and committee chairs shall start and conclude each meeting in a timely fashion. A minimum of five hours each quarter is the expected quarterly commitment of each member.

- Meeting Schedule

The Board meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each quarter. Committee meetings are typically held quarterly on days and times that work best for the members. The full board meets from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated. The location of meetings is announced and meeting materials are sent to members in advance and posted on the website.

- Participation

Beyond attendance and punctuality, each member should prepare for the meetings by reviewing pre-meeting materials and contacting resources for further information and opinions, as necessary. To ensure collective effectiveness, each member should provide his/her knowledge and expertise on substantive State Workforce Development Board issues. A candid expression of ideas and opinions among colleagues as well as respect for differences and similarities will ensure success.

- Committees Participation

Each member of the State Workforce Development Board should actively participate on his/her designated standing committee.

- Access to Resources

Beyond preparing for and participating in State Workforce Development Board activities, each member should be prepared to tap into other available resources in order to carry out the State Workforce Development Board mission, including professional networks, technical supports, etc.

- Compensation, Per Diem, and Expenses

State Workforce Development Board members who are not public members, state or local government members, or higher education members, may receive compensation, per diem and expenses at the rates established by the Division of Finance.

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- Conflict of Interest



The State Workforce Development Board exists for purposes that transcend personal, professional and corporate self-interests. Consequently, any board member who may have a conflict of interest must announce such potential conflict prior to voting on an affected issue.

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bruce Rigby	Cache Valley Bank
Sarah Dansie Jones	Inclusion Pro
David Gray	Lagoon
Deanna Hopkins	Dominion Energy
Joey Gilbert	Associated General Contractors of Utah
James Jackson III	Utah Black Chamber of Commerce
Debra Fiori	PROG Holdings, Inc.
Matt Loo	American Land Consulting/Engineering
Spencer Loveless	Dustless Technologies & Merit3D
Natalie Randall	Utah Tourism
Nikki Walker	Domo
Stacey Taylor	Deer Valley Resort
Dan Walker	Clyde Companies, Inc.
Megen Ralphs - Chair	Leavitt Group Enterprises
Dale Curtis	Joshua Tree Technologies
Wayne Cederholm	C.R. England
Tannen Ellis Graham	Diabetes & Endocrine Treatment Specialists
Shawn Newell	Waves Enterprises, LLC
Jared Haines	Utah System of Higher Education
Jennifer Saunders	Salt Lake Community College
Shawn Milne	Cache County
Jeff Worthington	Utah AFL - CIO
Michael Lanoue	Utah Electrical JATC

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Jeremy Haslam	UA Local 140
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Commissioner Anthony Martines	Carbon County Commissioner/Bodec
Tracy Gruber	Department of Human Services
Sarah Brenna	Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
Gary Harter	Department of Veteran and Military Affairs
Program Manager Sherry Stevens	Gov. Office of Economic Opportunity
Greg Paras	Department of Workforce Services
Stephanie Patton	Utah State Board of Education
State Representative Cory Maloy	Utah House of Representatives

Board Activities

The Department of Workforce Services had statute authority to serve as the administrative entity for the State Council of Workforce Services. During the 2017 Utah State Legislative session, the state code was amended to align with the changes in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) found in 29 U.S.C. Section 3101 et al. the Department of Workforce Services will retain the administrative oversight of the State Workforce Development Board.

The governor, in accordance with Section 106(d) of WIOA, retains and designates Utah as a “Single State Local Area.” Utah is well situated and prepared to continue delivering integrated workforce services and will align its governance and administrative structure to set policy direction and establish realistic performance goals. The State Workforce Development Board serves as the advisory body to provide guidance, oversight and evaluation to ensure programs remain fully responsive to Utah’s economic development and labor market needs. State agencies with core and required programs will continue, in a coordinated approach, to implement specific workforce development programs through the certified one-stop centers (AJCs) in local areas.

In terms of section 101(d) of WIOA, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will assist the Governor in the development, implementation and modification of the state plan through committees overseen by the board and chaired by members that fulfill assignments related to these activities. The board reviews and approves Utah’s Combined State plan, including all modifications during committee meetings, full board meetings, and email communications.

The State Workforce Development Board, <https://jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/index.html>, leads the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in Utah including, through its Board led core and required partner staffed committees:

- Identifying barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
- The development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth and individuals with barriers

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to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services including: access to transportation,

referrals to physical and mental health assistance, housing assistance, child and dependent care, and income support to enter or retain employment.

- The development of strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system.
- The development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- The development and continuous improvement of the one-stop delivery system, including providing assistance to one-stop operators, one-stop partners, and providers with planning and delivering services, including training services and supportive services to support effective delivery of services to workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- The development of strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system.
- The development and updating of comprehensive state adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state as required under section 116(b).
- The identification and dissemination of information on best practices, including best practices for:
  - The effective operation of one-stop centers (AJCs) relating to the use of business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment.
  - Effective training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis, and effectively use direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure an individual's prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences, and that evaluate such skills, and competencies for adaptability, to support efficient placement into employment or career pathways.
- The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the State's one-stop delivery system described in section 121(e), including the development of policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of entities carrying out one-stop partner programs within the one-stop delivery system, including approaches to facilitating equitable and efficient cost allocation in the system.
- The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to and improve the quality of services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system including such improvements to:
  - Enhance digital literacy skills as defined in section 202 of the Museum and Library Services Act (20U.S.C. 9101); referred to in this Act as "digital literacy skills").
  - Accelerate the acquisition of skills and recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.

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- Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals.

- Ensure such technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas.
- The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measurement and reporting processes to improve coordination of services across one-stop partner programs.
- The preparation of annual reports described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 116(d).
- The development of statewide workforce and labor market information system described in section 15€ of the Wagner-Peyser Act.
- The development of such other policies as may promote statewide objectives for and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the state.

The State Workforce Development Board will oversee its committees to ensure that recommendations include implementation and evaluation plans that clearly articulate specific actions, milestones and ongoing assessment.

The State Workforce Development Board has support of agency staff. Agency staff from the core and required partners are available to provide support to the committees. This includes:

- Assisting with committee meetings
- Providing information
- Leading workgroups (in the temporary absence of the chair or co-chair)
- Ensuring appropriate membership on workgroups
- Recommending goals for the committee
- Reporting agency updates to the committee

The State Workforce Development Board members have a clear understanding of participation requirements:

Beyond attendance and punctuality, each member should prepare for meetings by reviewing pre-meeting materials and contacting resources for further information and opinions, as necessary. To ensure collective effectiveness, each member should provide his/her knowledge and expertise on substantive State Workforce Development Board issues. A candid expression of ideas and opinions among colleagues as well as respect for differences and similarities will ensure success.

Each member of the board should actively participate on his/her designated standing committee.

The State Workforce Development Board members have access to resources:

- Beyond preparing for and participating in board activities, each member should be prepared to tap into other available resources in order to carry out the board mission, including professional networks, technical supports, etc.

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- The State Workforce Development Board may receive compensation, per diem, and expenses to support their activities:



- State Workforce Development Board members who are not public members, state or local government members, or higher education members, may receive compensation, per diem and expenses at the established State of Utah rates (e.g. only the pre-approved State rate amounts will be reimbursed for hotels and meals) established by the Division of Finance

#### 4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

##### A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

DESCRIBE HOW THE CORE PROGRAMS WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR BASED ON STATE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE HOW OTHER ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER PROGRAM SERVICES AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR. THIS STATE ASSESSMENT MUST INCLUDE THE QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND IMPROVEMENT OF PROGRAMS BROKEN DOWN BY LOCAL AREA OR PROVIDER. SUCH STATE ASSESSMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GOALS.

### **Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

#### Assessment of Core Programs

Utah core programs will be assessed annually based on the state performance accountability measures described in Section 116(b) of WIOA. Assessments include the quality, effectiveness and improvement of programs. Under the leadership of the Operations Committee, a workgroup with representation from the core partners will meet to define the performance accountability measures and sources of data, and how the information will be used for improvements. Utah will utilize previous performance measures as base measurements. The committee's recommendations will require approval from the State Workforce Development Board.

The Operations Committee will oversee the Data and Reports workgroup to develop a dashboard report of all core partner performance measures to be shared with community stakeholders including the State Workforce Development Board, SRC, and Utah State Board of Education. The dashboard will be updated with performance data quarterly as it becomes available for federal reporting. The Operations Committee and the Data and Reports workgroup will meet as needed to review and refine the dashboard reporting procedure.

A determination of each of the core partners' successes will be measured by their ability to meet or exceed their agency's targets as set with Labor, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education and Rehabilitation. Annually the core partners will be expected to self-evaluate their outcomes at a state and economic service area level and take measurable action(s) to improve data/service outcomes. For example, Adult Education will provide technical assistance through the evaluation of program effectiveness through monthly desk audits of program data with each of the service providers. Each program is reviewed tri-annually at a minimum, or as needed as determined through a risk assessment process. Adult Education's annual state professional development plan is based on program statuses, outcomes and issues. Annually each of the core partners will work with the Operations Committee to create a report for the State Workforce Development Board on successes and a plan defining program improvement.

Utah's performance accountability measures for the core programs shall consist of the primary indicators of performance for activities provided under the adult and dislocated worker

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programs authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B, the program of adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II, the H. R. 803—48 employment services program authorized

under sections 1 through 13 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) (except that subclauses (IV) and (V) shall not apply to such program), and the program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741), shall consist of:

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within one year after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).
- The primary indicators of performance for the youth program authorized under chapter 2 of subtitle B shall consist of:
  - The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.
  - The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
  - The primary indicators of performance described in subclauses (III) through (VI) of subparagraph (A)(i).

Utah has established levels of performance for each of the corresponding primary indicators of performance described in paragraph (2) for each of the programs described in clause (ii). Performance outcomes will be discussed with the Operations Committee to ascertain improvement strategies. Performance indicators will be negotiated with each federal government agency. The final agreed upon targets will be a result of performance data, regional data, and federal agencies recommendations. Core programs will define processes that will be used to increase/improve future state outcomes.

The programs included under clause (i) are:

- The youth program authorized under chapter 2 of subtitle B
- The adult program authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B
- The dislocated worker program authorized under chapter 3 of subtitle B

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- The program of adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II

- The employment services program authorized under sections 1 through 13 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.)
- The program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741)

Utah has identified expected levels of performance for each of the required primary indicators of performance for each of the programs described in clause (ii) for the first two program years covered by its plan.

Utah will reach agreement with its federal liaisons for each indicator described in clause (iii) for each of the programs described in clause (ii) for each of the first two program years covered by its plan. In reaching the agreement, Utah and its federal agency liaisons shall take into account the levels identified in its plan under clause (iii) and the factors described in clause (v). The levels agreed to shall be considered to be Utah's adjusted levels of performance for its program years and shall be incorporated into Utah's plan prior to the approval of the plan.

All Utah core partners and their federal liaisons shall reach agreement, prior to the third program year covered by Utah's plan, on levels of performance for each indicator. The levels agreed to shall be considered to be Utah's adjusted levels of performance for Utah's program and shall be incorporated into the plan as a modification to the plan.

Using funds authorized under a core program and made available to carry out this section, Utah will conduct ongoing evaluations of activities carried out in the state under each of the core programs. Utah will conduct the evaluations in order to promote, establish, implement, and utilize methods for continuously improving core program activities in order to achieve high-level performance within, and high-level outcomes from the workforce development system.

The evaluations conducted shall be designed in conjunction with the State Workforce Development Board and state agencies responsible for the administration of the core programs and shall include analysis of customer feedback and outcomes and process measures in the statewide workforce development system. The evaluations shall use analytical and statistical methods that are reasonably feasible.

Utah core partners will annually prepare, submit to the State Workforce Development Board and make available to the public (including by electronic means), reports containing the results of evaluations conducted under this subsection, to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system.

#### B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR EACH FOUR-YEAR STATE PLAN AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATION, PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORE PROGRAMS AND OTHER ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN DURING THE PRECEDING 2-YEAR PERIOD (I.E. THE 2-YEAR PERIOD OF THE PLAN MODIFICATION CYCLE), IN ACCORDANCE WITH METHODS DESCRIBED IN 4(A)

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE IS ADAPTING ITS STRATEGIES BASED ON THESE ASSESSMENTS.

#### **Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs**

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Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs. Utah's one-stop delivery system partner program services included in the plan will be assessed each year.

- Adult Education conducts monthly desk monitoring, tri-annual evaluations, and on-site monitoring. Programs prepare and submit annual program improvement plans used by state staff as a tool to evaluate program needs and levels of improvements.
- The Department of Workforce Services has an internal Program Review Team that randomly audits operation’s work including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and JVSG. Operation program support provides edits and targeted support and training. The Workforce Development Division has defined monthly outcomes goals and conducts an annual risk assessment. Additionally, the Department of Workforce Services undergoes an annual single state audit.
- The Unemployment Insurance Division has defined monthly outcome goals with quality checks, and its Program Services team provides targeted support and training. Assessment will occur through the State Quality Service Plan process with the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.
- Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a tri-annual needs assessment, prepares annual district and quality assurance plans, conducts random and targeted client record reviews, and has an internal compliance officer.
- The State Workforce Development Board assesses continual improvement and ensures one-stop centers (AJCs) are meeting required criteria during the one-stop certification process. Criteria are attached.
- The Veteran and Military Employment Services group meets regularly to assess and to improve service delivery to veteran customers, community partners and employers.

**Previous Assessment Results**

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Below are the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs during the preceding two-year period for the core partners. Utah plans to utilize its workgroups and State Workforce Development Board committees to adapt its strategies based on assessment results. These activities will be particularly meaningful as comprehensive one-stop centers (AJCs) are certified throughout the state.

Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education Previous Assessment Results

<b>Primary Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
Employment Second Quarter after exit	35.46%	42.85%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	40.59%	35.63%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$5,968	\$5,731

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Attained a Secondary School Diploma	5.17%	3.87%
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and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training within one year of exit		
Attained a Secondary School Diploma and Employed within one year of exit	23.07%	8.95%
Attained a Postsecondary Credential while enrolled or within one year of exit	6.66%	1.12%
Attained any credential (unduplicated)	23.92%	11.11%

Department of Workforce Services, Office of Rehabilitation Previous Assessment Results

Every three years, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) collaborate to develop and conduct a thorough statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities in Utah. The Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA), conducted triennially, was completed in 2023. The recommendations from the CSNA are outlined in the Vocational Rehabilitation program section. USOR utilizes a comprehensive approach to leverage data for managing the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. In addition, Utah State Office of Rehabilitation reviews current performance on a quarterly basis, analyzing performance on common performance measures, in addition to other relevant data points such as employment outcomes, wages at closure, timeliness of eligible and plan development and the rehabilitation rate. Performance reports are run on a statewide, regional, and district basis to provide a comprehensive picture of performance throughout the state. To help inform the overall quality of the services being delivered, customer satisfaction surveys are available and results are reviewed quarterly to guide work moving forward. The derived insights from this information play a pivotal role in shaping USOR's goals, priorities, and strategies, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of vocational rehabilitation services in Utah.

<b>Primary Indicators of Performance</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
Employment Second Quarter after exit	53.7%	53.2%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	52.7%	49.5%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$4,726	\$4,569
Credential Attainment Rate	37.5%	31.8%
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	55.2%	52.6%

Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Division Previous Assessment Results

Performance outcomes include the number of customers who complete an education program or who close as positive out of the total number of customers closed for that program year.

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Internal case reviews include the total case accuracy for cases reviewed in that program year.

## WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker and WIOA Youth Assessment Results

Performance Measure	Program Year 2021	Program Year 2022
Training Completion Outcomes: The percentage of customers who complete a training program for the indicated program year.	63.7%	64.3%
Positive Enrollment Closures: The percentage of customers who close as employed or, for youth, entered post-secondary education, obtained employment, or increased in literacy/numeracy skills for the indicated program year.	88.8%	90.2%
Case Review Accuracy: This is based on the accuracy of the total case when reviewed during the indicated program year.	76.8%	78.9%

## JVSG Assessment Results

Performance Measure	Program Year 2021	Program Year 2022
Positive Enrollment Closures: The percentage of customers who close as employed or, for youth, entered post-secondary education, obtained employment, or increased in literacy/numeracy skills for the indicated program year.	79.9%	90.3%
Case Review Accuracy: This is based on the accuracy of the total case when reviewed during the indicated program year.	82.2%	78.7%

As the State Workforce Development Board and core partners move forward to accomplish the goals outlined in Utah's Combined Plan, they will address the performance of required partners. All core partners are developing goals and priorities within the plan that meet objectives of common performance measures.

In addition, supporting the strategies outlined in this plan, Utah's core partners will develop processes to continually provide technical assistance to operations, evaluate funding, identify areas of weakness and provide corrective intervention as needed. This is an ongoing activity and will include enhancing the system, guiding policy, establishing a system for continual

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improvement of activities, and exploring how to manage performance assessments with required partners.

Utah will use performance data as targets. The core partners will analyze the performance data, review the one-stop system annually, meet the State Workforce Development Board certification requirements, conduct customer satisfaction surveys, review accessibility and ensure continuous improvement efforts. The Operations Committee will oversee the presentation of analysis to the State Workforce Development Board as it becomes available. This is an ongoing activity.

As Utah implements new methods to evaluate customer satisfaction, existing customer feedback mechanisms will be used, and continuous improvement will take into consideration the indicators of performance. Accessibility for individuals with disabilities will be evaluated, and restraints will be addressed as they arise.

### C. EVALUATION

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER WIOA CORE PROGRAMS; HOW SUCH PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH, AND DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH, STATE AND LOCAL BOARDS AND WITH STATE AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS; AND, FURTHER, HOW THE PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH THE EVALUATIONS PROVIDED FOR BY THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION UNDER WIOA (WIOA SECTION 116(E)).

#### **Evaluation**

The Operations Committee will engage a workgroup in making recommendations regarding evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs. The recommendations will include how the projects will be researched, coordinated and designed in conjunction with the State Workforce Development Board and core partners. The recommendations may also describe how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by federal liaisons under WIOA. As required and determined by the core partners, data will be made available for effectiveness analyses as defined by both Labor, Rehabilitation, and Education guidance for program improvement and compliance purposes.

Topics relevant to Utah will be defined by core partners in partnership with the Operations work group. Examples of topics may include whether Utah strategies are successfully meeting the needs of key demographics, the effectiveness of implemented policies and procedures, and the impact of service delivery methods.

The State Workforce Development Board committees will assess and report on the effectiveness of goals in the plan and our ability to successfully meet negotiated performance levels each year. The State Workforce Development Board will provide direction as needed to ensure that Utah's plan is implemented and meeting the needs of the state.

The State Workforce Development Board will coordinate with core and required partners to review opportunities for program research and evaluate programs. Workforce Services plans to utilize the Social Research Institute at the University of Utah for continued program evaluation

### 5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE STATE WILL USE IN DISTRIBUTING FUNDS UNDER THE CORE PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS AUTHORIZING SUCH DISTRIBUTIONS.

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A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

Utah is a Single State Local Area, and, as such, a local distribution is not required.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

Utah's eligible agency, the Utah State Board of Education, will host a competition in the Spring of 2026 to award competitive multiyear (defined as a minimum of two years) grants for the provision of Adult Education services. Available funds (82.5%, of which a minimum of 10% will be allowed for corrections education and other institutionalized individuals) will be awarded to programs meeting Utah State Board of Education - Adult Education defined competition standards for the purpose of developing, implementing and improving adult education within Utah. Awards will be made based on application merit as measured on a scoring rubric. Programs will be required to show demonstrated effectiveness to be considered eligible for funding. To show demonstrated effectiveness, applicants will be required to submit data demonstrating successful level gain percentages within the top three quartiles of the state in reading/writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition (where applicable). Applicants will also have to submit data showing effectiveness in transitioning students to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalence, and transition to postsecondary education and training. Eligible programs will then submit applications containing information regarding the thirteen considerations required in Section 231(e) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Completed applications will be reviewed and scored by multiple readers, including portions of the application that will be read by members of the State Workforce Development Board.

Utah State Board of Education - Adult Education state staff will then review the application scores and determine awards. Applicants not funded will have the opportunity to appeal the Utah State Board of Education's decision through an appeal hearing. Following the hearing, if desired, an applicant has the right to appeal to the Secretary of Education (defined in 34 CFR 76-401) for a final decision.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.

Utah will ensure it continues to provide direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to

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apply and compete for funds through a public announcement for potential funding opportunities. The Utah State Board of Education provided direct and equitable access to all



eligible providers utilizing the following process (this activity was completed in Spring of 2023 based on guidance released by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education):

- Issue a Notice of Availability: Notification of competition will be released through the posting of legal notices in Utah newspapers. An email blast will be released at the same time to all known potential providers. In addition, notification of a competition will be posted on the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education website.
- Process: A Technical Assistance Webinar will be held as announced in the legal notice. Completed Demonstrated Effectiveness applications will be submitted to the Utah State Board of Education on the assigned date and time. State staff score applications according to published scoring rubrics to determine eligible providers. Full grant applications will be sent out to all programs determined eligible through the Demonstrated Effectiveness application. Completed full-grant applications will be submitted to the Utah State Board of Education on the assigned date and time. State staff will conduct a cursory review by looking for compliance and completeness of defined basics that all applicants must complete. Any applicant whose application is found incomplete will be notified that they are ineligible to be considered for competition.
- Evaluation of Applications: Members of the State Workforce Development Board will read and score portions of the application. The Utah State Board of Education will assemble a panel of readers from the community to read the applications. A readers' resource packet will be utilized to assess and score the applications based on a defined scoring rubric. Readers will be trained on the processes on a predetermined date. All applications will be read and scored a minimum of three times by independent readers. Scored applications will be ranked and weighted for funding by a predetermined date. A preliminary announcement of a pending award will be made after the competition, with the final award being announced and funded based on receipt of the state's award letter from the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education.

#### C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

IN THE CASE OF A STATE THAT, UNDER SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(I) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT DESIGNATES A STATE AGENCY TO ADMINISTER THE PART OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER WHICH VR SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND, DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND THE FACTORS USED BY THE STATE TO DETERMINE THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS AMONG THE TWO VR AGENCIES IN THE STATE.

Utah has one designated state unit for Vocational Rehabilitation services that encompasses all populations and activities. The Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program administered through the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is a combined Vocational Rehabilitation program that serves individuals who are blind as well as individuals of all disability types. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Vocational Rehabilitation program includes services for individuals who are blind and is implemented statewide. Utah State Office of Rehabilitation distributes Vocational Rehabilitation program funds to 10 district offices under the Division of Rehabilitation Services at the beginning of each budget year. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation uses a formula allocation as the methodology to initially distribute Vocational Rehabilitation program funds throughout the state to regional districts. The criteria for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's formula allocation is based on regional service needs and

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program performance accountability.

## 6. PROGRAM DATA

### A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

DESCRIBE THE PLANS OF THE LEAD STATE AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CORE PROGRAMS, ALONG WITH THE STATE BOARD, TO ALIGN AND INTEGRATE AVAILABLE WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATION THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, AND TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE'S PLAN FOR INTEGRATING DATA SYSTEMS SHOULD INCLUDE THE STATE'S GOALS FOR ACHIEVING INTEGRATION AND ANY PROGRESS TO DATE. DESCRIBE DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE STATE'S PROCESS TO COLLECT AND REPORT DATA ON CO-ENROLLMENT, AND FOR THOSE PRESENT IN THE ONE-STOP CENTERS.

I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.

#### **Data Alignment and Integration**

Using a common identifier, Utah is committed to working toward aligning and integrating its workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs and education through post-secondary education. Utah's plans to continue making the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.

Utah's core partners currently share information about common customers who are served by Department of Workforce Services programs and services through interfaces. The core partners are consistently working to identify and enhance opportunities for data sharing and system interfaces. These efforts aim to streamline intake and service delivery, as well as track participation across all programs.

III. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Utah will continue researching how the State Workforce Development Board can assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs, including unemployment insurance. This includes considerations related to the design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc. and describing how alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals and employers. The Data and Reports workgroup will continue to report information to and receive feedback from the Operations Committee regarding these efforts.

IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S DATA SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES TO PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER

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SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

Utah plans to develop and produce the reports required under Section 116, performance accountability system [WIOA Section 116(d)(2)]. Utah's core partners, the State Workforce Development Board and chief elected officials, will establish and operate fiscal and management accountability information systems based on guidelines established by the secretaries of labor and education. Utah currently meets fiscal and management accountability requirements. Utah will continue to monitor and make adjustments, as needed, to meet requirements.

#### B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

DESCRIBE HOW LEAD STATE AGENCIES WILL USE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE EXITING FROM CORE PROGRAMS IN ENTERING, PERSISTING IN, AND COMPLETING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, OR ENTERING OR REMAINING IN EMPLOYMENT. STATES MAY CHOOSE TO SET ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.

##### **Assessment of Participants' Post-program success**

The State Workforce Development Board oversees the assessment of Utah's ability to meet the goals set in the negotiated performance measures. The Operations Committee will evaluate the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing post-secondary education, or who are entering or remaining in employment. The core partners will share data to help identify and remediate gaps to enhance customer experience. The Operations Committee's Data and Reports Workgroup maintains the report incorporating data from partners working with participants exiting programs and training/education programs.

#### C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS TO UTILIZE QUARTERLY UI WAGE RECORDS FOR PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY, EVALUATIONS, AND AS A SOURCE FOR WORKFORCE AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION, CONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW. (THIS OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENT APPLIES TO CORE PROGRAMS.)

##### **Use of Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data**

Utah currently uses Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data to evaluate performance accountability for Adult, Dislocated Workers, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Unemployment Insurance wage records are currently used and shared with appropriate partners (covered by MOUs) as a source for workforce and labor market information consistent with federal and state law. Utah's plan to align, share and integrate data is addressed under Program Data (6)(A) above.

#### D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

DESCRIBE THE PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS INCORPORATED IN THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS REQUIRED BY SECTION 444 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (20 U.S.C. 1232G) AND OTHER APPLICABLE FEDERAL LAWS.

##### **Privacy Safeguards**

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Utah incorporates privacy safeguards into its workforce development system. Currently Utah conducts required annual staff training and utilizes required release/waiver forms. Utah must

strictly adhere to the state's interpretation of FERPA and follow established security processes and policies required by the Department of Technology Services for all of its systems and databases.

The following safeguards are in place for the workforce development system:

- Data is contained in a secure database maintained by the Utah Department of Workforce Services following Utah Department of Technology Services information technology standards. Data is backed up on secure servers and firewalls are evaluated on an ongoing basis by a security team. All data access is password protected. Individuals accessing the database are required to update their password at least every 60 calendar days.
- Access to computer programs is only available to staff on a need to know basis, based upon the employee's role with a division. Staff no longer associated with a particular role or division are denied access. Supervisors are required to review employee's access every 90 days.
- Through contact with their counselor or Department of Workforce Services staff, customers have access to their records contained in the database.
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer line and only as allowed by Federal and State law.

The following safeguards are in place for adult education students:

- Data is contained in a secure database maintained by the Utah State Board of Education following Utah Department of Technology Services information technology standards. Student identifiable data is scrubbed from the development and training databases; data is backed up on secure servers nightly and firewalls are evaluated on an ongoing basis by a security team. All data access is password protected. Individuals accessing the database are required to update their password every 90 calendar days.
- Access by programs is only available to staff on a need to know basis meaning that not all service providers have access to the database. Staff no longer associated with a program are denied access upon termination from a program.
- Through contact with their adult education counselor, students have access to their records contained in the database. Students must sign a release of record to release any of their records to the Department of Workforce Services, the Office of Rehabilitation, other agencies, or individuals. On an as-needed basis, students may ask appropriate staff to run reports specific to their education (e.g. class schedule, Student Education Occupation play, grade transcripts and testing reports).
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer line and only with records whereby students have given permission. Data returned for reporting purposes is only an aggregate count and not personally identifiable.

The following safeguards are in place for general education students: parents have access to their student's education records and the right to protect the student's rights to privacy by limiting the availability of student records without parental consent. Utah follows FERPA guidelines in ensuring that rights including:

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- The ability to inspect and review education records relating to the student maintained by the school the student attends or has attended.
- The right to challenge and require the school to amend an education record concerning the student that is inaccurate or misleading or in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- The right to require the school to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information, subject to specific exceptions.
- Notifying parents, and students eighteen years of age or older, of the above rights.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation follows privacy safeguards in accordance with state and federal laws and professional ethics which require the protection of personally identifiable information specific to Vocational Rehabilitation:

- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation maintains policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of all clients.
- Personally identifiable information obtained by the Office of Rehabilitation, its employees or agents concerning individuals applying for or receiving services are not disclosed without the prior written consent of the individual or the individual's legal representative, except as required for administration of programs or services.
- All client information related to the vocational rehabilitation program is maintained by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation in the secure AWARE case management system, in accordance with the standards established by the Utah Department of Technology Services.
- Access to the AWARE case management system is password protected. Access to the system requires pre-approval. Access to information in the AWARE system is based upon employee's roles within the division.
- Data matching is completed using a secure data transfer interface and only as allowed by Federal and State law.

## 7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

- A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR COVERED PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

### **Priority of Service for Veterans**

Utah will provide Priority of Service to all employment and training programs that are funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. The Department of Workforce Services ensures the provision of priority of service with the following:

All one-stop center (AJC) staff wear a magnetic badge that states "Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?"

- All one-stop center (AJC) staff are trained to screen and identify potential covered

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persons. The question “Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?” is asked of every individual upon initial contact.

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- Individuals who self-register online on the Department of Workforce Services website as a potential covered persons are contacted by email and telephone. They are encouraged to visit their closest one-stop center (AJC) for eligibility and services.
- Small desktop posters asking covered persons to identify are displayed at intake counters in the one-stop centers (AJCs).
- The Department of Workforce Services Publication 07-107, which provides an overview of the services for which they receive priority and a description of the application for those services, is distributed in the job connection areas of every one-stop center (AJC) and given to individuals once they identify.
- The question “Have you or a spouse ever served in the U.S. military?” is displayed as part of a looping presentation on a television in the job connection areas of all one-stop centers (AJCs), encouraging covered individuals to self-identify.

This provides individuals with multiple opportunities to self-identify their covered person status or to share the information about priority of service to family members, friends or neighbors.

One-stop center (AJC) staff provide priority of service to job seekers by:

- Ensuring individuals register for services that reflect their status as a covered person.
- Placing individuals at the top of a waiting list for a service if the service from the Department of Workforce Services has limited or restricted access (If there is no waiting list for that service, a waiting list is created with the individual at the top of the list).
- Providing services or referring an individual to the appropriate internal or external pathway for a service (if the service is not limited or restricted, the one-stop center (AJC) staff provides services or refers the individual to the appropriate internal or external pathway for that service).
- Placing all qualified persons at the top of an employer’s applicant list upon completion of a job match request, meaning the covered person receives referrals to open job announcements over non-covered persons.
- Utilizing the DVOP Eligibility Triage Form with individuals claiming military service. This form identifies those veterans who have a significant barrier to employment ensuring only job seekers meeting eligibility requirements are referred to a DVOP worker.
- Ensuring veterans who are determined to have a significant barrier to employment are referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program for individualized career services through our internal referral system. This system alerts the DVOP worker of the referral and provides information to connect them to the referred veteran or eligible spouse to provide individualized services.
- Referring individuals to services through WIOA Title I and Wagner Peyser or other services as appropriate.

Native American job seekers in Utah have access to Department of Workforce Services programs and services through local one-stop center (AJC) and online services offered through

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jobs.utah.gov. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists are assigned to the one-stop centers (AJC) nearest to the Native American reservations and have developed relationships

within tribal leadership to ensure tribal member veterans and spouses receive priority of service.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS.

The Department of Workforce Services monitors its priority of services for veterans by visiting a required percentage of one-stop centers (AJCs) to ensure priority of service is provided to veterans and their eligible spouses. The Department of Workforce Services is audited by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Education and Training Services every three years. In addition, onsite visits at one-stop centers (AJCs) are conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Education and Training Services State Director, and the Department of Workforce Services leadership to verify that priority of service is provided to veterans and their eligible spouses.

C. DESCRIBE THE TRIAGE AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND OTHER POPULATIONS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST/CONSOLIDATED POSITION.

All customers who engage with Workforce Services and self-identify as a veteran or spouse of a veteran are screened for eligibility and are given a copy of the DVOP Eligibility Triage Form. If they meet eligibility requirements, they are referred to a local DVOP or consolidated staff for the provision of services. Referrals are tracked through the case management system.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS), WILL COMPLY WITH SECTION 188 OF WIOA (IF APPLICABLE) AND APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 ET SEQ.) REGARDING THE PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY OF FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY, AND MATERIALS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. THIS ALSO MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF COMPLIANCE THROUGH PROVIDING STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S ONE-STOP CENTER CERTIFICATION POLICY, PARTICULARLY THE ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA.

**Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**

Utah's one-stop service delivery system complies with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. The Department of Workforce Services' risk manager works in coordination with State Risk Management to conduct on-site reviews of one-stop centers (AJCs) and administrative offices. These reviews are conducted to ensure physical accessibility for customers as well as employees. Reviews are conducted every three years. The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Existing Facilities on the Achievable Barrier Removal Survey is used for the Risk Management review.

For programmatic accessibility, Department Policy 1109 provides the procedure for assisting customers with disabilities and processing disability accommodation requests. All Workforce Services staff receive annual training about this policy. Additionally, the Department designates

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one of its staff attorneys as the Equal Opportunity Liaison and Customer ADA Officer to ensure

there is a point of contact to review disability accommodation requests and provide guidance to Department staff working with customers with disabilities.

In addition, every one-stop center (AJC) has Licensed Clinical Social Workers onsite or available for individuals who need access to these services.

As required by 29 CFR §§38.51, 54 and 55, the Department maintains a nondiscrimination plan and annually reviews its programs and activities for compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions in WIOA and 29 CFR 38, which includes monitoring for accessibility for customers with disabilities.

Regarding technology, all core partners' public websites, including all applications for programs and services, are Section 508 compliant. The Utah Department of Technology Services evaluates, tests and surveys all Department of Workforce Services technology services to ensure compliance. The Utah State Board of Education has technical teams who ensure compliance as well.

The Operations Committee ensures that the comprehensive one-stop recertification criteria reflects the requirements outlined in section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). The recertification criteria assess the one-stop center's (AJC) current compliance with accessibility laws. It also examines the one-stop center's (AJC) strategies and goals for continual improvement in its efforts to remove programmatic accessibility barriers.

#### 9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS) WILL ENSURE THAT EACH ONE-STOP CENTER IS ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, SUCH AS THROUGH ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, STAFF TRAINING, RESOURCES, AND OTHER MATERIALS. DESCRIBE HOW ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WILL BE MADE AWARE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENROLL AND/OR CO-ENROLL IN ALL THE CORE PROGRAMS FOR WHICH THEY ARE ELIGIBLE.

#### **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners**

Utah will ensure that each one-stop center (AJC) meets the needs of limited English proficient individuals, through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. The staff in all one-stop centers (AJCs) have an established procedure and pathway to access contracted interpreter services to serve individuals with limited English proficiency.

Adult Education provides interpretative services as needed. Necessary educational documents are available in the predominant foreign languages. Clients in need of English Language Learners services are referred to adult education programs that offer ELL services appropriate for the individual.

Training in assisting customers who are limited English proficient (LEP) is a required, annual, web-based program. All staff, in every division, are required to take the Limited English Proficient training and test their learned skills upon completion.

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The State of Utah has several contractors who provide interpretive and translation services. The Department of Workforce Services has policy and procedures in place for staff to access an interpreter or send documents for translation.

The Workforce Development Division and Office of Rehabilitation have a procedure and instruction card for Accessing Interpreter Services to provide consistent and accurate service with access and charge code information for accessing interpretive services.

#### IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

DESCRIBE THE METHODS USED FOR JOINT PLANNING AND COORDINATION AMONG THE CORE PROGRAMS, AND WITH THE REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS AND OTHER PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN.

##### Coordination with State Plan Programs

Utah's workforce system partners worked together to develop Utah's 2024 Combined State Plan. Stakeholder collaboration, review, and comment are critical to the process of creating Utah's Combined Plan. Utah's State Workforce Development Board has assisted the governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the Utah's State Plan and has convened programs, required partners, and stakeholders to contribute to the plan. The Workforce Research and Analysis Division of the Department of Workforce services provided assistance with labor market data, relevant evaluations, existing research, and analysis during the planning process.

The State Workforce Development Board and its committees, which include core and required partners, created the plan's vision and goals. The State Workforce Development Board approved the vision and goals. The committees developed strategies and assessment for each goal that connects to their committee action plans.

Core partner staff reviewed and provided the content for the first draft of the plan while required partner staff reviewed assigned sections. The second draft of the plan was sent out to the State Workforce Development Board and core and required partners for review. It was also posted on core partner websites for 30 days and presented at one virtual town hall meeting for public comment.

The final draft was approved by the State Workforce Development Board.

All of the workforce system partners participated in the review process, including approval from the State Workforce Development Board and all core and required partners. The updated plan was posted for public input on partner websites for 30 days and one virtual town hall meeting was held for public comment on January 4, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

#### V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
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2.	The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information	Yes
	regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	
3.	The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4.	<p>a. The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>b. The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;</p>	Yes
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3)	Yes
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10.	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12.	Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

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## VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

THE STATE MUST ADDRESS ALL PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS IN THIS SECTION FOR THE WIOA CORE PROGRAMS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STATE SUBMITS EITHER A UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN.

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER SUBTITLE B—

#### A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

##### 1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND POLICY USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.

Utah has been designated as a single-area state.

##### 2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.

State policies for the statewide workforce development system can be found in the Workforce Development Division Policy Manual on the Department of Workforce Services website at [https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS\\_Employment\\_and\\_Business\\_Services\\_Manual.htm](https://jobs.utah.gov/infosource/EmploymentBusinessManual/DWS_Employment_and_Business_Services_Manual.htm)

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR’S SET ASIDE FUNDING FOR MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS OF TITLE I ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES.

Utah has centralized several functions for the governor’s set-aside funding, such as finance, audit, human resources, and UWORKS to create efficiencies by reducing overhead costs at the local level. The state has been able to absorb these costs allowing more funds to be used on

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career services and training for customers.

Utah also utilizes the governor's set aside funding to disseminate the Eligible Training Provider List and other information on program services, accessibility, employer services, and success stories highlighting effective service delivery strategies. Funding is also used to conduct research and evaluation, provide technical assistance to one-stop partners to meet the goals of the state plan, support the State Workforce Development Board, develop staff, and monitor services.

Up to 25% of Dislocated Worker funds are reserved for Rapid Response activities and Additional Assistance funding to local areas. Funds provide rapid response services to as many companies and workers as possible regardless of the size of event, either through a formalized coordination with the state Dislocated Worker Unit when layoffs impact 15 or more workers, or through a local-area response provided by local workforce development specialists when layoffs impact less than 15 workers. Additional Assistance funds are used when local areas have a significant increase in the number of dislocated workers needing assistance due to layoffs and closure events, and the local area does not have adequate formula funds to meet the needs.

The Dislocated Worker Unit is housed with the Workforce Development Division Program and Training at the Department of Workforce Services. The team includes the state Rapid Response coordinator, Dislocated Worker program specialist, Trade Adjustment Assistance program specialist and the state program specialist over the Eligible Training Provider List, ensuring coordination and the ability to design and deliver comprehensive services to dislocated workers. The Dislocated Worker Unit follows up on all WARN notifications, trade petitions and trade-certified companies to ensure prompt delivery of services.

Local workforce development specialist staff play a key role in Rapid Response by building and maintaining relationships with employers, which is a key activity in receiving early notification for planned layoff or closure events. This allows critical time to plan for and customize services to specific events and workers' needs. During layoff or closure events, local workforce development specialist staff become part of Rapid Response delivery by coordinating with the Dislocated Workers Unit and delivering services as appropriate. This includes collaborating with core and required partners to quickly reconnect affected workers with employers seeking their skill set. The Dislocated Worker Unit gathers and tracks layoff and closure data and disseminates Layoff Notification Records used by the Department of Workforce Services management, area directors, workforce development specialist staff, Unemployment Insurance and the Workforce Research and Analysis team to help plan for and potentially avert layoffs or minimize the impact to workers by matching workers to available jobs, sponsoring job fairs, linking workers to job-search workshops and providing Dislocated Workers, Trade Adjustment Assistance and other appropriate career services. Rapid Response services, along with the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and the Eligibility Assessment program, has shortened and prevented periods of unemployment of dislocated workers.

Utah's Rapid Response program implements early intervention strategies which create opportunities to engage employers, community partners, economic development agencies and training providers to avert the negative impacts of layoffs by quickly moving workers from layoff to employment or training. During Rapid Response workshops, worker information is gathered to register them in UWORKS, expediting access to services. The UWORKS system identifies Rapid Response services, career services, company information and layoff or closure data; employment and training counselors use it to determine WIOA Dislocated Worker eligibility. Utah is also working to implement layoff-aversion strategies to address at-risk

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companies and workers.

C. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS.

Local staff work closely with the Department of Workforce Services administration and the state Dislocated Worker Unit to provide Rapid Response services to local areas and to coordinate dislocation events, including disaster situations. Through ongoing partnerships developed with local agencies, businesses and community partners, Dislocated Worker Unit and workforce development specialist staff can respond immediately to emergency dislocations, including local-area disaster situations. Depending on the severity of the disaster, including FEMA-approved disasters, Dislocated Worker Unit and workforce development specialist staff are prepared to work independently or with first responders to conduct a preliminary assessment of the area to determine the need for funding to meet the career and training needs of individuals impacted by dislocation events, including coordinating services and providing temporary housing and other support needs of individuals displaced by such events.

The Department of Workforce Services executive director reports directly to the governor, ensuring coordination of necessary FEMA assistance or the need to apply for National Dislocated Worker Emergency Grant (DWEG) funds to address needs as a result of a disaster or national emergency. The Dislocated Worker Unit will assist in the development of and application for National Dislocated Worker Emergency Grant funding, which may include funding to temporarily hire displaced individuals to provide humanitarian assistance and to clean up and repair facilities and lands. This includes career and training services to enhance the skills of the impacted individuals, better positioning them for employment after the completion of temporary employment disaster relief.

Department of Workforce Services ensures coordination between Rapid Response and other program services, including Unemployment Insurance emergency disaster funds, and has an emergency plan in place to address communication and information technology backup of case management systems as well as a staffing plan to address these events so critical services will not be disrupted.

D. DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

The Department of Workforce Services has developed a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to respond to unforeseen disruptive events including natural disasters to ensure that essential functions are resumed in a timely manner. This plan is a guideline delineating and coordinating agency efforts to continue mission-critical essential functions immediately following the onset of a significant emergency. Within this plan the agency's essential functions are identified, roles and procedures for implementing the plan are presented, along with identification of any applicable delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession. Rapid Response staff follow the procedures outlined in the COOP in the affected area(s) to ensure employers and affected individuals have access to rapid response workshops, apply for WIOA, job search assistance, connect to public assistance, and layoff aversion services.

E. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) AND ENSURES THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A) AND TAA SECTION

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221(A)(2)(A) .) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION AND HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICE TO WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PETITION (TAA SEC. 221(A)(2)(A)).

Utah provides early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance petition has been filed [Section 134 (a)(2)(A)]. During the initial employer contact, potential Trade Act impact is determined, and the petitioning process is initiated. Rapid Response workshops are initiated at petition filing and include information regarding the Trade Act program when appropriate. When a Trade Act Certification occurs after the layoff, a Rapid Response Trade Act-specific workshop/orientation is scheduled, and workers are notified using the Trade Act impact list. Also, Trade-impacted workers receive a Trade Certification letter, which identifies what they need to do to access services, and a Trade Act benefit brochure.

As of July 1, 2022, the TAA program is federally under termination status and new petitions are not currently being certified until the program is reauthorized. All affected workers under previously certified petitions can continue to receive services. If and when TAA is reauthorized, new petitions will be certified and services provided to impacted workers.

#### B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

##### 1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

#### **Work-Based Training Models**

The Department of Workforce Services uses work-based training models including on-the-job-training, internships, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships. Each of these work-based training models provides participants with the opportunity to quickly develop occupational skills and expertise in their area of training. Additionally, while they are acquiring new skills and improving their existing skills, they may be earning a wage as well. Workforce development specialists reach out to employers to connect interested participants with appropriate opportunities. Workforce Development Division career and education counselors and the State Office of Apprenticeship monitor work-based learning to ensure the participant is progressing and meeting their goals as well as the needs of the employer. Both workforce development specialists and employment counselors monitor the training experience to ensure the customer is increasing their skills and the employer is providing safe and equitable work. Also, employers on the Utah State Workforce Development Board are informed about the different types of work-based training and provide valuable input in terms of workforce deficits they believe are not being addressed through traditional training programs that might be resolved through work-based learning programs. As these deficits are identified, workforce development staff and other appropriate staff work to develop strategies to help address employer needs including helping to develop an apprenticeship model to resolve labor shortage.

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Work-based learning programs allow employers to have an active role in the development of the participant's training plan. In close collaboration with the workforce development specialist



and the participant's career and education counselor, employers tailor the training plan to meet both their business needs and the participant's occupational and professional development interests. Additionally, if an employer participates in an on-the-job-training or a Youth Employment Internship Opportunity (EIO), they are eligible to receive wage reimbursements while the participants are in training. Workforce development division staff work with employers and customers to ensure customers are meeting the needs of the employers and employers are providing appropriate training to customers. If concerns are identified, staff provide mediation and support.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation develops and improves the diversity and availability of alternative training models and options. Examples include on-the-job-training, work-based training, apprenticeships, internships, temporary work experiences, Supported Employment (SE), Supported Job-Based Training (SJBT) and customized employment. The diversity of options allows individuals and counselors to customize a unique set of services to meet individual employment and training needs. These training pathways are supported through partnerships with other agencies, including employers, WIOA core and required partners, Utah State Board of Education, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD).

## 2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY FOR SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY (E.G., OUTREACH TO SPONSORS AND PROSPECTIVE SPONSORS, IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AND CONNECTING THEM TO APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES).

### **Registered Apprenticeship**

The Apprenticeship Committee, a subcommittee of the State Workforce Development Board, includes core and required partners. It is a goal of this committee to support expansion of industries that utilize apprenticeship and diversity apprentices. As these opportunities are developed further, the Department of Workforce Services will provide awareness and promote them to individuals.

Utah's labor exchange system allows for registered apprenticeship opportunities to be posted in UWORKS. This enhances the connection of individuals to available registered apprenticeship opportunities and assists employers in identifying qualified candidates for openings. These openings also display on the Eligible Training Provider List if the sponsor has elected to be included on this list.

The Department of Workforce Services is coordinating with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (OA) to identify registered apprenticeship sponsors in order to continue to grow the Eligible Training Provider List. In addition, the Department of Workforce Services is collaborating with the Apprenticeship Subcommittee of the State Workforce Development Board to better understand the needs of employers utilizing registered apprenticeships and any barriers that they face. In addition, the Department of Workforce Services will assist employers in connecting to the Office of Apprenticeships and prepare them to register their program. This will increase the opportunities for job seekers to participate in apprenticeship programs.

The Department of Workforce Services was awarded State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Base and Competitive grants. The purpose of these grants are to increase apprenticeship utilization among employers, expand access to registered apprenticeship opportunities for all,

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particularly underrepresented populations and underserved communities (including rural), develop infrastructure to effectively support long-term growth and modernize data tracking,

reporting, system integration and utilization. Utah now has a Registered Apprenticeship Five Year State Work Plan which directly aligns with the governor's Utah Home Plan and the WIOA Combined State Plan. Utah will initially focus on education services (K-12 teachers), the care economy (healthcare, childcare, long-term care), supply chain (transportation, biomanufacturing, and advanced manufacturing), and technology/cybersecurity (cybersecurity, software development, programming). Registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship efforts in support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act implementation will also be a priority.

The Department of Workforce Services is on the state team for the National Governors Association (NGA) Youth Apprenticeship Policy Academy (PAYA). The Utah State team seeks to align youth apprenticeships as a strategy to streamline and align post-secondary education with workforce needs, expand opportunities for all Utahns to access high-quality careers, including rural Utah, in the economic future of the state. Serving underrepresented youth and underserved communities are a priority. By connecting employers with a skilled and diverse workforce, Utah will better meet the evolving needs of the labor market while offering valuable career pathways for students.

In August 2021, The Department of Workforce Services launched <https://apprenticeship.utah.gov>. This website contains information and resources for both job seekers and employers to learn more about apprenticeships. The website and resources are updated as needed.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation supports individual's pursuit of apprenticeship opportunities, including registered apprenticeships, and engages with employers for the purpose of developing apprenticeships that meet an individual's employment goals. The Office of Rehabilitation works directly with employers and post-secondary education institutions and coordinates with the Office of Apprenticeship.

### 3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

#### **Training Provider Eligibility Procedure**

Utah's procedure for training provider eligibility, including initial and continued eligibility, and the process for including registered apprenticeship programs on the Education and Training Provider List are on the Department of Workforce Services website.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN WIOA SECTION 134 (C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).

Utah will implement and monitor the priority for public-assistance recipients, other low-income individuals or individuals who are deficient of basic skills in accordance with the requirements of WIOA Section 134(C)(3)(E). Department of Workforce Services will provide priority of

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service to WIOA Adult customers by focusing enrollments on at-risk individuals who are either low income, recipients of public assistance, or basic-skills deficient. Basic-skills deficiency will

be verified with a referral from Title II Adult Education or English Language Acquisition program or the individual's current enrollment in Adult Education Services including English Language Learner and Basic Education programs. Individuals who do not meet these criteria will be referred to other assistance programs. In addition, current adult education assessments can be used as a measurement of basic skills.

To ensure the priority of service is being correctly implemented and monitored on a regular basis, Utah uses a combination of policy, technology, and internal audit.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

Utah's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs:

Funds may be transferred between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs through a written request to the program manager, which must be approved by program and policy management and the finance manager before the transfer can be completed. Department of Workforce Services management considers the following to determine if there is an increased need for Dislocated Worker or Adult funding:

- Available funds to transfer
- The area's participant demographics
- Obligation and expenditure levels

6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(i).

Utah policy requires co-enrollment for TAA customers with WIOA Dislocated Worker, if eligible. If the TAA participant is not co-enrolled, there must be a narration explaining what has prevented the participant from being enrolled in WIOA. This is completed during the eligibility process.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)

All TAA case managers are cross trained in WIOA case management. The department's case managers provide both TAA and WIOA services to ensure that the participant receives all eligible benefits and services.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

Utah's TAA program information is available on the department's website and pamphlets about the TAA program are available in all one-stop centers (AJCs). TAA policy and procedure is available to all one-stop center (AJC) staff. All one-stop center (AJC) staff are trained on available programs, including TAA, as part of mandatory training.

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### C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA, STATES SHOULD DESCRIBE THEIR STRATEGIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER WIOA. STATE'S MUST-

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA.<sup>8</sup> FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

[8] SEC. 102(B)(2)(D)(I)(V)

While Utah has a single State Workforce Development Board, criteria have been developed to award grants for youth workforce investment activities. The state-developed criteria will include evaluating the provider's ability to engage youth in the service elements that the provider is offering; collaborating with organizations and community partners regarding the specific qualifications necessary in order to provide the service elements that the provider is contracted to offer; and licensing or certifying the provider and staff who will be working directly with the youth that they are serving. Criteria will also include a description of evidence-based program models or practices and the process the provider uses to collect and utilize customer feedback. This will help ensure information is provided on whether performance accountability measures are met based on primary indicators of the youth program performance.

As Utah is a single area state, the State does not assist local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.

Utah's definition, as defined by law, for not attending school as defined in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) is as follows: Out-of-school youth means a student 16-24 years old who is not attending any school, excluding Adult Education, Job Corps or YouthBuild. This includes youth aged 16-24 years old who have not graduated from high school and are no longer enrolled in a K-12 program of instruction. In-school youth means a student 14-21 years old who is attending a traditional k-12 program of instruction, an alternative school setting, an Adult Education program (when an alternative school setting is not available for the customer to attend) or a post-secondary education program.

Utah's strategies to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B) include leveraging and aligning core programs and other available resources:

- Elements discussing efforts to target out-of-school youth at the eligibility process by enrolling more out-of-school youth increasing the number of out-of-school youth receiving funds and services (This creates a balance between Vocational Rehabilitation's goal of serving more in-school youth by providing services to those with disabilities while in-school and then transitioning over to Workforce Development services once

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they are considered out-of-school).



- Strategies for retaining customers once they enroll, by providing effective assessment interviews that address each customer's individual goals, skills, abilities, barriers, concerns and feedback to create a career pathway for each youth that is specific to their educational and employment goals.
- Strategies for higher completion rates of secondary and post-secondary training as well as leadership development activities that help prepare youth for entering the workforce, which also includes increased opportunities for youth to participate in paid and unpaid work experiences that lead to more options for permanent employment.
- Assistance with skill upgrade needs and remediation, especially for those who are basic skills deficient or ELL by more engaged connection and referral to Adult Education Services, Vocational Rehabilitation services for those with disabilities, and access to resources through higher education institutions as we work with those on the Eligible Training Provider List for specific in-demand occupational training programs.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.

Utah will use funds to carry out the Youth Program elements described in WIOA section 129(C)(2). Staff will assess each individual to ensure the appropriate elements are provided based on specific circumstances and to meet performance outcomes. Monitoring the use of each service provided as well as the outcome of each service element. Utah will ensure that each of the 14 service elements are made available through in-house implementation, referring to outside agencies, community partners, businesses and agencies. This ensures that all 14 elements are available and being offered to each youth in the program. Funds will be used to provide:

- Support needed to complete secondary school education, including Adult Education, alternative high school education, packet completion or high school equivalency credential preparation, including tutoring with eligible tutors to assist with both secondary and post-secondary educational completion (This will be made available through referrals, connection and follow up with the youth to ensure they are getting the access to educational assistance that they need).
- Support to assist individuals with enrolling, attending, and completing Adult Education services, and alternative education services, which may include paying for high school equivalency credential practice tests and the supplies needed to complete their educational goals (This will be made available through referral and resource connections through Utah State Board of Education as well as other providers of secondary and GED completion services).
- Paid employment opportunities for youth that have an academic and occupational component, which may include summer employment and other opportunities available throughout the school year such as internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training (This will be made available through employer collaboration).

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- Training support to youth customers who are eligible under an ITA for tuition and required training related supplies needs. (Funds will also be used to support youth

customers in pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and custom fit training. This will be made available by ensuring youth are aware of post-secondary training options through customer choice utilizing the Eligible Training Provider List).

- Support individuals completing leadership development activities, including, but not limited to, job search and life skills workshops, conferences, and team building activities.
- Funding for reasonable expenses required for participation in training and employment activities, provided and monitored by Workforce Development through a Training and Support Card.
- Referrals and connections to fee-for-service providers who offer mentoring to students either on a one-on-one or group basis.
- Individual counseling, family counseling, trauma counseling, substance abuse counseling and intervention, mental health counseling and medication management.
- Budgeting workshops, courses and activities.
- Entrepreneurial skills training, as a direct payment to the provider for the courses being offered to the individual.
- Career assessments for individuals during appointments with staff in order to guide them through appropriate career pathways.
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training (staff will assist youth with educational searches on a one-on-one basis in order to help customers determine a best fit for them in completing training).

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

Utah policy meets the criteria specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). According to Workforce Development policy, individuals who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment will include out-of-school youth who are Native American, refugees, victims or witnesses to domestic violence or any other type of abuse (at any point in time in their lives), who have identified substance-abuse issues (within the last year). For in-school youth, this will include customers who are refugees, disabled, currently in Foster Care or aged out of Foster Care.

#### D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

IN STATES WHERE THERE IS ONLY ONE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA, THE GOVERNOR SERVES AS BOTH THE STATE AND LOCAL CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL. IN SUCH CASES, THE STATE MUST SUBMIT ANY INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE LOCAL PLAN (WIOA SECTION 106(D)(2)). STATES WITH A SINGLE WORKFORCE AREA MUST INCLUDE—

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1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN.  
(WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

The Department of Workforce Services is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

Utah will use funds to carry out the youth program elements described in WIOA section 129 (C). Staff will assess each individual to ensure the appropriate elements are provided based on specific circumstances and to meet performance outcomes. Youth with disabilities are provided appropriate activities and support through the WIOA Youth program and also through referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Youth counselors work together to ensure the youth is able to meet all their needs and accomplish appropriate youth program activities.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners are outlined in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and One-Stop Partner MOU and Common Client Information Exchange and System Access Agreement.

5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.

Utah does not award sub-grants and contracts for title I activities.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

Training Services are provided to Adult, Youth and Dislocated Workers through individual training accounts (ITA's). To determine eligibility for receiving training services through an ITA, customers must first meet eligibility requirements for Adult, Youth or Dislocated Worker. Once determined eligible, an assessment is completed to determine appropriateness for the selected training program. Appropriateness considerations include identifying if the customer has the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the program, whether there are employment opportunities in the selected occupation and whether the training will increase the customer's earning potential.

Customers are required to select an approved training program from the Eligible Training Provider List. Customers are given the final choice on the training provider and program they select, but through the Eligible Training Provider List they are given program information, outcomes and other tools to help them compare programs and find the appropriate program for them.

Once a customer has been determined appropriate and, through informed choice, has selected an approved training provider and program from the Eligible Training Provider List, tuition and fee costs are paid directly to the provider. Any required books and supply costs are authorized onto a Training and Support Visa Card, which can be used at any merchant that accepts card

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payments to purchase the required items. Customers are required to provide receipts for the

purchase of the required books and supplies to ensure WIOA funds were spent appropriately.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(1) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

Utah's State Workforce Development Board Executive Committee reviewed all of the grant applications after they had been scored by agency staff from Workforce Development and Utah State Board of Education. The Executive Committee made recommendations regarding relevant elements of the grant to the full State Workforce Development Board for its approval. Utah State Board Education accepted the State Workforce Development Board recommendations and incorporated them into the grant review process.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

#### E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

STATES WANTING TO REQUEST WAIVERS AS PART OF THEIR TITLE I-B OPERATIONAL PLAN MUST INCLUDE A WAIVER PLAN THAT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR EACH WAIVER REQUESTED:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
  - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
  - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
  - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
  - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
  - E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT;

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AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:



- A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
- B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
- C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
- D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
- E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.
7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

#### Request for Waiver Renewal: Providing ITAs to In-School WIOA Youth Participants

Utah requests a waiver on the requirement of providing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to only Out of School youth ages 18-24 enrolled in the WIA/WIOA Youth program.

As per current WIOA Regulations: 681.550: "In order to enhance individual participant choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, the Department allows WIOA ITAs for out of school youth, ages 18-24 using WIOA youth funds when appropriate." While this allows flexibility for serving out-of-school youth through post-secondary training, it does not give Utah the flexibility to continue to serve those youth customers enrolled as in-school who are preparing to graduate and extend their educational goals into post-secondary opportunities.

As of December 28, 2023, Utah has 77 in-school youth customers and 646 out-of-school youth customers enrolled in the WIOA program, 24 in-school youth are still enrolled in secondary education. Once those customers graduate, they will need continued support through post-secondary educational activities in order to obtain the certificates needed to find employment.

If the Department of Workforce Services is going to offer an adequate supply of workers to in-demand industry and occupations, it cannot include only those who are determined to be out of school as part of that supply. Utah needs a waiver to support those with post-secondary educational goals past high school. In-school youth deserve the same opportunities for support as those being served as out-of-school youth, and it would be a disservice to those in-school customers to not support them past their high school diploma or its equivalent. Although it has been recommended to close the enrollment of those in-school youth who graduate and then re-enroll them as an out of school youth for the purpose of assisting them with an ITA after age 18, this poses a risk that the customer may no longer be eligible under the new barrier requirements. It also prevents the Department of Workforce Services from serving youth customers who graduate early (at 16 or 17 years of age) under an ITA, even if they are enrolled as an out-of-school youth once they earn their diploma.

Having to procure for Occupational Skills Training services for in-school youth would also create an unnecessary and undue burden on those providers who have already submitted the required information to be on Utah's Eligible Training Provider List. Because state schools and effective providers of post-secondary training have already been identified through the Eligible

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Training Provider List, having an additional process for procured providers for those in-school youth customers would create a duplication of effort for those providers that would not occur if

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those in-school youth wishing to access post-secondary training have access to the Eligible Training Provider List through an ITA. It has been difficult to encourage training providers to participate on the Eligible Training Provider List and the State has gone to great lengths to provide technical support and encouragement. This duplication and additional burden for providers could limit provider participation on the Eligible Training Provider List and in turn limit options for customer choice.

Because Utah already has an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) in place and an electronic way to pay providers for educational services offered, both in-school and out-of-school youth will be served adequately under this waiver.

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

WIOA section 681.550

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

N/A

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

- Continue to serve the in-school youth already enrolled past high school completion through post-secondary training under an ITA.
- Continue to encourage education providers to remain current on the Eligible Training Provider List and provide technical assistance where needed to gather performance data that will help both in and out of school youth to receive services.
- Make a gradual shift toward enrolling more out of school youth and using those funds to support other activities, such as work experiences, leadership development activities, and mentoring, along with training activities under ITAs.
- Continue to monitor training completions and outcomes for both in and out of school youth to meet the federal requirements for training completions and job placements for youth.

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
  - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
  - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
  - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
  - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
  - E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

Through allowing both in-school and out-of-school youth to use Individual Training accounts to access training services it opens up more training programs for the youth to select from as they will now be able to use the Eligible Training Provider List approved programs. By opening up the training program opportunities youth will be able to better connect to training programs that match their interest, support their learning style and better prepare them for employment

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and work-based learning. Youth who are able to complete occupational skills or adult education programs more easily may be more prepared to enter the job market and be a qualified

employee. By serving in-school and out-school youth with the same policy and procedures allows for a continuity of services for all youth. All youth will be eligible to receive training services, connection to work-based learning and then employment and job search support. To better connect youth to work-based learning, they will be able to use the Eligible Training Provider List and find registered apprenticeships and also more easily find academic components that give them the credentials and support to be successful at an internship or on-the-job training placement.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT;

The effect of this waiver would be positive for both in-school and out-of-school youth customers who are enrolled, as both groups would be supported with WIOA funding while completing post-secondary training activities. The effect of this waiver would also be positive for education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List as they will not be required to go through procurement in addition to the requirements of being on the Eligible Training Provider List. This will hopefully encourage providers to continue to be on the Eligible Training Provider List.

This waiver will be able to affect disadvantaged populations and youth with barriers to employment through ensuring both in-school and out-of-school youth are able to receive all of the youth program services, receive a continuity of services without disruption and have access to more training providers and programs. Both in-school and out-of-school youth may have significant barriers to employment and have had previous hardships that could impact their ability to be successful. It is important for these youth to be able to not only receive support but to be able to customize their services to match their interests and abilities. Without this waiver in-school youth would be restricted to select training programs where they are less prone to be successful and find suitable employment. Also without this waiver, in-school youth who would like to receive an ITA would have to be closed and enrolled as an out-of-school youth. This disrupts continuity of services and could potentially stop services that could greatly benefit a population who may be disadvantaged and have barriers to employment.

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;

- Continue to review in-school enrollments and those accessing post-secondary education through an ITA to assess whether the waiver continues to be necessary.
- Review financial reports quarterly to ensure out of school youth expenditures are continuing to exceed the in-school expenditures in order to meet the goal of spending 75 percent of funds on out of school youth.
- Biannual monitoring of providers available to youth on the ETPL to ensure there are options to foster customer choice.
- Make adjustments as necessary based on the number of in-school youth accessing ITAs and the amount of funds being spent on out-of-school youth.

B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

Consistent with the general waiver request, the state will adhere to the publication requirements to ensure the broadest participation possible, including appropriate partners and

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interested parties such as labor, community based partners, and the State Workforce Development Board.

C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

Utah is a single state and therefore no local board would be affected.

D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

The Department of Workforce Services provides access to the waiver in order for businesses, organized labor, and the community to have an opportunity to make public comments on the waiver for a period of 30 days.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.

The outcomes of this waiver will be reflected through the common performance measures, specifically credential attainment, measurable skill gain attainment and employment rates.

7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and measurable programmatic outcomes are met.

Utah continues to use a waiver of the requirement to provide Individual Training Accounts to Out-of-School Youth ages 18 to 24 enrolled in WIOA Youth. The waiver is used to assist in-school youth in maintaining focus on education and exploring career options that require post-secondary education. Having more youth interested and engaged in education leading to credential attainment allows Utah to increase its supply of workers to in-demand industry and occupations. Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and meets measurable programmatic outcomes.

<b>WIOA Youth Expenditure PY22</b>	
<b>In-School Youth %</b>	<b>Out-of-School Youth %</b>
6.13%	93.87%

The above data shows that Workforce Services is exceeding the requirements for out-of-school youth spending. By the end of PY22, 93.87% of WIOA Youth funds were spent on out-of-school youth and only 6.13% on in-school youth.

A quarterly breakdown of in-school youth versus out-of-school youth expenditures indicates that out-of-school youth expenditures significantly exceeded the expenditure goal of 75% in each quarter.

Qt1	Qt1	Qt2	Qt2	Qt3	Qt3	Qt4	Qt4
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(07/01/22 - 09/30/22)	(07/01/22 - 09/30/22)	(10/01/22 - 12/31/22)	(10/01/22 - 12/31/22)	(01/01/23 - 03/31/23)	(01/01/23 - 03/31/23)	(04/01/23 - 06/30/23)	(04/01/23 - 06/30/23)
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Qt1	Qt1	Qt2	Qt2	Qt3	Qt3	Qt4	Qt4
ISY%	OSY%	ISY%	OSY%	ISY%	OSY%	ISY%	OSY%
11.75%	88.25%	4.49%	95.51%	3.73%	96.27%	5.62%	94.38%

Utah maintains its in-school youth enrollments at a level that has supported the above indicated increase in out-of-school youth expenditures. At the end of PY22, only 130 or 12.42% of youth served were in-school youth, and a quarterly breakdown of enrollments shows a shift towards enrolling more out-of-school youth, as agreed upon in the waiver.

WIOA Youth Enrollments									
Qt 1 (07/01/22 - 09/30/22)		Qt 2 (10/01/22 - 12/31/22)		Qt 3 (01/01/23 - 3/31/23)		Qt 4 (04/01/23 - 6/30/23)		PY22 Total	
In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %	In-School Youth %	Out-of-School Youth %
16.29%	83.71%	14.31%	85.69%	11.96%	88.04%	11.72%	88.28%	12.42%	87.58%

**\*\* The quarterly percentage may include the participants served in the previous quarter(s)\*\***

Out of the 130 in-school youth served in PY22, 29 youth were working toward obtaining a post-secondary credential. The remaining in-school youth were working on completing secondary school requirements with the intent to eventually enroll in post-secondary education. Six in-school youth attained a post-secondary credential and, so far, two have obtained employment. The youth who started a post-secondary training and did not complete it still benefited from their exposure to post-secondary education and gained additional marketable skills. Out of nine in-school youth who did not graduate, five obtained employment or 55.56%.

The Department of Workforce Services has maintained its partnership with John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and administers the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program by serving in-school youth preparing for post-secondary education. This federally funded program is designed to assist foster care youth, or youth who have aged out of foster care, with the support needed to complete post-secondary education and obtain employment. In Utah, a WIOA co-enrollment is required to administer the Education and Training Voucher program to foster care youth. Since most of the foster care youth are in-school youth, the waiver enables the department to serve this at-risk population and positively impact their ability to earn post-secondary credentials, enter the workforce and become contributing members of society. During PY22, Utah served 56 ETV youth and four of them successfully completed the program and earned a credential. Additionally, 65% of ETV youth had their ETV enrollment

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closed due to income.

The waiver positively impacted education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as they were not required to go through procurement in addition to completing the requirements to be on the list. This encourages providers to continue to be on the ETPL, benefitting both the in-school and out-of-school youth. Utah continues to certify the education providers and monitor their performance on a yearly basis.

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

## A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

Utah will continue to utilize state merit staff employees.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

Utah provides professional development activities for employment service staff to ensure staff are able to provide high-quality services to both job seekers and employers. Department of Workforce Services accomplishes this through:

- **New and Incumbent Employee Training:** A comprehensive core training for all new staff that utilizes a combination of virtual, in-person and multimedia training, including follow-up activities and focused, targeted one-on-one support. In addition to core training, staff receive program-specific training with implementation of policy, procedures and needed skills. Employees register and complete skills reviews for training in the Department of Workforce Services' Career Management System.
- **Professional Development:** Incumbent staff receive skills-based training, resource information, best-practice exchange, and professional development opportunities.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

Core program staff receive Unemployment Insurance Program training through a comprehensive core training for all staff utilizing a combination of virtual, in-person and multimedia training, including skills review assessment, follow-up activities and targeted one-on-one support. This training includes information on how to efficiently assist claimants with their Unemployment Insurance claim filing and refer to Unemployment Insurance staff for adjudication. Staff have access to Unemployment Insurance law and policy manuals through an internal system, and Unemployment Insurance changes are communicated or trained through a monthly update process. Unemployment Insurance has many resource guides and lists that can be found on the Department of Workforce Services website. These are available to help individuals and those working in other programs to be aware of the Unemployment Insurance guidelines. Integration between UWORKS and CUBS (the computer program used by Unemployment Insurance) facilitates awareness.

Staff are trained to ask individuals who are in one-stop centers (AJC) if they were recently employed and the nature of their separation from employment. By asking this question, staff are able to determine if applying for Unemployment Insurance is appropriate and assist them in the process. They also have been trained on how to access trained Unemployment Insurance staff to

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resolve and handle Unemployment Insurance issues. One option is access to the Unemployment Insurance Help Desk that is dedicated to supporting one-stop center (AJC) staff who may call or email and receive immediate help with unemployment issues for specific cases or escalated

situations. Another option is educating customers about the online chat feature available through the Unemployment Insurance interactive voice response system where customers can be immediately assisted during business hours.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

Utah will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers (AJCs). Whether an individual contacts Unemployment Insurance from home or from the one-stop center (AJC), they receive the highest level of customer service. To ensure this level of service, Unemployment Insurance has implemented an enhanced interactive voice response system, online chats, and a direct access help desk resources for the on-site one-stop center (AJC) staff providing in-person, meaningful assistance. The meaningful assistance that Unemployment Insurance provides includes:

- Interactive voice response claim status: Claimants accessing interactive voice response receive their claim status at the beginning of their call, which helps resolve basic question calls and results in lower hold times.
- The option for callbacks: When wait times are elevated, individuals have the option to choose a call back rather than waiting on the phone for a representative to become available.
- More effective direction for calls: Claimants and employers are directed to the same interactive voice response tree with the distinction between benefits questions and contributions questions made at the beginning of the system, which decreases the number of misdirected calls.
- More effective direction for online chats: Claimants and employers are provided with portals to the online chat system at multiple places throughout the Unemployment Insurance webpage, and the system is configured to direct them to the team that can assist them.
- Online Chat: Individuals accessing services through the one-stop center (AJC) have the option of contacting the Unemployment Insurance division through the interactive voice response system or online chat feature directly from the Unemployment Insurance webpage.
- Help Desk for staff at the one-stop center (AJC): An employment counselor can call a direct number for the Unemployment Insurance Help Desk that puts them ahead of the queue and be connected with an Unemployment Insurance specialist to handle escalated situations

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Utah's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants

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and other unemployed individuals involves:

### Staff support

- One-stop centers (AJCs) operate throughout Utah. A primary goal of the one-stop delivery system is to serve as the anchor for a statewide workforce development system that effectively responds to the needs of employers, job seekers and the community. The one-stop system provides a comprehensive employment exchange network serving as the connecting point for employers and job seekers. A one-stop center (AJC) provides direct services or referrals for services through partner agencies to meet the individual's needs. One-stop centers (AJCs) develop and maintain strong relationships with partner agencies to maintain efficiency and avoid duplication of services.
- Department of Workforce Services provides core curriculum and training to ensure that all one-stop center (AJC) staff understand and adhere to federal, state, and the Department of Workforce Services' policy and procedures. One-stop center (AJC) staff can access all policy and procedures online, or contact state and service-area program specialists to ask questions or obtain policy and procedure clarifications. In addition, supervisors play a very important role in training staff on policy, procedures, and local pathways.
- Department of Workforce Services staff focus on the same overall goal of helping individuals obtain the services and support needed to find employment, regardless of which of the four key business processes they are responsible for: eligibility, employment exchange, employment counseling or unemployment insurance. Outcome targets ensure the Department of Workforce Services achieves its goal of developing the workforce.
- Department of Workforce Services information technology and online services staff continually evaluates the department website's usability and functionality to ensure all users are able to navigate this site.

### Unemployed individuals

- Individuals can access services from the Department of Workforce Services by visiting one-stop centers (AJCs) or using online services, which are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The website allows individuals to enter resumes, search for job openings, learn about careers, access economic information, apply for training services, file for unemployment insurance benefits and find links to other useful resources. In addition, individuals may apply online for financial services, food stamps, child care, medical, and other supportive service benefits.
- Individuals, throughout the state, can access the same level of service regardless of their location. One-stop centers (AJCs) have a common appearance and feel, including signage. However, local areas have flexibility in establishing pathways driven by resources and local needs.
- Unemployment Insurance claimants, qualified or not, receive a resource document from the department after they have filed for benefits. This is included with the Notice of Monetary Determination and is available online at [jobs.utah.gov/ui/resources.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/ui/resources.html). When a claimant files, they receive labor market information regarding their selected occupation and available local job postings.

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- Unemployment insurance claimants who do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within 10 business days of filing an initial or reopened

claim. The registration process involves creating a profile on Utah's labor-exchange system, completing an online assessment and taking up to 5 online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. The online workshops cover topics such as networking, online job search, resumes and interviewing. More than 70% of Unemployment Insurance claimants are referred to complete the labor exchange registration and online assessment.

- The Unemployment Insurance division partners with the Workforce Development Division to offer targeted, virtual and in-person workshops through the Reemployment Support System (RSS). Claimants are referred in two ways. First, workshop presenters select claimants who are identified as most likely to exhaust Unemployment Insurance benefits, and, second, RESEA counselors can refer specific claimants to attend. Claimants who fail to report as scheduled, without good cause, are automatically denied Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- Employment counselors in the Workforce Development Division conduct outreach to Unemployment Insurance claimants. This is one more tool to connect claimants with resources available through one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state.
- As the demand for business hiring began to exceed the available labor supply, AJC's shifted the strategies for employer engagement. For example, workforce development specialists assist employers with posting jobs, consult with them about recruitment strategies, and provide direct support for filling certain positions. Staff utilized the increase in demand for labor as an opportunity to develop jobs for case managed customers from targeted populations.
- Rural areas of the state focus on the unique needs of job seekers and employers located in remote areas of Utah. Staff encourage employers to hire individuals who live in rural areas and help educate employers on remote work benefits.

#### Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment

One of the ways the state is providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants is through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. The RESEA program is a statewide program with support of Unemployment Insurance claimants across the state. Claimants are chosen for the program based on a profiling score compiled when they first file for benefits, which identifies those "most likely to exhaust."

The initial appointments typically last two hours, during which time the counselors:

- Review labor-market information specific to the customer's needs.
- Ensure that registration with the state jobs bank is completed.
- Provide an orientation to the one-stop services.
- Create an individualized reemployment plan.
- Review and assist with a job-ready resume by appointment completion.
- Provide resources based on the individual customer's needs, including a referral to training programs as appropriate.

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- Refer customers to or schedule them for a variety of workshops.
- Assist with tools for networking and train on online resources.

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- Provide mock interviews.
- Provide job referrals.

In addition to the RESEA program, Unemployment Insurance maintains a robust connection to labor-exchange services with one-stop centers (AJCs). This includes working closely with local one-stop center (AJC) staff to ensure individuals are co-enrolled in partner programs when appropriate, sharing interfaces within the UWORKS system, developing reemployment strategies to respond to the current situation and assist individuals at the local level, and providing reemployment workshops.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

Coordination of labor-exchange services for Unemployment Insurance claimants is provided through the Department of Workforce Services website. Claimants can sign into their accounts and see the status of their unemployment claim. The same page contains a link to search for work, where they can enter keywords to search for jobs. They are able to set parameters for the county they want to search and the number of miles from a specified ZIP code. In addition, a labor-market information link shows the wages of different occupations and the type of degree needed for those occupations. They are also able to see how many projected job openings are available in Utah each year for a particular occupation.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Registration of Unemployment Insurance claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law

Individuals that do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within 10 days of filing an initial, additional or reopened claim. The registration process involves completing a profile on the labor-exchange system, completing an online assessment, and completing online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. The virtual workshops are effective resources that provide access to important information for individuals seeking employment and training throughout the state. The Department of Workforce Services has a skillful workshop team consisting of workshop presenters throughout the state. In addition to presenting workshops, the team offers individualized career coaching to participants.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Individuals who do not qualify for a work-search deferral are required to register for work within ten days of filing an initial, additional or reopened claim. The registration process involves completing a profile on UWORKS, completing an online assessment, and completing online workshops based on the outcome of the assessment. They are required to search for

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work and make at least four job contacts per week. An eligibility team randomly reviews the work-search contacts to ensure claimants are making a proper work search and create

eligibility issues if they are not meeting the work-search requirements. These issues could result in a denial of benefits.

The Unemployment Insurance division partners with the Workforce Development Division to offer targeted, virtual, in-person and online workshops through the automated Reemployment Support System. Workshop presenters select groups of individuals, and RESEA counselors refer individuals to attend. Staff in the Workforce Development Division conduct targeted outreach to claimants who self-identify as veterans as well as those who are close to exhausting their claim. This is one more tool to connect Unemployment Insurance claimants with resources available through one-stop centers (AJCs) across the state.

#### 4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources are provided through [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). Individuals can find information on training resources, eligible training providers, Department of Workforce Services-funded training programs, and alternative funding. They can also apply for training services online or in person at a one-stop center (AJC) and may be referred to training programs during the course of a RESEA appointment.

Department of Workforce Services provides information and workshops focused primarily on “How to get the job you want,” which expands beyond traditional résumé and interview skills development into:

- Articulating how an individual’s skills align with job requirements.
- Capitalizing on non-professional experiences to demonstrate leadership, organization, time management, communication skills, etc.

#### E. EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF NEED**

IN COLLABORATION WITH UTAH’S NATIONAL FARM WORKER JOBS PROGRAM GRANTEE (NFJP), MIGRANT SEASONAL FARM WORKERS (MSFW) OUTREACH WORKER, AND UTAH’S STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE (SMA) THE MAJOR NEEDS AND ISSUES FACING UTAH’S FARM WORKERS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE CURRENT IMMIGRATION CLIMATE, LANGUAGE BARRIERS, LOW WAGES AND LACK OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

During the past few years, many farm workers have been observed as unwilling to seek assistance from available resources. Deportation concerns for family members has made the farm workers reluctant to utilize community services. Farm workers are either reluctant to give contact information or provide incorrect data for fear of facing legal repercussions.

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Farm workers are faced with the need for stable employment and wages. This factors in when deciding whether to pursue additional resources, education and training. The majority of farm

workers believe that they lack the necessary skills and therefore are unable to transition into other fields of employment. Wages are slowly rising due to the adverse effect wage rate (AEWR). The current economic climate has also had an impact, farmers are finding it difficult to find workers and as a result have had to increase wages to attract employees.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

1) Information from the Utah Department of Agriculture, Utah's NFJP grantee, outreach staff and the SMA, shows Utah's top five labor intensive crops as: cherries, apples, corn, tomatoes, and melons. The months of heaviest activity are during the harvest season of July - September. The counties with prime crop activities are: Box Elder, Weber, Davis, and Utah counties.

2) Employers have continually expressed concern regarding a labor shortage in all areas of agriculture as Utah reports a September 2023 unemployment rate of 2.6%. Employers have also expressed concerns over the quality and dependability of the workforce as many workers show up for several days and do not return. Other major issues employers face are increased costs (wages, taxes, land leases, fuel costs and tariffs, etc.) while prices they are receiving for their products have decreased. Employers are cutting costs in any way possible and some are operating with a year-end deficit. Farmers believe that under the current conditions, this manner of operations is not sustainable long term. They also fear that without a change to the current climate or an increase in commodity prices, they will have to cease operations.

3) Other factors that are affecting agriculture in Utah include a steady decrease in available farmland.

Every year more land is developed for housing or commercial properties. Wages are also a concern with the H2A program wages (AEWR) raising to levels employers believe are unsustainable.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

The majority of the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are from Mexico and Peru, with other Central American nationalities serving as a secondary source for the agriculture workforce. For most workers, Spanish is their native language. The workers that fit the WIOA definition for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are predominantly seasonal, with an extremely low migrant

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worker presence in Utah. The peak times are during harvest months of July - September. Information gathered from the experience and outreach of the SMA, NFJP, and SWA staff, and

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other organizations from the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers Coalition report there are approximately 500 domestic workers and 1,800 H-2A workers.

#### 4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

THE LOCAL OFFICES OUTREACH ACTIVITIES MUST BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MSFWs IN THE STATE AND TO LOCATE AND CONTACT MSFWs WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED THROUGH NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE AGENCY'S PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR:

Utah has outreach activities designed to meet the needs of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers in the state and for locating and contacting those who aren't being reached through normal intake activities. Details of how Utah will accomplish each required MSFW activity are described below each activity.

##### A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

The Utah State Workforce Agency utilizes multiple methods to contact farm workers who cannot be reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the one-stop centers (AJCs). As mentioned above, the Department of Workforce Services conducts outreach activities through joint activities with partners from the Utah Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition. Coalition members share events and gatherings of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and invite other organizations to join and offer their services.

The State Workforce Agency outreach worker is active in joint efforts with the NFJP. They meet on a monthly basis, coordinate outreach efforts and typically perform outreach activities together. In conjunction with the Foreign Labor Certification Program, farm workers are also informed by the H-2A housing inspector regarding their rights and resources that are available to them.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM ("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Utah's State Monitor Advocate coordinates on an ongoing basis with the outreach worker. Technical assistance is provided when needed on resolving complaints, identifying human trafficking, collaborating with community partner organizations, and providing quality services to all MSFW's. New information and refresher training are provided regularly. Complaints are taken by the outreach worker and immediately reported to the State Monitor Advocate. When appropriate, action is taken at the local level to resolve the complaint in a timely manner. The complaint system is reviewed each month and all complaints are discussed to ensure appropriate actions were taken and to determine areas for improvement.

The State Monitor Advocate and outreach worker attend monthly Migrant Seasonal Farm

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Worker Coalition meetings and events held by other organizations. This allows for improved collaboration and connection to organizations serving the MSFW population in Utah. Coalition

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members are invited to participate in outreach events and assist by staffing, posting and distributing marketing materials.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

Utah's outreach worker is a member of the multi-program funded connections team. This team has knowledge of all core programs to assist individuals who walk-in the one stop center (AJC). All connections workers complete a yearly proficiency training that is reviewed by their managers to ensure they are knowledgeable about core programs. Unemployment Insurance is included in the proficiency training.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

The Department of Workforce Services provides state merit staff workers with many opportunities for professional development. Internally there are training sessions as frequently as quarterly or bi-annually on new and innovative ways to work with individuals and employers. There is also mandatory online training which includes sexual harassment training and filing complaints. From system enhancements to new services offered, these trainings keep staff up to date on services available to the at-risk populations. Additionally, the department offers yearly regional and national conferences that offer opportunities for networking, learning vehicles for merit staff, and relationship building with community and federal partners.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

The outreach worker and outreach staff at Futures Through Training, Utah's NFJP, meet monthly in person, virtually, or via telephone to coordinate services provided to employers and farmworkers. To improve efficiency and reach more migrant seasonal farmworkers, outreach visits are frequently completed with NFJP. Coordination with community partners in both the public and private sectors meets monthly at the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition meetings. Through the collaboration of coalition members, needs and issues of the agricultural community are identified. By this same effort, resources are leveraged to meet the needs of stakeholders and aid in recruiting additional community partners to the coalition.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

DESCRIBE THE STATE AGENCY'S PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

Utah is able to provide the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system.

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS

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THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

The Department of Workforce Services offers career services to all individuals, including Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. This includes work-readiness activities, resume preparation and printing, access to email accounts, employment exchange activities, review and referrals to job orders, workshops and career counseling. Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers who are unable to obtain employment through core services are referred to an employment counselor for career and training services that include assessments, employment plans and career counseling. Weber and Utah counties have the highest populations of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, with this in mind Futures Through Training and the Department of Workforce Services collaborate in an effort to streamline services and coordinate funds to best serve individuals with training. Services are reviewed quarterly and reports are prepared by the Utah State Monitor Advocate at the state and economic service area levels to ensure that services provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are “qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate” compared to non-Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers seeking services.

## II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

The Outreach worker will focus on continuing to develop better working relationships with agriculture employers. Assisting employers is a key component to the overall economic health of Utah’s agriculture industry and these relationships provide access to farm workers. Assisting employers with recruiting, posting required literature, informing on employment law and providing other resources, enable employers to focus on farming.

These services are also marketed to employers through local workforce development staff that work solely with employers to provide them with access and knowledge of available services.

### B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

The employment service complaint process is a high priority in the State Workforce Agency’s daily operations. With guidance from the Department of Labor Regional Monitor Advocate, Utah implemented the Department of Labor’s preferred complaint form and shared it with partners. Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Coalition partners are reminded of the process and importance of reporting all complaints to the State Workforce Agency. The State outreach worker and the State Monitor Advocate inform Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and other organizations of the state’s desire to be informed of any complaints. A tracking sheet has been created to ensure complaints are addressed timely and resolved or referred to the proper enforcement agency.

### C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Agricultural employers are provided the same level of service as other employers, including public job recruitment listings, labor market information, interview space at one-stop centers (AJCs) and assistance from local workforce development specialists. The State outreach worker has been trained to first approach employers and offer services to them before asking to speak with their farm workers. This has helped in creating better relationships with our farmers.

Agricultural employers who are unable to fill their labor needs through the recruitment of United States citizens and other eligible non-citizens, are provided with information on the H-2A program. The Department of Workforce Services assists H-2A employers with employee

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recruitment and meeting the H-2A program requirements.

## 6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

#### A. COLLABORATION

DESCRIBE ANY COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) HAS WITH OTHER MSFW SERVICE PROVIDERS INCLUDING NFJP GRANTEES AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE SWA INTENDS TO BUILD UPON/INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING PARTNERS AND IN ESTABLISHING NEW PARTNERS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (INCLUDING ANY APPROXIMATE TIMELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AGREEMENTS OR BUILDING UPON EXISTING AGREEMENTS).

The Department of Workforce Services implemented an MOU in 2018 with the NFJP grantee Futures Through Training. As a result of this agreement, collaboration has been heightened and awareness of the needs of MSFW's has increased. Due to the implementation of the MOU, the State Monitor Advocate and the outreach worker meet either in person, virtually or by phone on a monthly basis with NFJP staff. This monthly interaction facilitates the calendaring and coordination of in person outreach throughout the various parts of the State. The MOU also allows for the department to exchange data with Futures Through Training that validates employment information for NFJP participants. Futures Through Training also provides the department with participant information to support the WIOA Infrastructure Agreement. This MOU was reviewed, updated and approved in June of 2022 for an additional five years.

In 2019, the Department of Workforce Services led efforts to form a coalition of community partners with the intent of identifying the needs of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers in Utah. The MSFW Coalition is anchored by Workforce Services, Futures Through Training, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and Utah Legal Services. As issues are identified, the Coalition determines which resources and partners are best able to address the farm worker needs. The Coalition also identifies areas of training that would be beneficial to the partners and coordinates presentations to enhance the Coalition's knowledge. Presentations have included a wage and hour Q & A with DOL, human trafficking prevention and identifying worker harassment. The Coalition as a whole strategically leverages and provides valuable resources to the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker population.

As collaboration takes place via outreach and other organized events, it has increased the exposure of the existing partners within the Coalition and the objective of providing resources to the MSFW community. The exposure increases interest from other potential partners. Since its inception, the Coalition has increased in community partners each year and continues to identify other partners who can enhance the Coalition and provide additional resources.

#### B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

IN DEVELOPING THE AOP, THE SWA MUST SOLICIT INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FROM NFJP GRANTEES, OTHER APPROPRIATE MSFW GROUPS, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS. IN ADDITION, AT LEAST 45 CALENDAR DAYS BEFORE SUBMITTING ITS FINAL AOP, THE SWA MUST PROVIDE A PROPOSED PLAN TO NFJP GRANTEES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING AN INTEREST AND ALLOW AT LEAST 30 DAYS FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT. THE SWA MUST: 1) CONSIDER ANY COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FORMULATING ITS FINAL PROPOSED AOP; 2) INFORM ALL COMMENTING PARTIES IN WRITING WHETHER THEIR COMMENTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED AND, IF NOT, THE REASONS THEREFORE; AND 3) TRANSMIT THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RECEIVED AND ITS RESPONSES WITH THE SUBMISSION OF THE AOP.

THE AOP MUST INCLUDE A STATEMENT CONFIRMING NFJP GRANTEES, OTHER APPROPRIATE MSFW GROUPS,

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PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER INTERESTED EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE AOP. INCLUDE THE LIST OF

ORGANIZATIONS FROM WHICH INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS WERE SOLICITED, ANY COMMENTS RECEIVED, AND RESPONSES TO THOSE COMMENTS.

The Utah State Workforce Agency provided a copy of the final proposed Agricultural Outreach Plan for review and public comment to all of the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker coalition members and community partners, listed below:

- Futures Through Training (Utah's NFJP Grantee)
- Centro De La Familia of Utah
- Community Health Centers of Utah
- Provo School District
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Salt Lake School District
- Bear River Health Department
- Utah Legal Services
- The Mexican Consulate

No comments or recommendations were received from any of these organizations, other community partners, or public individuals on the proposed Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP).

#### C. DATA ASSESSMENT

REVIEW THE PREVIOUS FOUR YEARS WAGNER-PEYSER DATA REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE. NOTE WHETHER THE STATE HAS BEEN MEETING ITS GOALS TO PROVIDE MSFWs QUANTITATIVELY PROPORTIONATE SERVICES AS COMPARED TO NON-MSFWs. IF IT HAS NOT MET THESE GOALS, EXPLAIN WHY THE STATE BELIEVES SUCH GOALS WERE NOT MET AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO IMPROVE ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES IN ORDER TO MEET SUCH GOALS.

Utah continues to meet all of the Equity Ratio Indicators. Utah continues to increase career and supportive services to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. Due to the population geographic density of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in the State of Utah, in many cases, travel to a one-stop center (AJC) is not feasible for most Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. Utah's outreach worker has been tasked with contacting Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in our system to attempt job development activity to increase career services.

#### D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS ACHIEVED BASED ON THE PREVIOUS AOP, WHAT WAS NOT ACHIEVED AND AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE STATE BELIEVES THE GOALS WERE NOT ACHIEVED, AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO REMEDY THE GAPS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE COMING YEAR.

Based on the previous Agricultural Outreach Plan, outreach efficiency and effectiveness has been enhanced. The addition of an outreach worker, increased collaboration and outreach efforts with the NFJP, improved organization of outreach events, and a focus on the complaint system have enhanced the advocacy offered to Utah's Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. The face-to-face contact and assistance with Utah's Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are continuing to grow.

Utah's agriculture employer goals continue to be a focus through coordinating resources offered by Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker outreach and workforce development staff.

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E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

THE PLAN MUST CONTAIN A STATEMENT CONFIRMING THE STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THE AOP.

The Outreach Plan has been reviewed and approved by the State Monitor Advocate. Workforce Services will afford all coalition members the opportunity to review and comment on this plan as required during the 30-day comment period of the Combined State Plan.

#### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE FOLLOWING AS IT PERTAINS TO ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II OF WIOA, THE ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT (AEFLA).

##### A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY HAS ALIGNED ITS CONTENT STANDARDS FOR ADULT EDUCATION WITH STATE-ADOPTED CHALLENGING ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS, AS ADOPTED UNDER SECTION 1111(B)(1) OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED (20 U.S.C. 6311(B)(1)).

Utah has aligned adult education content standards with the state-adopted challenging academic content standards adopted under Section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended [20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)]. The Utah State Board of Education, Adult Education Department is governed by Board Rule R-277-733 - Adult Education which can be viewed online at <https://www.schools.utah.gov/File/fd75d3d5-cdfc-4cb4-a085-18f38c4b442d>

Adult Education Board Rules require adult education programs offering Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) curriculum to follow Utah Core Standards infused with OCTAE-developed College and Career Readiness Standards as the basis for instruction leading to an Adult Education Secondary Diploma. Staff teaching courses leading to an Adult Education Secondary Diploma must be licensed as defined in the Utah Adult Education Policies and Procedures Guide Section 3 - Program Design D. Adult education programs are monitored on a rotation schedule whereby curricula are reviewed regularly by the monitoring team for compliance.

Adult Education funded community-based organizations (CBO) offering English language instruction to non-native learners are required to ensure that curriculum is aligned to OCTAE-developed College and Career Readiness Standards at a minimum in Language Arts and Math. English Language Acquisition programs are to employ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)-certified instructors or individuals with an English Language Learner (ELL) endorsement.

Non-licensed persons may teach under the supervision of licensed staff. Instructors employed in school district adult education programs are required to follow the hiring practices of the local school district.

##### B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND EACH ELIGIBLE PROVIDER TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 203 OF WIOA, INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUCH ACTIVITIES

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CONCURRENTLY. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AT A MINIMUM THE SCOPE, CONTENT, AND ORGANIZATION OF THESE LOCAL ACTIVITIES.

Date: February 1, 2024

- ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)
- ADULT EDUCATION;
- LITERACY;
- WORKPLACE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES;
- INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION;
- WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES; OR
- INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING THAT—
  1. PROVIDES ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES, CONCURRENTLY AND CONTEXTUALLY WITH BOTH, WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES, AND WORKFORCE TRAINING FOR A SPECIFIC OCCUPATION OR OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTER, AND
  2. IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

SPECIAL RULE. EACH ELIGIBLE AGENCY AWARDING A GRANT OR CONTRACT UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL NOT USE ANY FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THIS TITLE FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING OR PROVIDING PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR ACTIVITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 16 AND ARE ENROLLED OR REQUIRED TO BE ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOL UNDER STATE LAW, EXCEPT THAT SUCH AGENCY MAY USE SUCH FUNDS FOR SUCH PURPOSE IF SUCH PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR ACTIVITIES ARE RELATED TO FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES. IN PROVIDING FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS TITLE, AN ELIGIBLE PROVIDER SHALL ATTEMPT TO COORDINATE WITH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE NOT ASSISTED UNDER THIS TITLE PRIOR TO USING FUNDS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS TITLE FOR ACTIVITIES OTHER THAN ACTIVITIES FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.

Utah will fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities. Adult Education AEFLA funds will be awarded based on a competitive application process following the 13 guidance points outlined in section 231(e). Program awards will be made on the basis of the application merit as measured on a scoring rubric. The Utah State Board of Education Adult Education leadership will review the applications and determine awards.

Programs not funded will have the opportunity to appeal the Utah State Board of Education's decision through the appeal hearing. Following the hearing an applicant may appeal to the Secretary of Education (defined in 34 CFR 76-401) for a final decision.

Programs will compete for WIOA AEFLA awards to provide instruction in English language acquisition (ELA), Adult Basic Education (ABE) literacy services and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) services to qualified individuals as defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. All programs are expected to infuse civics education within the context of offered coursework. Instruction provided should be contextualized and designed to focus on career opportunities defined within the regions.

In addition to the above, Utah will make available funds to concurrently blend adult education and literacy activities into strong partnerships with the other partners through increasing the integration of instruction into regional high demand occupations identified by the Department of Workforce Services. As appropriate, programs will partner directly with their local training or post-secondary institution to encourage student transition through the use of transition coaches or counselors. Applicants that are funded are expected to infuse Utah's

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College and Career Readiness Standards into instruction.

ELA instruction will include concurrent and contextualized workforce preparation activities in combination with support from the Department of Workforce Services to ensure successful integrated education and training offerings are provided to students. Additionally, the application process will require programs to define how they will infuse career pathway implementation into ELA, ABE, or ASE instruction, utilizing partnerships with the Department of Workforce Services, including Vocational Rehabilitation, to support the development and implementation of career pathways in high demand industries. Applicants for Family Literacy funding are expected to work in partnership with a local Head Start or early education partner, in addition to the Department of Workforce Services, to ensure that the educational and employment needs of adults and families are adequately met. Applicants are also encouraged to meet the needs of employers by providing ELA, ABE, and ASE services in the workplace when appropriate. Applicants who indicate they are providing workplace literacy programs may also receive priority points. Funded applicants must provide services that are focused on defining a career pathway for each student.

#### C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 225 OF WIOA:

- ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- SPECIAL EDUCATION, AS DETERMINED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY;
- SECONDARY SCHOOL CREDIT;
- INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING;
- CAREER PATHWAYS;
- CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT;
- PEER TUTORING; AND
- TRANSITION TO RE-ENTRY INITIATIVES AND OTHER POST RELEASE SERVICES WITH THE GOAL OF REDUCING RECIDIVISM.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Utah will establish and operate programs under Section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals. Priority of service will be given to individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participating in the program. A minimum of 10% of the allowable 82.5% of federal AEFLA funds will be competed for funding opportunities.

Eligible providers of demonstrated effectiveness will have direct and equitable access to apply for Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals grants to provide educational services in correctional facilities, county jails or other institutional settings. These funds will be competitively applied for using the same grant application and application process being used for section 231 funds. Adult Education AEFLA funds will be competed based on an application process following the 13 guidance points outlined in section 231(e). Grant

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awards will be awarded on the basis of application merit as measured on a Utah State Board of Education defined scoring rubric. The final decision will rest with the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education leadership.

Applicants will be funded based on the focus of grant applications defining the program's ability to meet the needs of the adult learner 16 years of age or older by providing literacy activities, including adult education (including high-school completion), basic literacy, special education services to qualified youth, integration of English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation or integrated education and training.

Programs awarded funds will be expected to infuse civics education within the context of offered coursework. Applicants applying for funding must define how funding will be used to meet the educational needs of offenders who are within five years of leaving an institution. Awarded funds are to be used to increase the number of incarcerated adults improving their basic skills, completing a secondary school credential, entering post-secondary education and training, or entering or retaining employment. Educational services offered may be provided by peer tutors who work under the direction of an adult educator. Instructions provided should be contextualized and designed to focus on the transition of reentering society. Programs will be expected to define how educational services will improve the offender's likelihood of successful reentry. This may include partnerships with post-secondary education and training institutions so students are participating in postsecondary training and education programs within the correctional facilities in industries that the Department of Workforce Services defines as marketable for formerly incarcerated individuals. Adult Education corrections program applicants awarded funding shall actively engage with Corrections staff and programming officers to ensure students are actively engaged in transition services at release and post-release. Adult Education program staff members are expected to partner with the Department of Corrections, Department of Workforce Services in transition and release processes designed to reduce offender recidivism.

#### D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION (IELCE) PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA. DESCRIBE HOW ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES, ARE SERVED IN IELCE PROGRAMS.

DESCRIBE HOW THE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 243(A) OF WIOA WILL BE OFFERED IN COMBINATION WITH INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES FOUND IN 34 CFR SECTION 463.36.

DESCRIBE HOW THE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 243(A) OF WIOA WILL INCLUDE INSTRUCTION IN LITERACY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND INSTRUCTION ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Utah is requiring all eligible providers for sections 225, 231 and 243 to follow the same

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grant application process. Doing so ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants. This process also ensures that the same grant announcement,

application, and grant process is used by all potential applicants. The Adult Education programs awarded funds by Utah will be expected to serve qualified students by:

- Incorporating an understanding of the American system of government, freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship within ELL curriculum and instruction;
- Preparing qualified ELL students to transition to employment and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency through partnerships with Department of Workforce Services and post-secondary training programs;
- Individualizing services to professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries in such a way as to maximize the utilization of training and experience already gained;
- Providing ELL services that include general career-readiness instruction related to employment and occupations; and
- Defining processes that will be implemented with partner agencies, the Department of Workforce Services, including the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, to ensure that integrated education is focused on high-demand industry needs in the local economic area.

Utah funds an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C. Funds for this program are awarded to qualified adult education ELA providers based on sub-state data supporting the most at-risk populations of ELA persons and the high-demand industry needs within the areas.

Utah delivers the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program in combination with Integrated Education and Training activities (IET). Each program receiving IELCE funds must include access to an IET program. As part of the monitoring processes already established, IELCE grantees will be required to provide evidence of an IET program that meets requirements such as having a single set of learning objectives that is used in all three components of the IET program (i.e. adult education activities, workplace preparation, and workplace training). Instruction in IELCE programs include the history and structure of the U.S. government (i.e., the executive, legislative and judicial branches), the geographical history and current geopolitical structure of the country, the roles and responsibilities of the president, the responsibilities of the White House, the U.S. legal and education systems, and how these roles and rights are carried out in the workplace and the community. These curriculum components are designed to guide students in becoming knowledgeable citizens and active community members.

English literacy and civics classes introduce students to civics related content by providing them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily work lives while building their English language and literacy skills. As English language learners gain confidence as language learners and as citizens with rights and responsibilities associated with success in the workplace and in-demand industries, they will achieve personal and professional growth and successes within the communities. Adult Education programs providing ELL services will refer qualified adult education students to the Department of Workforce Services and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation for necessary services. Department of Workforce Services and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation will reciprocate by referring potential students to Adult Education.

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Again, the intent of the English literacy and civics program will be not only to teach English to non-native speakers, assisting them in understanding civic rights and responsibilities, but also

to work with partner agencies to place the learners in employment settings leading to self-sufficiency.

#### E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

The Utah State Board of Education will utilize 12.5% of the AEFLA allocation for state leadership activities to:

- Investigate positive practices for improving teacher quality and retention;
- Develop content and models for IET career pathways; and
- Work with programs and partners to integrate literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers.

By aligning Adult Education and literacy activities with core programs, the Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services will implement the strategy in WIOA Section 102, including developing career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. Activities that support this alignment include:

- State and local area trainings with partner agencies where staff have the opportunity to interact and set the framework for partnerships, discussions and action in meeting the education and employment needs of customers;
- Providing curriculum to programs to support student instruction in high demand career pathways;
- Providing technical support to programs providing Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs;
- Providing additional support to enable the presence of Career Navigators or similar positions in each program;
- Funded activities for programs to support the implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards;
- Monitoring programs for alignment of Adult Education secondary graduation standards with the Utah Core Standards in the areas of math, English and OCTAE College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards; and
- Providing Adult Education program staff with trainings on components of <https://jobs.utah.gov> and <https://www.ktsutah.org/> with an emphasis on:
  - Career pathways, including but not limited to an understanding of occupational outlook, education requirements and wages in Utah.
  - Post-secondary and technical training opportunities supporting in-demand occupations.

The Utah State Board of Education Adult Education Services will develop high-quality

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professional development opportunities to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231 (b). This will include instruction on the essential

components of reading adapted to the specific needs of adult learners. Instruction may be provided by volunteers or by paid staff and will include disseminating information about models and promising practices related to such programs. Programs are encouraged to allocate portions of their budgets, both state and AEFLA funds, to pay for staff to attend state-sponsored Adult Education training. Programs releasing staff for training will define what their expectations are as a result of training and how they will implement and maintain the training learned. State staff will:

- Assess the needs of local programs;
- Continue to utilize LINCS, COABE, ProLiteracy, and other literacy entities as providers for training;
- Utilize local program staff as trainers;
- Host or co-host a fall conference focused on the adult teacher and learner; and
- Disseminate information about models and promising practices.

Program-specific professional development examples include:

- Training opportunities with four emphases: ELA, reading, math, and career pathways with career-infused curricula;
- Adult Education training utilizing both national and state trainers;
- Training utilizing delivery options such as virtual meetings, self-paced online training, and in-person training;
- Student Information System (SIS) training;
- Ongoing data training and program monitoring with program directors, analyzing data, outcomes and implications for changes in academic programming at the local level with an emphasis on meeting state and federal targets;
- Professional learning opportunities for certification in the administration of NRS approved assessments;
- NRS Training;
- Onboarding and additional professional learning opportunities for new Program Directors;
- Training with partners to ensure that mentors and counselors understand referral processes and all available resources, including post-secondary and career training programs; and
- Other professional development as necessary.

Eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funding under title (3)(i) have a provision for technical assistance. This involves developing and disseminating instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training.

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Instructional coaches will be used to disseminate instructional practices statewide based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available. The instructional coaches will provide support in instructional practices rooted in andragogy and contextualization.

Data is monitored regularly and is used along with needs assessments to identify program needs. Targeted technical assistance activities are provided surrounding the following areas:

- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Corrections education
- Evidence-based instruction in the essential components of reading
- Standards based instruction

The role of eligible providers as one-stop center (AJC) partners is to provide access to employment, education and training services. Each Adult Education program will define its role with its partners and how they will meet on an ongoing basis and discuss common topics. Topics include, but are not limited to, services provided, access to services, employment trends and employment opportunities available for the common client. This can be accomplished through attending quarterly area partnership meetings with representatives from core and required partners. At the meeting, members will share information about existing employment partnerships and emerging employment opportunities within the local economic areas. Members may also present information such as workforce development strategies that will be developed during a program year and how employment opportunities will be extended to adult education students.

Eligible providers will receive assistance in using technology, including for staff training and especially for improving system efficiencies.

- Program directors will utilize electronic desk monitoring tools and reports to improve program performance and state outcomes.
- Programs will define how they incorporate technology into their classroom in order to increase the amount and quality of learning related to increased performance. Student outcomes will be evaluated by the Utah State Board of Education based on data in the state's adult education student information system.
- Programs will define weaknesses and areas where state support is needed to advance their programming options to increase both efficiency and student outcomes.
- Professional learning activities will be provided based on increasing the use of technology in instruction.

A remote learning program specialist will provide technical assistance focused specifically on increasing the amount and quality of learning through technology.

Programs will monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities as well as the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state.

- Programs are reviewed at a minimum of every three years. A risk assessment is used to evaluate programs using a variety of metrics. Programs identified through the

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assessment as high risk are monitored more frequently.



- Each program is assigned a technical assistant (TA) and has regular desk monitoring conversations with their technical assistant. These conversations help identify proven or promising practices within the state and then these are disseminated through Directors' Meetings and other professional learning activities.
- State staff run program reports on a monthly basis and identify programs with additional technical assistant or monitoring needs.
- Funds are used to create and maintain a Student Information System (SIS) that allows for continued monitoring of data.

Funds will be used to support activities surrounding the implementation of statewide broadcast courses and the expansion of remote learning within the state.

Funds will also be used to provide a text-based communication tool for outreach to instructors and students.

#### F. ASSESSING QUALITY

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ASSESS THE QUALITY OF PROVIDERS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL TAKE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SUCH QUALITY, INCLUDING PROVIDING THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 223(A)(1)(B) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE EVALUATIONS, DATA ANALYSIS, PROGRAM MONITORING, OR OTHER METHODS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE.

MSG levels will be monitored including academic outcomes, education-gained advancement and high-school completion, through monthly data monitoring with program directors to ensure the entry of quality and timely data into the statewide adult education student information system.

- State specialists will utilize state policy, reports, compliance monitoring as well as monthly desk monitoring to ensure compliance of quality Adult Education services and data. Examples include monitoring appropriate testing and testing standards, or monitoring intensity and duration of programs and impact on outcomes.
- Programs will define what programmatic changes they will make to improve their program outcomes.

A risk assessment is used annually to identify high risk providers. These providers receive an onsite monitoring visit, during which technical assistance is provided and programs receive corrective actions as needed to bring the program into compliance. Programs are monitored at a minimum of every three years. On site visits also allow opportunities to gather and disseminate best practices. Collaboration between programs is encouraged to facilitate the implementation of best practices throughout the state.

Corrective action will be taken with programs as needed to ensure their compliance with Utah State Board of Education's expectations.

In addition to the above, Utah will use State Leadership funds as needed to cross train adult education staff to better align services between partners including common referral processes and intake processes. Utah supports statewide professional development. A directors' Advisory Committee meets as needed to assist the Utah State Board of Education in identifying professional learning needs. Decisions are based on data as well as WIOA rules in identifying

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and setting PD priorities.

State leadership funds will be used to focus on a variety of areas including CCR implementation, establishing bridge programs, evidenced based ELA practices, effective program management, integrated education and training as well as transition to post-secondary opportunities. The Utah State Board of Education will deliver technical assistance to enhance program effectiveness through program desk monitoring, program visits and the development and delivery of data reports designed to assist program directors and staff to improve student outcomes. Professional learning and technical assistance delivery options include: in person, virtual, and online ensuring that all providers are afforded information needed to develop, maintain and improve services for the adult learner.

Utah assesses the quality of professional development in a variety of ways. The state utilizes input from programs gathered from annual program plans, desk monitoring conversations, program data, and program reviews to prioritize gaps that necessitate additional professional development. In addition to the direction and input from the directors' Advisory Committee team the needs assessments drive the creation of an annual training plan. Participants of all workshops, conferences, presentations and web meetings will be surveyed to evaluate and provide feedback on the quality and content of the professional development event. This feedback will be used to improve future PD opportunities.

#### SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

IN THE TEXT BOX BELOW, DESCRIBE THE STEPS THE APPLICANT PROPOSES TO TAKE TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND PARTICIPATION IN, ITS FEDERALLY-ASSISTED PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PROVIDE THE INFORMATION TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA), CONSISTENT WITH THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS POSTED AT <HTTPS://WWW2.ED.GOV/FUND/GRANT/APPLY/APPFORMS/GEPA427.DOC>.

In the disposition of all duties, the Utah State Board of Education recognizes the need to ensure access and participation in all programs for all students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs. With this recognition comes the responsibility to ensure that each sub-recipient operates in a like manner. To this end, the Utah State Board of Education will take the following steps:

1. As the recipient of WIOA Title II funds, for all activities performed by the recipient, the Utah State Board of Education will ensure to the fullest extent possible equitable access to, participation in, and appropriate educational opportunities for all staff and students with special needs. The Utah State Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, military status, veteran status, or any other status or classification protected by federal, state or local law in its education programs and community outreach activities. It provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations in response to the needs of its students, staff, community members and other participants.
2. Ensure that all sub-recipient's submit a GEPA statement as part of the awarding process for WIOA Title II funds and conduct monitoring visits (both on-site and desktop) to observe steps that sub-recipients have taken to maintain compliance concerning access

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to, participation in, and opportunities for all students and staff.

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3. Provide annual training for all sub-recipients on processes to support equal access and participation in all programs for all students.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

**Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

**(a) State Rehabilitation Council.** All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

(A) is an independent State commission.

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo. Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1	1/22
Parent Training and Information Center	1	3/22
Client Assistance Program	1	9/22
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1	3/22
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1	11/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	2	11/21
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	3/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	11/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	N/A

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Disability Advocacy Groups	2	11/18
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Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1	2/20
Section 121 Project Directors in the State Program for Tribal Communities	2	11/20
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	2	2/20
State Workforce Development Board	1	3/22
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	3	8/16
Rep. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community	1	11/23
Former Recipient of VR Services	1	2/21
Former Recipient of VR Services	1	11/23
Parent of a Child with a Disability	1	11/23
Rep. Service Provider	1	11/23
Rep. Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities	1	11/23

**If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.**

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council convenes six times annually, aligning with the quarterly meeting requirement. In addition to these regular meetings, the executive committee and the membership subcommittee hold supplementary sessions to guarantee adherence to council mandates, objectives, and priorities. These additional meetings serve to identify subjects for evaluation and discussion, facilitate membership outreach, and engage in strategic planning. The SRC has consistently upheld the standards for membership composition, with only one current vacancy in the Business, Industry, and Labor category, which the council is actively working to fill.

**In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.**

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council, in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational

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rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment. This mission is accomplished by reviewing programs, analyzing service delivery



processes, and advising on policies and procedures. Over the last two years, the SRC provided the following points of input and recommendations:

- At the November 2021 meeting, the DRS Assistant Director gave an update on the WIOA State Plan, recommended by the council goals and strategies for improving VR services, including an expansion of service to employers, and the improvement of VR counselor and client access to financial literacy and life skills training. The SRC supported moving forward with the updates.
- The VR Program Evaluation Coordinator, discussed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey process and results, which included client responses being sent to the Assistant Director and the Field Service Directors (FSDs). She requested council approval to share that information as well with the District Directors (DDs) so that the feedback could be reviewed and discussed at the local district level. A lot of council feedback was provided on how to utilize the surveys to address client issues, confidentiality, and how best to reward successful VR counselors. The council voted in favor of the updates to the client satisfaction survey.
- The Program Evaluation Coordinator, discussed the previous and current modes for survey administration and collection of data. The new approach followed outreach with other states and survey platforms; new questions and readability with both SRC and Disability Law Center (DLC) feedback; and the current use of SurveyMonkey that has resulted in a quicker turnaround and return rate. A review of several responses from participants, and suggestions for improvement from clients was provided as well.
- The SRC endorsed the recommendation for Utah State University to coordinate the Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The SRC engaged in an overview of the assessment and concurred with the designated focus areas. Additionally, the council agreed to select members to take part in key informant interviews and requested regular updates from the principal researcher.
- The USOR Employment Support Services Specialist reviewed the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Fee-for-Service Rates, including a comparison of 2020 and 2021 data on increases in Work Strategy and Discovery Assessments; placement rate increases and a significant jump in customized employment placements. High Quality Indicators (e.g. Work Hours; Wages; Benefits; Days to Placement; STEM Occupation; and Rural as incentives to CRPs providing services to VR clients. Additional information regarding CRP capacity training (e.g. ACRE, financial literacy) to provide improved client services, as well as individual CRP performance data of contracted providers was given. The council motioned in favor of USOR moving with the fee-for-service updates.
- During the September, 2023 presentation on USOR's corrective action plan addressing underspending of its pre-employment transition services funds, it was suggested that USOR allocate a portion of these funds to bolster collaboration with local education agencies and partners. This would increase awareness of services, facilitate information sharing to reach underserved groups, and improve connections with parents.

**Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.**

The following is a summary of USOR's response and actions taken:

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- USOR integrated feedback from the SRC on the proposed state plan updates, focusing

particularly on expanding services to employers and enhancing VR counselor and client access to financial literacy and life skills training. A vote was called and unanimously approved the WIOA State Plan, which includes the goals and strategies developed in collaboration with the council. The motion's unanimous passage paves the way for the plan to be submitted for federal review and approval in March 2022.

- The SRC proposed changing the council by-laws, shortening the yearly meetings from 10 to 6. The meetings would be held in the months of January, March, May, June, September, and November. USOR responded in support of the proposed changes. The motion was made and the council voted unanimously in the affirmative.
- The SRC offered feedback concerning revisions to the confidentiality statement on the client satisfaction survey. USOR concurred with the recommendations and presented a new proposed wording. Subsequently, the council unanimously approved the requested change to the confidentiality wording in the current client satisfaction survey.
- The SRC requested an overview of Informed Choice, especially in its relevance to requesting a counselor change or selecting a service provider. USOR provided valuable insights into the process, including the involvement of a supervisor and/or district director when valid reasons exist to transfer a client's case to another counselor. Additionally, USOR furnished details about their Informed Choice policies and the information they offer to clients to aid them in selecting service providers. Furthermore, USOR collaborated with their Client Assistance Program representatives to provide an up-to-date overview of their roles and services.
- In response to a previous presentation on national VR trends related to staff retention and raising awareness about VR services, the SRC requested an update on USOR's actions to address these concerns. USOR responded by providing the council with an overview of its public awareness initiatives and sharing outreach materials. Furthermore, USOR committed to keeping the council informed about its efforts to recruit and retain staff, which includes providing information on strategic hiring initiatives and implementing a 10% wage increase for VR counselors, alongside a legislative-approved cost-of-living increase
- After the introduction of the new Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) performance dashboard, the SRC recommended making this information accessible to the public. USOR concurred with this suggestion and assured the council that the dashboard would be made available on the USOR website to enhance transparency and facilitate informed choices for clients.
- Following the presentation of USOR's Corrective Action Plan in response to not meeting the mandate for fully expending its Pre-ETS reserve, the SRC requested regular updates, a request to which USOR agreed. Council members also recommended enhancing collaboration with LEAs, other state agencies, and underserved student populations. USOR also committed to prioritizing these recommendations.

**(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**, Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

(1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

- (A) **Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;**

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USOR, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducts a comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the state of

Utah. The assessment identifies needs and assesses the current VR system's capacity to meet service needs. The most recent triennial Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA) was developed and completed in the Spring of 2023.

USOR and SRC worked in collaboration to analyze the results of the CSNA, review the findings and recommendations, and develop goals and strategies to inform on the state plans, and improve areas of service capacity gaps and unserved/underserved populations.

In Utah, the prevalence of disability is lower than the national average, at 9.1% compared to 12.7%, with around 289,000 Utahns having a disability as per the ACS-2019. While state-level data is useful, regional disparities in factors like disability prevalence, poverty, and racial diversity, among others, exist. Thus, considering regional variations is crucial. The CSNA identified not just areas for improvement but also the organization's strengths. Notably, Utah ranks third nationally for employment among those with disabilities, boasting a 47.5% employment rate in this demographic. The CSNA findings consistently showed that while stakeholders acknowledged strengths of USOR, they also identified areas for growth to better serve Utahns with disabilities.

The pandemic caused a disruption in rehabilitation services, resulting in a 4.8% drop in applications and a 10.7% decrease in the number of individuals served from 2018-2021. These decreases were consistent across racial and ethnic groups, with non-white disability populations seeing the most significant increase in USOR service eligibility. While there was a decline in the number of people with disabilities exiting the USOR program with employment from PY 2018 to 2021, the quality of employment outcomes improved.

Focus group participants consistently expressed a favorable opinion of USOR, especially valuing the accessibility and openness of its leadership. Several recurrent themes emerged: the need to improve consumer access to services, enhance outreach efforts, increase pay for personnel and contractors, and advance the use of technology—specifically, there was a clear desire for digital signature capabilities. Concerning Pre-ETS, USOR counselors highlighted several challenges: a scarcity of resources, collaboration bottlenecks with schools, the need for specialized training for transition youth, and gaps in outreach to particular youth groups, such as those in juvenile justice or foster care systems, and those without 504 plans or IEPs.

Agency turnover, particularly within special education, contracted providers, and USOR, was cited as a substantial disruption. Suggestions point toward an emphasis on system-wide collaboration over individual relationships to ensure continuity. Partnering agencies expressed a consistent desire for better and more frequent communication from USOR.

#### Challenges Faced by Those with Most Significant Disabilities:

In regards to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services, the CSNA found USOR's performance stands out positively when compared to vocational rehabilitation agencies in other states in terms of employment rates, quality indicators, and service timing. However, an area for enhancement is the employment rate for those with the most significant disabilities, where Utah ranked 3rd out of 5 states in 2021 and last in 2020. Identified challenges and recommendations include:

- Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers identified those with the most significant disabilities as having the more difficulties in finding and maintaining employment. It is noted this is often compounded by having parents or caregivers who do not see any possibility for employment.
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities living in rural areas faced challenges in

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accessing USOR services and employment due to limited transportation, difficulties  
accessing technology, job opportunity scarcity and pervasive poverty. Recommended

solutions include strengthening the presence of USOR in rural areas and better outreach and awareness for its services.

- USOR staff pointed out that the main barriers lay in access, collaboration, and knowledge level among providers, in rural areas when serving individuals with most significant disabilities. These challenges were attributed to service provider turnover and hiring difficulties, affecting collaboration and service provision, particularly for supported and customized employment.
- A notable issue with Supported Employment Services is the reduction in funding for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) for extended support services.
- The consensus among focus group members is that Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) need more training on both supported and customized employment services. Training for VR counselors, specifically in understanding customized employment, was also identified.
- In addition, other needs to support individuals with most significant disabilities include: providing job accommodations, communication and social skills training, developing effective business relations partnerships, benefits planning, financial literacy and self-advocacy training.

**(B) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

USOR has completed a thorough analysis on the demographic make-up of individuals seeking services compared to Utahns with disabilities overall. The CSNA results reveal USOR serves a diverse population, largely representative of those with disabilities in Utah. The results revealed that USOR assists diverse clients, closely mirroring the demographic composition of Utah's population. Historically, past CSNAs pointed to a slight underrepresentation of the Asian community within USOR client bases.

Consequently, the current CSNA placed a greater focus on catering to the needs of Utahns with disabilities identifying as Asian. Through focus groups and surveys, it was discerned that while many of the target populations we sought information from suggested that there are systemic and cultural reasons that some from this population may not seek out or want to receive USOR services even if qualifying for them. Survey data suggests that the Asian population is not among the most unserved or underserved racial-ethnic groups in Utah. Instead, USOR counselors and staff observed that the American Indian community grapples with the most pronounced challenges in accessing and benefiting from USOR services. However, on a broader scale, race and ethnicity were deemed less consequential in influencing employment challenges than the nature and type of disability.

Furthermore, the CSNA underscored several vital areas of potential improvement. Recognizing the significant fraction of Utah's population fluent in Spanish but not English, the CSNA also noted a need for USOR to enhance the provision of outreach, information resources and forms in Spanish. Additionally, given the unique challenges posed by Utah's refugee population, the CSNA recommended specialized training tailored to help serve refugees and address their specific needs.

The CSNA also examined unserved and underserved communities. The CSNA high-lighted homeless population with disabilities as underserved and facing the most significant barriers. These include challenges related to employment, accessing USOR services, and deriving benefits

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from the same. Adults with criminal backgrounds were identified as the next group facing the highest employment challenges, followed closely by individuals with limited English proficiency. However, perceptions of which groups are most underserved varied across the state.



Cultural barriers play a critical role in outreach effectiveness. Interviewees pinpointed specific marginalized groups, such as Asians, Polynesians, and the Slavic community, as having pronounced stigmas associated with disability and a cultural inclination to address needs internally, within the family or community framework. Additionally, there's a noteworthy gap in counselor knowledge about these specific underserved groups, further exacerbating the challenges of effective outreach.

In the context of Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services), several primary challenges and barriers were outlined. These encompassed resource limitations, collaboration challenges with schools, and the need for specialized training geared towards working with transition youth. CSNA particularly emphasized the need for outreach to underserved transition populations, which includes youth in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, those in foster care, youth with disabilities with only a 504 plan, and those without either a 504 plan or an IEP.

**(C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and**

The CSNA delved into the collaboration between USOR and other components of the state workforce development system in serving individuals with disabilities. Most respondents perceived these partnerships as beneficial, with a majority deeming the services moderately to very effective. When asked about potential improvements to the Department of Workforce Services one-stop centers (AJCs), a clear emphasis emerged on two primary areas: collaboration and accessibility. The most frequent feedback highlighted the need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration. Some praised existing collaborative efforts but also noted conflicting goals between agencies. A robust referral system, prioritizing a personal approach, was recommended. The next prevalent feedback centered on program accessibility, with concerns about the complex service access process, an over-reliance on automated phone systems, and a hard-to-navigate website. Respondents also underscored the importance of disability awareness training to improve the understanding of the unique needs of clients with disabilities.

In regards to another core WIOA partner, Adult Education, the CSNA assessed the frequency of collaboration between direct service providers and adult education entities. The prevailing perception of the efficacy of adult education services was positive. However, only a minor proportion found them slightly or not at all effective. While specific recommendations for enhancing adult education services were gathered, the report urges caution in interpreting these suggestions, given that many respondents had minimal or no interactions with such services.

**(D) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.**

The CSNA assessment thoroughly examined the needs and challenges faced by youth and students. Students with disabilities generally have access to the broad range of transition and pre-employment transition services. The number of youth and students served did plateau during the pandemic, but has started to rebound. However, there is a clearly identified need to increase the number of youth and students served, including the provision of Pre-ETS. In addition to the CSNA, this is reflected in USOR data reports. While students with individual disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and other health impairments have the strongest access to Transition and Pre-ETS services, there is an opportunity to increase service provision to

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students with sensory impairments. Another shortfall identified is the limited outreach efforts geared towards underserved populations. This underserved group encompasses youth

entangled in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, those navigating the complexities of foster care, and students without the support of a 504 plan or an IEP. Furthermore, the introduction of more temporary and work-based learning opportunities for the youth and students stands out as an area for enhancement.

Another area of note was the varying degrees of collaboration between educational institutions and the CSNA. While some schools are proactive and welcoming towards collaborative efforts, others demonstrate noticeable reluctance, resulting in inconsistent cooperation levels.

The feedback from focus groups across different target populations highlighted a persistent challenge: the high turnover rates among agencies associated with special education, USOR, and contracted providers. This turnover disrupts consistent service delivery and hinders long-term collaborations. To mitigate these challenges, CSNA proposes a more systems-oriented approach rather than relying on personal relationships. This would involve amplifying efforts in information sharing, offering on-demand training sessions, and devising strategies to bolster inter-agency communication, ensuring smoother collaboration.

In regards to Pre-ETS, the CSNA underscores the importance of proactive and strategic long-term planning. This planning should holistically consider the roles and capacities of USOR in assisting students with disabilities. In terms of inter-institutional relationships, the assessment suggests a deeper emphasis on building and sustaining ties with school counselors and 504 coordinators within the LEAs. Moreover, the assessment emphasizes the potential of the USOR website as a key tool for outreach and recommends its enhancement, focusing on better searchability and making it more user-friendly for potential beneficiaries.

## **(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

The CSNA has pinpointed significant areas of development for USOR in its collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers in Utah. These areas include fostering a culture within CRPs that aligns with and respects the perspectives of USOR, expanding CRP options in rural regions, and enhancing communication between CRPs and USOR staff. There's also an emphasis on bolstering CRPs' capacities to cultivate business partnerships and offering additional training in areas like Supported Employment, Pre-ETS, and Customized Employment. Furthermore, the CSNA recommends enriching CRPs' comprehension of USOR's policies and expectations and providing them with training to refine the gradual phase-out of job supports. Conversely, CRPs have voiced their needs, including the ability to digital signatures with USOR, improving the compensation structure of temporary work experiences and worked-based learning experiences, clearer comprehension of their needs and services by VR counselors, timelier responses from these counselors, consistency in service hours authorized by USOR, and an increase in ACRE trained personnel.

**c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies.** Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

- (1) Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

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The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, has formulated goals and priorities aimed at enhancing the delivery of high quality vocational rehabilitation services. The development of these objectives involved a thorough examination of information derived from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, client satisfaction survey outcomes, stakeholder input, corrective action plans, and internal data analysis. The State Rehabilitation Council played a crucial role by offering valuable feedback, input, and voting in favor of advancing the proposed goals and strategies.

(2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

- (A) Support innovation and expansion activities;
  - (B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;
  - (C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and
  - (D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.
- **Goal 1:** Ensure sufficient and reasonable resources are available to support the State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council in carrying out essential and mandated tasks.
    - **Strategy 1:** USOR will reserve funds and resources to support the SRC in fulfilling their activities, such as gathering customer satisfaction feedback, contributing to the statewide needs assessment and publishing the Annual Report. Ongoing coordination with USOR will emphasize identifying crucial resources to meet these responsibilities in line with the strategic plan goal.
    - **Strategy 2:** USOR will allocate funding to empower the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to carry out their mandated activities outlined in the Statewide Plan for Independent Living. The earmarked funds for SILC are determined through a collaborative planning process, during which the SILC identifies the resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities and achieve their goals.
    - **Basis and Measures:** Adherence to regulatory requirements, fulfillment of SRC objectives, and implementation of the USILC plan will be evaluated. Success will be determined through compliance assessments and the review of achievements aligned with the objectives set by each council.
  - **Goal 2:** Ensure the provision of quality Pre-Employment Transition Services that meet the needs of students with disabilities.

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- **Strategy 1:** USOR will extend and enhance quality assurance activities to verify students are benefiting and gaining skills from services provided.

- **Strategy 2:** USOR will allocate additional resources to increase the provision of Pre-ETS contract monitoring and technical assistance, including on-site visits, to ensure that the provided Pre-ETS services align with the needs of the students.
- **Basis and Measures:** Ensuring the delivery of high-quality Pre-ETS services remains a continuous priority for the SRC, in alignment with internal compliance standards set by USOR. Success will be gauged by monitoring Pre-ETS contract goals and assessing students' skill gains through pre-and-post test evaluations.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance awareness and facilitate improved access to services for minority and underserved groups.
  - **Strategy 1:** Broaden outreach efforts and strengthen collaborations with community partners and agencies that engage with individuals involved in the justice system; including youth in custody.
  - **Strategy 2:** Increase the provision of USOR forms, documents, and informational resources available in Spanish.
  - **Strategy 3:** Provide ongoing training and information to VR staff to ensure they possess the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to serve diverse populations.
  - **Strategy 4:** Develop region specific outreach, engagement and support initiatives to assist individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness.
  - **Basis and Measures:** The CSNA-derived recommendations form the foundation for the objective and strategy aimed at enhancing access to services for minority and underserved groups. USOR will gauge success by examining demographic trends among 9-11 data and evaluating feedback from clients, staff, and stakeholders.
- **Goal 4:** Optimize and modernize VR processes to enhance accessibility and sustained engagement in services.
  - **Strategy 1:** Improve the referral and application process by streamlining data collection and implementing an online referral.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand use of technology to communicate with clients, obtain required documents and signatures.
  - **Strategy 3:** Identify data entry and paperwork burdens for clients and VR staff and implement process improvement initiatives.
  - **Basis and Measures:** The CSNA, along with input from staff and stakeholders, pinpointed crucial areas for enhancing client access to services. USOR is dedicated to improving the client experience and will measure success by tracking progress toward and completion of the specified strategies.
- **Goal 5:** Fully Spend 15% Funding Reserve for Pre-Employment Transition Services.
  - **Strategy 1:** Allocate additional USOR staff resources to provide and coordinate Pre-ETS to students.

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- **Strategy 2:** Evaluate and, if deemed appropriate, incorporate the costs for additional authorized Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) activities beyond the mandated five.

- **Strategy 3:** Improve opportunities for fee-for-service arrangements for providers offering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- **Basis and Measures:** In compliance with regulations and its corrective action plan, prioritizing the utilization of the Pre-ETS reserve is imperative for USOR. Success will be monitored and measured through a thorough review of expenditures and fully spending the reserve funding.
- **Goal 6:** Increase the number of students with disabilities participating in work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 1:** Expand utilization of USOR Business Relations Team to assist in identifying and coordinating work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand contracts for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) with a focus on providing work-based learning experiences.
  - **Strategy 3:** Review policies and rates for the provision of work-based learning experiences and implement identified areas for improvement.
  - **Basis and Measures:** As indicated by performance dashboards and the CSNA, USOR must increase the provision of work-based learning experiences. Success will be measured by monitoring the number of eligible and potentially eligible students who participate in these services.
- **Goal 7:** Improve access and awareness for Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services.
  - **Strategy 1:** Identify and implement strategies resilient to turnover to foster local-level collaboration and facilitate access to information.
  - **Strategy 2:** Revise outreach, information and referral materials to improve engagement with education and parents.
  - **Strategies 3:** Enhance outreach and develop new referral pathways to increase engagement with students on 504 plans, youth in foster care, youth in custody and youth living in rural communities.
  - **Basis and Measures:** Highlighted in the CSNA and acknowledged by stakeholders, enhancing awareness and linking students to services emerged as an identified area for improvement. This initiative aligns with overarching goals pertaining to the delivery of Transition and Pre-ETS services. Success will be attained by increasing the number of students served.
- **Goal 8:** Improve client achievement of high-quality employment outcomes, considering factors such as wages, hours worked, benefits and occupations that require credentials.
  - **Strategy 1:** Provide additional training and resources to VR staff for effectively utilizing labor market information with clients to identify high-demand careers.
  - **Strategy 2:** Expand VR staff and client access to vocational assessment and career exploration resources.
  - **Strategy 3:** Enhance and increase services to employers to support hiring and

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retention of individuals with disabilities; including developing new employer partnerships.

- **Basis and measures:** A review of performance dashboards and secondary data from the CSNA has identified opportunities for USOR to improve the quality of its employment outcomes. Success will be measured through common performance indicators and a thorough examination of client employment information at exit.
- **Goal 9:** Increase co-enrollment with Adult Education and Workforce Development programs to support client success
  - **Strategy 1:** Enhance local level partnership collaborations to streamline co-enrollment processes and coordinate service delivery efficiently.
  - **Strategy 2:** Provide WIOA partners with training, resources and support to improve disability awareness and understanding for VR services.
  - **Basis and measures:** Insights from the CSNA and performance dashboards guided the identification of this goal. Success will be measured by the increased co-enrollment of Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peysner, and Adult Education programs.

**(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.** For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

(1) Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

**Goal:** Increase awareness, information availability, and access to Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- **Progress:** USOR has successfully expanded its student outreach, witnessing a growth from 4492 eligible and potentially eligible students in FY20 to 6,083 in FY22. This achievement was made possible through strengthened collaborations with Local Education Agencies, the facilitation of an Annual Transition Institute for education and VR staff, the creation of innovative digital and print materials focusing on Pre-ETS services and the formulation of targeted local-level outreach plans in conjunction with VR district offices.

**Goal:** Expand availability of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has expanded the network of contracted service providers for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from 8 to 18, thereby enhancing the statewide reach of these services, with a particular focus on rural areas. Furthermore, the number of Pre-ETS instructors has been increased from 11 to 16. Each Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) District office now ensures the presence of at least one instructor, and additional instructors have been strategically allocated to regions characterized by extensive geographic coverage and significant student populations.

**Goal:** Improve the quality of services provided by Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs).

- **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) established and maintained

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collaborative contracts with Utah State University, focusing on training and technical assistance in Customized Employment and Work Supports. This partnership also gave

rise to a Community of Practice for Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), facilitating ongoing education sessions and the sharing of best practices. To address concerns and training needs, USOR initiated monthly CRP meetings. Simultaneously, the agency revamped provider agreements, bolstered provider monitoring, and implemented a provider performance dashboard. Over the past four years, these efforts have yielded positive outcomes, evidenced by an improved success rate in provider placements and a reduction in the average days to placement. Furthermore, the placements from CRPs increasingly align with criteria for positions offering high wages, hours, and benefits.

**Goal:** Improve access to Vocational Rehabilitation services for minority populations.

- **Progress:** Counselors and staff consistently engage in ongoing training to enhance their cultural competence, covering areas such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, Native Americans and disability experience and LGBTQ & disability intersecting identities. Notably, outreach efforts to the Asian American population have been expanded in various regions. Vocational Rehabilitation district offices have actively collaborated with local community partners and Asian American associations to offer insights into Vocational Rehabilitation services and cultivate referral networks. Despite these initiatives, USOR did not observe a notable rise in the percentage of individuals from minority populations accessing services. This remains a focal point for ongoing improvement efforts.

**Goal:** Improve client understanding of benefits and work incentives.

- **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) updated informational brochures designed to offer clients an overview of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, including details on work incentive options and earning thresholds. These brochures were disseminated directly to clients and made accessible on the USOR website. To enhance staff expertise, USOR conducted both virtual and in-office training sessions for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff on benefits counseling. This training aimed to equip staff with a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles, enabling them to effectively communicate and clarify rights and options to clients. Additionally, USOR broadened its scope to include information and training on ABLE savings accounts, addressing the specific needs of potentially eligible clients.

**Goal:** Expanding Services to Employers.

- **Progress:** In the past four years, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has undertaken substantial improvements to its services for employers. Notable program enhancements involved the consolidation of all Choose to Work Employment Specialists under the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Business Relations Team. This initiative included intensive training for specialists in disability awareness, accommodations, and employment placement strategies. The team was seamlessly integrated into a specialized employer services tracking system. Consequently, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Business Relations team achieved a remarkable increase of over 115% in the number of employers served. Additionally, USOR utilized technology to augment its capabilities, extending support to Utah employers through expanded training and technical assistance initiatives.

**Goal:** Increase Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and client access to Career Assessment Resources.

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- **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) ensured that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors received ongoing training with continued access to the

Career Index Plus Training curriculum. Both current and new staff can review training sessions as needed. This material is also incorporated into the VR Training Academy for new staff onboarding. As an additional resource, staff were provided access to the Virtual Job Shadow platform, specifically designed to assist students and youth in exploring career opportunities. Ongoing efforts include the development of fee-for-service opportunities for vocational assessment and exploration pathways.

**Goal:** Improve Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and client access to financial literacy and life skills training.

- **Progress:** The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) developed a financial literacy curriculum that clients can access through CRP providers. Vocational Rehabilitation refers clients and youth with disabilities to the training and authorizing payment for the financial literacy curriculum that includes modules for engaging in banking services, budgeting, residential finance needs, and managing credit. Currently, over 25 CRPs statewide have undergone training and are authorized to deliver this valuable service to clients.

**Goal:** Increase Vocational Rehabilitation performance on WIOA performance accountability measures.

- **Progress:** Over the past four years, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has conducted training sessions and offered guidance to its staff on common performance measures. The primary objective of these sessions was to enhance staff knowledge and comprehension of performance measures, equipping them to assist clients in achieving quality outcomes in various areas. Additionally, the training aimed to instruct staff on effective coordination with clients, partners, and vendors to obtain necessary documentation for reporting purposes. To ensure accuracy, USOR implemented internal controls to validate educational goals and skill gains. They also introduced counselor dashboards to aid field staff in tracking their progress. Furthermore, the office revised Training Services policies, providing additional training to enhance staff understanding of career pathways, apprenticeships, and other post-secondary training opportunities. Consequently, USOR demonstrated year-to-year increases in measurable skill gains, credential attainment, median wages, and employment rates during the 4th quarter after client exit.

(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Indicators	PY22 Negotiated Level	PY22 Actual Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	51.0%	53.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	49.3%	52.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,996	\$4,726
Credential Attainment Rate	30.4%	37.5%
Measurable Skill Gain	53.9%	55.2%

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USOR successfully met or exceeded its negotiated performance levels for PY22.

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- (3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has undertaken various innovation and expansion projects and activities. These encompass a range of strategic initiatives aligned with the Rehabilitation Act's requirements, demonstrating the organization's commitment to enhancing rehabilitation services:

- Funding of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) Transition and Supported Employment Coordinator and Program Specialist to increase the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services to youth with disabilities, specifically those with the most significant disabilities and expansion of Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities. USOR also added an additional Pre-ETS Program specialist to assist with monitoring and providing technical assistance to contract providers in order to ensure the provision of quality services.
- Establishment of a Pre-ETS program evaluation model with Utah State University to assess students gaining measurable skills following the participation in Pre-ETS services.
- Development and implementation of new contracts to provide training and technical assistance to Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers to ensure the provision of high-quality job development, placement and coaching services, along with increasing the number of Customized Employment (CE) providers. In the past four years, the number of CE-approved providers has surged from 7 to 27, marking a remarkable 280% increase.
- Implementation of Disability Career Navigator positions which focus on identifying youth at risk of entering subminimum wage employment or currently engaging in subminimum wage employment. The goal of these positions is to connect youth to VR services, including providing Pre-ETS to eligible and potentially eligible students with the most significant disabilities.
- Providing funding to support a School-to-Work Customized Employment Project with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and three local school districts to develop competitive, integrated, and meaningful employment for students with developmental disabilities, specifically students who are at-risk of entering into sheltered work settings at subminimum wages once exiting high school.
- Providing funding support operation of the Utah State Independent Living Council.
- Providing administrative support and funding for operation of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) were also provided by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation.

**(e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.**

Acceptance of title VI funds:

VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

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If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation provides Supported Employment (SE) services to clients with the most significant disabilities, including youth aged 14 to 24. These SE services are funded through a combination of Title I and Title VI funds. The USOR has defined key goals and priorities guiding the utilization of Title IV funds and the delivery of Supported Employment services.

**Goal 1:** Increase the number of competitive, integrated employment outcomes for individuals receiving supported employment services.

- **Strategy 1:** Expand the number of qualified and trained providers of Customized Employment Services.
- **Strategy 2:** Enhance the support and training of Community Rehabilitation Program providers to increase the quality and quantity of supported employment services; including targeted training on job accommodations and job coach fading.
- **Strategy 3:** Implement supported education resources to help individuals with significant disabilities increase participation in training programs and obtain long-term employment outcomes.
- **Strategy 4:** Identify tactics to assist clients achieve independence on the worksite.

**Goal 2:** Increase the number of youth with most significant disabilities receiving supported employment services

- **Strategy 1:** Enhance ongoing School-to-Work initiatives to assist students with disabilities begin SE/CE prior to exiting the secondary education system.
- **Strategy 2:** Enhance outreach and training to educator partners on supported and customized employment models to help facilitate discussion of CIE during Individual Education Program planning meetings.
- **Strategy 3:** Enhance outreach to youth with substance use and mental health disabilities who could benefit from supported employment and individual placement and support services.

Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

**Quality:** USOR maintains high quality in supported employment services by establishing and applying Supported Employment (SE) program standards for USOR SE vendors. These standards prescribe minimum customer outcomes and identify program procedures that must be followed for a provider to receive funds. A newly implemented quality assurance checklist for provider reviews every two years requires certifications, continuing education

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requirements, consumer satisfaction, review of complaints and concerns, and an action plan for continuing services for USOR.

USOR created specific policy based on the provision of supported employment services. The main service provided under SE is job coaching. USOR requires all employment specialists to be trained and have certifications prior to providing services to SE clients. Employment specialists from providers who do not meet the minimum qualifications cannot work with VR clients. The monitoring of SE service providers is conducted by the SE Coordinator and the Employment Support Services Program Specialist. This monitoring is conducted by assessing the application of USOR program standards and outcomes. It includes a review of any complaints received and the results of surveys completed by counselors using the program for clients. The coordinator and program specialist also review current providers, create updates, standardized expectations, revise provider agreements, and provide technical assistance.

USOR also partners with extended support agencies to train and set expectations for employment specialists in customized employment, discovery, and Individualized Placement Services (IPS). These services have been proven to meet the needs of persons with most significant disabilities (MSDs) who may need additional services and long-term support in order to be successfully employed.

**Scope:** SE services are provided with Title VI, Part B funds on a fee-for-service basis (based on achievement of milestones) by SE service providers, including functional assessment of clients to perform in supported employment (supplemental to the assessment conducted by the counselor for purposes of establishing eligibility with Title I funds); life-skills training, job development, job analysis and client job matching; training by an employment specialist in job skills and behavioral expectations at the job site; training and support away from the job to ensure work performance; family support; and support to the employer to ensure client job retention. The same scope of services is provided by the extended service agency. Target populations in supported employment include persons with the most significant disabilities who qualify for ongoing support from the Division of Services for Persons with Disabilities (DSPD) or the Division of Mental Health (DMH), or individuals who have ongoing support available from other sources, including private, Social Security and natural supports.

**Extent:** SE services are provided to eligible individuals according to their needs. Services are provided for a period not to exceed 24 months unless under special circumstances a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been jointly agreed to by the individual and the VR counselor and established in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). SE services may be provided to students with disabilities in the school system as a part of a team with the school, extended services agency, VR, family etc.

**Timing:** The transition of services from VR to the extended support service agency depends on the customer's needs and level of support. VR can provide long-term extended support on the job and employment specialist job coaching for up to 24 months or until the customer reaches an 80/20 level of intervention support. The 80/20 level of support is defined as needing less than 20% intervention by the employment specialist to successfully complete job tasks. For example, if a client is working 20 hours each week, the employment specialist would be intervening with job support for four hours or less each week.

The VR counselor is required to maintain communication with the Supported Employment (SE) team at least every 30 days. The SE team includes the VR counselor, customer, family members, extended services agency representative (i.e., support coordinator, mental-health worker, etc.), teacher (if a student), and employment specialist or employer. The team will coordinate services to ensure the client has the support needed to be successful on the job. Once the client reaches an 80/20 level of support or 24 months (whichever comes first) and the team agrees, services and funding will be transferred to the identified extended services agency for long-term SE.

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For youth and students with disabilities who qualify and need supported employment services, the transition to the extended services agency will occur at the 80/20 level of support or 24 months. Youth SE who have received ongoing support for a full 24 months and are not able to

transition to an extended services provider may receive extended services from USOR for a period of up to 48 months, until they reach age 25, or until an alternative extended services provider is found.

Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation(USOR) reserves Supported Employment (SE) funds for clients who have been determined most significantly disabled and who have secured an extended support agency for long-term SE support. USOR has partnered with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to provide and transfer funding and support for mutual clients. Though these are the primary agencies that USOR partners with for SE, there are other individual supports that may qualify as an extended support agency as provided for in policy.

USOR and DSPD, in partnership with the Utah Legislature, seek annual ongoing funding for the Support Work Independence (SWI) program. This program provides state funded supported employment supports for individuals who have accessed the vocational rehabilitation program and are on the waiting list for DSPD long-term supports. When the client is working successfully and is ready to transfer to DSPD for long-term support, state funds are utilized for SE while the individual remains on the waiting list for other waiver supports. The Utah State Board of Education also partners with the DSPD for long-term SE for clients who are receiving waiver services from DSPD. These individuals are provided with long-term SE as well as the other designated living support.

USOR partners with DSAMH with the Individual Placement Services (IPS) model to support local mental health agencies with training and technical assistance to provide supported employment services. USOR and DSAMH are partnering to provide supported employment and extended support to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). Through the support and direction of DSAMH, the local mental health agencies partner with USOR to provide the necessary treatment and employment support necessary for individual success. Supported employment is growing for mental health agencies; therefore, many projects are in progress across the state. USOR is providing guidance on policy, milestone payments and facility requirements in order to partner with each project and local mental-health agency.

USOR continues to set aside 50% of SE funds to be used for youth with most significant disabilities ages 14-24 who are in need of supported employment services. In order to qualify for use of these funds, the individual must be classified as someone with a most significant disability, require ongoing and extended services to maintain employment, and be between the ages of 14-24. USOR supports these individuals to seek and secure access to an extended services provider (DSPD, DSAMH, natural support, etc.). USOR's information management system is programmed to expend youth SE funds and adult SE funds based on the individual's age, employment status, and service provided. This allows USOR to capture and accurately report expenditures for adult SE and youth SE services

USOR continues to partner with DSPD, USBE, WDD and USU on the school-to-work project.

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USOR is partnering with Local Mental Health Authorities and DSAMH to provide and expand supported employment services for youth and adults with severe and persistent mental illness, specifically with the IPS model. Through Customized Employment and Supported Employment,

USOR is also providing services and support for individuals with most significant disabilities in sheltered workshops earning subminimum wages, who want to participate in integrated and competitive employment and have access to the community. USOR continues to develop training for internal staff and external service providers through the Supported Employment Coordinator position and a collaborative partnership with DSPD and DSAMH.

**(f) Annual Estimates.** Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

(A) VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Most Significant Disability	6,069	4,572	\$8,229,600	N/A
Significant Disability	8,886	6,664	\$8,156,736	N/A
Individual with a Disability	1,136	852	\$1,032,624	N/A

(B) Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Most Significant Disability	6,069	1663	\$3,013,356	N/A

**(g) Order of Selection.**

The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

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**Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.**

**(1) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—**

**(A) The justification for the order;**

In FFY 15, the Utah Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) Designated State Director found that there were insufficient resources to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals throughout the program year. As per state and federal laws and regulations, the Director established priority categories to determine the order in which otherwise eligible individuals would be served. On February 25, 2015, USOR received approval from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to implement an Order of Selection (OOS), which became effective on February 27, 2015. This decision was made due to the inadequate financial and personnel resources available to serve all eligible client

As of FFY 24, USOR remains under an Order of Selection and foresees the necessity to uphold this approach. At present, all priority categories are open, and there are no clients awaiting services. USOR will continue with the Order of Selection as client applicant trends and client service costs continue to rise annually,

**(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

In accordance with Section 101(a)(5)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the 2014 Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA), the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has designated that individuals with disabilities will receive vocational rehabilitation services in the following order of priority:

- Category 1: Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities (MSD)
- Category 2: Individuals with Significant Disabilities (SD)
- Category 3: Individuals with Disabilities (D)

Definitions:

- Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities: Has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; will require multiple (three or more) vocational rehabilitation services; and will receive those services for an extended period of time (at least six months).
- Individuals with Significant Disabilities: Has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; will require multiple (three or more) vocational rehabilitation services; and will receive those services for an extended period of time (at least six

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months).

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- Individuals with Disabilities: Has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; can benefit in terms of an employment outcome through the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; and will require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment.

#### Order of Selection Administrative Process:

- When setting up the Order of Selection, USOR will take into consideration all eligible individuals and prioritize them individually.
- The Order of Selection will be implemented statewide with the same priority levels in all areas of the state.
- Prior to implementation, USOR will submit the Order of Selection plan for public review and comment. USOR will also consult with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) regarding the decision to implement an Order of Selection and solicit input regarding the plan.

#### Order of Selection Implementation Procedures:

- When the Designated State Director of USOR invokes an Order of Selection to prioritize the provision of VR services, each eligible individual will be classified into one of the three priority categories. If necessary, further prioritization within a category will be done by application date.
- All applicants, including individuals in trial work exploration status and eligible without IPE status, shall be notified in writing of the Order of Selection and their subsequent priority classification. Included in the written notification will be their right to appeal the determination of their priority classification and the availability of the Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- Services necessary to determine eligibility, including services in extended evaluation, shall not be impacted by the Order of Selection.
- Individuals who are found to be eligible but whose priority category is closed at the time of eligibility determination shall be placed in Order of Selection Delayed Status.
- USOR will ensure eligible clients who are not assigned to an open Order of Selection category will have access to services provided under the Information and Referral System [Section 1010(a)(5)(D) of the Act]. Information and referral services include:
  - Providing VR information and guidance to assist the individuals to achieve employment.
  - Referring individuals appropriately to other federal and state programs, including the statewide workforce investment programs through the Department of Workforce Services, that are best suited to meet the individuals' specific employment needs.
- Individuals in Order of Selection Delayed Status shall be contacted at least once in the first 90 days after being placed in deferred status and periodically monitored as long as they remain in that status if they request follow up. Contact and monitoring lists will be computer generated with minimal efforts required of staff. USOR will also maintain the individual's client records to include documentation on the nature and scope of any information and referral services provided.

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Order of Selection: Change in Priority Levels

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- USOR will open and close priority categories, so long as the order of the categories is maintained and the continuity of services to all individuals selected for its services is assured.
  - USOR will use the individual's date of application to rank individuals within a priority category. This equitable and reasonable factor provides a method of selecting individuals from a waiting list when USOR has enough resources to serve some, but not all, individuals in that priority category.
- (C) **The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.**

As of FFY 24, all eligible clients are able to develop individualized plans for employment, receive services, and work towards an outcome of competitive and integrated employment.

- The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) estimates serving 4,572 individuals in Category 1 (MSD) at an annual cost of \$8,229,600. USOR estimates these individuals will obtain their goals and objectives between 3 to 4 years. USOR's annual estimate of successful employment outcomes is 689 Category 1 (MSD) clients.
- USOR estimates serving 6,664 individuals in Category 2 (SD) at an annual cost of \$8,156,736. USOR estimates these individuals will obtain their goals and objectives between 2 to 3 years. USOR's annual estimate of successful employment outcomes is 1,006 for (SD) clients.
- USOR estimates serving 852 Category 3 clients. USOR estimates a \$1,032,624 annual cost, with 1 to 2 years to complete goals and objectives. USOR's annual estimate of successful employment outcomes is 156 Category 3 (D) Clients.

USOR estimates the following time frame for eligible individuals in each category to achieve their goals:

- Individuals in Category 1 (MSD) will achieve their goals within 3 to 4 years.
- Individuals in Category 2 (SD) will achieve their goals within 2 to 3 years.
- Individuals in Category 3 (D) will achieve their goals in 2 years or less.

#### Managing Wait Lists:

Any individuals placed on a wait list will be contacted at least once in the first 90 days after being placed in delayed status. USOR's best practice is for individuals on the wait list to be contacted every 90 Days. Documented contact between USOR and clients on the wait list must not exceed 180 Days. Contact and monitoring lists will be computer generated with minimal efforts required of staff.

#### Informational and Referral Services:

USOR will provide Information and Referral services to individuals placed on the waiting list. USOR Staff will provide guidance to explain available referral sources and, where appropriate,

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initiate referrals to other relevant programs. Clients on the waiting list will receive written information and referrals for services provided by other components of the statewide

development system, other Federal and State programs, and Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work program, which offer employment-related services. The written referrals will include the name of the agency or organization as a specific point of contact and the most suitable services to address the client's employment needs. USOR staff will document information and referral services in the client's record, utilizing the Partner Referral System for direct referrals with agency and community partners, including one-stop center (AJC) Partners.

(2) Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

Yes

No

**(h) Waiver of Statewidness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewidness or has a previously approved waiver of statewidness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewidness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewidness, please indicate "not applicable."**

Not applicable. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation is not requesting a Waiver for Statewidness.

**(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.** In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

- (1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—
- (A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;
  - (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
  - (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
VR Counselors	101	103	105
VR Counseling Supervisors	25	26	26
District Directors	9	10	10
Office Specialists	43	45	45
Rehabilitation Techs	14	14	15
Pre-ETS Instructors	16	18	24
Business Relations Specialist	3	3	3
Employment Specialists	9	10	10
Work Incentive Counseling Staff	8	8	9
Assistive Technology Staff	8	8	8
Field Service Directors	3	3	8
Program Coordinators	3	4	4
Program Specialists	4	4	4
VR Staff Trainers	3	3	3
Business Analysts	3	3	3
Assistant Division Directors	2	2	2
State VR Director	1	1	1

**(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:**

Of the 265 positions within the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, 129 are rehabilitation counselors and counseling supervisors who provide the direct core, non-delegable Vocational Rehabilitation services to clients. During FFY 23, USOR served 16,827 individuals (applicant to eligible) with a counselor to client ratio of 1:130.

**(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:**

The University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute projects an annual population growth of 1.7% in Utah through 2028. In addition, 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium projects a similar growth trend, but also notes a lower disability prevalence in the state. In analysis of this information, along with referral trends, outreach initiatives, and the connection of potentially eligible students to the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the Utah State Office of

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Rehabilitation anticipates serving 14,650 eligible individuals annually in the next five years

(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

**(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students**



**who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Utah State University	Master's of Rehabilitation Counseling	53	18

**(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively engages in recruitment efforts to strengthen the rehabilitation profession within the state. USOR hiring officials regularly attend college and provider job fairs to promote the profession and attract applicants with relevant qualifications. The organization has fostered relationships with out-of-state colleges, including successful outreach to the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. From this partnership, USOR successfully recruited four Spanish-speaking VR counselors to relocate to Utah.

Throughout the year, USOR targets Vocational Rehabilitation counselor positions by participating in career fairs and presenting to Utah State University Rehabilitation Counselor Education (RCE) students. Additionally, USOR provides internship opportunities for rehabilitation students, with several later joining as full-time counselors. To broaden its reach, USOR collaborates with the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to amplify recruitment announcements across the nation, using platforms like LinkedIn and engaging with other social service professionals, including WIOA partners. USOR collaborates with DHRM to provide an alternative state application pathway that promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Work Ability Internship program, offered by USOR, has demonstrated success in creating a pathway to state employment for individuals with disabilities.

Active involvement in the state chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) allows USOR to leverage this association for recruitment and professional development. The organization backs the Utah Rehabilitation Association (URA) conferences and co-sponsors monthly 'brown bag training seminars' for staff. These endeavors aim to attract, train, and retain qualified personnel, especially those from minority backgrounds or with disabilities.

USOR offers flexible schedules, an incentive program that gives administrative leave for above average performance and generous educational assistance. USOR provides staff with a 10% Administrative Salary Increase (ASI) for master's degree attainment, and a 5% increase for CRC

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attainment. USOR supports employees by providing reimbursement for costs related to obtaining and maintaining certification and licensure. In addition, USOR focuses on internal

promotion and career mobility opportunities to support the long-term career development of staff.

**(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:**

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) provides for attendance at workshops, conferences, formal course work at institutions of higher education, as well as agency developed and conducted training sessions.

All new counselors participate in a training academy that provides in-person training, instruction and guidance on Vocational Rehabilitation policy, procedures and case management. New counselors also have an opportunity to learn about various support programs, community partners and resources. While working in their offices, new staff receive training, clinical supervision, administrative supervision, counseling skills instruction, and professional development from office leadership, counseling supervisor and district director. New counselors also receive support through peer mentorship, case conceptualizations and staffing meetings.

New and existing staff receive regular training in the areas of counseling, informed choice, medical, psychological and vocational assessment, assistive technology, culturally sensitive practices, job placement and development, ethics, diversity, equity and inclusion, labor market, technology, as well as other topics relevant to Rehabilitation counselors. Topics and content areas for training are identified through client record review findings, staff surveys, consumer satisfaction survey responses, program updates, local and national trends, system changes and leadership recommendations.

USOR provides monthly in-service training via the video conferencing system to offices throughout the state, as well as by virtual training content. USOR has consistently exceeded the required training hours required to maintain national certification and has also provided counselors with the training hours required to maintain state licensure this past year.

During FY 22 and FY 23, USOR provided training in topics centered on intersectional identities for persons with disabilities. Training was foundationally grounded in the CRCC code of ethics, specifically with respect to section D. Multicultural Considerations. Training content included sessions such as: Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion: Understanding Our Ethical Responsibility as Rehabilitation Counselors, Intersection of Systemic Racism & Bias within Chronic Pain and Substance Abuse Treatment, What Difference Does Difference Make (this session included overarching topics like equity, access, diversity and connection, encouraging VR professionals who are experts in ability disability, to apply these tools to their work and knowledge), Intersectionality, Disability & Victimization, the Status & Experiences of Utah

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Women of Color, and Exploring Healing Among Survivors with Mental Health Conditions from

Black, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color. USOR continues to operate within a lens centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion that represents.

Furthermore, USOR provides for attendance at workshops, conferences, webinars, formal course work at institutions of higher education, as well as agency developed and conducted training sessions. USOR provides monthly in-service training via high definition video conferencing to offices throughout Utah, as well as by web-streaming training content. USOR has consistently exceeded the required training hours required to maintain national certification and has also provided counselors with the training hours required to maintain state licensure this past year. Available training incorporates the dissemination of knowledge gained through research in rehabilitation.

USOR leadership, program specialists and other staff attend local and national conferences and receive training where research relevant to their areas of specialization is disseminated. The information obtained is used for the development of staff training, along with application for enhancement of policies, practices and programs. USOR also surveys staff on the training they attended in order to obtain feedback on making improvements and identifying additional training needs. In addition, USOR encourages staff to be aware of current research, information and practices in the field of rehabilitation and disability. USOR regularly shares and incorporates into trainings information provided by professional associations, government programs and university resource centers, such as the National Rehabilitation Association, Helen Keller National Center for deafblind youth and adult, Utah State University's Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Mathematica, University of Utah's Policy Institute, George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education, and ADA National Network.

**(3) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**

**(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

**(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has established hiring preferences, policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that the USOR professional and paraprofessional personnel are prepared and trained. USOR has a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) policy that ensures professionals providing services meet the requirement of master's level education, rehabilitation counselor certification and state licensure. This policy applies to all rehabilitation counselors, counseling supervisors, district directors and field service directors.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation CSPD standard requires employees meet one of the following criteria:

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- Hold a Utah State Licensure in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling

- Meet the criteria to obtain a Utah State Licensure in Vocational Rehabilitation

Counseling which includes holding a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or related field as outlined in the Utah State licensing regulations; obtaining 4000 hours of supervised experience under a Licensed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; and having taken and passed the CRC exam (national certification exam). Employees who hold a Master's degree in an approved counseling field will be considered to have met the CSPD if they have completed the required 4000 hours of supervised work under the supervision of an LVRC and have completed and passed the CRC national exam. CSPD status is tracked for counselors, supervising counselors, and district directors. In addition, the CSPD database contains information on various area directors, administrators and program specialists.

CSPD plans also require new counselors to meet the standard within five years of their hire date. Counselors who do not meet CSPD upon hire and require additional graduate level education are expected to enroll in at least one graduate level class and apply for a graduate program during their probationary period (first 12 months of hire).

USOR makes every effort to recruit and hire individuals who meet the USOR's CSPD standard and supports the training of existing employees who do not meet the CSPD standard. USOR offers ongoing educational assistance for those needing additional education to meet the standard. USOR offers a pay increase for counselors who obtain national certification (CRC).

All new counselors receive a notification indicating their current CSPD standing and the requirement they must meet within their first year of hire and subsequent five years to meet the standard. Supervisors track the progress of the employee and include the requirement to meet CSPD in the counselor's performance plan and evaluation.

Each new counselor hired must complete a Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Qualification of Personnel Standard form. For staff who meet the standard at the time of hire and those who will meet the standard within five years of hire with additional work experience and national certification, those hired with a Master's degree in an approved counseling field, no additional documentation is required except verification of passing the CRC exam and verification of state licensure. For counselors who need additional education to meet the standard, sections will be added to their performance plans under the heading of Professional Development. The Professional Development section must include a plan describing how the counselor will meet the standard, by obtaining the required Master's degree and National Certification, within five years of the date of hire. These plans are submitted to the USOR training coordinator with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation Qualification of Personnel Standard form within 30 days of hire. Progress sufficient to meet the CSPD plan requirements will be monitored in each subsequent year. If an employee has not satisfactorily completed all activities outlined for the year of review, they will receive an unsatisfactory rating in the Professional Development section and be placed on corrective action. This plan will include goals and deadlines for remediating their lack of progress toward their CSPD Plans. If the corrective action is not successful, disciplinary action will result, which may include termination based upon non-compliance with the Department of Workforce Service's policy.

USOR assists with partial funding for graduate level education for those hired without a Master's degree in a counseling field. A graduate degree specific to rehabilitation counseling is required and considered to be directly related to the job requirements of a vocational rehabilitation counselor. The CACREP accredited program chosen must be eligible to grant an RSA scholarship to offset the costs of tuition, fees, and books. All employees attending these programs must apply for the RSA scholarship. In the rare instance where an approved graduate program has exhausted available scholarship monies for a given semester, employees will be

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eligible to request full reimbursement from the department.



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All requests for USOR educational benefits will be considered contingent upon available funding, and employees will be notified of approval prior to enrollment for each semester. All related educational expenses and time required to complete any graduate program will be the responsibility of the employee.

While it is the intention of USOR to establish and maintain funding necessary to allow all employees to meet the CSPD requirements, exceptional and unforeseen circumstances may arise that prohibit such funding. Should funding become unavailable, the employee will be allowed an adjusted time frame to accomplish the standard when such funding becomes available.

Upon completion of a Master's degree, counselors will be promoted to the position of Rehabilitation Counselor II and will receive a 10% increase. Counseling staff who obtain the CRC certification will receive a 5% increase. Counselors must continue to maintain CRC certification or they will lose the salary increase. In addition, once a counselor obtains their CRC designation and has completed the required number of hours, they must meet the eligibility criteria to become an LVRC. To assist counselors in maintaining licensure and certification, USOR provides training for continuing education credits. The department also provides reimbursement for CRC and LVRC application and renewal.

USOR instituted a hiring preference to encourage hiring staff that already meet the CSPD standard:

- Individuals who hold the Utah State Licensure for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
- Individuals who meet the USOR CSPD standard but have not yet obtained state licensure.
- Individuals enrolled in a CORE/CACREP accredited program to obtain a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
- Individuals who hold a Master's degree in an approved counseling field as outlined in the state licensing law.
- Individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree in a related social service field such as counseling, psychology, social work, etc. and who have three or more years of employment or vocational counseling experience.
- Individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree in a related social service field with less than three years of counseling experience are hired as a rehabilitation counselor trainee.

Progress of USOR staff is collected and monitored through the data system. Staff employed as rehabilitation counselors, counseling supervisors, district directors and field service directors must meet the CSPD standards and are tracked through this system.

In addition, USOR has established policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training and staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the DSU. Training and professional development targets necessary rehabilitation skills particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, rehabilitation technology, disability and utilization of labor market information. USOR maintains procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals within the DSU.

**(4) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in**

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**appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) works to ensure the availability of personnel who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English-speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. USOR makes coordinated efforts to hire vocational rehabilitation counselors who have bilingual skills to meet the needs of eligible individuals with limited English speaking abilities.

Beyond linguistic diversity, USOR also acknowledges the unique communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. To this end, USOR has strategically designated specific caseloads across the state to be managed by professionals who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). USOR provides interpreting services through qualified staff members, through telephone, video relay services, real-time captioning, and through outside staff services purchased per state contract. USOR also routinely provides materials in alternative formats, to meet the needs of individuals. This includes electronic, large print and braille.

**(5) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has put in place procedures and initiatives to align with the comprehensive system of personnel development outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A cornerstone of this alignment is the state interagency agreement between the USOR and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). This agreement ensures a systematic transition for Utah's youth with disabilities.

One primary objective of this partnership is to elevate awareness and understanding of Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) available to eligible and potentially eligible students. The agreement provides clarity on how USOR and USBE work synergistically, detailing collaborative efforts in cross-training, offering technical assistance and fostering partnerships at the local level. Furthermore, to support best practices and enhance staff capabilities, USOR and USBE jointly host an annual transition institute conference. This event serves as a platform for USOR staff and local education agency personnel to receive training and share effective strategies, ensuring a seamless and efficient transition for the youth they serve.

**COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)**

**(j) Coordination with Education Officials.** In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

- (1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has robust plans, policies, and procedures in place to strengthen coordination with education officials overseeing the public education of students with disabilities. These mechanisms aim to ease the transition of students with

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disabilities into employment and independent living, with a focus on providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students aged 14 to 21.

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Annually, USOR collaborates with the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) through a cross-training conference. This gathering provides an avenue for teams from both sides to strategize and refine their collaboration efforts, particularly concerning Transition and Pre-ETS. A pivotal part of this strategy involves synchronizing the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) with their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), ensuring seamless progression from school to post-school endeavors.

To support this process, USOR maintains policy and procedures to ensure that eligible students with disabilities develop an IPEt prior to exiting high school. Both USOR and USBE have affirmed their commitment through a signed Interagency Agreement. This agreement delineates the blueprint for state and local level coordination, guaranteeing a smooth transition for Utah's students with disabilities as they navigate from academic settings to the workforce.

Both USOR and USBE attend the annual National Transition Institute sponsored by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition to develop state goals and strategies to improve student transition from school to employment. In addition, as specified in the DWS and USBE interagency agreement, USOR will share information regarding policies, procedures, guidelines, programs and services for the purpose of improving the access to, and availability of Transition and Pre-ETS services. The interagency agreement also specifies that USBE will assist USOR in the facilitation of provision of transition services.

To ensure procedural integrity, USOR's Client Services specifies that student's IPEs will be developed and signed prior to graduation from high school or post high. USOR's Client Service Policy Manual Chapter 10 (Individual Plan for Employment) states that IPEs will be developed as soon as possible, but within 90 days unless an exception is granted. Furthermore, USOR, in partnership with USBE and the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), aligns IEPs with IPEs. This coordination ensures timely IPE development and signing, all within the prescribed 90 days and prior to the student's exit from the school system.

**(2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**

- (A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**

The Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) maintains a state-level interagency agreement with Utah State Board of Education (USBE) which governs collaboration with school districts and public charter schools who serve secondary education students. The interagency agreement includes provisions for consultation, technical assistance, professional development, Vocational Rehabilitation referrals and eligibility, and individualized goals of the local teams. USOR has assigned transition counselors to each local school district and charter school. The counselors meet with special educators and administrators, provide outreach to students and parents, provide Vocational Rehabilitation Welcome Sessions to students, provide Job Readiness Workshops to students, attend IEP meetings, as well as cover all referrals and questions from that school.

The interagency agreement with USBE also provides guidance and clarification of expectations as set forth by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), defines terms, and

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delineates financial responsibilities. It describes consultation and technical assistance available to assist USBE and local districts in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from

school to post school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services and Pre-Employment Transition Services to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. Recognizing the diverse geographical landscape and potential logistical challenges, USOR and the LEAs have integrated alternative communication tools, like video conferencing and conference calls. This ensures continuous and effective collaboration regardless of any physical distance or logistical barriers.

**(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;**

The interagency agreement between the Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) provides for joint transition planning coordination for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and specifies the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

The agreement includes directives for establishing state lead agencies and delineating qualified personnel responsible for overseeing transition services. It includes provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and describes procedures developed for outreach to students with disabilities during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. To ensure a comprehensive understanding and shared goals, representatives from both entities are embedded within the other's key advisory groups. Specifically, a representative from the Utah State Board of Education Special Education is an integral member of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Conversely, a representative from USOR plays an active role in the Utah Special Education Advisory Panel (USEAP). These cross-representations facilitate continuous dialogue, consultation, and assistance between the two bodies.

Every year, USOR and the USBE collaborate to formulate statewide objectives aimed at enhancing transition services. This collaborative effort is enriched by their participation in the Capacity Building Institute, an initiative sponsored by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). Furthermore, representatives from USOR and USBE play active roles in the Statewide Transition Council (STC). Alongside other state agencies and stakeholders, this council's overarching mission is to elevate post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities in Utah. Through interagency collaboration and shared expertise, the council works diligently to ensure a seamless and productive transition for these students.

**(C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;**

The interagency agreement between the Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities for each entity, ensuring clarity and direction in their collaborative efforts.

USBE agrees to ensure that all children ages 3 through 21 with disabilities are provided free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under IDEA. USBE has responsibility for educating transition youth between age 14 and school exit through graduation, reaching maximum age, or no longer IDEA-eligible. Under IDEA, USBE will provide education and activities focused on

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improving the academic and functional achievement of the student, to facilitate movement from the school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training,



counseling and guidance, integrated employment (including supported employment), adult services, independent living or community participation. USBE is also responsible for funding transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services including speech-language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation (including therapeutic recreation), social work services, counseling services (including rehabilitation counseling), orientation and mobility services and medical services (for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in students.

USOR is responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with a disability, including students and youth with disabilities, to prepare for, secure, retain or regain an employment outcome that is consistent with his or her strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. In addition, USOR is responsible for providing transition services to eligible students and youth with disabilities as they transition from school to adult life. USOR will coordinate with USBE to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students who are eligible and potentially eligible for services. USOR coordinates with USBE at the state and local level to ensure that transition services, to include Pre-ETS, provided by each entity are complementary and non-duplicative. USOR and USBE agree to collaborate on financial responsibility of services, within the guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA. Both agencies will respect the resources set forth by the policies and procedures that guide each agency's services. When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with Vocational Rehabilitation, the cost of services necessary for both education and for the student to become employed, will be negotiated between the LEA representative and the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, pending any necessary approval through LEA administration and USOR chain of command. At any time during the transition process, comparable benefits or additional agency representatives will be included in the IEP and IPE transition team as an additional resource for financial responsibility. Agreements on shared cost of required services for the student/client, will be in writing in the IEP and IPE, to ensure collaboration and understanding of agency involvement. USOR and USBE are separately responsible for recruiting, hiring, training and retaining qualified personnel responsible for transition services and the coordination of transition services. USOR's staffing policy and practices comply with CSPD standards and state licensing requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. USBE maintains a separate staffing policy that adheres to state educator and para-educator licensing and credential requirements.

- (D) **Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively engages with a broad range of educational and community partners to ensure that students with disabilities are promptly identified and provided the necessary transition services.

Key school personnel, including special education teachers, administrators, 504 coordinators, school counselors, and nurses, collaborate closely with USOR. Additionally, community non-profit organizations, such as the Utah Parent Center, also play a vital role in this outreach process. These collective efforts aim to pinpoint students requiring Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Informational sessions, bolstered by both digital

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and printed resources, provide clarity on the services offered, emphasizing the eligibility

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criteria, application procedures, and the range of services available. Notably, outreach materials underscore the opportunity for students as young as 14-years-old to access these services.

To support and enhance outreach endeavors, USOR has a notable presence on various advisory and operational councils. This includes local school district transition councils, the statewide transition council, and the Utah Futures Advisory Committee. These platforms foster a cohesive collaboration between the Department of Workforce Services Workforce Development Division and Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Utah State Board of Education, Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity and higher education.

Further strengthening this collaborative structure, USOR has designated roles such as a transition coordinator and two Pre-ETS program specialists. Their primary responsibility is to augment the quality of transition services provided by USOR.

In addition, by working collaboratively with the Utah State Board of Education and the Local Education Agencies, USOR ensures that students, both eligible and potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services, have information and access to services. In addition to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, USOR has Pre-ETS instructor positions in each of the Vocational Rehabilitation district offices to provide Pre-ETS services and outreach and coordination activities to students.

The outreach and identification procedure for students with disabilities is multi-faceted and inclusive. By casting a wide net through varied platforms and methods, USOR ensures that every student who could benefit from transition services is not only identified but also equipped with comprehensive knowledge about the opportunities available to them.

**(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and**

To fulfill the documentation mandates outlined in 34 C.F.R. § 397, both the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) have a coordination process, which is defined in the statewide interagency agreement.

Furthermore, USOR has set forth specific policies and procedures concerning Section 511—Limitations of Subminimum Wage. These guidelines encompass the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services, Pre-Employment Transition Services, as well as career counseling, information and referral services to youth contemplating subminimum wage employment.

To reinforce this effort, USOR and USBE actively collaborate with the Local Education Agencies (LEA). This collaboration ensures that youth receive the requisite career counseling, information, and referral services. Information related to these services is communicated to parents, guardians, teachers, and students during IEP meetings, fostering a comprehensive postsecondary transition planning process. In addition, USOR has introduced disability career navigators to support these activities. These navigators are tasked with providing education and outreach services to youth with disabilities and their parents, particularly those considering the prospects of subminimum wage employment.

Lastly, USOR maintains a centralized database to track and maintain records, making it easier to verify and demonstrate compliance regarding its statutory responsibilities.

**(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program**

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**under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

According to the statewide interagency collaborative agreement, the State Education Authority and the Local Education Agency affirm not to enter into contracts or partnerships with entities possessing a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which could lead to employing a youth with a disability at subminimum wage levels. Furthermore, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation commits to adhering to all regulatory mandates as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, specifically Section 511 - Limitation on the Use of Subminimum Wage.

**(k) Coordination with Employers.** In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) is actively engaged in several initiatives aimed at forging partnerships with employers to uncover competitive, integrated employment opportunities and foster career exploration that facilitates the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services. These initiatives are primarily spearheaded by the Business Relations team, the Choose to Work (CTW) Program, and the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD). Through these coordinated efforts, USOR enhances the connection between employers and individuals with disabilities. The approach involves outreach endeavors, disability awareness training, consultation services, job fairs, workshops, business networking activities, and job posting networks. Key activities, services, and initiatives are outlined as follows:

- **Customized Services:** The USOR Business Relations Team actively engages in outreach activities, meeting with individual businesses to furnish information and resources regarding hiring practices, disability awareness, recruitment strategies, retention programs, consulting, technical assistance, tax credits, incentives, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reasonable accommodations, employment laws and other pertinent subjects related to disabilities and assistive technology.
- **Workshops, Job Fairs, and Trainings:** USOR conducts semi-annual employer workshops focused on hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities and career preparation. These workshops provide business partners an opportunity to gain insights into disability-related topics, accommodations, and other employment-related issues. USOR offers job fairs designed to connect businesses with job-ready individuals with disabilities and provide career exploration opportunities. They also offer avenues for internships and mentorship experiences. Additionally, the USOR collaborates with the GCEPD to support the Utah affiliate of Disability:IN, a business-to-business mentoring model aimed at promoting disability-inclusive workforce practices.
- **PWDNET:** Through the one-stop center's (AJC's) online job board, employers have the option to use the keyword "PWDNET" in their recruitment, facilitating the search for job opportunities by job seekers with disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and employment specialists. The business relations team manages an email listserv of job postings shared by business partners and recruitment entities targeting individuals with disabilities.
- **Choose to Work (CTW):** The core services of the Choose to Work program involve job development and job placement for individuals with disabilities. CTW employment specialists collaborate with the business relations team to organize employer workshops aimed at increasing awareness about hiring and retaining individuals with

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disabilities. These specialists actively participate in local chambers of commerce and sit on local and community boards to facilitate Vocational Rehabilitation services leading to

employment outcomes. They also work closely with workforce development specialists, other one-stop center (AJC) partners and affiliates to identify integrated employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities.

- **Business Customized Training (BCT):** The business relations team also helps to support Business Customized Training (BCT) with specific business partners. BCT entails negotiating a tailored training program and training duration in partnership with USOR, a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) of the business's choice and the business partner. The designated CRP conducts training on-site at the business partner's location, preparing clients for potential employment opportunities with the partner business.
- **Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP):** USOR utilizes the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), a platform developed by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Employment Team (NET) in partnership with disABLEDperson, Inc. TAP serves as a connection point for a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation clients seeking employment and a job posting system for employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities.

USOR offers a diverse range of transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) aimed at connecting transition-aged youth, including students with disabilities, with employers. To facilitate these transition services, USOR leverages the business relations team, Choose to Work and Pre-Employment Transition Services team.

The various USOR teams collaborate closely with the Governor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities to organize Disability Mentoring Day events for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. These events are hosted by interested businesses, offering insights into their organizations and addressing concerns raised by students with disabilities. During these events, students have the opportunity to tour the company premises and gain a firsthand understanding of the job opportunities available within the business. Local high school students, accompanied by their teachers, advocates, or parents, are invited to attend these informative gatherings.

Furthermore, the VR district office staff, which includes Pre-ETS instructors, VR counselors and supervisors, partners with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to develop events and activities with employers tailored for students. These activities encompass business tours, employer panels, mock interviews, career days and workshops.

USOR is committed to expanding work-based learning and job exploration opportunities for students and youth with disabilities. USOR has established contracts with providers to support the provision of Pre-ETS, with a strong emphasis on collaboration with employers to deliver work-based learning experiences for eligible and potentially eligible students. These services are provided in both individual and group settings, fostering partnerships with employers to enrich the learning experience.

Additionally, USOR incorporates a career exploration track within its Work Ability Job Fairs. This unique offering enables LEAs to bring students to engage with hiring specialists and explore potential employment opportunities. The business relations team and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors equip school transition specialists and teachers with information packets to prepare students for these events. These packets cover essential topics such as dressing for success, interviewing skills, resume building and appropriate etiquette when interacting with business partners. Students can also participate in workshops covering subjects such as "Working in Government Professions, State and Federal Hiring Initiatives," "Employer Panel," "How to Dress on a Dime and Interview Success" and "Social Security and

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Working."



**(I) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies.** In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are **not** carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

**(1) State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has a collaborative relationship with the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP), which is a state program carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. UATP provides assistive technology devices and services to Utahns with disabilities, in addition to providing training to individuals with disabilities, families and professional service providers. Through USOR's Utah Center for Assistive Technology office, UATP operates a program that provides refurbished mobility devices and equipment to low-income individuals with disabilities. In addition, specific to the provision of assistive technology services, Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) serves as a statewide resource for information and technical services for people with disabilities for assistance with acquiring and using assistive technology devices. Another assistive technology resource within USHE is the Utah assistive technology team which provides assistance to adults and youth with disabilities by providing introductory training and support on computer technology that can enhance education and employment. This includes free consultations, workshops, and information and referral services and augmentative communication device loaner programs for students with disabilities in public schools.

**(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively partners with AgrAbility of Utah, a program under the umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture. AgrAbility's primary objective is to assist farmers, ranchers, and their families in navigating the challenges posed by age, illness, injury, or other disabilities, ensuring they can continue their agricultural endeavors. Specialists from AgrAbility assess individual cases, offering pragmatic solutions tailored to each unique situation. This can range from restructuring work tasks and adapting agricultural operations to tapping into community and state resources. With their expertise, they design customized plans addressing the specific needs of farmers and ranchers.

USOR works hand-in-hand with AgrAbility, lending its expertise to shape these recommendations. The focus is on enabling individuals with disabilities to pursue agricultural employment safely and effectively. Many of these tailored recommendations encompass the introduction of assistive technologies or other necessary accommodations, ensuring individuals remain active and productive in the agricultural sector.

**(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) actively collaborates with various agencies dedicated to assisting out-of-school youth. Among its key partners are the Division of Services for People with Disabilities, the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health, Community Rehabilitation Programs, the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services and regional mental health agencies. To streamline these collaborations, USOR has designated liaisons across the state. These liaisons play a pivotal role in interagency referrals, conducting outreach, disseminating information and coordinating services tailored to the specific needs of out-of-

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school youth. Additionally, USOR partners with the Title I WIOA Youth program, further enhancing the referral process and ensuring comprehensive support for these youth.

**(4) State use contracting programs;**

The State Use Program serves to create employment opportunities and to enhance independence of people with disabilities by having departments of state government purchase commodities and services from qualified Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Utah state law sets aside funding for contracts to be awarded to CRPs. The USOR assistant director serves as a member of the Purchasing from People with Disabilities Advisory Board, which implements the State Use Program.

**(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) continues to collaborate with the Departments of Health and Human Services related to provision of services for individuals eligible for home and community-based waiver programs. USOR, the Division of Services for People with Disabilities and the Utah State Board of Education will coordinate efforts to provide information and referral resources to Utahns with disabilities interested in entering or reentering the workforce. The three aforementioned agencies will negotiate and allocate resources as necessary to support a comprehensive system of work support resources that will increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Utah.

**(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) maintains a long standing cooperative agreement with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD), the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities. USOR and DSPD are partners in the Employment First legislative initiative in Utah (UT HB 240) which establishes competitive, integrated employment as the preferred option for Utahns with disabilities. USOR and DSPD are in the process of developing an improved data sharing agreement to enhance collaboration and coordinate services for shared clients.

USOR and DSPD collaborate to provide extended services to clients participating in supported employment services, including customized employment services. DSPD receives its extended support funding through Medicaid Waivers and the Utah State Legislature. This funding is ongoing and available to provide long term services for individuals who have utilized Vocational Rehabilitation supports, are eligible for DSPD Services, and need long term supported employment services. USOR and DSPD coordinate to ensure successful transitions of mutual clients from ongoing services to extended services. DSPD currently has a waitlist for services and will provide services to those with the most critical needs first when funding is available. DSPD has a yearly allocation in their budget to provide extended services to clients who are on their waitlist.

**(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) and the Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use and Mental Health (DSUMH) have a longstanding partnership and collaborative relationship to provide supported employment opportunities for individuals with primary diagnoses of severe and persistent mental illness. USOR coordinates and collaborates with the DSAMH to implement the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS). IPS is a Supported Employment model that is designed to meet the needs of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. To implement the IPS model, local mental health agencies receive employment support training from DSAMH and register as Community Rehabilitation Program providers

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with USOR.

**(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and**

The Department of Workforce Services Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) has developed and maintains cooperative agreements where necessary with federal and state agencies not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. The department maintains cooperative agreements with the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). As required by Utah state legislation, USOR has coordinated plans with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health (DSUMH) within DHHS to carry out services related to employment for persons with significant disabilities. Additional agreements exist relevant to the Employment First initiatives in Utah. The department also maintains cooperative agreements with the USBE, the Utah Department of Corrections, The Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Veterans Administration (VA).

**(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.**

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) holds the authority to engage in contracts with organizations to deliver Vocational Rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in compliance with Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. Within the framework of the Combined State Plan, USOR has established fee-for-service provider agreements with both private and non-profit entities offering Vocational Rehabilitation services throughout Utah. Furthermore, the office maintains vendor relationships with agencies involved in Supported Job Based Training (SJB T), Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) services. These partnerships involve fee-for-service agreements and participation in job coach training activities. USOR remains committed to identifying and, where applicable, expanding the availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) offering supported employment and extended services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, in line with state plan requirements. To ensure the efficacy of these agreements and the quality of services, USOR employs an employment support services specialist. This specialist is responsible for overseeing provider agreements, ensuring that providers meet the necessary training qualifications, and monitoring the performance of these providers.

**VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM**

STATES CHOOSING TO SUBMIT A COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SIX CORE PROGRAMS—THE ADULT PROGRAM, DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM, YOUTH PROGRAM, WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM, ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM, AND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM— AND ALSO SUBMIT RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR ANY OF THE ELEVEN PARTNER PROGRAMS IT ELECTS TO INCLUDE IN ITS COMBINED STATE PLAN. WHEN A STATE INCLUDES A COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM IN ITS COMBINED STATE PLAN, IT NEED NOT SUBMIT A SEPARATE PLAN OR APPLICATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PROGRAM.<sup>24</sup> IF INCLUDED, COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS ARE SUBJECT TO THE “COMMON PLANNING ELEMENTS” IN SECTIONS II-IV OF THIS DOCUMENT, WHERE SPECIFIED, AS WELL AS THE PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THAT PROGRAM.

**JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS**

(OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 1225-0086)

THE JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS (JVSG) ARE MANDATORY, FORMULA-BASED STAFFING GRANTS TO

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STATES (INCLUDING DC, PR, VI AND GUAM). THE JVSG IS FUNDED ANNUALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A FUNDING FORMULA DEFINED IN THE STATUTE (38 U.S.C. 4102A (C) (2) (B) AND REGULATION AND OPERATES ON A FISCAL YEAR (NOT PROGRAM YEAR) BASIS, HOWEVER, PERFORMANCE METRICS ARE

COLLECTED AND REPORTED QUARTERLY ON A PROGRAM YEAR BASIS (AS WITH THE ETA-9002 SERIES). CURRENTLY, VETS JVSG OPERATES ON A MULTI-YEAR GRANT APPROVAL CYCLE MODIFIED AND FUNDED ANNUALLY.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(B)(5) AND § 4102A(C), THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (ASVET) MAKES GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR USE IN EACH STATE TO SUPPORT DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVER) STAFF. AS A CONDITION TO RECEIVE FUNDING, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(C)(2) REQUIRES STATES TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A GRANT THAT CONTAINS A STATE PLAN NARRATIVE, WHICH INCLUDES:

- A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM.

Veteran Employment Services encompass a range of services administered by the Department of Workforce Services to support veteran job seekers in securing and sustaining employment. These services are made possible through the funding provided by JVSG, which supports the roles of Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and the consolidated DVOP and LVER positions. These services are delivered virtually, in-person or through a combination of both methods.

#### Employment Service

DVOP specialists provide the following services to veterans, eligible spouses, and other eligible populations with significant barriers to employment:

- Individualized career services
- Comprehensive and specialized assessment
- Employment planning
- Career planning
- Career counseling
- Customer follow-up and engagement
- Referrals to outside community partners
- United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program coordination

LVERs promote the hiring of all veterans to employers and work with business services partners to connect job-ready veterans to employment opportunities through:

- Develop relationships with employers who are interested in hiring veterans
- Job development
- Recruitment assistance
- Educating and train employers on:

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- Veteran employment law



- Incentives for hiring veterans
  - Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit
  - Utah Veteran Employment Tax Credit
- Developing and promoting:
  - United States Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) Hire Vet Medallion Program participation
  - Utah Patriot Partner Program participation
  - Job and resource fairs
  - Employer online and employment center recruitments

Consolidated DVOPs provide the following:

- Individualized career services
- Comprehensive and specialized assessment
- Employment planning
- Career planning
- Career counseling
- Referrals to outside community partners
- Job development
- VR & E coordination
- Develop relationships with employers who are interested in hiring veterans
- Recruitment assistance
- Education and training for employers on:
  - Veteran employment law
  - Incentives for hiring veterans such as:
    - Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit
    - Utah Veteran Employment Tax Credit
  - DOL VETS Hire Vet Medallion Program participation
  - Utah Patriot Partner Program participation
  - Job and resource fairs
  - Employer online and employment center recruitments

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Training Services

DVOP Specialist

- Referral and coordination with:
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
  - Wagner Peyser services
  - Family Employment Program (TANF)
  - VR&E
  - Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE)

#### LVER

- Development of apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training experiences
- Employer seminars to educate employers and employer associations
- Veteran resource and Infinity Group assistance

#### Consolidated DVOP & LVER

- Referral and coordination with:
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
  - Wagner Peyser services
  - Family Employment Program (TANF)
  - VR&E
  - Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE)
- Development of apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training experiences
- Employer seminars to educate employers and employer associations
- Veteran resource and Infinity Group assistance

#### Job Placement

##### DVOP Specialist

- Assist with the training of priority of service
- Labor exchange
- Labor market information

#### LVER

- Worksite visits to encourage business services staff to develop job opportunities for

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veteran customers

- Coordination with federal contractors

## Consolidated DVOP &amp; LVER

- Assist with the training of priority of service
- Labor exchange
- Labor market information
- Worksite visits
- Coordination with federal contractors
- Rural employer and veteran employment assistance

The Utah Patriot Partnership (UPP) program, initiated in 2011, is an employer recognition initiative launched by Workforce Services. It acknowledges employers pledging to hire qualified veterans over non-veteran applicants. Over 1,200 employers have joined the Utah Patriot Partnership program, receiving a signed certificate from the governor and a window decal. A star symbol is displayed next to Utah Patriot Partnerships employer names in the labor exchange system on jobs.utah.gov. The program has been expanded to encourage employers to go 'beyond the pledge' by engaging in activities that promote veteran hiring and retention, such as developing company policies that are veterans-friendly and veterans-ready. The LVER promotes Utah Patriot Partnerships at a statewide level and distributes welcome packets to local workforce development specialists and consolidated position staff for new UPP employers. Workforce development specialists engage with employers to recognize their participation in UPP, explain 'beyond the pledge' activities, and review the company's hiring expectations and veteran hiring strategies. Additionally, the LVER and workforce development specialists encourage employers to apply for the DOL VETS Hire Vet Medallion Program to gain national recognition for employing and retaining veterans. Information about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program is provided on the department's veteran page on jobs.utah.gov and is presented to employers as part of UPP program orientation.

B. THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE; SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE.

**DVOP Specialist.** The DVOP specialist's primary duty is to provide individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses facing significant barriers to employment, or belonging to additional populations deemed eligible for services. Individualized career services includes:

- Comprehensive skill and service need assessments.
- Development, implementation and monitoring of an individualized employment plan to achieve the veteran's employment goal.
- Individual or group counseling and career planning.
- Short-term pre-vocational services, preparing individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Follow-up contact to ensure successful employment and address remaining employment barriers affecting retention.

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The provision of individualized career services employs the case management approach taught by the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), which includes assessments, employment

plan development and continuous contact with the veteran to alleviate employment barriers and secure employment.

DVOP specialists conduct outreach to identify eligible veterans and eligible spouses needing individualized career services to obtain employment. These job seekers are encouraged to register or apply for services. Outreach services occur on-site or at local community events to locate veterans with significant barriers to employment, leveraging existing databases the department has for proactive service offers.

**LVER.** Workforce Services utilizes a full-time LVER position and a Consolidated DVOP & LVER position to meet Title 38, Section 4104 U.S. Code requirements. The department achieves this by leveraging the services of other Workforce Development Division employees and workforce development specialists in collaboration with the LVER.

The LVER's duties encompass:

- Serving as the statewide employer point-of-contact for veteran hiring inquiries.
- Collaborating with and training workforce development specialists on processes, incentives and employer coordination for veteran hiring.
- Acting as the statewide contact for employer referrals from the Utah Director of Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS).
- Coordinating department efforts for statewide job and career fairs aimed at veteran job seekers.
- Managing the implementation and promotion of the Utah Patriot Partnership program with participating Utah employers, including the promotion of 'beyond the pledge' activities and services.
- Assisting in the development and dissemination of policies and materials for local one-stop centers (AJCs) to support veteran hiring and retention.

The LVER operates from the department's administration building in Salt Lake City and closely coordinates their activities with the one-stop center's (AJC's) designated workforce development specialists and the consolidated DVOP & LVER. They collaborate and actively advocate to employers of the benefits of hiring and retaining veterans within their workforce.

To foster employer relationships, the LVER, in conjunction with workforce development specialists, employs various methods, including in-person, telephone, mail and electronic communication. They attend trade association meetings, employer conferences and job and community fairs to establish and maintain connections with employers. The goal is to generate job opportunities for veterans, educate employers about the advantages of hiring veterans and cultivate relationships that will benefit veterans in the future.

**Consolidated DVOP & LVER.** The consolidated DVOP & LVER staff fulfills the roles of both a DVOP specialist and LVER staff, promoting the more efficient administration of services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment. The consolidated position is designed to ensure that services to veterans and employers are not compromised.

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER.

The Department of Workforce Services offers many federal and state-funded programs. Its

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mission is to strengthen Utah's communities by connecting the workforce to new opportunities and providing services to individuals and families in need. The department is structured around four fundamental principles or cornerstones: operational excellence, customer experience,



employee success and community connection. Moreover, the department has identified four target populations: veterans, refugees, homeless individuals and individuals with disabilities.

Various divisions within the department serve veterans, military members and spouses. However, employment services primarily fall under the Workforce Development Division (WDD). WDD is operationally organized into Economic Service Areas. DVOP specialists and consolidated DVOP & LVER positions are co-located and well integrated into one-stop centers (AJCs). They receive training on all available programs and other services veterans might be eligible for. Furthermore, they provide training to staff on their responsibilities concerning veterans and services available through state and federal veterans' programs. One-stop center (AJC) staff ensure that all veteran job seekers are screened for the full range of supportive services. Veterans who are eligible for DVOP and Consolidated DVOP & LVER services are seamlessly referred to the local JVSG funded staff. This unified staffing approach makes DVOP and consolidated services readily accessible to veterans in need.

The LVER, who is centrally located at the department's administrative office, closely collaborates with each workforce development specialist, with specific responsibilities in veteran employment, training and job placement. This close partnership allows for concentrated coordination and consistent collaboration, benefiting employers, DVOP specialists, consolidated staff and veteran customers alike.

The LVER attends monthly meetings with the one-stop center's (AJC's) veteran employment team, which comprises DVOPs, LVER, Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) specialists, workforce development specialists and area leadership. This forum facilitates coordination, updates on veteran caseload activities, and status reports on veteran job development activities and employer outreach and training. It establishes quality case management standards and consistent actions and messaging, both internally and with external partners and employers. The LVER also leverages this platform to coordinate veteran events and activities that transcend economic service area boundaries.

**D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;**

The Department of Workforce Services will allocate the entire one percent of the approved grant towards providing performance incentives to eligible employees. The specific amount allocated for these incentive awards in each fiscal year will fluctuate depending on the total funding received for the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) during each fiscal year.

Department employees who are eligible to receive the performance incentive awards are outlined below:

- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER)
- Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff
- Individuals providing employment, training and placement services to veterans, funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or the Wagner-Peyser Act
- A one-stop center (AJC) or team

The Department uses the incentive award program to:

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- Encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training, and placement services for veterans.

- Recognize eligible employees who demonstrated exemplary achievements.

The department administers three tiers of veterans performance incentive awards tailored specifically for veterans' programs. They are: the Service to Veterans Award, the Eagle Award and the Stars and Stripes Award.

- **Service to Veterans Award:** The Service to Veterans Award is presented to eligible Department of Workforce Services employees throughout the state by division leadership. Eligible employees nominated for providing direct services to veterans are processed through their respective area's nomination procedure. The Service to Veterans is a \$250 cash award.
- **The Eagle Award:** Annually, five Eagle Award recipients are recognized for their exceptional service to veteran customers. All Service to Veteran Awards nominees automatically become candidates for these prestigious awards. A committee of Workforce Development Division representatives convene and review all Service to Veteran nominations to select the five Eagle Award recipients. The selection is made by August 15 each year. The Eagle Award consists of a \$650 cash prize, an Eagle Statue and a framed certificate. These awards are presented by department leadership during the annual Veterans Training Conference. It is worth noting that the \$650 cash award will be funded from the one-percent incentive allocation, while the acquisition of the Eagle statue and framed certificate will be covered by other department funding.
- **Stars and Stripes Award for Services to Veterans:** The Stars and Stripes Award is the Department's top-tier recognition, presented by the Executive Director at the annual Veterans Training Conference. This department wide award is granted to the most deserving of the Eagle Award recipients, as determined by an awards committee. This committee is composed of the Department Executive Director, the Assistant Deputy Director, the Division Director and the Chief of Veteran Services. The Stars and Stripes Award includes a \$750 cash prize and a U.S. Flag, encased in a glass flag case, with engraving to highlight the recipient's remarkable achievement. The \$750 cash award is funded through the one-percent incentive allocation, while the U.S. Flag and glass flag case are purchased using other Workforce Services funding sources.

The criteria for the Service to Veterans Award are as follows:

**Outstanding Service:** Nominations must include specific, written examples of how the nominee provided exceptional services to veterans, transitioning service members or eligible spouses. Examples may include:

- Going beyond their regular job duties.
- Conducting searches to match veterans with jobs in UWORKS.
- Advocating for veterans by reaching out to employers on their behalf.
- Providing valuable training services to veterans or employers.
- Increasing the delivery of individualized career services to veterans.
- Taking extra steps to enhance a veteran's employability.
- Establishing connections between veterans and other Department of Workforce Services programs, community partners and resources to support veterans' employability.

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- Offering other exceptional services to veterans.

**Improving Services to Veterans:** Nominations provide written examples of ways the nominee contributed to enhancing the overall system of providing services to veterans. Examples may include:

- Improving pathways within their respective division or between divisions to create more opportunities and services for veterans.
- Increasing the percentage of individualized career services delivered to eligible veterans or eligible spouses.
- Ensuring that eligible veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment receive assistance from the DVOP specialist.
- Offering other services not listed above that improve the overall system of services for veterans.

Each division will submit their Service to Veterans Award recipient information to the Chief of Veterans Services and state program specialist for Veteran Employment Services for submission to the department finance division. All nominations are submitted using the awards nomination form. An individual may receive more than one Service to Veterans Award during the year.

Employees funded through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act funding are eligible to receive the Service to Veterans Award funded through the one-percent JVSG Incentive Allocation, while all other nominees are funded using other department funds.

The estimated total cost for the Service to Veteran Awards is \$7,320 based on 24 cash awards at \$250 and \$55 for awardee benefit costs.

The estimated total cost for the Eagle Award is \$3,965 based on \$650 for five cash awards, \$715 in awardee benefit costs.

The estimated total cost for the Stars and Stripes Award is \$1,037 based on \$850 for one cash award and \$187 in awardee benefit costs.

E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

### **Significant Barriers to Employment**

Utah has identified the following significant barriers to employment. If an eligible veteran, eligible spouse or other eligible person has one of these barriers and requires individualized career services to obtain or retain employment, they are served by the DVOP specialists in accordance with VPL 3-14 changes 1 and 2, VPL 7-14 and VPL 3-19.

### **Disabled Veteran**

The Department of Workforce Services defines a disabled veteran as someone who:

- Is eligible for compensation under the laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) or would be if not for receiving military retired pay.
- Was discharged or released from active duty due to a service-connected disability.
- Has a VA disability rating of 30% or higher or a military service-issued disability

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determination.

- Self-attests to having a pending disability claim with the VA.

Primary outreach efforts to disabled veterans are facilitated through a partnership with the VA's VR & E Office in Salt Lake City. This partnership is governed by VPL 01-16 and GOM 03-17. A designated department employee serves as the intensive services coordinator to address the needs of shared veteran customers, including:

- Delivering overview of DVOP services during the bi-weekly VR & E veterans resource group meetings.
- Screening and referring veterans to department programs and services.
- Assisting with VR & E's Initial Rehabilitation Planning by providing labor market information for potential employment goals.
- Referring veterans to local DVOP specialists for employment services when necessary during rehabilitation plan implementation or when the veteran is deemed job ready.
- Monitoring VR & E job ready referrals and acting as a liaison between the VR & E office and the department.
- Providing the VR & E coordinator with monthly reports completed by DVOP specialists and updating DVOP specialists on all VR & E case closures.

### **Homeless Veteran**

Utah is recognized nationally for its efforts in reducing the numbers of chronically homeless individuals, including homeless veterans.

Over the past two years, the State of Utah initiated a holistic strategic homeless plan, with an emphasis along the Wasatch Front and the downtown Salt Lake City area. This plan was supported by all levels of government, local non-profit organizations, religious organizations, community leaders and downtown businesses. Representatives from these entities belong to and serve on the Shelter the Homeless board, Utah's nonprofit board that serves the public good through the alleviation of human suffering and foster economic well-being.

Shelter the Homeless oversees shelters and resource centers throughout Salt Lake valley. One of the first resource centers was built in the city of Midvale, known as the Midvale Family Shelter. Three additional homeless resource centers were developed during 2019 to provide programs and services for homeless individuals and families and promote self-sufficiency. Currently these facilities, along with two temporary warming facilities in the winter months, provide invaluable shelter and services for anyone in need. Inside each facility, supportive agencies, including the Department of Workforce Services, provide services for individuals to achieve their employment goals.

Each customer is screened using the homeless veteran definition. The Department of Workforce Services defines a homeless veteran as one who:

- 1) Either lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- 2) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or privately operated shelter for temporary residence, or has a primary nighttime residence that was not designed or ordinarily used for regular sleeping accommodations.
- 3) Any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in the

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individual's or family's current housing situation, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.



When a veteran or eligible spouse meets the homeless veteran definition and needs individualized career services, they are referred to a DVOP specialist. The department tracks the services provided to homeless veterans once they are identified.

The Department of Workforce Services' staff participate in the annual "Project Homeless Connect" program. This event is held in the Fall for those experiencing homelessness and connects them to resources, provides basic hygiene supplies, medical and dental services. Veterans or eligible spouses who self-identify are directed to the VA and the veteran employment services booth. Department staff discuss services and available resources with them and invite them to visit the nearest one-stop center (AJC) for applicable services.

The number of homeless veterans in Utah has decreased dramatically over the past two years. Utah's goal is to reduce this number each year. Partners throughout the state will continue to work collaboratively and collectively to provide quality service to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who are homeless.

### **Recently Separated – Unemployed**

A recently separated member-unemployed is defined by the department as a veteran job seeker who has registered for services within 36 months of their military service separation date and who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks.

The Department of Workforce Services maintains active relationships with the Utah National Guard and Reserve units throughout the state to ensure that service members are greeted and provided information regarding the employment services available to them. The department attends and participates in statewide veteran events to coordinate the provision of services, including employment services.

Utah National Guard, Reserve or service members who contact the Department of Workforce Services for assistance are screened to determine whether they are eligible for service from a DVOP or Consolidate DVOP & LVER staff.

Many job seekers self-identify as a recently separated service member upon their registration for services with the department. These veterans are provided services primarily by the staff in one-stop centers (AJCs). Each AJC has a trained veteran subject matter expert to assist these individuals. If the veteran is a transitioning service member and has experienced long-term unemployment, a referral is completed and forwarded to the local DVOP specialist for individualized career services.

Veterans who are receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits and are scheduled for a reemployment eligibility assessment are referred to the local DVOP specialist. Furthermore, the one-stop center (AJC) staff reach out to unemployment insurance veteran recipients that are close to exhausting their benefits. Both of these efforts have resulted in numerous veterans connecting to veteran services within the department.

Additional outreach occurs through staff that reach out to newly registered veterans, transitioning service members, reserve component members and eligible spouses that create a new profile on the department website. The staff give these customers information on the services available and encourage them to visit their local one-stop center (AJC). These efforts show continued positive results for veteran customers.

Moreover, the state unemployment rate shows reason to be optimistic. In 2021, Utah had a veteran unemployment rate of 3.2%, today the rate is below 3%.

### **Recently Incarcerated Veterans**

The Department of Workforce Services defines a Recently Incarcerated Veteran as a veteran

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who is, or has been, subjected to any stage of the criminal justice process or requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction and who has been released from incarceration. Veterans currently incarcerated are also eligible

for services from a DVOP, or a Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff. A recently incarcerated veteran is considered to have a significant barrier to employment. If they are in need of individualized career services they are eligible to be served by the DVOP specialists and or a Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff. The department, along with state and federal partners attend the state penitentiary release days. At these events, each prisoner is required to visit each provider's booth. At the department booth, services are explained and contact information of the closest one-stop center (AJC) is provided. Individuals who follow-up are screened for eligibility for DVOP services. Those who meet the requirements are referred to a DVOP specialist for individual career services. Department staff also work closely with the local VA re-entry specialist to assist those veterans with their employment goals.

The Veterans Justice Outreach Program (VJO) is a VA based initiative that focuses on partnering with local law enforcement, jails and courts to assist eligible veterans access the treatment they need. Utah has four veteran's courts, three in Salt Lake City (federal, district and another in the Justice court system) and one in Utah County (district). These courts have been an invaluable resource for veterans. The department continues to participate in the state's veteran court system. The DVOP VJO specialist plays an important role in the existing court and will continue to be included as new veterans' courts are established. The specialist will work with the veteran and the courts to address any employment issues through negotiated employment plans. The DVOP VJO specialist attends court sessions to report on the veteran's progress.

With direct and constant involvement within the veteran courts and with VA VJO partners, veterans greatly increase their opportunity to get back on track, reduce or eliminate any barriers and are provided a road map to achieving personal economic goals.

### **Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent Certificate**

Eligible veterans or eligible others who self-declare that they do not have a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate qualify for services. This is a barrier that is more common among older veterans and is not encountered with many recently separated service members. Partnering with the UDVMA has been instrumental in identifying veterans with this significant barrier to employment (SBE). Using this information, the DVOP specialists conduct targeted outreach activities specifically to veterans with this SBE.

### **Low-Income Veterans**

A low-income veteran is determined by reviewing the individual income or family income for the six-month period prior to the application. To meet this SBE for services, the income cannot exceed the high end of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level for an equivalent period. Upon initial contact with the one-stop center (AJC), the job seeker is given the opportunity to self-identify as having this barrier.

Department staff use an income chart with family size delineations to help customers self identify as low income. Additionally, DVOP specialists conduct outreach activities to individuals who receive services from other department programs such as Unemployment Insurance benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, financial assistance or Vocational Rehabilitation services as each program income guidelines meet the qualification standards for services under this barrier.

### **Additional Populations**

#### **Veterans Age 18-24**

Veterans ages 18 – 24 have been identified by the Secretary of Labor, in VPL 3-19, as a population eligible to receive individualized career services from the DVOP specialists. In Utah, this age group traditionally has a lower unemployment rate than their older counterparts. Staff

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provide them with the services needed to reach their economic and employment goals. Additionally, veterans in this age category receiving other department benefits are identified in a monthly list given to one-stop center (AJC) staff to conduct outreach activities.

### **Vietnam-era Veteran**

Veterans whose active military service were between February 2, 1961 and May 7, 1975 in the Republic of Vietnam, or between the dates of August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975 for all others, are considered Vietnam-era veterans. There are about 47,000 veterans between the ages of 65 and 84 living in Utah. However, due mostly to the age of these individuals, the large majority are not actively seeking employment. When a veteran job seeker identifies as belonging to this group, services are provided at the appropriate level, including a referral to a DVOP specialist for individualized career services.

### **Transitioning Service Member**

A transitioning service member is a military service member who is within 12 months of separating or 24 months of retirement from active duty service and 1) has been determined to not meet Career Readiness Standards; 2) is between the age of 18-24; or 3) has been voluntarily separated due to a reduction in force.

### **Wounded – Transitioning Service Member**

A member of the Armed Forces who is wounded, ill or injured and receiving treatment in a military treatment facility or warrior transition unit meets the criteria for the wounded - transitioning service member category. There is one military treatment facility in Utah, located at Hill Air Force Base, but they do not provide treatment to transitioning service members. The closest transition unit is located at Fort Carson, Colorado. Contact is maintained with this facility and with the regional contact of the Army Wounded Warrior program. In addition, open lines of communication are maintained with Hill Air Force Base Airman Family Readiness Center and the Utah National Guard and Reserve Family Assistance Centers to ensure that qualifying transitioning service members are referred to appropriate services.

### **Wounded – Caregiver of a Transitioning Service Member**

A family member (parent, spouse, child, stepfamily member or extended family member) of a wounded service member or non-family member who lives with a wounded service member and provides personal care services to the wounded service member meets the criteria for wounded - caregiver of a transitioning service member. Staff maintain open lines of communication with the Hill Air Force Base Airman Family Readiness Center and the Utah National Guard and Reserve Family Assistance Centers to ensure qualifying veterans are referred to appropriate services.

### **Native American Veterans**

Utah is home to several Native American reservations, including two with significant resident populations. The Navajo Nation, spanning the Utah-Arizona border, primarily offers services to Navajo tribal members on its southern Arizona side. Navajo veterans and eligible spouses access services from the Blanding and Moab one-stop centers (AJCs), which maintain a strong relationship with the Navajo Nation.

The Ute tribe, located in Fort Duchesne, Utah, represents the state's second-largest Native American tribe. Tribal members utilize both the Roosevelt and Vernal one-stop centers (AJCs) for services. The department deploys a DVOP specialist at the Vernal one-stop center (AJC) to conduct outreach activities, identify Native American veterans with barriers and provide personalized career services.

Veterans undergo a screening process to assess their eligibility for assistance from DVOP or Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff. If they do not meet the specified criteria during the screening, they are directed to other employment counselors who are trained to provide services tailored to veterans' needs.

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## **Underemployed Veterans**

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Another population with barriers, identified by the department, are underemployed veterans. One-stop centers (AJCs) serve walk-in veteran job seekers, and DVOP specialists while doing outreach services to locate veterans who are employed, and determine if these veterans are in need of assistance in finding better employment. This group of veterans is screened to determine if they are eligible for service from a DVOP or Consolidate DVOP & LVER staff. If they don't meet the screened requirements, they are referred to employment counselors who are trained to provide services to veterans.

Underemployed veterans are often identified while conducting proactive service offers to recipients of unemployment insurance benefits, public assistance programs (SNAP, Medicaid, etc.), housing assistance or Vocational Rehabilitation services. Veteran job seekers are referred to the veteran subject matter expert for services. If the veteran needs individualized career services or training services, the subject matter expert will make a referral to the appropriate ACE Specialist or WIOA counselor. Working together, these staff help underemployed veterans receive the assistance they need.

**F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;**

The Department of Workforce Services establishes clear and transparent guidelines outlining the criteria for covered persons and the prioritization process. This includes defining the specific categories of individuals eligible for priority of service. Members of the department connection team wear a badge with the question, "Have you or your spouse ever served in the U.S. Military?" Additionally, there are numerous signs in the one-stop centers (AJCs) throughout the state aimed at identifying veterans and spouses.

Priority service training is provided to all new staff and refresher courses to current employees. JVSG staff are integrated in the one-stop centers (AJCs), and participate in constant collaboration and training on priority of service.

Supervisors and managers monitor through observation of customer interaction and reviewing cases to ensure priority of service to veterans and spouses is implemented correctly.

**G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF: (1) JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES, (2) EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND (3) JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;**

The Department of Workforce Services one-stop centers (AJCs) employment counselors providing employment exchange services to all job seekers. Staff are trained to assist veteran job seekers, with specific staff designated as the veteran subject matter expert for more comprehensive veteran-specific services and resource support.

Staff identify job seekers requiring individualized career services, and when eligible veterans or eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment are recognized, a referral is made to the local DVOP specialist. If training for employment is identified as a need, eligible veterans are referred to the WIOA or ACE program.

Job seekers who need individualized career services but do not meet the eligibility criteria or significant barriers to employment definition, are referred to staff trained in individualized career, training and placement services.

The department monitors eligible program enrollments, case management and outcomes to ensure eligible individuals receive quality services and obtain employment.

**H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP**

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SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND,



A quarterly assessment is conducted of all JVSG staff and their respective training completion dates. Subsequently, staff members are enrolled in training sessions that align with the terms of the grant. It is mandatory for every JVSG staff member to fulfill required training within 18 months from their date of hire. Below is a list of all current JVSG staff, their hire date and the date they completed the NVTI training.

Staff	Date Appointed to Current Position	Date NVTI Training Completed
AG	2/25/2016	10/16/2016
RR	6/1/2020	8/1/2021
JH	3/7/2022	11/18/2022
DT	7/25/2023	
MH	2/6/2023	
MJ	11/22/2022	
AF	9/16/2013	6/4/2014
TP	7/23/2012	6/21/2013
RE	5/8/2023	
AM	6/27/2022	12/9/2022
RS	4/12/2021	10/28/2022
D	12/19/2022	
LD	6/1/2020	8/13/2021

#### I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

Utah JVSG's program has several partnerships that support veteran employment.

#### **Utah Employment Coalition for Veterans, Military Service Members and Their Families.**

The Department of Workforce Services maintains crucial partnerships with the VA and the Utah Department of Veteran and Military Affairs to ensure veterans are well-informed about available resources. In 2011, these agencies, in collaboration with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, local chambers of commerce and other partners, established the Utah Employment Coalition for Veterans, Military Service Members, and their Families. This coalition organizes veteran career and benefit fairs across the state, with the department actively participating by offering promotional support, assisting in administration and planning and staffing a booth focused on Veteran Employment Services. Through this coalition, the department contributes to various committees and meetings that benefit veterans and the military community. The Utah Department of Workforce Services Chief of Veterans Services and LVER play integral roles engaging in program and event planning. They relay information to

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DVOPs and Consolidated DVOP & LVER staff for further dissemination to their veteran customers.

**The Utah Veterans Community Engagement Partnership.** On a monthly basis, a collaborative gathering brings together government representatives from various levels, including legislative liaisons, non-profit organizations, medical providers and other entities offering services to veterans. During these meetings, participants engage in discussions about opportunities, the introduction of new programs and updates on existing programs that serve veterans and military personnel. The overarching objective of this organization is to disseminate valuable information to all service providers assisting veterans, service members and spouses. The Department of Workforce Services Chief of Veteran Services participates in these meetings and shares resources with the JVSG-funded staff.

**Utah State Military and Veteran Affairs Legislative Commission.** The commission includes leaders from various sectors, including state legislators, community service providers, veteran service organizations, military representatives and business community representatives. The commission plays a pivotal role in the state's preparations for the legislative session. The Utah Department of Workforce Services Chief of Veterans Services is an active member of this commission, offering insights into JVSG services and providing guidance on how the department can contribute to potential legislative adjustments to state laws.

**Salt Lake Military Advisory Committee (MAC).** This committee collaborates with the Salt Lake Chamber and has a diverse membership which includes active and reserve military leaders statewide, veteran service organizations, Department of Labor, state veteran employment representatives, local business leaders and military and veteran associations. The primary mission of this committee is to foster connections between military installations and businesses. This is achieved by heightening awareness through regular briefings and tours, and an open invitation to participate on the committee. The Utah Department of Workforce Services Chief of Veterans Services and LVER serve as members of this committee. They deliver monthly updates on the services rendered by JVSG staff to specifically targeted veteran clients, along with information on events organized by the department for veteran clients.

**Utah Department of Veteran and Military Affairs Veteran Service Officer (UDVMA).** The UDVMA service officers maintain a partnership by visiting one-stop centers (AJCs) throughout the state to meet with and assist veterans with their Department of Veteran Affairs disability claims. Times and locations are published online and are widely distributed throughout the community. It is through this partnership that veterans receive assistance with employment needs. This collaboration effort has, and will continue, to provide great opportunities for veterans.

**Hill Air Force Base Collaboration.** Clearfield one-stop center (AJC) staff partner with Hill Air Force Base. Through this partnership, staff host job events for contractors on base, assist transition service members and spouses with employment training services and assistance. Department staff attend scheduled Transitional Assistance Program courses and have an active role with the Family Readiness Group. This is an extremely valuable resource in providing services to transitioning service members and ensures a warm hand-off for employment related services.