



**MOUNTAIN AREA
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
REGIONAL AND LOCAL
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN**

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
TITLE I**

**FOUR-YEAR PLAN
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020**

*Mountain Area Workforce Development Consortium
An Agency of Land of Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806-2088*

I. Local Area Outline

A. Local Area Overview

The Local Area Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division. It is important this section remain current. Updates should be submitted to the Division Planner when changes occur especially to contact names and addresses in questions Section A 1-10.

1. Provide the Local Area's official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or, if not a Consortium, in the formal request for Local Area designation. If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement. Name document: Local Area Name Consortium Agreement.

The Local Area's official (Legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the Mountain Area Workforce Development Consortium.

Attached is a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.

2. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Workforce Development Director.

**Mr. Nathan Ramsey
Local Workforce Development Director
Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
Land of Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806-2088
Phone: (828)251-7473 Fax: (828)251-6353 E-mail: nathan@landofsky.org**

3. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Local Area's Chief Elected Official.

**Mr. David Gantt
Chairman
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
200 College Street, Room 316
Asheville, NC 28801
Phone: (828) 252-2852 Fax: (828) 250-6076 E-mail: commissioner@davidgantt.com**

4. Provide the name, title, business name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official, if different than question 3.

Ms. Kathy Hughes
Clerk to the Board
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
200 College Street, Room 316
Asheville, NC 28801
Phone:(828)250-4001 Fax:(828)250-6076 E-mail: kathy.hughes@buncombecounty.org

5. Provide the name, address, telephone number of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds. This is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)].

Land of Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806-2088
Phone: (828)251-6622 Fax: (828) 251-6353

6. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official.

Mr. Justin Hembree
Executive Director
Land of Sky Regional Council
336 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806-2088
Phone: (828) 251-6622 Fax: (828) 251-6353 E-mail: justin@landofsky.org

7. Attach a copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent's organizational chart with an 'effective as of date'. Name document: *Administrative Entity Name Organizational Chart*.

A copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent's organizational chart with an effective "as of date" is attached.

8. Provide the Administrative Entity's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and assurance that the 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website (<https://www.sam.gov/ccr/>) to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].

The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is 1133470250000. The "System for Award Management" (SAM) status is current.

Composition of the local Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements have been provided as reference at Appendix C.

9. Provide the Workforce Development Board member's name, business title, business name and address, telephone number and e-mail address. The first block is reserved to identify the Board chairperson. Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. Name document: Local Area Name WDB List.

Note: Check the block on provided form certifying compliance with required WIOA local Workforce Development Board business nomination process.

* Use form provided and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names.

Attached is the provided form with the current WIOA Board Membership Listing for the Mountain Area WDB.

10. Attach the Workforce Development Board By-laws including date adopted/amended. Name document: Local Area Name WDB By-laws.

The Mountain Area WDB By-Laws are attached as required.

Sunshine Provision - The local board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the local board, including information regarding the Local Plan prior to submission of the Plan, and regarding membership, the designation and certification of one-stop operators, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, and on request, minutes of formal meetings of the local board. [WIOA Section 107(e)]

11. Describe how the Workforce Development Board meets the Sunshine Provision.

The Local Plan was developed with public input including an all-day meeting at the Western Carolina University Biltmore Park instructional site on March 23, 2016. Over one hundred people attended this meeting to assist in developing the Local Plan. The notice for all meetings of the Mountain Area WDB, including the meeting at WCU Biltmore Park cited above, is posted on the Mountain Area WDB website www.MountainAreaWorks.org and the Land of Sky Regional Council website www.LandOfSky.org. All meeting notices are sent to a public distribution list which includes over fifty individuals, elected officials and organizations in the region.

Public Comment - The workforce development board shall make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

12. Describe how the workforce development board will make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

The Local Area Plan will be posted to the website of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board at www.MountainAreaWorks.org and to the website of the Land of Sky Regional Council at www.LandOfSky.org. The Local Area Plan will be distributed via electronic mail to the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board distribution list and to local media outlets.

13. Attach a copy of the Local Workforce Development Board’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date.’ Include position titles. Name document: *Local WDB Name Organizational Chart*.

A copy of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Consortium’s organizational chart with an effective “as of date” is attached. The chart includes position titles.

14. Provide the Local Workforce Development Board’s planned meeting schedule to include time, dates and location.

A copy of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board’s planned meeting schedule is attached including time, dates, and location.

15. List the county/counties that comprise the Local Area. List the July 1, 2016 population estimates by county (ies) in the Local Area. (Reference: North Carolina State Demographics “County/State projections,” found at www.demog.state.nc.us or, if another source is used, identify source.)

Following are the population estimates for the Mountain Local Area:

County	Population estimate as of July 1, 2016
Buncombe	257,413
Henderson	113,314
Madison	21,875
Transylvania	34,047
Total	426,649

Source: www.demog.state.nc.us

County	Population estimate as of July 1, 2015
Buncombe	253,178
Henderson	112,655
Madison	21,139
Madison	21,139
Total	420,183

Source: US Census Bureau, Carolina Demography demography.cpc.unc.edu/resources/data-tables/

The average age of the population in the Mountain Local Area exceeds the national and state average. The nation will have the same average age of the Mountain Local Area in about two decades. This more rapidly aging population is due to the area being considered as one of the top retirement destinations in the nation as well as the challenge of younger people to remain in the region due to the relatively high cost of living and the lower average wage per job in the Mountain Local Area compared to state and national averages.

Population of Mountain Local Area by age

419,793 2015 Population 4.2% of State	5.1% Population Growth for the Last 5 Years State Growth 5.1%
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Age Group	2015 Population	% of Population	
Under 5 years	21,493	5.1%	
5 to 9 years	22,168	5.3%	
10 to 14 years	22,968	5.5%	
15 to 19 years	23,044	5.5%	
20 to 24 years	24,139	5.8%	

Age Group	2015 Population	% of Population	
25 to 29 years	25,315	6.0%	
30 to 34 years	25,666	6.1%	
35 to 39 years	25,429	6.1%	
40 to 44 years	26,260	6.3%	
45 to 49 years	26,234	6.2%	
50 to 54 years	28,451	6.8%	
55 to 59 years	30,122	7.2%	
60 to 64 years	29,951	7.1%	
65 to 69 years	28,452	6.8%	
70 to 74 years	22,022	5.2%	
75 to 79 years	15,546	3.7%	
80 to 84 years	10,989	2.6%	
85 years and over	11,544	2.8%	

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

16. Attach a copy of the signed ‘Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions’ (form provided). [Required by the Regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, participants’ responsibilities.] Name document: *Local Area Name Debarment Form*.

Note: Document must bear the original signature of the Administrative Entity signatory official. Mail the signed Certification form original to Division Planner.

A copy of the signed “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters-Primary Covered Transactions” has been uploaded to the WISE System and the hard copy has been mailed to the Local Area’s Planner.

17. Submit the original Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) Signatory Page (form provided), bearing the original signatures of the Chief Elected Official(s) and the Workforce Development Board Chairman and attach a copy of the signed document. Name document: *Local Area Name Signatory Page*.

Note: Mail the signed original Signatory Form to Division Planner.

The original Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) Signatory Page bearing the original signatures of the Chief Elected Official and the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Chairman with the attached copy of the signed document have been mailed as a hard copy to the Local Area's Planner.

B. Local Area Planning

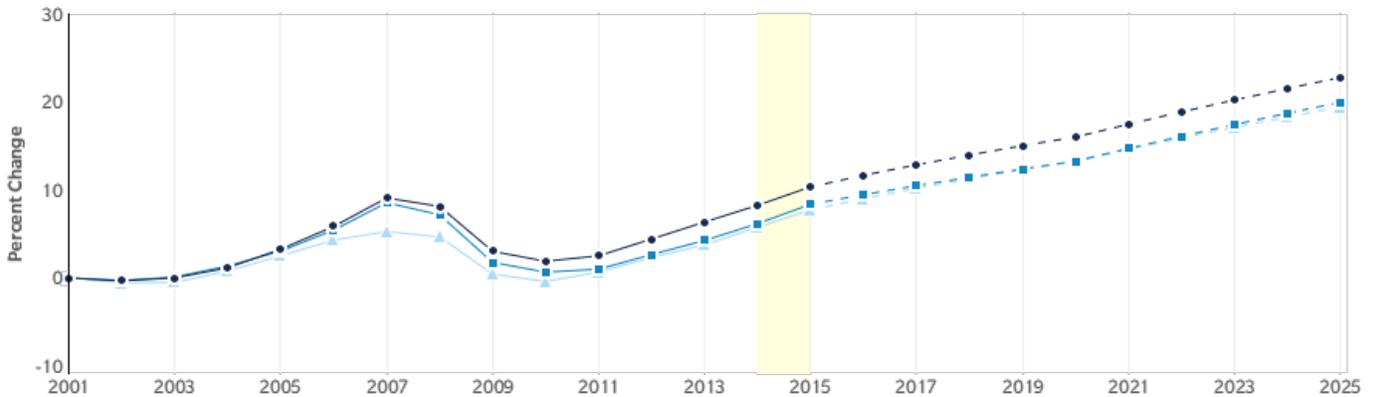
Each local Workforce Development Board shall develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local Plan. The local Workforce Development Board is encouraged to keep the Plan up to date and fluid as events and funding changes occur which may require local area responses. Local Plans will require a modification at least every two years to reflect labor market changes and economic conditions.

1. Provide a description of the Workforce Development Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board focus is on growth sectors of our local and regional economy including the economic target clusters of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology and IT. These target clusters have been adopted due to the economic development focus of the four counties in the Local Area, including but not limited to, Economic Development Coalition of Asheville Buncombe, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, Madison County Economic Development Commission and the Transylvania Alliance. The mission of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board is to provide employers and job seekers a fully integrated system of employment, education, and training services for the purpose of developing the economic strength and global competitiveness of the local area. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's strategic vision is consistent with the premises of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the NC Works Commission's Strategic Plan. The emphasis will be on upgrading the skills of the under skilled population of the region. The Mountain Local Area is experiencing significant labor shortages in all target economic clusters and at all skill levels. Unemployment rates for the early spring of 2016 have remained in the low 4% range and even under 4% for Buncombe County. The Mountain Local Area has consistently remained the lowest unemployment rate of any of NC's 23 workforce development regions. The Asheville metro has consistently remained the lowest unemployment rate of any NC metro and Buncombe County has remained consistently the lowest unemployment of any NC county. Most economists have predicted there will be a continued reduction in the unemployment rate for the Local Area as the region is experiencing economic growth at a rate not seen in at least the past decade. Advanced manufacturing employment is seeing positive

growth for the first time in decades with significant growth anticipated over the next few years. There have been announced 1555 new advanced manufacturing jobs anticipated to be created over the next two years with existing industry expansions and new locations for GF Linamar and Raumedic. These new positions do not count the additional jobs which will be created by retirements of an aging manufacturing workforce. Healthcare growth has continued unabated as healthcare needs expand due to an aging and growing population base in the region. Mission Health is the largest private employer in WNC and they currently have over 1000 job openings for healthcare professionals. Other hospitals and healthcare facilities in the region are experiencing similar growth. Hospitality and Tourism growth is exploding as the region sees over 2000 hotel rooms being developed. Adding to the region’s traditional attractions are over fifty local craft breweries, many now consider the region as the craft beer capital of the Eastern United States. Demand for positions in the skilled trades is exploding as construction growth increases. Large commercial projects are common across the region including hotels, residential apartments, manufacturing facilities, breweries, healthcare facilities. The Local Area is also experiencing growth in entrepreneurial start-ups in technology and IT fueled by the livability of the region and attractiveness to the creative class. There are many initiatives to expand this growth including support from local economic development groups, universities, community colleges, and others.

Job growth in the Mountain Local Area (top line on the graph) has rebounded from the Great Recession and is experiencing growth that mirrors and often exceeds state and national averages (bottom line on the graph) as the following chart indicates:



Source: EMSI

There has been a consistent increase in job openings in the Local Area as the economy has continued to improve and unemployment has declined. There have been fewer business closings based on WARN notices and the number of dislocated workers has declined.

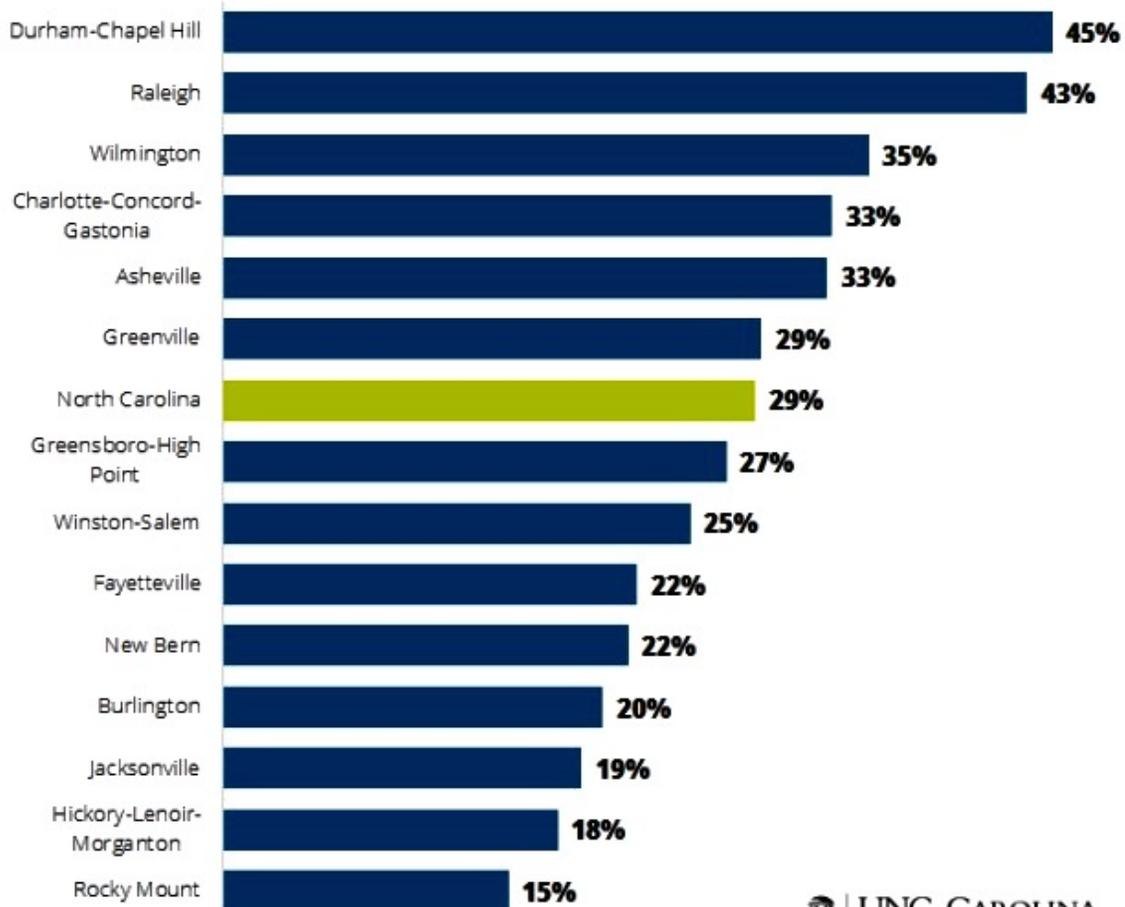
County	December 2015 Unique Job Postings	January 2016 Unique Job Postings
Buncombe	5,290	6,178
Henderson	1,530	1,766
Madison	147	148
Transylvania	386	433
Total	7,353	8,525

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

The Mountain Local Area is attracting an in-migration of people, many who are highly trained and with significant workforce skills due to the quality of life and desirability of the region. Public school systems in the region rank fairly high statewide in standardized test scores and academic performance. Developing the human capital of the region is critical to providing employers with individuals who have the appropriate workforce skills. There is an effort regionally to expand higher educational opportunities which most recently include the additional of the branch campus of the UNC Chapel Hill School of Pharmacy at UNC Asheville and the location of an Engineering School at Western Carolina University's Biltmore Park instructional site. The Local Area (which comprises most of the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area) has an educational attainment that exceeds the state average based on the percentage of the adult population that have earned at least a Bachelor's degree or higher based on the following data from Carolina Demography at the UNC Population Center.

Adult educational attainment is highest in Triangle Region

Share of Adults (25+) with Bachelor's Degree or More, NC Metros, 2014



Data Sources: 2014 American Community Survey via Social Explorer



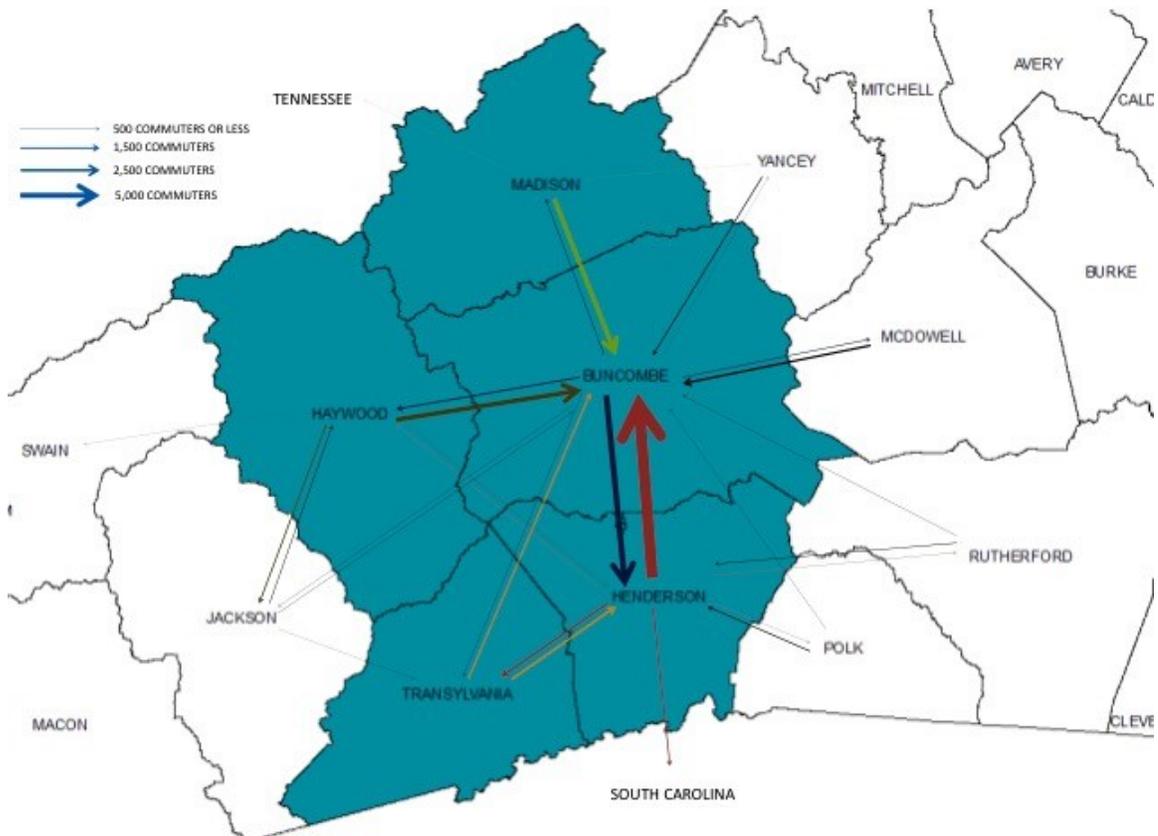
While educational attainment in the Local Area tends to be higher than the state average, the Mountain Area WDB has placed as a major priority upskilling the existing population. The Board recognizes that the best way to promote economic self-sufficiency is to provide the skills needed for workers to earn a higher paying job. While short-term training is a focus, the top priority is placing individuals in employment which provides the best path for increasing incomes as skills increase. With a relatively tight labor market, employers are recognizing the need to invest in worker training while on the job.

The Local Area has experienced relatively strong job growth following the recovery from the Great Recession. The pace of job growth is accelerating in many sectors including the target sectors of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology/IT. The job growth is more robust in Buncombe and Henderson Counties and less so in Madison and Transylvania Counties. County to County Commuting Flows from the Carolina Demography at the UNC Population Center indicate 3,799 workers or 46.1% of all Madison County

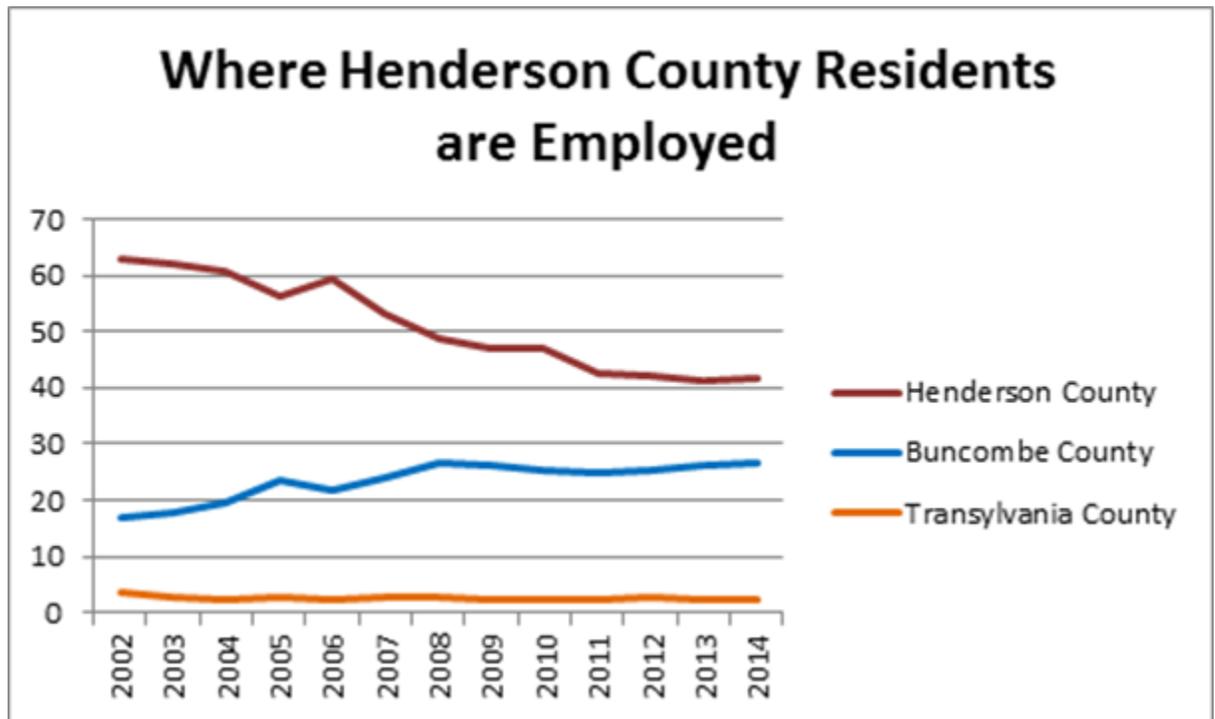
resident workers worked in Buncombe County. 1,138 or 8.8% of all Transylvania County resident workers worked in Buncombe County. 10,404 or 24.1% of all Henderson County resident workers worked in Buncombe County. 1,702 or 13.1% of all Transylvania County resident workers worked in Henderson County. 5,462 or 4.9% of all Buncombe County resident workers worked in Henderson County. Regional commuting patterns indicate there is increasing cross county travel to employment after the depths of the Great Recession. US Census Bureau data from 2006 to 2013 reveal that the number of workers driving to another county climbed in all four counties of the Local Area. There was a 32% increase in Buncombe County from 22,005 people to 29,039. There was a 56.6% increase in Henderson County from 13,941 people to 21,833 people. There was a 38.6% increase in Madison County from 4,080 people to 5,653 people. Since public transit service is very limited in the Local Area, most of the commuting is in single occupancy vehicles. Based on employment growth, jobs are being concentrated in the more urban areas which require those living in more suburban or rural communities to travel a greater distance to their place of employment. The commuting patterns demonstrate our Local Area is becoming more of an interconnected regional economy and counties are becoming more dependent on each other for employment and for workers. For most employers, the number of counties represented by their workers home residence is increasing.

Transportation is cited as a significant barrier to employment for many workers throughout the Local Area. With a public transit service that is very limited, employers are seeking additional resources, both public and private, to expand access to public transportation. Mountain Area WDB is working to expand workforce transportation connections with the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coordinator at the French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which is an administrative unit of the Land of Sky Regional Council. The strategies being utilized involve park and ride lots, ride sharing, expanded regional public transit connectivity, and route design which will respond to the needs of employers and job seekers.

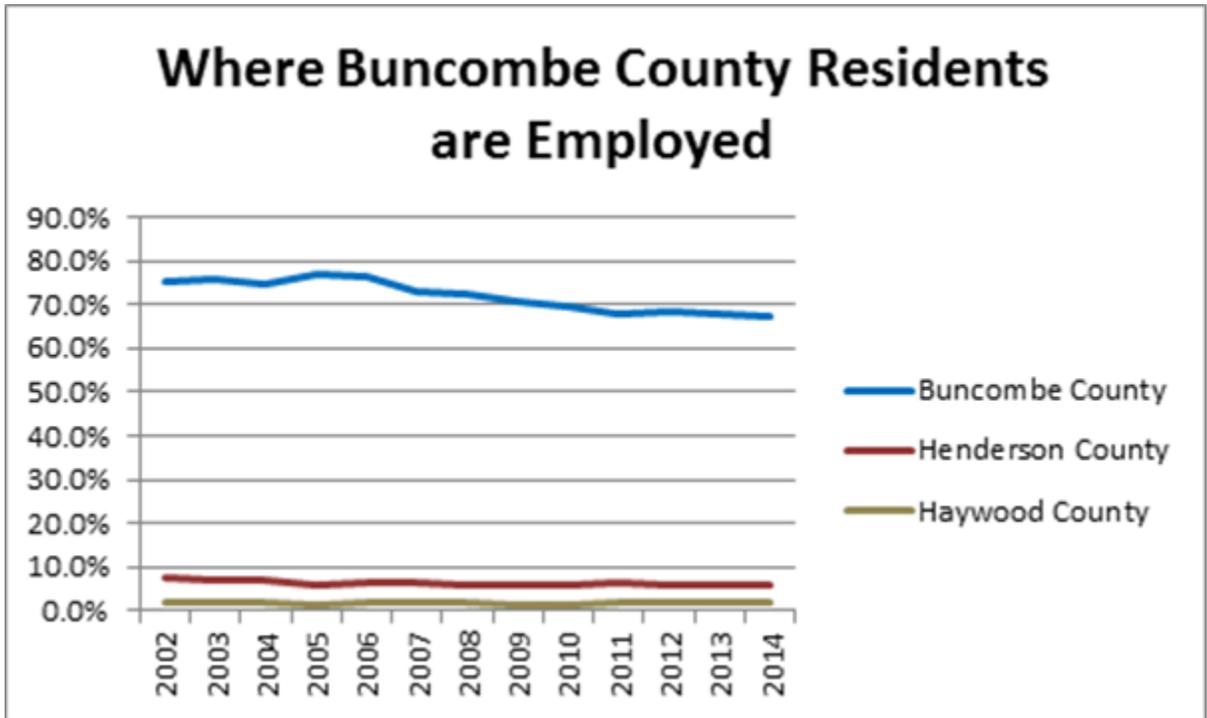
The following charts display commuting patterns for the Local Area and indicate there is significant cross-county travel to employment opportunities in the region:



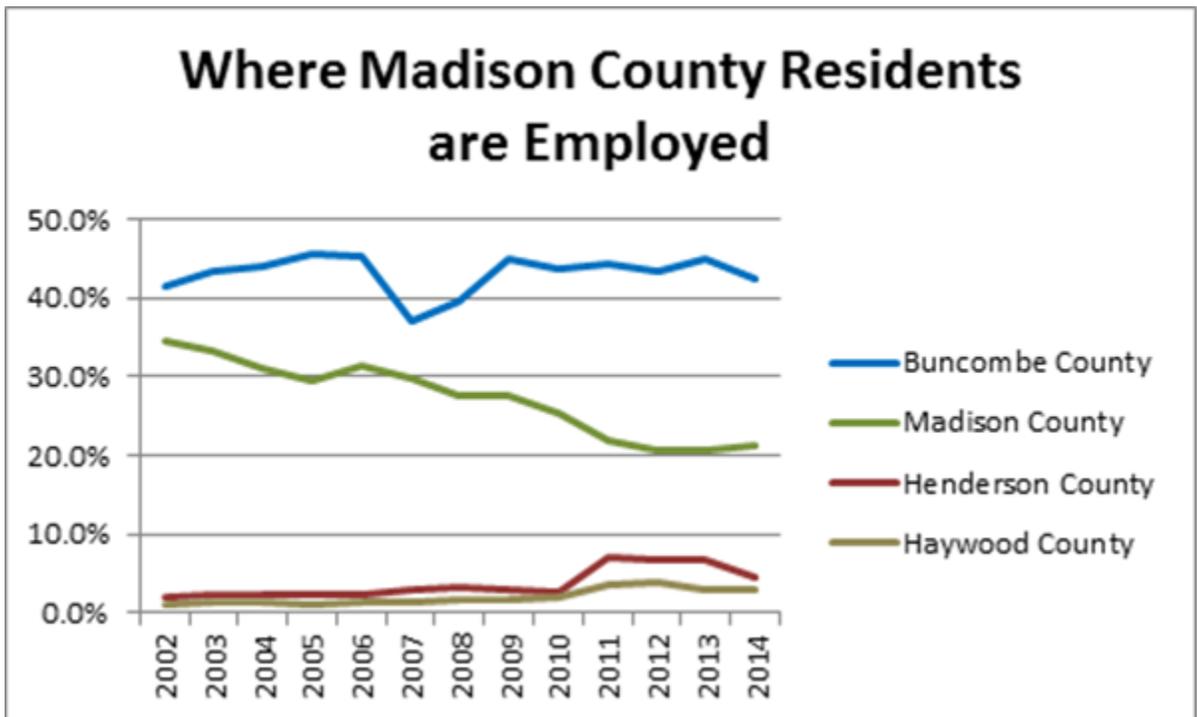
Source: Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, 2014 US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS)

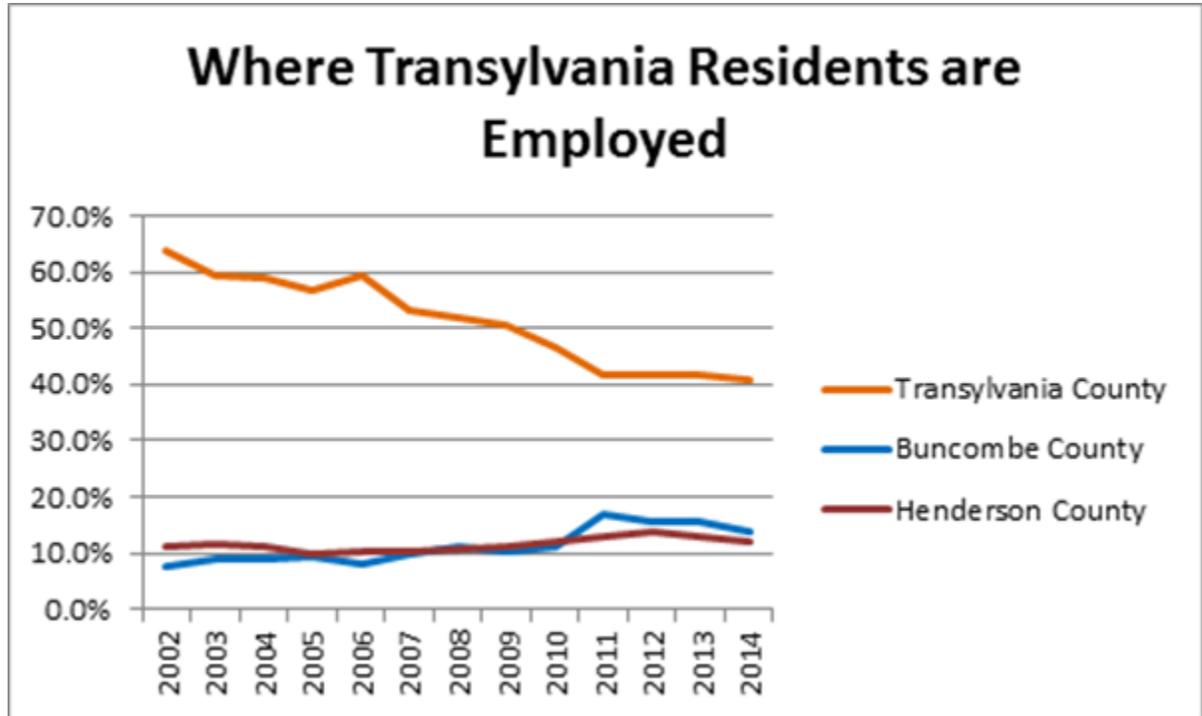


U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>



U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>





U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

Job growth in the Local Area has steadily accelerated from the depths of the Great Recession. Unemployment rates in the Local Area peaked over ten percent around 2010 and have steadily declined since that date. All major industry sectors are leading this job growth. In most cases, employment exceeds pre-recession levels. Although the Local Area still has a higher unemployment rate than was experienced in the mid- 2000s, the current labor market is in the best condition in the past decade. While the employment growth has been following state and national trends, the Local Area has consistently outperformed state and national trends.

Hospitality and healthcare sectors are anticipated to lead job growth in the Mountain Local Area between 2010 and 2020. These two sectors have traditionally accounted for significant job growth in the region and that trend is expected to continue. Increased demand for healthcare services is driven by the rapid growth of an aging population. The Local Area has been considered to be a tourism mecca for over a century and the annual economic impact of tourism in the region exceeds two billion dollars annually based on data from NC Department of Commerce. The Local Area is anticipated to see strong growth in educational services, administration and professional scientific and technical services. Many of these jobs

will require a post-secondary credential. These sectors reinforce the target sectors of the Mountain Area WDB as the source of in demand and high growth jobs.

Industries Projected by Growth in the Mountain Local Area:

The table below shows the top 25 industries with the highest total employment change in Mountain Area WDB, North Carolina for the 2010 - 2020 time period.

Rank	Industry	2010 Estimated Employment	2020 Projected Employment	2010-2020 Annual Percent Change	Total Employment Change
1	Food Services and Drinking Places	14,280	18,410	2.6%	4,130
2	Ambulatory Health Care Services	10,040	13,080	2.7%	3,040
3	Educational Services	13,110	15,850	1.9%	2,740
4	Administrative and Support Services	7,800	9,920	2.4%	2,120
5	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5,130	7,030	3.2%	1,900
6	Hospitals	11,230	12,980	1.5%	1,750
7	Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs	14,100	15,370	0.9%	1,270
8	Specialty Trade Contractors	4,380	5,470	2.2%	1,090
9	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,930	7,000	1.7%	1,070
10	Social Assistance	3,020	4,040	3.0%	1,020
11	Accommodation	3,960	4,590	1.5%	630
12	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	2,560	3,160	2.1%	600
13	General Merchandise Stores	3,970	4,540	1.4%	570
14	Construction of Buildings	1,570	2,050	2.7%	480
15	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	2,870	3,320	1.5%	450
16	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,150	1,570	3.2%	420
17	Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	2,050	2,460	1.8%	410
18	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	2,140	2,550	1.8%	410
19	Food and Beverage Stores	4,840	5,220	0.8%	380
20	Health and Personal Care Stores	1,320	1,630	2.1%	310
21	Real Estate	1,150	1,410	2.1%	260
22	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1,540	1,780	1.5%	240
23	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,490	1,720	1.4%	230
24	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,010	1,230	2.0%	220
25	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,290	1,500	1.5%	210

Source: Labor & Economic Analysis Division, Economic Analysis

Source: NC Department of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD)

Based on data from EMSI, the following is the projected job growth in the Mountain Local Area from 2014-2021 sorted by industry by the North American Classification System (NAICS):

NAICS	Description	2014 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2014 - 2021 Change	2014 - 2021 % Change
11	Crop and Animal Production	2,239	2,175	(64)	(3%)
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	147	130	(17)	(12%)
22	Utilities	441	400	(41)	(9%)
23	Construction	10,507	9,749	(758)	(7%)
31	Manufacturing	17,809	17,433	(376)	(2%)
42	Wholesale Trade	4,748	4,733	(15)	(0%)
44	Retail Trade	23,534	25,587	2,053	9%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	4,677	4,828	151	3%
51	Information	2,116	2,063	(53)	(3%)
52	Finance and Insurance	4,095	4,440	345	8%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,595	2,946	351	14%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,114	9,474	1,360	17%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,086	1,202	116	11%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	10,713	12,092	1,379	13%
61	Educational Services	5,433	6,448	1,015	19%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	30,559	35,795	5,236	17%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,893	4,242	349	9%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	22,076	24,979	2,903	13%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	10,507	11,412	905	9%
90	Government	25,048	26,421	1,373	5%
99	Unclassified Industry	0	0	0	0%
		190,335	206,548	16,213	9%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Based on data from EMSI for occupations sorted by Standard Occupational Codes (SOCs), following is the projected job growth for the Local Area from 2014-2021:

Description	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	2014 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2014 - 2021 Change	2014 - 2021 %
Management Occupations	255	\$39.56	7,302	7,776	474	6%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	230	\$27.12	6,186	6,819	633	10%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	83	\$29.09	1,979	2,291	312	16%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	85	\$30.81	2,143	2,291	148	7%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	48	\$31.78	1,015	1,100	85	8%
Community and Social Service Occupations	162	\$21.72	3,447	3,942	495	14%
Legal Occupations	37	\$29.29	1,202	1,256	54	4%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	435	\$19.51	9,984	11,372	1,388	14%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	165	\$17.25	3,459	3,880	421	12%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	662	\$36.82	15,013	17,217	2,204	15%
Healthcare Support Occupations	337	\$13.25	8,032	9,181	1,149	14%
Protective Service Occupations	139	\$16.93	3,473	3,718	245	7%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	1,380	\$10.04	22,346	25,310	2,964	13%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	404	\$11.43	8,705	10,108	1,403	16%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	276	\$11.68	6,354	7,054	700	11%
Sales and Related Occupations	904	\$16.02	20,332	21,810	1,478	7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	907	\$15.43	27,471	29,092	1,621	6%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	44	\$11.28	1,163	1,188	25	2%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	202	\$15.63	8,374	7,886	(488)	(6%)
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	244	\$19.08	6,857	7,250	393	6%
Production Occupations	396	\$16.27	12,852	12,885	33	0%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	386	\$14.94	11,570	12,052	482	4%
Military occupations	29	\$16.15	1,078	1,069	(9)	(1%)
Unclassified Occupation	0	\$0.00	0	0	0	0%
	7,810	\$18.48	190,335	206,548	16,213	9%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

It is inconsistent with local trends that the Local Area will see a decline as the EMSI data indicates in the number of construction occupations from 2014-2021. With population growth expected to continue in the Local Area, there will be increasing demand for residential, commercial and infrastructure construction employment. While firms are utilizing technology to become labor efficient, it is unlikely that those productivity gains will be sufficiently great to result in the displacement of approximately six percent of the construction workforce. There are virtually not extraction industries in the Local Area so that occupational code is comprised almost entirely of construction workers.

According to the Land of Sky Regional Council Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CED), it is anticipated that the population of the Asheville MSA will grow by 41%. This represents an increase of 176,000 people which translates into the addition of two similarly populated cities the size of the City of Asheville within the next twenty-five years.

According to data from the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) the Local Area will experience robust population growth over the next two decades. This growth represents the addition of almost 100,000 new residents to the Local Area over the next two decades.

County	Projected Population 2035
Buncombe	315,714
Henderson	133,044
Madison	24,680
Transylvania	39,924
Total	513,362

Source: NC OSBM www.osbm.nc.gov/demog/county-projections

The focus of the Mountain Area WDB is to increase the workforce skills of the population in the Local Area to provide for increased self-sufficiency and better wages for workers in the region. While the Local Area has consistently been ranked as the region with the lowest unemployment rate in NC, wages in the Local Area are below state and national averages. That has also been a consistent trend over the past several decades. Upskilling more individuals will raise wages and provide employers with the skilled workforce that they need. At a time when most every economic sector in the Local Area is experiencing workforce skill gaps, there is an opportunity to meet that employment need by deploying more training to individuals who are already employed. Combined with providing more opportunities for dislocated workers, the Local Area can meet the workforce skill demands of our region’s employers.

County	2014 Average Weekly Wage	2014 Average Annual Wage	Hourly wage (40 hour work week)
Buncombe	\$740	\$38,480	\$18.50
Henderson	\$689	\$35,828	\$17.23
Madison	\$576	\$29,952	\$14.40
Transylvania	\$600	\$31,200	\$15.00
NC	\$890	\$46,280	\$22.25
USA	\$1,035	\$53,820	\$19.90

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

There is some indication that a tightening labor market is raising wages. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Average weekly wages in Buncombe County rose from the fourth quarter 2013 to fourth quarter 2014 by 4.9% which ranks Buncombe as #50 in the nation of 343 urban counties. This exceeded the national average of 3.5% and the NC average of 3.4%.

2. Taking into account the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning section, describe strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the Local Area to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in B.1. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(F)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board consistent with the legislative purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as stated in WIOA Section 2 is working to integrate the core programs with integrated service delivery through the one stop NCWorks Career Centers in the region. The contractors that provide Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA services are integrated with Title III WIOA Wagner-Peyser staff at the NCWorks Career Centers in the region. Career Centers in three of the four counties are certified as NCWorks Career Centers by the NCWorks Commission. The career center in Madison County is not certified due to the small population and lack of resources to meet certification standards. The NCWorks Career Centers in Henderson and Transylvania Counties are located on the campus of Blue Ridge Community College. The Madison County NCWorks Career Center is located on the Madison campus of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech). The Buncombe County career center, referred to as the Asheville NCWorks Career Center, is located in downtown Asheville. The community colleges offer Title II Adult Education and Literacy WIOA services at these sites. The Asheville NCWorks Career Center offers Title II WIOA services through HRD classes being offered on site and through referrals to AB Tech. Public transportation is available in this part of the Local Area so clients can easily obtain these WIOA services. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation WIOA services are offered through the career centers on a weekly basis and by referral as needed. These core programs are aligned in the Local Area to meet the in demand occupations in the region to address workforce skill gaps and to transition Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient, Individuals who are not literate, and Individuals with Disabilities.

3. Describe Local Area's workforce development system, including identifying the programs included in the system, and how the Workforce Development Board will work with the entities administering core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment and provision of services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). [WIOA Section 108(b)(2)]

Mountain Area WDB works closely with the community college system, the public school system, and other core program contractors to support alignment and provision of services of core programs. These programs include the Adult and Dislocated Worker Program for attainment of certificates, diploma's, and two-year degrees at the local community colleges. The Mountain Area WDB also supports the In-School and Out of School Youth Programs which include core programs such

as: HRD, GED, Adult Basic Ed, Pre-employment classes (Job Club), Early College, and dual enrollment through the community colleges and Career and Technical Education programs in the area's public schools.

The Mountain Area's workforce development system includes the following organizations at the adult and dislocated worker level:

Wagner-Peyser services, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, NC Community College System programs (including adult basic skills), Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Services programs, Community Action Opportunities Life Skills program and Goodwill.

Partners in Youth Services include each of the public school systems, especially the Career and Technical Education Programs (funded under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006), the community college programs (including the high school/college articulation programs e.g. branded in North Carolina as "College and Career Promise", Goodwill and Green Opportunities (a nonprofit skills training program for culinary, construction, and "green" or environmentally sustainable jobs).

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) most of the Mountain Area's youth programs were in-school programs operated in close affiliation with the Career and Technical Education departments. These programs provided career guidance to low income youth with barriers to employment and the programs worked to encourage high school graduation. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) close affiliation with Career and Technical Education will continue, but much of the focus will be on dropout recovery, career planning and the achievement of high school graduation along with the attainment of post-secondary credentials which are industry recognized and that will lead to higher wage employment opportunities.

The Career and Technical Education directors have been fully involved with the Mountain Area's target sector strategies including service on work groups for each of the five target sectors (advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology/IT). These work groups are comprised of sector employers, educators, and other interested parties with the focus on developing the talent in the region for in demand jobs in each of the target sectors. The career and technical education directors are working closely with manufacturing industry employers to encourage youth to participate in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses of study. Between 2015-2017 there have been public announcements of over 1500 new advanced manufacturing jobs for the region. This does not include the advanced manufacturing job openings which will be created by retirements and turnover of the workforce. To meet this demand for advanced manufacturing workforce talent, the community colleges, public school administrators, career and technical education directors, the Mountain Area WDB staff and local government elected officials are partners in

promoting manufacturing careers to youth and interested adults. The initiative in Buncombe and Madison Counties has been named “Raising Awareness of Manufacturing Possibilities” (RAMP). In Henderson County, the economic development organization Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development is working with the local community college, public school administrators, career and technical education director, and others on the “Made in Henderson County” initiative. Both of these efforts are involved in the development of career pathways, education articulation arrangements, the promotion of apprenticeships, and other services that will encourage youth to consider high skilled careers in advanced manufacturing. Community colleges are supplementing these efforts through Carl Perkins Act funds by providing services to students in need of additional assistance and by working to attract more students with diverse backgrounds into the program. Similar efforts will be made as we continue to develop sector strategies for attracting students into other growth industries in the regional economy. Local community colleges are participating in an initiative funded by the National Science Foundation to promote STEM careers for women. Nationally and in the Local Area, traditionally advanced manufacturing and technology/IT jobs have been male dominated. This “Women in Technology” initiative will engage females about the career opportunities available in STEM in the region. These STEM careers offer higher wages than the region’s median wage and these jobs are in high demand. Eliminating gender and other barriers are proven strategies to resolve workforce skill gaps. The goal of the “Women in Technology” initiative is to increase the number of women in STEM areas by fifteen percent annually.

4. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Workforce Development Board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable. [WIOA Section 108(b)(3)]

The core providers for Mountain Area include: AB Tech and Blue Ridge Community College, (HRD, Adult Basic Education, GED, Literacy), Goodwill Industries (training and employment readiness), and Green Opportunities (training and employment readiness).

The Mountain Area WDB works to expand access to eligible individuals, especially those with barriers by:

- 1.) Educating career center staff on each program (purpose, eligibility requirements, content, end goal, credentials), and
- 2.) Educating staff on barriers and referral sources for various barriers to employment (assistance available for food, housing, clothing, transportation,

- child care, mental health, physical health, domestic violence, criminal history, basic skills), and
- 3.) Cross-agency marketing of offerings and services, and
 - 4.) Cross-agency marketing of career pathways and enrollment in core programs, and
 - 5.) Offering OJT and work experience opportunities for eligible individuals completing core programs.

The Mountain Area WDB has convened career sector meetings for aggregating the partners who can develop post-secondary credentials aligned with career pathways. The sectors identified for career pathways include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology/IT. Substantial work has been completed in organizing the employer and educational partner base for the advanced manufacturing (which includes logistics) career pathway. Mountain Area WDB is in the process of completing certification of a NCWorks Certified Career Pathway in advanced manufacturing through the NCWorks Commission.

Based on sector strategies in the high demand sectors of the local economy the Mountain Area WDB will work with local education agencies, community colleges, NCWorks Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, adult basic skills programs and literacy councils, veterans' services programs and apprenticeship programs to develop career pathways for in demand occupations.

Mountain Area WDB will expand access to employment and training programs by using the NCWorks Career Centers to provide recruitment, screening, referral and pre-hire training services for employers who are hiring in the growth sectors of the economy. This process of recruitment, screening, and referral for high demand occupations provides opportunities for NCWorks Career Center staffs to identify clients who have an interest in an occupation but may not have the necessary skill set necessary to acquire employment at that time. This process can also be used to identify clients who have specific skill deficits or lack the necessary credentials to secure employment in the field. Most of the higher paying employment opportunities in the region require, at a minimum, a post-secondary credential. In many cases, these clients can be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to learn the occupational skills necessary to achieve employment in the field. In addition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds other sources of support such as Pell grants, State Employee Credit Union (SECU) and other private scholarships, including employer assistance, for short-term training, and other sources of financial aid can be used to help interested jobseekers pay for the occupational skills courses and credentials that are necessary for employment.

Each of the NCWorks Career Centers has lists of local support service providers. The Memorandum of Understanding between each of the NC Works Career Centers and partners helps provide a unified working relationship between the NC Works Career Centers and supportive services. Also, career counselors are familiar

with the regional 211 service that provides information on support services available throughout the region. Access to child care services are still a major challenge because of scheduling, costs, and waiting list for services. Satisfactory alternatives are only available to those clients who have trusted family members or friends in close proximity to their homes or workplaces. Public transportation services are generally available in the cities of Asheville and Hendersonville. There are very limited transportation services for work opportunities available outside of the larger urban areas. Most of the Mountain Area region is rural with small towns and suburban communities which are not accessible to public transportation services generally. Land of Sky Regional Council is continuing to work on encouraging large employers that have facilities in close proximity to one another to develop carpools for their employees. Mapping the routes the employees use for driving to work and the addresses of other employees permits the opportunities for ridesharing. The project could also be used for helping prospective new hires access transportation to work. Land of Sky Regional Council has recently hired a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coordinator who will promote alternative transportation options. Mountain Area WDB is working with the TDM Coordinator and initially hospitality employers in the region to develop collaborative solutions to assist their workforce with transportation.

Although there are several points of entry into career pathways, the NCWorks Career Centers are the primary point of entry for adult job seekers seeking training and/or employment opportunities. NCWorks Online allows for job seekers to register remotely through the online portal. NC Works Online includes job postings from many private employment websites to offer the job seeker a more seamless job search opportunity. High school students in career and technical education programs can enter into several pathways that usually include progression through the community college curriculum or continuing education programs. For adult jobseekers who are considering a career transition or seeking to advance their skills and/or credentials in their chosen career field, the NCWorks Career center is an ideal place to start. Career counselors at the NCWorks Career Centers can provide job seekers with in-depth information about the skill requirements and credentials needed for successful entry into the career field. Career counselors will also be able to provide clients with information on the availability of training courses and activities, appropriate work-based learning opportunities, labor market information about job demand and wages, assessments that will be useful in determining job skill weaknesses and strengths, local employers who have job opportunities in the field, and other important labor market and education/training information.

5. Describe how the Workforce Development Board coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5)]

At this time the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has not established entrepreneurial skills training as an approved training activity. However, the Mountain Area WDB's business services staff has worked closely with the community college small business centers and business incubators. In cases where business startups have shown good and solid business plans and have demonstrated

their potential for growth, based on the recommendations of the small business center directors, recruitment and OJT services have been provided. The Board and business services staff will continue to review options related to offering entrepreneurial skills training as an approved training program. Beyond the community colleges, there are numerous nonprofit small business startup and economic development organizations in the region that provide entrepreneurial support for startups.

6. Describe how the Workforce Development Board enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.

The Mountain Area WDB has built a partnership with the US Department of Labor's state approving agency for Registered Apprenticeship in North Carolina, referred to as NCWorks Apprenticeship, as well as the NCWorks Apprenticeship local apprenticeship consultant for the Western Prosperity Zone. Registered apprenticeships have been integrated into advanced manufacturing and the skilled trade initiatives across the region. There are over two hundred registered apprenticeships in the region with more employers adopting this training model on a regular basis.

The RAMP (“Raising Awareness of Manufacturing Possibilities”) is a collaborative partnership established in 2014 between the Mountain Area WDB, NC Works Apprenticeship, 17 advanced manufacturers, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), Asheville High School, Buncombe County and Madison County high schools, and the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. One of the major goals of this sector initiative is to increase the awareness and sponsorship of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre Apprenticeship programs as well as provide valuable career pathways to high school and community college students through apprenticeship opportunities in high demand advanced manufacturing occupations such as CNC machinist and industrial maintenance technician. AB Tech is establishing a Pre Apprenticeship program for these two occupations to assist students in being selected to participate in Registered Apprenticeship programs. The local apprenticeship consultant for the Western Prosperity Zone serves an active role on the RAMP leadership team. RAMP, Madison High School, and NC Works Apprenticeship have assisted Atlas Precision Products, Advanced Superabrasives, GE Aviation, Borg Warner Turbo, and other employers in establishing Registered Apprenticeships.

Blue Ridge Community College is working with “Made in Henderson County”, NCWorks Apprenticeship, and local manufacturers to grow their own industrial maintenance technicians. Blue Ridge Community College is working with Clement Pappas, Putsch, GE Lighting Solutions, Meritor, Alpha Tech, and other advanced manufacturers on Registered Apprenticeships for industrial maintenance, CNC machining, and other advanced manufacturing occupations.

Mountain Area WDB worked with local employers, Skills USA NC Chapter, local community colleges, NC Works Apprenticeship and NC Department of Commerce

Division of Workforce Solutions to provide a skilled trades booth at the NC Mountain State Fair to promote the skilled trades and Registered Apprenticeship. Mountain Area WDB is in the early planning stages for the Fall 2016 NC Mountain State Fair to offer Registered Apprenticeship and skilled trades competition similar to what is offered at the NC State Fair in Raleigh. It is the intent of this initiative to promote skilled trades and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in the region.

Apprenticeship, as a career pathway, is marketed locally through the business services of the Mountain Area WDB and through the workforce development staff of local community colleges. Mountain Area WDB is working with NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, NCWorks Registered Apprenticeship, local community colleges, and local economic developers to host a “Work Based Learning” summit to allow employers who are already utilizing Registered Apprenticeship and other work based learning opportunities to speak to other employers in the region as an employer to employer dialogue.

7. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A). [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)]

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) coordinates workforce investment and opportunity activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities in two different ways:

First, the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) notices may be filed by employers directly with the Governor’s Rapid Response Team and/or with the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions Dislocated Worker Unit. These two units share WARN information at the state level; the Division of Workforce Solutions Dislocated Worker Unit then notifies the affected Local Area Director(s) with the WARN information.

Second, employers may contact a NCWorks Career Center Manager and/or the Local Area Director in their area(s) with questions regarding the WARN process and/or with a WARN notice. In this case the NCWorks Career Center Manager(s) and the Local Area Director would share information and coordinate services and then, with the employer’s permission, inform the state level WARN Unit(s) of the business closing or layoff. The affected employer is also given information regarding employment and training services and products offered through the Career Center(s) in the Local Area(s).

In either case, employment and training services and products are provided to WARN-affected workers by the Local Area’s NCWorks Career Center(s), including registration in NCWorks Online, career planning and/or counseling, skill development, referral to jobs and WIOA training assistance. Mountain Area WDB works collaboratively with the Local Area economic development organizations, NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, NC Community

Colleges, and others in the region to provide the best services possible to dislocated workers.

8. Provide a description of plans, strategies and assurances concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the Local Area through the NCWorks Career Center system. Include how improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of services are/will be achieved. [WIOA Section 108(b)(12)]

Cross training of the NCWorks Career Center staff, including both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff will help maximize coordination and strengthen services to both job seekers and employers. During the coming years we will seek to train all staff who provide counseling and job referral services as certified Career Development Facilitators. The use of the NCWorks Online system by all staff providing services minimizes the duplication of services. The NCWorks Online system tracks services provided to all clients who are registered in the system. This enables staff to review all services that have been provided to each client as they prepare to provide additional services to the client.

Under WIOA, Wagner-Peyser career center staff have the same performance goals as the WIOA funded staff. This encourages a teamwork atmosphere since everyone is seeking to attain the same outcomes for both job seeker clients and employer customers.

In some cases, partners from other organizations in the NCWorks Career Centers do not use the NC Works Online system. To the extent practical, we will encourage partner staff to record services provided to individual clients on the NCWorks Online case management system.

9. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board values our partnerships with adult basic skills programs and literacy councils in the region. Since three of the NCWorks Career Centers are located on community college campuses, adult basic skills programs are readily available and in close proximity. At the Asheville NCWorks Career Center we are exploring opportunities to make adult basic skills services readily available to clients on site. The memorandum of understanding that has been developed provides for specific referral arrangements. Currently Human Resource Development classes are offered on site which include the development of the job seeker's communication skills. If the job seeker needs additional assistance, the individual will be referred to the Adult Literacy services at the nearby community college. At this point the Asheville NCWorks Career Center facility may be able to support a small regularly scheduled basic skills instructional class.

That possibility will require further discussion in light of the emerging demands for other class size activities to be delivered.

Workforce investment and opportunity activities are coordinated in great part through the Local Area's career centers. The centers coordinate with the Local Area's community colleges, various county literacy councils and/or related entities. Informal and formal referral processes are in place to facilitate this coordination. There is ongoing communication in the Local Area between the Mountain Area WDB, the Title II Adult Education and Literacy programs at the community colleges, the Title II funded nonprofit organizations that provide literacy training and with the NCWorks Career Centers. The lack of appropriate literacy skills is a significant barrier to employment with English Second Language (ESL) individuals and as well as adults who failed to acquire sufficient literacy skills during their educational experience.

10. Provide a description of cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Workforce Development Board and other local entities described in Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108(b)(14)]

Currently Vocational Rehabilitation staff members have a regularly scheduled presence at two of the Local Area's four NCWorks Career Centers. At this time co-location of vocational rehabilitation staff and the other career centers is not practical. However, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the Vocational Rehabilitation administration will explore possibilities of co-location as staffing and changes in facilities permit. All career centers are in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding with Vocational Rehabilitation. This memorandum of understanding will provide for cross training of staff in proper and effective processes for providing services to clients with disabilities. All career centers are required to provide auxiliary aids and accommodations to clients with disabilities upon request. Vocational Rehabilitation provides technical assistance in these and other areas to the NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area region. Vocational Rehabilitation and career center business services staff will share information on how to effectively work with employers to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These discussions occur on an ongoing basis and will be included in the memorandum of understanding.

Under WIOA, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) has a standing committee for providing services to clients with disabilities. This committee will assist in the development of policies and procedures related to the memorandum of understanding to enhance the coordination of career center

services with those career and employment services offered by Vocational Rehabilitation.

11. Provide a detailed description of the competitive process used to award sub-grants and contracts in the Local Area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16)]

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) procurement methods comply with the procurement policies of Land of Sky Regional Council, Mountain Area WDB and the NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions (including DWS Policy Statement Number PS 22-2015).

Procurement Methods

Procurement by Competitive Proposals – Competitive procurement shall be the method of procurement of workforce WIOA services, except as provided for in situations described under the noncompetitive procurement section.

Requests for Proposals (RFPs) shall be publicized for a minimum of three (3) consecutive days in a sufficient number of newspapers, public meetings, websites, etc. (including minority publications where feasible) that will provide for a general circulation throughout the area served. The public notice will be made at least three (3) days prior to the release of the RFP. This public notice shall also contain information on the bidders' conference. A bidders' list shall be maintained of all entities that have indicated in writing an interest in providing workforce services in the Mountain Area WDB's service area. This list shall be updated biannually. A notice indicating the service or activity being procured, date, time, location of the RFP release, etc. shall be sent to the individuals on the list, all existing service providers, and others as applicable.

All RFPs shall be released with language which shall include:

- **Name and address of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and Land of Sky Regional Council.**
- **Name, address, and phone number of person(s) to contact regarding the solicitation.**
- **General description of the sub-grant program, including identification of the applicable Federal and State laws and regulations with which the selected contractor must comply. [Note: At a minimum, the Mountain Area WDB should reference the WIOA; USDOL Regulations 20 CFR Parts 626-631; and any appropriate NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions policy issuances.]**
- **The population to be served and minimum service levels to specific target groups.**
- **An estimate of the number/range of individuals to be served and expected performance results in each activity.**
- **Requirements for coordination with other workforce entities, as applicable.**
- **Funding parameters by activity.**

- A detailed description of the training and/or services to be provided.
- The period of performance.
- Applicable monitoring and reporting requirements, including, but not limited to, data entry, performance, and financial reporting.
- Other services or requirements (e.g., responsibility for eligibility determination, WDB policy on support payments, audit requirements and work statement requirements) that will affect proper budgeting by the offeror.
- Prohibition against subcontracting without Mountain Area WDB approval.
- Line item budget of proposed costs, including any profit to be realized and/or funds to be contributed.
- Documentation to be supplied by the offeror to establish its programmatic and financial capability to perform the work.
- Requirements for the preparation and submission of the proposal, due date and time, content and format, number of copies and location/person where the bid should be submitted.
- Process and procedures by which proposals will be evaluated for competitiveness, including identification of specific criteria which will be used.
- Description of the procedures for responding to bidder inquiries and a schedule for the receipt of proposals, approximate dates for review and award.
- Conditions under which the completed contract may be modified and extended for additional years, if applicable.
- Grievance procedures for contesting the procurement process.
- Affirmative action assurance that the offeror will fully comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); the Nontraditional Employment of Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to 29 CFR Part 34.
- Affirmative action assurance that the offeror will comply with N.C.G.S. 147-86.59 and certify that the offeror is not identified on the Final Divestment List of entities that the State Treasurer has determined engages in investment activities in Iran and that the offeror shall not utilize on any contract with the State agency any subcontractor that is identified on the Final Divestment List.
- Affirmative action assurance that the offeror, and any subcontractors of the offeror, complies with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the NC General Statutes, including the requirement for each employer with more than 25 employees in North Carolina to verify the work authorization for its employees through the federal E-Verify system. E-Verify System Link: www.usic.com

At the Mountain Area WDB's discretion, the WDB may procure either single or multi-year contracts. Multi-year contracts may not exceed a three (3) year period. Such multi-year contracts shall include provisions for first year funding and activity levels and provisions and conditions for the negotiation of subsequent year funding and activity levels.

Proposers will be required to submit their qualifications to be a service provider. The provider, at a minimum, shall submit a brief description of the following: 1) organizational structure and experience; 2) personnel standards; 3) financial system; 4) latest audit; 5) bonding coverage; 6) procurement procedures; and, 7) monitoring procedures.

A log will be maintained of all bidders that have requested and been sent a RFP.

A potential bidders' conference may be held after the Request for Proposals becomes publicly available. To maintain fair and open competition, the answers to the questions that arise from the bidders' conference will be provided to all entities on the bidders' list and all entities that have requested a RFP.

Amendments to solicitations will be accepted if submitted within the time frames of the original solicitation requirement. The closing submission date must be clearly stated in the RFP. Where late proposals come in, these shall be accepted and the date and time recorded. A letter shall then be sent to the proposer returning its proposal package and explaining why it is not being considered. The Mountain Area WDB reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals received in response to the RFP. Obligation to the bidder is contingent upon the availability of grant funds. No legal liability on the part of the Mountain Area WDB for payment of any money shall arise unless and until funds are made available to the Mountain Area WDB for procurement. The bidders shall be responsible for all costs involved in the development of the proposal.

The intent of the evaluation process is to certify that each proposal received meets the basic submission requirements (Proposal Review Criteria) and to determine the quality of each proposal. The Youth Committee will evaluate eligible providers of youth activities and shall submit a recommendation to the full Mountain Area WDB for their review.

The evaluation process may be divided into the following major steps: 1) a general review of the proposals; 2) an evaluation of the vendor's qualifications; 3) an evaluation of the technical aspects of the proposal; 4) an evaluation of the cost aspects of each proposal; and 5) and evaluation of demonstrated performance, effectiveness, potential for meeting performance goals, costs and quality of training.

This proposal review will be conducted by Mountain Area WDB staff and the members of the WDB Planning and Procurement Committee. The committee will be familiar with the programs/activities being solicited and understand what is being requested of the bidders. WDB staff shall provide training, guidance, and/or technical assistance on an as-needed basis to the review committee.

After evaluation and recommendation of the proposals received by the WDB staff, WDB Planning and Procurement Committee, and the WDB Youth Committee, the

final selection of providers will be made by the WDB. The WDB shall have the final authority for the selection of service providers.

Final selections will be primarily based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, participant characteristics, past workforce development experience and performance of the bidder and non-duplication of services.

A letter will be sent to each successful and unsuccessful bidder that contains the WDB decisions related to procurement.

Intention to Bid Option. The Mountain Area WDB may use this option when there is a high level of uncertainty regarding the number of proposals which will be received for a workforce service or activity and whether there will be a sufficient number of bids to justify the development of the solicitation. This competitive method maintains the integrity of a competitive procurement process by identifying, through public notice, potential bidders to determine the feasibility of procurement.

Procedural Requirements. When using this option, the Mountain Area WDB will develop a set of preliminary training/service specifications for which the WDB intends to request bids. The specifications will include the following parameters:

- date the proposed solicitation will be issued
- specific type of training/services to be performed
- estimated number of participants and/or available funds or ranges, if preferred
- expected period of performance
- geographic area to be served
- specific target groups to be served
- type of contract to be awarded
- expected performance

A public notification will be issued in the same manner as that used for issuance of RFPs. In addition, letters or e-mail notifications will be sent to all applicable organizations on the bidders' list, requesting an indication of whether the organization intends to bid on specific training/services which are described in the letter, consistent with the specifications developed. The letter will indicate the date by which a response is to be received.

If the intention to bid process is used and no interest is received, noncompetitive sole source procurement may be used. When one intention to bid is received, every effort will be made to negotiate the desired training/services with that provider. However, if acceptable training/services cannot be negotiated, the WDB may use sole source procurement to obtain the training/service. A complete history of this process will be documented in the procurement file.

Limitations. Sole source procurement will not be used if more than one organization indicated its intent to bid. In this case, a RFP solicitation for the training/services advertised must be developed and transmitted to all who respond to the intention to bid.

Procurement by Noncompetitive Proposals – Noncompetitive procurement (solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is deemed inadequate) shall be used only when the award of a contract is not feasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids or competitive proposals, and one of the following circumstances applies:

- The service is available only from a single source.
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.
- The awarding agency authorizes noncompetitive proposals.
- After solicitation of a number of sources, including the current bidders' list, competition is determined inadequate.

The WDB staff will conduct a cost analysis and contract negotiation process for all noncompetitive procurements. The termination or suspension of a current contractor shall be considered as an emergency under certain conditions; however, termination of an existing contract should not be used to circumvent competitive solicitation. Final approval will be made by the WDB. The WDB staff is responsible for fully documenting this method of procurement. Special attention shall be given to code of standards of conduct, conflict of interest, and safeguarding values normally achieved through competition and competitive procurement.

12. Describe methods used to track Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth performance measures throughout each Program Year and plans for continuous improvement of performance.

The MIS Specialist uses Future Works to oversee performance. At least once a month, an exit report will be run to identify which individuals have exited the WIOA program. Every exited individual will be entered into a spreadsheet that has been sorted by case manager name, then by the individual's exit date. All performance standards are listed and calculated, and each individual will be measured according to performance standards.

Skilled career counseling prior to enrollment in training assures that individuals choose training appropriate to their interests, abilities, and life situations. Intensive case management while individuals are in training assures that any problems are resolved during training.

Upon completion of training, most individuals receive an industry recognized, post-secondary credential such as the Career Readiness Certification, Skilled Job

Coaching, Group Job Seeking Skills workshops, Resume consultation and intensive job referral. These services assure that individuals have the best opportunity for placement. NCWorks Career Center staff work as a team under an Integrated Services Delivery (ISD) model to provide the support necessary to insure that individuals find and keep jobs.

The NCWorks Career Centers participate in local and regional job fairs and provide space and assistance on an individual basis to area employers looking to fill positions and to connect with job seekers. Every effort will be made to assure that all individuals make improvement toward obtaining training goals to ensure performance standards are achieved. Staff will monitor each individual's progress. Personal contact with staff has proven to be a primary factor in the individual's continued growth and employment retention. With more virtual tools available access to services has expanded. There will be efforts made to engage with job seekers and employers to offer assistance and personal contact. Continuous improvement is a team effort and it focuses on customer service to job seekers and employers. Additional focus is place on customizing services for the client's convenience and level of comfort with personal or virtual services.

13. Provide a brief description of the actions the Workforce Development Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission. [WIOA Section 108(b)(18)]

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), almost half of the Board members have been appointed in the past year. This has required substantial training and we will have the Board members who are transitioning from WIA to WIOA who have also participated in that training. New by-laws were adopted by the Mountain Area WDB and included in the by-laws are standards as set under WIOA for Board membership. Members who retire or leave their positions of optimum policy or hiring authority with their businesses will be replaced, at the earlier date of the following, within one year or upon the expiration of their term. Private sector members must represent companies or sectors that hire for in jobs that are "high-quality" and jobs that require work relevant training for in-demand occupations. (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A))

The Board has been engaged in the development of the WIOA regional/local area strategic plan. This has helped them broaden and strengthen their understanding of the dynamic and diverse local economy, and they will become familiar with the accountability and performance expectations of the Workforce Development System in the region. Board members are serving on committees that involve executives and leaders from workforce partners and related organizations that serve both employers and jobseekers in the Local Area. The Board will work at a high level and provide guidance that will focus the workforce system on meeting the skill needs of the sectors they represent. In addition to the standing committees of the Mountain Area WDB, most Board members are serving on one of five sector work groups representing advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism,

skilled trades, and technology/IT. Board members are bringing their private sector experience in human resources to assist the work groups in developing strategies for each sector to develop the skilled talent needed. Board members also are utilizing their industry contacts to bring additional business leaders to join in this effort as we develop our Local Area and regional workforce plans. Board members keep the workforce system looking forward and preparing clients for changes in the industry. They provide insights concerning the skills that are required to adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Board members represent employers who are the largest employers in the region in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, and technology. The Workforce Board contributes significantly to and reviews the effectiveness of sector strategies and career pathways developed by the staff and workforce partners.

14. Describe how Performance Data, Data Validation, and NCWorks Online oversight is provided by the local Workforce Development Board?

The Mountain Area WDB MIS Specialist has a real time capability to review performance data from Future Works, NCWorks Online and Wage DES data. Mountain Area WDB constantly reviews our Youth and Adult/DW performance data based on reports generated from the Local Area and from DWS. The Board review the Adult Entered Employment Rate, Adult Employment Retention Rate, Adult Average Earnings, DW Entered Employment Rate, DW Employment Retention Rate, DW Average Earnings, Youth Placement in Employment or Education, Youth Attainment of Degree or Certification, and Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gains. Mountain Area WDB works with our contractors to improve performance when we are failing to meet our 100% goal and 80% goal. Mountain Area WDB holds meetings with contractors to offer best practices and innovative ways to improve performance. The Mountain Area WDB MIS Specialist review client records for Data Validation and works with contractors to obtain the needed files that are requested by DWS for Data Validation. Reports are provided monthly to the Mountain Area WDB Director on contractor and Local Area performance. Workforce Board takes very seriously the Local Area's responsibility to meet accountability measures based on the performance standards established by the NC Works Commission, DWS, and USDOL. As PY2015 is a transition year, the Local Area has struggled to meet expenditure targets for Out of School Youth and Work Experience. Mountain Area WDB is working with our contractors to improve performance and to meet all performance standards. Contractors and Workforce Board staff take advantage of educational opportunities offered by DWS to learn best practices to meet the performance targets. Mountain Area WDB has the second highest performance targets of any Workforce Board in the state. Despite these high standards, Mountain Area strives to meet and exceed all performance targets. The Workforce Board utilizes all available technology to monitor performance and validate data.

C. NCWorks Career Centers (One-Stop Delivery System)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes a one-stop workforce delivery system and requires there be at least one One-Stop location (NCWorks Career Center) in each local workforce development area. These NCWorks Career Centers provide workforce development services as well as access to other programs and activities carried out by One-Stop partners identified in the WIOA.

A Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open full-time as defined by the local Workforce Development Board, at which integrated services delivery is fully implemented and where services on-site include at least Trade Adjustment Act, Veterans Employment Services, Wagner-Peyser, Title I WIOA Adult and Title I WIOA Dislocated Worker.

A Tier 2 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open to the public at least 16 hours a week, at which paid, trained staff are available to serve customers during all hours of operation. These are locations whose primary purpose is to provide workforce services and are considered by the workforce development board to be a part of their one-stop delivery system. These locations are staffed by at least two paid, trained staff personnel who are paid by a federal workforce funding stream.

WIOA authorizes career services for adults and dislocated workers. There are three types of “career services”: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer.

In addition to providing career and training services to individuals who are unemployed, there remains a significant population of job seekers who are underemployed. Individuals who are underemployed may include:

- Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;*
- Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;*
- Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Section 3(36); and*
- Individuals who are employed, but whose current job’s earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job’s earnings from their previous employment.*

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis (Also reference Priority of Services pages 16-17).

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gap), supportive service needs, and more.

If one-stop center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual. These services must be available in all one-stop centers.

Individualized Career Services include outreach, intake and orientation, initial assessment of skills levels, labor exchange services (job search and placement, in-demand occupation information); business services for employers; and appropriate referrals to partners and workforce programs. Additional services include specialized assessment, in-depth interviewing, development of an individual employment plan, career planning; internships and work experiences; financial literacy services; English language acquisition and follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the first day of employment.

Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up service.

After receiving an interview and evaluation, adults and dislocated workers who are determined unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through the career services, or be in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; or have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services; and who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the adults or dislocated workers are willing to commute or relocate; and who are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system may be enrolled for Training Services.

Training Services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training; transitional jobs or job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition, and more.

1. Provide a brief description of the NCWorks Career Center system and include how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]

There are four NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Local Area. Three of the NCWorks Career Centers (Asheville, Henderson County, and Transylvania County) are certified as Tier I Centers. Along with the Henderson County NC Works Career Center, the other two centers (Transylvania County and Madison County) are located on community college campuses. The Asheville NCWorks Career Center is located in downtown Asheville adjacent or in close proximity to the City of Asheville Transit Center and the Buncombe County Department of Human Services. The Asheville NCWorks Career Center is located 1.6 miles from the main campus of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech). There is public transportation provided by the City of Asheville Transit System to enable relatively easy access between the Asheville NCWorks Career Center and AB Tech.

The Asheville NCWorks Career Center is located in the former Employment Security Commission office in downtown Asheville. The location is near the urban transportation hub and offers convenient access to individuals with transportation needs. In addition to eight Wagner-Peyser supported staff and seven WIOA supported staff, there are two Veterans Services staff and a regularly scheduled Vocational Rehabilitation representative staff presence in the center. Public assistance programs provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services are located within two blocks of the center at the Buncombe County Department of Human Services.

The Henderson County NCWorks Career center is staff with 4.5 WIOA supported positions and four Wagner-Peyser supported positions. Veterans Services are provided on a regularly scheduled basis. Community college adult basic skills and human resource development (HRD) programs are co-located in the same building as the career center at the Flat Rock campus of Blue Ridge Community College. Vocational Rehabilitation services and public assistance programs provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services are located on the bus line within 1.3 miles of the Henderson County NCWorks Career Center.

The Transylvania County NCWorks Career Center is located on the campus of Blue Ridge Community College in Brevard and is staffed by two WIOA supported positions. Wagner-Peyser staff and Veterans' Services staff have regularly scheduled office hours at the center.

2. Describe how local Workforce Development Boards determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.

Mountain Area WDB determines the need for enrollment in Training Services based on the individual client's personal career goals, existing job skills, work history, and availability of employment opportunities in the Local Area for that client's occupational choice. Training programs are only approved for WIOA funding by the Local Area if the training will lead to an in demand and higher employment in the region. The NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area utilize all staff and career resources to inform customers for training opportunities for high growth, high demand occupations. All customer clients who enroll in training are required to research occupational interest using web based tools and informational interviewing and to meet at least once with a career counselor and meet once with a program coordinator over the program they are interested in to assure appropriate career choices.

Each customer interested in training receives a list of training programs approved by the Mountain Area WDB. Also a strong feature of our Local Area NCWorks Career Centers is the availability of national certified career counselors who stay abreast of local and regional employment trends and assist customers in choosing viable, well-paying career fields which match individuals' interests and aptitudes. Quality career counseling assures higher training program completion and entered employment rates.

Career counselors are responsible for issuing vouchers and tracking participants. Following the Mountain Area WDB compliance procedures, career counselors track the individuals' performance in the training program and work with the individual to assure successful completion of the training and entry into the desired career pathway.

3. Describe how follow-up services are provided through the NCWorks Career Centers.
[WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)]

The NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area currently provide follow-up services for Adult and Dislocated workers who have completed WIOA Title I short-term or long-term training and are seeking employment or have entered employment. Staff conduct these follow-ups in person, by telephone and/or by email if the individual is seeking employment, and by phone and/or email once the individual has entered employment. Follow-up services continue for a minimum of 12 months after the first day of employment. Mountain Area WDB places significant emphasis on providing follow-up since we recognize most of our clients have many barriers to employment. Working with the clients proactively can help the individual remain employed and making progress on their self-selected career pathway.

Centers received Draft WIOA Eligibility Overview documents in April of this year and centers awaiting further guidance and clarification on Follow-up Services.

4. Describe how new NCWorks Career Center staff are trained in the integrated services delivery system, dual enrollment of customers in WIOA Titles I & III and have full access to NCWorks.gov and the timeline for accomplishing the training for new staff. Describe the staff development activities that reinforce and improve the initial training efforts.

Either the MIS Specialist or the NCWorks Career Center Managers provide training to newly hired staff.

Staff are trained to be part of a career center team that is focused on an integrated service delivery (ISD) model. WIOA Title I and Title III Wagner Peyser staff are cross trained to serve job seekers and employers. Staff from both Title I and Title III are part of a Welcome Team, Training Team, and Employment Team. From the outside observer, one cannot determine which staff are WIOA Title I staff and which staff are Title III Wagner Peyser staff.

Whenever a new staff member is hired and access to NCWorks.gov is requested, the MIS specialist asks if they have received training. If training is required by the MIS Specialist, she first sends information on how to access the NCWorks.gov training site and provides step-by-step how-to instructions for setting up a staff account,

setting up staff alerts, individual registration, how to find individuals, and enrolling in WIOA. Staff is asked to practice on the training site and an appointment for one-on-one training is set as soon as schedules allow. For other areas of NCWorks.gov such as LMI, Employer registration, Job Orders, etc. normally the NCWorks Career Center Manager or other seasoned Case Management professional provides training. A staff member is not given full access to NCWorks.gov until it is assured that they have been thoroughly trained in the NC Works system. Staff development activities are provided on an ongoing basis. Weekly staff meetings provide the opportunity for internal training or outside speakers so career center staff will be aware of the latest developments for the labor market, training providers, and the skills required by local employers. As funding and staff scheduling allow, staff are encouraged to attend conferences and professional development meetings locally or throughout the state. Occasionally career center staff are provided the opportunity to attend regional conferences when funding and schedules allow.

5. Describe how the Workforce Development Board works to improve Career Center operations by working with state and regional Division of Workforce Solutions staff.

Bimonthly meetings are held with Career Center managers, NCWorks Regional Operations Director for the Western Prosperity Zone, and the Workforce Board staff (director and business services) for the Mountain Area WDB and Southwestern WDB. At these meetings, efforts are discussed on how the region can work together to better serve job seekers and employers. Regional and State DWS staff are regularly included in these meetings to receive guidance on WIOA implementation, NCWorks.gov, career center ISD, and numerous other topics. DWS staff are included and provided the opportunity to participate in all of the Mountain Area WDB sector strategy and career pathways initiatives. Beyond the bimonthly meetings, weekly and sometimes daily discussions occur with DWS staff to improve career center performance and relevance to job seekers and employers.

6. Describe how the Workforce Development Board holds the NCWorks Career Center operator and contractors accountable for activities and customer outcomes in the Center.

The majority of program oversight of the NCWorks Career Center and WIOA contractors for activities and customer outcomes in the NCWorks Career Centers is provided by the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's MIS specialist. She conducts continuous online reviews of individual records as to services provided and case management. Annual reviews are conducted at each career center for at least 10% of individual paper files: enrolled files are reviewed for eligibility documentation and compliance and exited individual files for data validation documentation and compliance. Performance reports are analyzed for each NC Works Career Center to determine whether the NCWorks Career Center is meeting the 80% goal or 100% goal. Failure to meet a performance standard results in corrective action by the operator and contractor. Mountain Area WDB staff meet with the career center operator and contractors and offer suggestions to meet the

performance standards. Resources are sought out to assist the operator and contractor to meet those standards. The annual contract renewal in the proposed Statement of Work will require the operator and/or contractor to identify steps to meet performance standards. Failure of the operator and/or contractor to take appropriate corrective action which result in Mountain Area WDB to engage in a new procurement to competitively acquire a new operator and/or contractor to meet the mandated performance standards. As procurement policy dictates, a new Request for Proposals will be issued prior to the conclusion of the third year of the contract for the operator and contractors.

7. Describe how the Workforce Development Board facilitates access to services provided through the NCWorks Career Center delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(B)]

The Mountain Area WDB has worked with the public libraries in Madison County to train their staff on using NCWorks Online. These libraries are located in very small rural communities but they do have internet access. The library staff have been very enthusiastic about learning how to use NCWorks Online. These libraries have been equipped with NCWorks Career Center Computer Workstations that have prominently featured links to career development and employability skill development websites. The library staff at these public access sites have been trained to help customers use the sites and have been provided with written information about how these sites can help with different customer needs. They will also be given contact information for NCWorks Career Center staff who can provide technical assistance. The potential for using Skype, online chats and live/recorded webinars of jobseeker workshops is being explored. Mountain Area WDB has also explored partnerships with the YMCA of Western North Carolina, community centers and other organizations to expand the availability of workforce services throughout the region. Under WIOA local area are encouraged to develop strategies to provider interactive virtual services for clients in more remote areas. The remote NC Works computer stations are pre-configured with links to NC Works Online system: <https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx> and numerous job search and career development systems. A few of these sites are: American Job Centers <http://jobcenter.usa.gov/>; O'NET Online <https://www.onetonline.org/>; America's Career InfoNet – Disabilities <https://www.disability.gov/resource/americas-career-infonet/>; Veterans Career transition Program <http://vets/syr.edu/education/employment-programs/>. Staff at the public access sites are trained to help customers use the sites and have also been provided written information about these sites can help with different customer needs. They have also been given contact information for NCWorks Career Center staff who can provide technical assistance.

While the Local Area is home to a growing metropolitan region, there still remains many isolated communities in rural parts of the region. It has been an ongoing challenge to serve these communities with the workforce and supportive services

needed. The Regional Council of Governments as the administrative entity for the workforce development board is particularly advantageous when it comes to identifying the workforce and economic development needs of cities, towns and rural areas. Both Councils of Government in the Western Region periodically submit and update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plans for the region of the US Economic Development Administration. These plans, along with the economic development plans that are created for each county, provide useful information for the development of workforce strategies to be implemented by the region's Workforce Boards. Understanding the planned direction of economic development, especially in rural counties, helps guide the development of training opportunities that will assist in preparing skilled workers for existing and future rural enterprises. The Local Area also works with the NC Department of Commerce Rural Division to assist our rural communities.

8. Describe Local Area strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between the NCWorks Career Center system and unemployment insurance programs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iv)]

Currently as a requirement of UI, clients are being scheduled for Re-employment Assessment (REA) and Employment Assessment Interview (EAI) in the NCWorks Career Center office.

Along with these programs, once participants are called into the local NCWorks Career Center office they are provided referrals and signed up for other Job Seeking and Job Keeping workshops. All product box activities are offered to clients and appropriate actions are taken for each.

In addition, each local NCWorks Career Center office has simplified instructions on how to access the UI website and call in number in order to access customer needs in filling for unemployment insurance. Staff are instructed not to provide answers to substantive questions regarding UI and the customer is referred to the DES website and phone number. Understandably, many customers are confused and refer to the office as the "unemployment office" and NCWorks Career Center staff are working to address any confusion that remains with customers and the general public. Due to the relative low unemployment rate in the region, NCWorks Career Center offices are seeing few Dislocated Workers. Every effort is made to reach out to those who are unemployed and to provide them career center services.

9. Describe how the Local Workforce Development Board connects NCWorks integrated services to:
 - a) persons with disabilities;

Vocational Rehabilitation is a key partner in the success of our center operations. We have an active referral process between our NCWorks Career Center offices and VR. Routinely VR staff will come to the NCWorks Career Center offices and use available space, also career center staff have provided off sites services

at VR as requested.

In addition with the Henderson and Transylvania County NCWorks offices being located on the campus of Blue Ridge Community College, we are able to access staff at BRCC specifically designated to serve individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the Director of Disability Services has become a great resource for our NCWorks Career Centers in both counties.

At most of the NCWorks Career Centers the offices now have access to the following assistive technology: #1 Screen reading software for the blind – Job Access with Speech (JAWS) #2 Zoom Text-screen reading capacity for seeing Impaired #3 Headphones for hearing related needs.

b) returning veterans and skilled military retirees;

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) staff and Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) staff are either directly housed in the Tier I Asheville and Henderson County NCWorks Career Centers. They have regularly scheduled dates for office hours in the smaller NCWorks Career Centers in Transylvania and Madison Counties. Veteran preference is provided as mandated by law in all of our career centers as it relates to WIOA funds and services.

In addition, we work closely with local Veteran Services organizations in the Local Area to make sure outreach is being accomplished and services and resources are being deployed as needed.

c) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients;

Currently we have referral procedures in place to work with our TANF recipients in each of the career centers. TANF personnel send participants to take part in community college HRD job seeking and job keeping skills workshops.

Orientation regarding all career center services is provided to each client on first visit to our career centers. We provide preference as required under WIOA legislation to our TANF populations in regards to services and assistance.

In addition, we have also offered off site services to our TANF populations as needed. Space is also provided when needed in our centers for TANF partners. Career center staff have worked with agencies of the NC Department of Health and Human Services to serve TANF recipients so the clients would have access to job training and supportive services.

d) Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and Rapid Response Activities;

All of the NC Works Career Centers have worked with numerous area companies to provide Rapid Response or Dislocated Worker Services including Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) due to facility site closings or downsizings. The Centers work in cooperation with the NC Division for Workforce Solutions Rapid Response staff to meet with management, listen to the needs of the company and together with company representatives, develop a system of services that can be provided to individuals before a layoff occurs. After a plan is developed with management, the partners meet and create an agenda for meeting with the workers and informing them about the services and support available. We tailor each plan to the number of employees, their schedules and their needs.

The region currently has two TAA specialists who can help register affected employees for TAA benefits if the company is approved for TAA status. Affected workers can receive WIOA dislocated worker services while awaiting determination of eligibility for TAA services. Clients can be dual enrolled in TAA and WIOA. However, when this occurs TAA funds are the primary source of funds for participant services and WIOA financial support sharply diminishes once TAA support begins.

Rapid Response is advertised as one of the Career Centers' business services, in part because of the work up-front with the company to assist them preparing for the layoff or closing. At this time, our region is fortunate to have only a few companies who have announced they were closing or downsizing and in some of these instances, the company has qualified for TAA status.

e) individuals with other barriers to employment; and

Services to individuals with barriers to employment are customized to meet the individuals' needs. Generally, we have partners that specialize in helping people with different barriers: Adult Basic Skills staff at the community colleges can help individuals with basic skills deficiencies, limited English language abilities and a need for a high school diploma. Vocational Rehabilitation can help with physical, emotional and mental health challenges. The NCWorks Career Center Asheville also houses the regional coordinator for the former offender re-entry program. All Career Center staff are familiar with the local support network for temporary shelter, transportation food, clothing, and medical services. Similarly, staff can assist referrals for transportation and child care assistance. However, the support resources available are not always in sufficient to meet everyone's needs. Working together with all community partners offers the best opportunity to meet the needs of those with barriers to employment.

f) additional specific populations, if applicable.

In many cases it is important to know what other services the client is receiving

and what strategies are planned by other service providers. Release forms are available for clients to sign that allow Career Center case managers to get information from other service providers so that coordinated strategies can help the client overcome the barriers more quickly and with less waste and duplication to most effectively manage limited resources.

10. Describe how entities within the NCWorks Career Center system, including Career Center operators and partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and 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 and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(C)]

The entities within the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area place an emphasis on serving those with disabilities and complying with Section 188, if applicable, and all provisions of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*. The certification process for career centers includes verification that career center facilities and center products and services are physically and programmatically accessible per the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*. Any career center partners providing partner services on-site are required by the center to meet that same level of programmatic accessibility as well. The three certified Mountain Area centers currently comply with all provisions, and the fourth center, located on a community college campus, whose facilities, programs and services are required to comply with ADA provisions, is currently compliant as well.

In addition, the NC Department of Commerce – Division of Workforce Solutions arranges for interpretive services for the hearing disabled free of charge, the Workforce Board assists with purchase of assistive technologies as needed, and NC Vocational Rehabilitation provides guidance and recommendations regarding assistive technology and accessibility requirements per the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*.

11. Describe the integrated customer service process for participants. Attach a flow chart for services to include initial one-on-one interviews with customers, including NCWorks.gov dual registration, skills assessments, and determination of further services. Name document: *Local Area Name Service Flow Chart 2016*.

The flow chart for integrated customer services for participants at the Local Area NC Works Career Centers is attached. The Greeter, stationed in the reception area, first determines the reason for the customer's visit. For customers desiring staff-assisted employment and training services, the greeter determines if they first need a *Welcome*. All customers coming to the center for the first time receive a *Welcome*; customers who have previously received a *Welcome* but have not accessed center services in the past year receive a *Welcome Back*.

The *Welcome* is the initial one-on-one interview with the customer and includes registration in NCWorks Online and a dual enrollment in WP and WIOA Adult

Basic Career services whenever possible. The customer also receives an informal initial assessment in order to determine “first steps” in addressing their employment and/or training needs. Customers also receive recommendations and referral(s) to center products and services and to off-site one-stop partners as appropriate. A brief overview of how to use NCWorks Online features and referral(s) to jobs are also included.

Customers who return to the center after being welcomed can request staff-assisted employment and/or skills development services and products as they choose. With each subsequent visit to the center, center staff conduct ongoing assessments of the customer’s employment and/or training needs and customers receive additional referrals to center products and services as appropriate.

12. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the local Workforce Development Board and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. (A MOU guide is attached for your reference as Appendix D). [WIOA Section 121(b)(A)(iii)]. Name document: *Local Area Name NCWorks Career Center MOU*.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Mountain Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NC Works Career Center system is attached.

13. Describe how the Workforce Development Board uses a portion of funds available to the Local Area to maintain the NCWorks Career Center system, including payment of the infrastructure costs of Career Centers. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(ii) and (h)]

A significant portion of the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding received by the Mountain Area WDB is utilized to maintain the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area. A-B Tech and Blue Ridge community colleges operate three of the centers in the Local Area, and the NC Department of Commerce – Division of Workforce Solutions operates the fourth. Mountain Area WDB contracts for Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA services with A-B Tech and Blue Ridge Community College. Staffing for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are included in contracts for those WIOA services with A-B Tech for Buncombe and Madison Counties and Blue Ridge Community College for Henderson and Transylvania Counties. Infrastructure costs include the purchase and maintenance of some of the technology for the centers, including WI-FI connectivity, computers and website fees, and a portion of the cost of signage for the centers. The WDB also assists the centers with the purchase of marketing materials, staff development and training products and other miscellaneous supplies.

14. Describe the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

Note: Per USDOL FAQ January 28, 2016, local agreements for funding one-stop infrastructure costs must be in place by Program Year 2017 and must satisfy the requirements of WIOA Section 121(h).

In the Local Area, most of the WIOA core one stop NCWorks Career Center partners contribute in some way to the operations of said centers.

For the NCWorks Career Center Asheville, infrastructure cost sharing and resource contributions are as follows:

- 1. NC Department of Commerce – Division of Workforce Solutions operates the CENTER and provides leased space, computer access for center staff, telephone access, fax equipment, copiers, supplies and management of the daily operations of the center.**
- 2. Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College provides WIOA Adult and Dislocated Program staff, administers funding for long-term and short-term training programs and provides supplies and marketing materials. A-B Tech also provides a part-time instructor for an employability lab and a monthly basic computer skills class.**

For the NCWorks Career Centers in Henderson and Transylvania Counties, infrastructure cost sharing and resource contributions are as follows:

- 1. NC Department of Commerce – Division of Workforce Solutions provides the staff to support operations of the center.**
- 2. Blue Ridge Community College operates the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program, provides the space, computer access for center staff, telephone access, fax equipment, copiers, supplies, management of the daily operations of the center, and administers funding for long-term and short-term training programs.**
- 3. Mountain Area Workforce Development Board provides funding for marketing materials and center signage and can assist with other miscellaneous costs as they may arise.**

15. Describe the Workforce Development Board’s method for planning oversight, review process and frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)]

The Mountain Area WDB method for planning oversight, review process and frequency review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area places a top priority on providing the highest level of quality customer service possible to both jobseekers and employers. There is on-going communication and meetings with NCWorks Career Center managers in the Local Area. This close relationship provides an opportunity to identify challenges in serving customers and a focus on continuous improvement of NCWorks Career Center services. Best practices are evaluated to identify more efficient means to serve customers recognizing dwindling resources available to staff the operations of the centers. Emphasis is placed on reaching out to individuals who may be jobseekers and employers in the Local Area on the availability of the services at the NCWorks Career Centers. As the economy has improved, there is less engagement from jobseekers at the centers but more engagement from employers. Most individuals in the Local Area who want a job can find employment but employers are experiencing greater difficulty in meeting workforce talent needs. Performance reports from NCWorks Online are evaluated to determine the best course of action to improve performance. The Mountain Area WDB MIS Specialist provides data to evaluate on a real-time basis performance and to identify areas for improvement. Monitoring activities by Mountain Area WDB ensure program compliance and improved performance outcomes. Performance indicators include individuals served, services provided, individuals obtaining employment, customer satisfaction (includes jobseekers, employers, and center staff). Employers in the Local Area are sought out to provide feedback on services from the centers. There is a direct relationship in the engagement of employers with the interest of job seekers at the centers. If job seekers recognize that good employment opportunities and rewarding career pathways can begin at the local NCWorks Career Center, the traffic of jobseekers will increase as they understand the direct correlation between the centers and better job opportunities. Economic conditions are considered in evaluating the performance of the NCWorks Career Centers. At times of lower unemployment, often the customers receiving services have more barriers to employment since most individuals who want to work already have found employment. As the greatest need in the Local Area is to upskill the existing workforce for better paying employment opportunities, increasingly the customers of the centers already have a job but they are searching for better employment possibilities. In times of economic distress and high unemployment, the jobseeker customers will be much more likely to have job ready skills but there will be less opportunities for employment due to poor economic conditions.

Mountain Area WDB recognizes this is a time of maximum opportunity and the workforce partners in the Local Area are focused on taking advantage of increased employment opportunities and engaged employers searching for talent. Employers understand this economic reality and they are responding by taking additional steps to be more competitive in a regional war for talent.

16. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using the integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA

and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]

Everyone who comes into the career centers is required to register into NCWorks Online Database Management System and should also be enrolled into the WIOA Adult Core Only program. The individual can also register online wherever the individual may be located: home, work, or other gathering places wherever online access is available.

Each individual who enters a one-stop career center receives an orientation which includes insight into WIOA services. If the individual is interested in pursuing training in education or on-the-job, the case manager will complete an Intensive application, collect all required eligibility documentation, complete most recent eligibility checklist, complete an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and enroll them into WIOA intensive program.

Upon arriving at the NCWorks Career Center, each individual is greeted. First-time customers receive an orientation and are assisted in the registration process on NCWorks Online. Once registration and assessments are complete, additional services are discussed, such as job placement, short and long term training, on-the-job training, etc. There is a welcome team in place to help guide clients through orientation and offerings. After being greeted by the welcome team as the client enters the NCWorks Career Center, a client can choose to work at their own pace at self-service NCWorks computer terminals located near the reception area at each of the NCWorks Career Centers. Clients can conduct their own job search, review educational opportunities, and obtain resources they need via the self-serve, internet connected computer terminals. Many of the individuals in the region, especially those with the greatest barriers to employment, lack web and internet access at their home. The self service area allows these clients to work at their own pace and extends the capability of the limited career center staff.

The intake and case management information systems are used to identify strategies that better meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, leveraging resources and capacity within the local NCWorks Career Center office.

The Henderson County and Transylvania County NCWorks Offices will provide comprehensive career planning, training, placement, and business services. From the initial point of contact, cross trained NCWorks Staff will provide customers core services including orientation and intake. Staff members will place emphasis on raising customers' skill levels and returning these individuals to work with skills to secure well-paying jobs appropriate to the individual's interests and abilities.

Key to this plan is accurate assessment of the client's skills. The plan calls for the use of career counseling from nationally certified career counselors. During the past several years, the need for Career Counseling hours has dramatically increased. These counselors will assist the individuals in developing an

individualized career plan. If individuals receive professional career counseling and assessment, then make appropriate career decisions based on interests and abilities, chances for securing and keeping a job will increase. It is our belief that after exit performance is directly linked to upfront career counseling.

Participants will be required to assess and where needed, increase core workplace skills using Career Ready 101 curriculum. All participants will be required the North Carolina Career Readiness Certificate. The certificate can be used as an employment tool along with the individual's resume. There are several prominent employers which require CRC certification for jobs in the region and many more employers prefer CRC.

17. Identify NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites; on-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth services provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use form provided. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)] Name document: *Local Area Name Career Centers*.

Using the form provided, the Mountain Area's NC Works Career Center System has been uploaded to WISE.

D. WIOA Title I Programs

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

1. Describe the local Workforce Development Board's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include high level goals, outreach strategies, service delivery and expected outcomes. Describe how this vision will improve the employment outcomes for this population.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board is focused on serving WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers in the region to assist them in obtaining the training and skills necessary to find employment at a family sustaining wage. Our target sectors of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades and technology/IT are all experiencing significant job growth and employers are encountering difficulty in finding the qualified workers they need to support that employment growth. Most of the occupations in the target sectors pay wages near or above the median wage for the region. By providing WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers high quality workforce services, our region can help meet employers' needs and minimize workforce skill gaps.

Multiple strategies are employed to reach out to Adults and Dislocated Workers in the region. We work with our workforce partners and employers to promote hiring opportunities, career fairs, and other potential employment options. The career centers are being rebranded as NCWorks Career Centers and efforts are being

made to create uniform marketing materials to potential jobseeker and employer customers. As the economy improves, there has been a reduction in job seeker customer activity at the career centers and the local community colleges. Creative ways to reach potential job seekers are being considered so a greater number of WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers can be engaged. Due to the small number of business site closings and downsizings, the number of Dislocated Workers is declining. However, there are still many eligible Adults that can be engaged, many who are currently employed at least on a part time basis but who desire employment that provides a better financial opportunity. Upskilling the existing workforce is key to the goal of serving Adults and Dislocated Workers. Consistent with the Governor's Goals of 67% of all working age adults obtaining a post-secondary credential, there is an effort to provide short term training that awards an industry recognized post-secondary credential which will raise the earnings of the job seeker.

Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services are provided through contracted WIOA operators and board approved training providers. Job seeker customers identified as needing skills development are assessed for WIOA eligibility and may receive financial assistance for training. To help determine what type of training is needed, an individual's skills and interest can be assessed formally and informally. Formal assessments include the TABE, the Career Readiness Certificate Work Keys Assessments, Skills Check, the Self Directed Search and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory.

A NCWorks counselor or WIOA Case Manager meets individually with customers who take these assessments to discuss the outcomes and assist them in identifying a career goal as well as creating a career development plan. In demand jobs in the target sectors are reviewed as possible employment and career options for the customer. Other sectors are also reviewed depending on the customer's interest, the results of the skill assessments, and local labor market conditions. Job seeker customers are also evaluated informally, through one-on-one appointments and interviews. Key questions are asked and responses lead to discussion that helps determine if training is desired or necessary for job attainment. If training is required, training will be completed through board approved providers. Most training is conducted through the NC Community College System but it may also be conducted through other approved vendors. While the occupations approved for training can be amended by the Board at any meeting, the standards for consideration include regional occupational demand, the recognition of the credential/certification among local employers. Training providers must complete registration on NCWorks Online and be assessed in accordance with WIOA criteria. The Board is also interested in costs and policies related to refunds for dropouts and related financial concerns.

To improve employment outcomes for Adults and Dislocated Workers, there must be significant collaboration with employers. The employment needs of employers are identified in several ways. First, the NCWorks Business Services team does extensive outreach to local businesses. A primary purpose of their employer visits is to learn what the employers need. As part of our sector strategies, we are engaged with employers in all five target sectors. Employers are serving on each of the sector work groups providing feedback on what job skills are needed and how our region can respond to workforce skill gaps in each of the five target sectors. Any information on hiring needs as well as the types of skills and training required or preferred for the jobs these employers have is communicated to staff at the NCWorks Career Center. Career center also serve on each of the five sector work groups so they can better understand the workforce needs of employers. The information obtained from this dialogue is very valuable in advising job seekers on skills and training needed to be competitive for specific jobs. In addition to the Business Services Team, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, local Chambers of Commerce, and related organizations have extensive interaction with employers and gain valuable information on training and hiring needs. All skill deficits are identified in the community, training providers address those needs by developing short or long term training. The sector work groups help identify workforce skill gaps and potential solutions with input from employers, economic developers, educators, and many others. Unfortunately, due to the length of time required for curriculum development and approval of programs this sometimes does not adequately meet the needs of employers in a timely basis.

Once an in-demand skill is identified and training is developed then an effort is made to make the community aware of this opportunity. This is done through various advertising and marketing methods by the Community Colleges and the Career Centers.

Adults and Dislocated Workers who obtain employment counseling at the region's NCWorks Career Centers, in most cases, will obtain the necessary job skills and they are able to find employment opportunities, in many cases, through a multitude of employers, at wages paying near or above the median wage for the region. For Adults and Dislocated Workers who have barriers to employment like transportation or child care, there is an outreach to the relevant local agency and/or nonprofit to address those barriers.

2. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]

A strength of the existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services is its ability to provide a high level of service for those participating in

longer term training programs. A weakness is that the number of individuals able to commit to longer term programs has decreased significantly due to the reduction in U.I. benefits and the ability to get a job quicker as a result of the improved economy. As a result, the emphasis is being shifted from longer term training to shorter term training and finding combinations of several Continuing Education courses that can give participants the basic skills needed to be competitive in a specific job and field. Also, work based training options that emphasize assisting employers with plans for training new hires and offsetting some of those costs of training can be increased under WIOA.

3. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs that insures an arm's length relationship between the Workforce Development Board and service delivery. Include any service provider contract extensions.

Note: While NPRM Section 679.410(b) and (c) provide exceptions to the competitive procurement process, WDBs *must* have an arm's length relationship to the delivery of services.

Mountain Area issued a Request for Proposal for competitive procurement of Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in the four county Mountain Area region for Program Year 2015 pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. AB Tech was awarded the contract for Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) services in Buncombe and Madison Counties for Program Year 2015. Blue Ridge Community College was awarded the contract for Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) services in Henderson and Transylvania Counties for Program Year 2015. Contractors have been requested to submit a Statement of Work for Program Year 2016. Pending the submission of the Statement of Work by each contractor, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board will review the proposals and evaluate the performance of each contractor. The contract will only be extended for Program Year 2016 if the performance of each contractor is acceptable and the contractor is effectively and efficiently providing Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) services to clients in the region.

4. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s).

Note: By June 30, 2016, every Local Board must demonstrate it is taking steps to prepare for competition of its one-stop operator. [NPRM Sec. 436.635(b)]

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board issued on March 28, 2016 the Notice of the Request for Proposals pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the operations of the NC Works Career Centers in the four county Mountain Area region. The RFP was released on April 4, 2016 with a

bidders' conference on that same date. The deadline for proposals is April 29, 2016.

5. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board's Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) service providers chart effective July 1, 2016. Name document: Local Area Name Adult and DW Providers 2016.

The Mountain Area's Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) service providers chart, effective July 1, 2016 is attached in WISE.

6. Describe how and when eligible training providers are reviewed at the local level and how customers are informed they have choices in choosing their providers. Define what "significant number of competent providers" means in the local area. Include whether the local Workforce Development Board uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers. Attach if a separate policy. Name document: Local Area Name Eligible Training Providers. [Division Policy Statement 21-2015]

Mountain Area WDB does not have a separate policy to select and evaluate training providers. Mountain Area WDB does have a board policy regarding the approval of training providers. All competent training providers offering in demand occupational training are considered by the Local Area and career counselors after they complete a standard questionnaire. The following questionnaire included in the Board Policy Regarding the Approval of Training Providers solicits basic information regarding the potential training provider and their occupational training programs:

Please provide the following information if you wish to be considered for approval as a Mountain Area Workforce Development WIA/WIOA training provider:

1. *Describe your organization's billing processes and schedule/frequency.*
2. *At what point in a trainee's participation are billable costs incurred?*
3. *What are your organizations refund policies for "no shows" and/or "dropouts"?*
4. *If Board policies do not provide sufficient funds to cover the entire costs of the training and certification, what options does your organization offer to trainees that will enable them to pay the additional costs? Provide copies of any specific documents that trainees must sign to assure that these unsubsidized costs will be paid.*
5. *Please provide a copy of your organization's latest audit, financial balance sheet and cash flow report.*
6. *Please provide at least four references from other local areas, and/or employers who have experience with the performance of your organization's graduates.*

- 7. Also provide the following performance data for the past two years. Out of the total number enrolled for the year, how many completed training, passed training, and entered employment. Of those who entered employment, please provide the name of the company and the beginning rate of compensation for employment.*

The Mountain Area WDB Policy Regarding the Approval of Training Providers is attached in WISE.

Jobseeker clients and those seeking additional training are provided a detailed listing of all the training opportunities available in the region. Career counselors and customers evaluate the training options available to determine which option is the best fit for that individual. The preference in the Local Area is for training that provides an industry recognized, portable post-secondary credential. Earning said credential will provide the most economic opportunity and the best career pathway for the individual. The career counselors will confirm whether the training provider is in compliance with the appropriate state and/or federal agency or with a national industry sector group. The same evaluation method is used for in-state and out-of-state providers. Career counselors and individuals consider the cost of the training relative to other training options and attempt to discern the best return on the individual's time and Local Area training investment to make a final decision on the training plan, provider, and method of delivery. The training must lead to an occupational skill credential resulting in a certificate, degree, or diploma and the occupational skill must be identified by the Mountain Area WDB as being in demand for the Local Area. In some cases, there are many competent providers and in others only one or a few. Mountain Area WDB evaluates the training provider's ability to do business in North Carolina, reviews the proposed training program and course schedule, reviews all program costs and fees, evaluates the training provider's history at providing said training, confirms whether the training provider is in compliance with all EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) requirements, among other considerations. Training providers must submit online applications through NCWorks.gov to remain on the approved training provider list.

Customers are informed that they have choices in choosing their training providers through the NCWorks Online system, all Mountain Area WDB outreach materials, and through the NCWorks Career Advisors. The Mountain Area WDB has determined there is a "significant number of competent providers" in the Local Area based on the number of post-secondary institutions that provide a programs of training that will lead to an industry recognized, post-secondary credential, the number of apprenticeship programs registered by USDOL and NCWorks Apprenticeship, the number of public or private training providers including joint labor-management organizations, pre-apprenticeship programs, and technical and occupational training programs, and the number of adult education and literacy training activities provided in conjunction with workforce occupational skills training.

7. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(A)]

The Mountain Area WDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers through appropriate monitoring and oversight of service providers. Performance data will be evaluated to see if targets are being met either at the 100% goal or 80% goal. Failure to meet the 80% goal will result in corrective action by the service provider. If said corrective action does not improve performance to the target goal, the contract will not be renewed and a new Request for Proposals for WIOA services will be issued. The performance data considers the following metrics:

- 1. Number of participants completing the program.**
 - 2. Number of participants exiting the programs and employed in a training related occupation.**
 - 3. Number of participants enrolled in the training who will have received and earned an industry recognized, post-secondary credential.**
 - 4. The wage earnings of participants compared to the prevailing wage rate for the occupation for which the participants were trained.**
8. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will meet all federal and state Adult and Dislocated Worker performance outcomes and training expenditure requirements.

The ability of Mountain Area WDB will meet all federal and state Adult and Dislocated Worker performance outcomes and training expenditure requirements begins with the Request for Proposal Process. Macro-economic and social conditions

beyond the control of the Board in the Local Area will have a material impact on the performance in the Local Area. WIOA service providers and NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area are monitored on a monthly basis to determine

compliance with all relevant regulations and policies. The Mountain Area WDB MIS Specialist reviews participants' files to determine compliance with eligibility, that all documents

are entered into NCWorks Online and that case notes are comprehensive and appropriately detailed. The Mountain Area WDB reviews performance reports on a monthly basis and discussion occurs continually on possible opportunities to improve performance outcomes and to meet training expenditure requirements.

Youth Services

Note: A reference to Youth Services and Activities is provided as Appendix E.

9. Provide an analysis of Title I WIOA eligible youth by Local Workforce Development Board area. Include the following information for the local Workforce Development Board area:

In-School Youth Analysis

a) Number of Youth ages 14-21

36,687 Youth ages 14-21 reside in the Local Area based on data from the 2010 US Census. The 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) from the US Census is more up to date, however the age ranges provided from the ACS do not correspond to the 14-21 age range.

County	Youth ages 14-21
Buncombe	22,663
Henderson	8,485
Madison	2,319
Transylvania	3,220
Total	36,687

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

County	Youth ages 15-24
Buncombe	28,907
Henderson	11,003
Madison	2,914
Transylvania	3,903
Total	46,757

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (ACS)

b) Youth ages 14-21 represent what % of the population?

Based on data from the US Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Youth ages 14-21 represent 9.2% of the total population of the Local Area. The data from the 2014 American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau is more up to date but the range available is ages 15-24 so it does not correspond to the 14-21 age range.

County	Youth ages 14-21	Total county population	Youth ages 14-21 as % of total population
Buncombe	22,663	238,318	9.5%
Henderson	8,485	106,740	7.9%
Madison	2,319	20,764	11.2%
Transylvania	3,220	33,090	9.7%
Total	36,687	398,912	9.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

County	Youth ages 15-24	Total county population	Youth ages 15-24 as % of total population
Buncombe	28,907	244,599	11.8%
Henderson	11,003	108,642	10.1%
Madison	2,914	20,951	13.9%
Transylvania	3,903	32,943	11.8%
Total	46,727	407,135	11.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (ACS)

c) What percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)?

Youth poverty is higher in the Local Area than the state and national averages. Over 50% of the Youth enrolled in school qualify for free and reduced lunch in all five public school systems in the Local Area. The average for the five public school systems (LEAs) in the Local Area is 54.45% of all students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The state average is 52.83%.

LEA/School System	Students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch	Average Daily Membership (ADM)	% of qualifying students to overall average daily membership (ADM)
Asheville City Schools	1,882	4,295	43.82%
Buncombe County Schools	13,798	24,700	55.86%
Henderson County Schools	7,369	13,537	54.44%
Madison County Schools	1,343	2,434	55.18%
Transylvania County Schools	2,025	3,466	58.42%
Total	26,417	48,432	54.54%

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

d) Current school dropout statistics

LEA	2013-14 Count	2014-15 Count	% Change	2013-14 Rate	2014-15 Rate
Asheville City Schools	39	42	7.7	2.85	2.94
Buncombe County Schools	225	188	-16.4	2.75	2.31
Henderson County Schools	74	59	-20.3	1.75	1.37
Madison County Schools	21	36	71.4	2.39	4.03
Transylvania County Schools	41	38	-7.3	3.37	3.13

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction High School Dropout Counts and Rates

Out-of-School Analysis

a) Number of Youth ages 16-24

41,202 Youth ages 16-24 reside in the Local Area based on data from the 2010 US Census. The 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) from the US Census is more up to date, however the age ranges provided from the ACS do not correspond to the 16-24 age range.

County	Youth Ages 16-24
Buncombe	26,181
Henderson	9,002
Madison	2,496
Transylvania	3,523
Total	41,201

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

County	Youth Ages 15-24
Buncombe	28,907
Henderson	11,003
Madison	2,914
Transylvania	3,903
Total	46,757

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (ACS)

b) Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population?

Youth ages 16-24 in the four county region represent 9.2% of the total population of the Local Area based on data from the US Census Bureau, 2010 Census. While the data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) is more up to date, the age range of 15-24 does not correspond exactly to the 16-24 age range.

County	Youth ages 16-24	Total county population	Youth ages 16-24 as % of total
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			population
Buncombe	26,181	238,318	11.0%
Henderson	9,002	106,740	8.4%
Madison	2,496	20,764	12.02%
Transylvania	3,523	33,090	10.6%
Total	36,687	398,912	9.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

County	Youth ages 15-24	Total county population	Youth ages 15-24 as % of total population
Buncombe	28,907	244,599	11.8%
Henderson	11,003	108,642	10.1%
Madison	2,914	20,951	13.9%
Transylvania	3,903	32,943	11.8%
Total	46,727	407,135	11.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (ACS)

c) What are the general educational levels of this age group?

Generally, high school graduation rates are higher in the Local Area and drop out rates are lower in the Local Area compared to the state average.

d) What is the general employment status of this age group?

Nationally youth unemployment has been persistently high as the economy has recovered from the Great Recession. In the Local Area there is a significant number of youth ages to 16-24 who are not enrolled in school and who are not employed. These individuals have some of the most significant barriers to employment and there is a focus by the Mountain Area WDB to reach these youth, whether they are In-School Youth or Out-of-School youth to assist them in earning an industry recognized, post-secondary credential. Failure to obtain marketable skills will often result in the Youth being significantly underemployed or unemployed.

10. Describe the local Workforce Development Board's new vision for serving the WIOA eligible Youth to include high level goals, outreach strategies, planned interactions,

service delivery, concepts and expected outcomes. Describe how this vision will improve the employment outcomes for this population.

The vision of the Mountain Area WDB for serving WIOA eligible Youth is to assist youth in being placed on a career pathway in a high growth, in demand occupation that will provide the youth the opportunity to become self-sufficient. Nationally, youth unemployment remains stubbornly high and many youth are struggling to find suitable employment. A high school diploma and often a four-year college degree does not guarantee employment and above median wages. Mountain Area WDB believes, consistent with WIOA and the NC Works Commission State Unified Plan, that youth education and employment can best be achieved by providing real world work experiences so youth will be job ready. Recognizing that higher wage job opportunities often require post-secondary attainment, the Local Area has a consistent focus to promote certifications, including Career Readiness Certification and registered apprenticeships. Many career pathways will provide youth the opportunity to earn an industry recognized, post-secondary credential. Research shows that a well-educated workforce pays dividends in the future. Youth who can learn today can lead tomorrow. Youth who not only balance the role of a student, but that of an employee as well, understand and often outperform their peers as the value of hard work is exhibited in the desire to earn a better living than others in their family or peer group. Providing the necessary interventions and tools for Youth allow them to be successful in educational studies and the workforce as well and allows them the opportunity to continue on a career pathway that will lead them to continued success.

11. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities being used and/or planned. [WIOA Section 108(b)(9)]

There are many workforce activities available to youth in the Local Area. Employers in some sectors are reluctant to hire youth below the age of 18 due to insurance regulations. Mountain Area WDB is assisting youth to obtain employment through every available tool. Youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities are growing from a relatively small number at the present time. There are many entry level jobs available in all economic sectors including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology/IT. For some of these sectors, there is a significant challenge in obtaining work experience prior to the age of 18 due to insurance regulations for the employers. Mountain Area WDB is exploring every effort to expand work experiences for Youth including utilizing OJT reimbursement as employers provide real life experience to enable Youth to become job ready and continue employment with the employer. Our Youth contractors work with Vocational Rehabilitation in the case the Youth has a disability and there can be additional funding opportunities to support the Youth's education, training, and

work experience. As the labor market becomes more tight with fewer job seekers and more employers hiring, employers are often more willing to work with individuals who have significant barriers to employment. This opportunity in the Local Area should provide our Career Readiness Coaches more choices in the career pathways that are available to Youth, including Youth with disabilities.

12. Will the Workforce Development Board have a standing committee to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

Yes. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has a standing youth committee that provides information and assists with planning, operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The youth committee is comprised of employers, educators and representatives of community organizations that serve youth.

- a) If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.
- b) If yes, please provide a response to the following questions.
 - 1) Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

The purpose of the Youth committee is to help all youth, including but not limited to WIOA eligible in school and out of school youth, obtain the necessary education and training to be able to earn a wage that will lead to self-sufficiency. To accomplish this purpose, the Youth committee will work with employers, educators and other community organizations serving youth to assist the youth in obtaining an industry recognized post-secondary credential in addition to their High School Diploma or the equivalent certificate to a High School Diploma. As part of the youth's education and training, work based learning opportunities, like registered apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, etc., will be expanded to include as many youths as possible. A special emphasis is placed on helping youth who have barriers to employment and who are in need of supportive services. Youth unemployment is a significant challenge nationwide and data indicates that youth unemployment can have lasting negative impacts on the individual. The earlier the youth can receive work experiences and connection to employment, the better opportunity the youth will have to improve their skills and to maximize their employment and earning potential. The Youth committee will assess the needs of the youth populations as they relate to future workforce preparation and will encourage the coordination of services, activities and support that will enable youth to successfully attain their career goals. The Youth committee will make policy recommendations

for and assist in the oversight and accountability of WIOA supported youth programs. The Youth committee's recommendations will be presented to the Board for approval.

- 2) Provide the planned Program Year meeting schedule.

The Youth Committee meets on normally on a quarterly basis or more often as needed. The Youth Committee has met on February 5, 2016 and February 23, 2016. The Youth Committee held a conference call on February 25, 2016 with representatives from Charlotte Works to discuss the Youth Business Connector. The Youth Committee will meet to evaluate the contractors' proposed Statement of Work for Program Year 2016 and will make a recommendation to the Board before the May 24, 2016 Mountain Area Workforce Development Board meeting.

- 3) List the members to include members' agency/organization, one of which must be a community based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth.

Jonathan Szucs, chair, Advanced Superabrasives Inc.

Ann Ashley, Biltmore Company

Bryan Dover, Silverline Plastics

Rick Elingburg, Asheville NC Works Career Center

Tony Carter, Morris Broadband

Dr. Jeffrey McDaris, Superintendent Transylvania County Schools

Dr. Dennis King, President of AB Tech

LeElaine Comer, Community Action Opportunities

- 4) Provide the Committee's Chair information (who must be a Workforce Development Board member.) [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

Jonathan Szucs of Advanced Superabrasives in Madison County, NC serves as chair of the Youth Committee of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board. Mr. Szucs is a member of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board representing the private sector as an employer. Advanced Superabrasives is an advanced manufacturing company that makes grinding wheels for automotive, aerospace, computer, and medical industries.

13. Provide the Workforce Development Board's approach to meeting the required 75% minimum youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design. [WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)]

Mountain Area WDB has contracted with two service providers who will serve only Out-of-School Youth. Goodwill and Green Opportunities provide career counseling and planning services for WIOA eligible youth. Both organizations provide work experience opportunities for WIOA eligible youth participants. They

will also refer clients for short and long-term training opportunities, OJT funded by WIOA. When possible these participants will also be provided with registered apprenticeship opportunities when arrangements with employers can be made. The Mountain Area WDB increased the work experience wage from \$7.50 to \$8.00 earlier this year since many of the Out-of-School Youth would be able to find jobs in the community that will pay in excess of that amount due to a tight entry level job market. The Local Area has faced significant challenges in convincing Out-of-School Youth to enroll in WIOA. With efforts being made to increase collaboration with employers, we anticipate increased opportunities for OJT opportunities for youth. In addition to these 100% Out-of-School Youth Programs, each of the four County school systems in the Local Area will be focusing on dropout recovery to meet their Out-of-School Youth service goals. The career readiness coaches work with youth and help them determine their best option to improve their skills and employment opportunities. In some cases, the youth may choose not to re-enroll in the public school system and will work to obtain their high school equivalency diploma. The four county school systems are working to substantially reduce their prior service levels for In-School-Youth. The transition has been challenging but all four county school systems are working to attain specific measurable goals that will ensure the attainment of the 75% Out-of-School Youth service level. All of the programs emphasize work experience, short term skills training focusing on earning an industry recognized post-secondary occupational skills credentials and OJT to assist with placement into unsubsidized employment. Contracted funds for work experience and OJT should exceed the 20% required spending level for work-based learning.

Henderson County Schools is in the process of developing an Innovation High School focused on in demand, high growth careers. They have a proven track record of operating a successful 100% Out-of-School Youth program for several years. Even the Henderson County Schools In-School Youth program has actually recovered several additional Out-of-School Youth and helped them return to school and successfully complete graduation requirements. All five public school systems in the region are working to eliminate barriers between the Title II Adult Education providers at the community colleges and area literacy councils. Improving collaboration will help reach more Out-of-School Youth and provide them many different career pathways that will provide self-sufficient wages.

14. Provide the Workforce Development Board's approach to meeting the required 20% minimum for work experience to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth. [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)]

The Mountain Area WDB is working to comply with the WIOA mandate that 20% of youth funding be spent on work experience. This mandate is more challenging when combined with serving more Out of School Youth. Many youths in the Local Area do not have transportation access which makes it almost impossible for them to obtain and retain employment. Public transit is very limited and what public transit that is available often does not comply with work schedules. Employers are

investigating transit options to address the lack of applicants and/or high turnover for entry level jobs.

15. Describe how the local Workforce Development Board partners, aligns, and leverages, as appropriate with:

- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies;
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies;
- Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as well as the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]

The Mountain Local Area’s NCWorks Career Centers and WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs work closely together through a process of informal and formal referral processes. In all four counties in the Local Area, the community college is a provider of Adult Education and Literacy. The advantage in three of the four counties is that the NCWorks Career Center is located on the community college campus and often within walking distance of the Adult Education and Literacy provider. In the case of the Asheville NCWorks Career Center, the community college and the center are on the same public transportation bus line and in relatively close proximity. Based on the initial screening at the NCWorks Career Center, it is determined whether the individual needs additional literacy skills. A referral is then made to the Adult Education and Literacy provider along with additional guidance for the individual. There is follow-up to determine if the individual accessed the literacy services. There is discussion at this time of out posting staff from Title II at the NCWorks Career Center as well as out posting of staff at the community college Title II Adult Education and Literacy provider. The ability to physically out post staff is dependent on funding availability and staffing levels.

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation staff is out posted on a weekly basis at the Asheville NC Works Career Center. At the other three NCWorks Career Centers in the region, there is a process of informal and formal referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. The Vocational Rehabilitation office is served by limited public transportation access and out posting staff allows for more accessibility for career services for individuals with disabilities.

Adult education, occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as well as career pathways for youth, are often inextricably linked. The NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area have an integrated service design (ISD) which provides services to many different populations in a seamless manner. All centers have staff trained to work with jobseekers with barriers to employment which includes former offender specialists. There is close collaboration with agencies providing public assistance and services to homeless individuals with each of the NCWorks Career Centers. Since messaging and marketing can be used for different populations, the career pathways available to youth are the same career pathways

available to other populations. A career pathway offers many on ramp and off ramp opportunities depending on that individual's preferences and life circumstances. Regardless the age of the individual or their relevant skill level, the career pathways can be made available to all of these populations

16. Describe how each of the required fourteen program elements will be made available to youth. Complete the Youth Program Elements chart on the provided form. Name document: *Local Area Name Youth Program Elements*.

Each of the contracts with youth program operators include descriptions of how the contractors will provide basic WIOA funded activities listed under the youth program elements. The contracts also name the partner organizations that provide the other youth program elements in their communities. Youth program operators make referral arrangements with the organizations providing the elements that are required to be available. Please see the WIOA Youth Program Element chart attached.

17. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for youth.

Note: All youth participants must receive some form of follow-up for a minimum duration of twelve months.

All youth participants receiving WIOA services in the Mountain Local Area receive follow-up for a minimum duration of twelve months. The goal of the Youth program is to provide youth the opportunity to earn a self-sufficient wage which will allow the youth to provide the best opportunity for career advancement. Assisting the youth to provide the necessary support so they receive an industry recognized post-secondary credential will help promote income self-sufficiency. There are significant employment openings at this time in the Local Area in all the target sectors of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, skilled trades, and technology/IT. Follow up with the youth, the youth's educational provider and/or the youth's employer will make sure that the youth is proceeding on a career pathway with a bright future for the youth. Also, follow up will address whether the youth experiencing difficulty and if so, what are the possible solutions to overcome any barriers. Supportive services will be investigated to resolve any barriers that the youth is encountering. The youth that are enrolled in WIOA at this time are those with the most significant challenges. Follow up is critical since the transition to independence and self-sufficiency will often take at least one year.

18. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs were completed to include any contract extensions.

There was competitive procurement for Youth Programs in 2015 with a Request for Proposals for WIOA Youth Services being released. The Mountain Area WDB awarded contracts for WIOA Youth Services in 2015 to Buncombe County Schools, Henderson County Schools, Madison County Schools, Transylvania County Schools, Goodwill, and Green Opportunities. An updated Statement of Work for Program Year 2016 was requested of all contractors with updated budgets and program management information. The deadline for submission by contractors of their updated Statement of Work for Program Year 2016 was April 22, 2016 at 3:00 pm. The Youth Committee will evaluate the proposals and make a recommendation to the Board for the May 24 meeting of the Mountain Area WDB.

19. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board youth service providers chart, effective July 1, 2016 using the provided form. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. Name the document: Local Area Name Youth Providers.

The Mountain Area WDB youth service providers chart, effective July 1, 2016 using the provided form.

20. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will meet all federal and state Youth performance outcome requirements.

Mountain Area WDB will meet all federal and state Youth performance outcome requirements with a collaborative and team approach with employers and workforce partners throughout the region. The initial step to ensure high performance begins with the contracting process. The Request for Proposals for Youth WIOA services performance standards that contractors would be required to meet. Last year the Local Area engaged in a competitive procurement process for Youth WIOA services. This year the Local Area requested an updated Statement of Work from each of our Youth contractors.

The Mountain Area WDB Youth Committee has thoroughly evaluated contractor performance. In February, the Youth Committee invited all of our Youth contractors to a roundtable discussion on how the Local Area can meet performance standards and better serve youth in our region. Also included in the roundtable were Local Area representatives of a District Attorney's Office, Juvenile Justice, Adult Education and Literacy, nonprofit youth organizations, community colleges, homeless providers, and other organizations that serve youth. From the feedback at this roundtable, Mountain Area WDB Youth Committee have taken proactive action to improve youth performance. In response to rising wages for entry level jobs in the Local Area, the Youth Committee recommended raising the wage rate for youth work experience

from \$7.50 to \$8.00 per hour. The Mountain Area WDB enacted that new youth work experience rate at the March meeting. In response to hearing how the lack of transportation has been a significant barrier in contractors helping youth to obtain employment and education, the Youth Committee recommended changes to the Mountain Area WDB Youth Supportive Services Policy to make it easier to access funding for transportation for youth. Public transportation is unavailable for many parts of the Local Area and when it is available the service is very limited. The Youth Committee recognizes that the youth we serve have significant barriers to employment and to find a path for income self-sufficiency. The updated Statement of Work requires contractors to specify how they will meet the mandate to serve Out of School Youth and the mandate for work experience.

Mountain Area WDB and the Board Youth Committee evaluate Youth performance on an ongoing basis. Performance reports are provided at every meeting of the Board and Youth Committee. The Mountain Area WDB staff including MIS Specialist work with contractors to ensure compliance and to provide data to Board for oversight of Youth performance on a monthly basis. Youth reports and records on NCWorks Online are utilized by Mountain Area WDB staff to make program oversight decisions for improving youth performance. The MIS Specialist reviews client records on a regular basis by evaluating randomly chosen client files to ensure all records are in compliance with federal, state and Local Area policy.

21. Specify if the Local Workforce Development Board plans to offer incentives for youth. If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include: a) criteria to be used to award incentives; b) type(s) of incentive awards to be made available; c) whether WIOA funds will be used and d) the Local Workforce Development Board has internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards. Name document: *Local Area Name Youth Incentive Policy*.

Note: Federal funds may not be spent on entertainment costs.

The Mountain Local does not currently provide incentives to youth. The Youth Committee is continuously evaluating our existing youth programs to improve performance outcomes for clients. This process involves working with youth organizations in the region, our youth contractors, and others to improve the services available to youth. Within the constraints of funding availability, there is a continuous effort to improve performance and developing a youth incentive policy is one strategy that is being evaluated.

E. Policies

1. Provide a description of the Local Workforce Development Board oversight and monitoring process including processes for program and fiscal monitoring.

[WIOA Section 107(d)(8)]. Attach a copy of the monitoring policy and tools.
Name document: *Local Area Name Oversight and Monitoring PY 2016*.

The Mountain Local Area will use a modified version of the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions Oversight and Review Guide for financial and programmatic monitoring of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs funded under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. For On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs operated in the Mountain Local Area, the monitoring tool provided in Local Area Issuance: 2010-14, Attachment B will be utilized. The guides will be used to monitor the administrative and programmatic management operations of each subcontractor to ensure compliance with the Act, the federal regulations, state policies and requirements and the terms of the sub-agreement with the Local Area.

The major responsibilities of the financial monitoring are:

- a. To periodically review and monitor all subcontractors and NCWorks Career Centers to ensure fiscal compliance with all applicable regulations;**
- b. To ensure that expenditures are in compliance with the cost categories and are within cost limitations of the Act and regulations and the terms of the WIOA contract;**
- c. To review expenditure levels to ensure percentages are met as required by each funding source;**
- d. To provide financial reports for the WDB Planning Committee and the Youth Committee;**
- e. For review and to identify any concerns or non-compliance with the Act, and federal and state regulations, and the terms of the WIOA contract;**
- f. To provide technical assistance when appropriate to ensure the Local Area programs are within the guidelines and that performance requirements are met by all subcontractors;**
- g. To fulfill requirements for transparency and accountability of expenditures of WIOA funds.**

The monitoring system functions as a management support function to assess the performance of the Local Area's program and activities. Recommendations will be made to correct any non-compliance with the terms of the WIOA contract, the Act, or regulations that are identified through the monitoring process. Technical assistance will be provided by the Local Area staff for any program not achieving the performance level required by the Act and the Workforce Development Board.

The purpose of the programmatic and performance monitoring is:

- a. To assess the effectiveness of the program mix and to determine if equitable services are being provided for all residents of the Local Area;
- b. To determine the effectiveness of the NCWorks Career Centers and subcontracted programs for continuous improvement efforts;
- c. To provide information to the NCWorks Career Centers and subcontractors for management and problem solving purposes;
- d. To keep program providers informed of their performance outcomes throughout the year so that adjustments are made in a timely manner in order to meet the desired performance;
- e. To monitor through the NCWorks Online System to determine compliance with the requirements for the timely entry of data and to assess the performance of each program;
- f. To review participant records for compliance with eligibility requirements and data validation of the file structure;
- g. To provide the Workforce Development Board and administrative management information to ensure the programs are addressing business needs and expectations.

On site visits for On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts will be made by the MIS Specialist to ensure that records are maintained in accordance with the contract and the participant is receiving training as scheduled in the training outline. The Mountain Area Finance Officer will monitor the OJT contractors in the Local Area through a desk review process involving a review of the invoices and supporting documentation submitted for reimbursement of WIOA participant training costs by the OJT employer.

The Local Area monitors develop annual monitoring schedules of all subcontractors and One-Stop Career Centers (NC Works) receiving WIOA funding. The monitoring schedules shall be reviewed by the Local Area Director and suggestions made as needs are identified for additional monitoring or oversight reviews. Agencies to be monitored will receive written notice of the planned monitoring visit so that appropriate records and staff are available for the monitoring review.

The Local Area staff provides technical assistance as needed during the monitoring process and at other times at the request of the subcontractor.

The completed monitoring reports will be submitted to the Local Area Director for review and corrective action, if appropriate. If no action is warranted a copy of the final report will be sent to the subcontractor for review and for their records. Copies of the monitoring documents (Financial, Programmatic (including Work-Based Learning, where appropriate) and OJT) are attached in WISE.

2. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. [WIOA Section 188]

The Local Area has processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. As a condition to the award of financial assistance under WIOA, the Sub-recipient assures that it will fully comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin.

The Sub-recipient assures that it will fully comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the Sub-recipient's operation of all financially assisted programs and activities and to all agreements the Sub-recipient makes to carry out the financially assisted programs and activities. The Sub-recipient understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. The Sub-recipient shall designate a person other than its chief executive as its equal employment opportunity officer, who shall be responsible for the Sub-recipient's non-discrimination policy, monitoring the equal opportunity compliance, development of a procedure for investigation of and hearings on equal employment opportunity grievances, dissemination of non-discrimination policy for Sub-recipient and who will act as the liaison with the Local Area.

3. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR Part 37.71]. Name document: *Local Area Name EO Complaint Grievance Procedure 2016*.

The Mountain Area's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements (29 CFR Part 37.71) is attached.

4. Provide the Workforce Development Board policy(ies) on supportive services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth (i.e., amount, duration, qualifying criteria). [WIOA Section 134(d)(2)]. Name document: *Local Area Name Supportive Services Policy*.

The Mountain Area does not provide supportive services for Adult and Dislocated Workers. The Policy Regarding Youth Supportive Services is attached.

5. Does the Workforce Development Board provide Needs-Related Payments? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy(ies) on Needs-Related Payments for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. The policy should include amount,

duration, qualifying criteria. [WIOA Section 134(d)(3)]. Name document: Local Area Name Needs-Related Payments Policy.

The Mountain Area does not provide Needs-Related Payments for Adults, Dislocated Workers, or Youth.

6. Does the Workforce Development Board provide local Incumbent Worker Training? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy for local Incumbent Worker Training. The policy should include eligibility and the non-Federal share for employers. [WIOA Section 134(d)(4)]. Name document: Local Area Name Incumbent Worker Policy.

Note: The Workforce Development Board may use not more than 20 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to pay for the federal share of the cost of training through a training program for incumbent workers.

The Mountain Area does not use Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for the provision of Incumbent Worker Training at this time.

7. Does the Workforce Development Board provide local Transitional Jobs Training? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy for local Transitional Jobs. [WIOA Section 134(d)(5)]. Name document: Local Area Name Transitional Jobs Plan.

Note: The Workforce Development Board may use not more than 10 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide Transitional Jobs Training.

The Mountain Area does not have a policy for local Transitional Jobs at this time. Consideration will be given to developing a policy at a later date. Short term work experience participants could prove useful in some cases.

8. Describe the Local Area's planned use of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Provide the Local Area's On-the-Job Training policy(ies). [WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)]. Name document: Local Area Name OJT Policy.

The On-the-Job Training Program has had a successful history over the past several years with completion and retention rates at or above 90%. Mountain Area provides OJT opportunities for both Adult and Dislocated Workers primarily in advanced manufacturing, IT, and a variety of small businesses. With the number of business closures and reductions-in-staff declining due to an improving local and regional economy, the focus of OJT will move from serving Dislocated Workers and Adults to Out-of-School Youth ages 16-24 years, veterans and those most in need for training in high demand, high growth sectors.

OJT eligible candidates are accessed by the OJT case manager for suitability for training that is aligned with their career goals and skill development needs. OJT is best suited for individuals who have a reasonably good work history and are interested in learning new skills and possibly transitioning into a new career field. In the future, OJT will be utilized for serving more low income individuals with barriers to employment. Mountain Area WDB will work closely with organizations serving youth, offender release programs, and veterans with barriers to facilitate transition from pre-employment and pre-release programs into OJT. Mountain Area WDB will also work with the Career and Technology Departments of the area’s high schools to promote post-high school OJT options. It is often a challenge to engage youth under the age of 18 years in OJT due to employer limitations and insurance regulations. All OJT participants and employers are entered into the NC Works Online system.

The Mountain Area WDB has an OJT Policy Handbook which includes instructions for developing OJT contracts along with all the required state forms. Mountain Area WDB is currently in the process of revising the OJT Policy Handbook but it is unlikely that the revisions will be complete before the deadline to submit this plan. An employer must meet all OJT criteria in order to participate in the OJT Program and understand the Assurances provided as part of the dually signed Agreement. The Mountain Area WDB business services representative (BSR) works with the employer and/or trainer to develop a training plan based upon the trainee’s identified skill gaps. A customized training plan with a timeline is developed. The training is monitored by the BSR to ensure completion of training and retention by the employer. Wage reimbursements are made on a monthly basis upon submission of required documentation. The minimum wage for OJT is \$9.00 per hour. The training period may be between two and six months, not to exceed 1040 hours, and reimbursement may be up to 50%. Smaller companies, fewer than 250 employees, are more likely to be reimbursed at a higher percentage. The Business Services Representative (BSR) also serves as a case manager and follows the trainee/employee for four quarters after completion of training to ensure retention in the job.

Mountain Area WDB uses the LLSIL income guidelines for assessing WIOA eligibility based on income.

Mountain Area WIOA Adult Self-Sufficiency Wage Policy:

Mountain Area WDB has established the definition of self-sufficient for determining whether an employed individual is receiving a wage that leads to self-sufficiency as follows (NC DWS Policy Statement Number PS 10-2015):

Family Size	70% LLSIL	100% LLSIL by	Adult Self-Sufficiency	Adult Self-Sufficiency	Full-time (40 Hours)	Full-time (40 Hours)
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	(Six Month Earnings)	Family Size (Six Month Earnings)	Earnings Level Percent of LLSIL	Earnings Level (Six Months Earnings)	for Wage Earner 1	for Wage Earners 2
1	\$6,319	\$9,027	150%	\$13,541	\$13.54	N/A
2	\$10,353	\$14,790	150%	\$22,185	\$22.19	\$11.10
3	\$14,210	\$20,300	125%	\$25,375	\$25.38	\$12.69
4	\$17,543	\$25,062	125%	\$31,328	\$31.33	\$15.67
5	\$20,705	\$29,579	110%	\$32,537	\$32.54	\$16.27
6	\$24,217	\$34,595	110%	\$38,055	\$38.06	\$19.03
For Each Additional Family Member Added	\$5,391		110%			

Source: US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2016 (South Metro)

Dislocated Work Self-Sufficiency Definition

In the Mountain Area, Dislocated Worker Self-Sufficiency is defined as an individual’s wages being at least 80% of the pre-dislocation wage or the adult self-sufficiency wage level, whichever is higher.

In an effort to promote skill development and advancement of incumbent workers, Mountain Area implemented OJT for Incumbent Workers on a very small scale and developed guidelines as Mountain Area OJT Policy Statement: 2014 Number 2, February, 2014.

Policy Statement Regarding the Implementation of “Incumbent Workers On-the-Job Training” program for WIOA Eligible Adults

Incumbent Work On-The-Job Training (OJT) program is designed to help a working but “under-employed” WIOA eligible adult reach a “self-sufficient”

wage as defined by the Local Workforce Development Board. Above you will find the most up-to-date chart that sets the “self-sufficient” wage rate for the Mountain Local Area. Under this policy to be eligible to participate in the Adult Incumbent Worker OJT the WIOA eligible client’s family income would have to be below the amount shown in the column titled “Adult Self Sufficiency Earnings Level (Six Month Earnings)”. While the Incumbent Worker OJT may not always achieve the level of wages necessary to move the worker’s income above the “self-sufficiency” threshold, the Incumbent Worker OJT contract with the employer must achieve at least a 10% increase in income for the trainee at the conclusion of the training.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Incumbent Worker OJT Policy (NC DWS Policy Statement Number PS #13-2013, August 15, 2013)

On-the-Job Training for Incumbent Workers is allowed by WIOA when:

- 1. the employee is not earning a self-sufficient wage as determined by local Workforce Development Board policy;**
- 2. all OJT Pre-Award Analysis conditions are met; and**
- 3. the OJT relates to the introduction of new technologies, introduction to new production or service procedures, upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes identified by the WDB.**

Prior to enrollment in the Incumbent Worker OJT program the WIOA eligible employee:

- 1. must have been in continuous employment with the company for at least six months,**
- 2. demonstrated excellent attendance and performance, and**
- 3. acknowledged a desire to learn and accept the responsibilities associated with the new position.**

The incumbent worker cannot be a member of the immediate or extended families of the company’s management or supervisory personnel.

The length of the training is determined by the skills gap between the position that the employee occupies and the position for which he/she is being trained.

The OJT contract will provide a reimbursement of 200% of the wage increase for the determined training period. If the level of reimbursement, based on the 200% of the wage increase model, exceeds 75% (or 50% for employers over 250 employees) wage reimbursement rate allowed by state and federal regulations, the total reimbursement for the contract is limited to the lower amount.

Employers would receive the “OJT wage increase” reimbursement for training (based on the hours worked/trained) during the training period, in the same

manner provided under the regular OJT contract. The increase in the trainee's wage would not be required at the start of the training period. Post contract follow-up (required for four quarters) with the participant would enable the MAWDB staff to confirm the continuation of the wage increase.

In the incumbent Workforce OJT contract the employer must agree that:

- 1. the movement into this higher wage position will not displace an employee currently holding that position and that the previous occupant of that position (if applicable), is employed elsewhere within the company or resigned, and was not dismissed from employment;**
- 2. the employer will list any job vacancy created by the Incumbent Workforce OJT with NC Works Online and give due consideration to applicants referred by the local NC Works Career Centers.**

Priority of Services - Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services.

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of a low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis. Additionally, individuals who meet the definition of an individual with a barrier to employment (WIOA 3(24)) who are underemployed may also be served in the Adult program. [USDOL TEGL 3-15]

Individuals who are underemployed may include:

- Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;*
- Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;*
- Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA section 3(36); and*
- Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment, per State and/or local policy.*

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

- i. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible*

spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.

ii. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.

iii. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.

iv. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Priority for services does not preclude service to individuals who are not low-income or not receiving public assistance or not a veteran, but rather establishes the order of precedence for service as provided at WIOA and section 134(b)(3)(E).

***Note:** When past income is an eligibility determinant for Federal employment or training programs, any amounts received as military pay or allowances by any person who served on active duty, and certain other specified benefits must be disregarded for the veteran and for other individuals for whom those amounts would normally be applied in making an eligibility determination. Military earnings are not to be included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213.*

With respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient for receipt of career services and training services. In addition, Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs.

Under WIOA, an individual may receive training services after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning if the one-stop operator or partner determines the individual is unlikely or unable, by only receiving career services, to retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. Additionally, the one-stop operator or partner must also determine that the training the individual receives would result in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. The one-stop operator or partner must also determine that the individual has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in and complete the training. [NPRM 680.210]

9. Describe the Local Workforce Development Board's process and policy to meet priority of service requirements for Adult Training Services. If the Local Workforce Development Board has a policy, attach the document and name document: Local Area Name Priority of Service Policy.

The Local Area's Priority of Service Policy encourages the increased focus on serving priority groups (Veterans and Eligible Veteran's Spouses, Public Assistance Recipients, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient). The Local Area will continue to serve individuals who are not in a priority group as long as funds are available. The Local Area's Priority of Service

Policy establishes which clients should receive employment and job training services as the first priority. The Mountain Area’s Priority of Service Policy is attached in WISE.

10. How does the Local Workforce Development Board define self-sufficiency?

The average wage of workers in the Local Area is below the state and national average. While the unemployment rate in the Local Area consistently ranks as the lowest of any region in NC, wages are an ongoing challenge. While the federal minimum wage in many cases is irrelevant since the job market requires higher rates of pay to attract talent, many individuals are working full time but yet unable to afford the basic necessities of life and are eligible for public assistance in some cases. Many workers are challenged by the region’s high housing costs and other living expenses so even full time workers can still be struggling and dependent on public assistance. The primary focus on the Mountain Area Workforce Board is to upskill the labor force so more individuals will be self-sufficient. Most, if not all, the jobs paying higher wages require some postsecondary training. Consistent with the Governor and the NC Works Commission goal that by 2025 67% of working age adults in NC will have an industry recognized post-secondary credential, Mountain Area WDB is utilizing all available resources to expand training opportunities to those who are employed but earning a wage that does not provide for self-sufficiency. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has established the definition of self-sufficient for determining whether an employed individual is receiving a wage that leads to “self-sufficiency” as follows:

1. to utilize the LLSIL guidelines with an upward adjustment for the family of one and two to 150% of the LLSIL; and
2. to utilize the LLSIL with an upward adjustment for a family of two to 150% of the LLSIL; and
3. to utilize the LLSIL at 125% of the published rate for families of three or four: and
4. to utilize the LLSIL at 110% of the published rate for families of five or six.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has established the definition of self-sufficient for determining whether an employed individual is receiving a wage that leads to self-sufficiency as follows:

Family Size	70% LLSIL (Six Month Earnings)	100% LLSIL by Family Size (Six Month Earnings)	Adult Self-Sufficiency Earnings Level Percent of LLSIL	Adult Self-Sufficiency Earnings Level (Six Months Earnings)	Full-time (40 Hours) for 1 Wage Earner	Full-time (40 Hours) for 2 Wage Earners
1	\$6,319	\$9,027	150%	\$13,541	\$13.54	N/A
2	\$10,353	\$14,790	150%	\$22,185	\$22.19	\$11.10

3	\$14,210	\$20,300	125%	\$25,375	\$25.38	\$12.69
4	\$17,543	\$25,062	125%	\$31,328	\$31.33	\$15.67
5	\$20,705	\$29,579	110%	\$32,537	\$32.54	\$16.27
6	\$24,217	\$34,595	110%	\$38,055	\$38.06	\$19.03
For Each Additional Family Member Added	\$5,391		110%			

Source: US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2016 (South Metro)

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board definition of “self-sufficiency” is included in Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Policy Statement 2014, Number 2 dated February 25, 2104. The wages for an adult must be at the adjusted LLSIL level listed above or more to be defined as earning a self-sufficient wage. The wages for the dislocated worker are defined as at least 80% of the wages the individual was earning when the dislocation occurred.

11. Provide the Local Workforce Development Board Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy and include the following elements in summary. [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)]. Name document: *Local Area Name* ITA Policy.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Dollar Amount Limits annually	\$8,000 total limit; \$1750 limit per semester, \$1,000 for extra term if needed
Dollar Amount Lifetime Limits	\$8,000
Time Limits	2 ½ years
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate’s, Bachelor’s, other)	Associate’s degree when it is the terminal degree from that occupation. Bachelor’s degree if it can be completed within the 2 ½ year time frame.
Period of time for which	ITAs are issued on a semester basis.

ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short term, etc.)	
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	Case manager submitted in writing can make a request for exceptions to the director. Generally, exceptions are only granted in cases of personal illness or significant unexpected family hardships. The client’s previous participation and performance is taken into consideration on whether to grant the exception(s).

12. Describe methods to ensure all updates and changes to the local Workforce Development Board Policies are submitted to the Division throughout the life of this Local Plan.

After the Mountain Area WDB approves any updates and/or changes to the Local Area’s Board Policies, the updated policy will then be uploaded to WISE on a timely basis.

II. Regional Strategic Planning

North Carolina has implemented integrated services delivery with an enhanced emphasis on regional planning and services. This approach is consistent with federal, state and regional initiatives and opportunities. North Carolina’s workforce system includes businesses, organizations, agencies, employed and unemployed persons, training and educational institutions, adults and youth. To enhance services to all these constituents, aligning workforce development planning and services with regional labor markets is both effective and productive. Communities and regions recognize that to have successful economic development, it must go hand-in-hand with a well-functioning workforce development system. North Carolina has built on several years of emphasizing the value of regional efforts and worked with local workforce development boards and local elected officials to establish and enhance identification of appropriate regions and the working relationships that have been developed.

Local Area Plans should reflect compatibility with NCWorks Commission’s Strategic Plan and the North Carolina Jobs Plan, issued in December 2013 that contains recommended strategies for economic growth during the years 2014 – 2024 and the draft North Carolina WIOA State Unified Plan. A regional framework in Local Area Plans should:

- *Promote effective and efficient use of resources;*
- *Align with North Carolina’s regional economic development efforts;*
- *Identify the workforce needs of businesses, job seekers and workers, current and projected employment opportunities and job skills necessary to obtain employment;*
- *Better address the workforce issues of businesses and individuals on a labor market basis;*

- *Detail coordination with community colleges and universities;*
- *Provide a customer-focused coordinated approach to delivery of training, employment services and economic development; and*
- *Articulate a consistent and defined regional approach to workforce development.*

Local Workforce Development Boards are to continue, or begin, formal interaction based on regional geography aligning with labor market areas. The following regional configurations will be used for submission of this Regional Plan:

- *Western Region: Southwestern and Mountain Areas WDBs;*
- *Northwest Region: High Country, Western Piedmont, and Region C WDBs;*
- *Piedmont Triad Region: Northwest Piedmont, Guilford, Davidson Works, and Regional Partnership WDBs;*
- *Southwest Region: Centralina, Charlotte Works, and Gaston County WDBs;*
- *North Central Region: Kerr-Tar, Durham, and Capital Area WDBs;*
- *Sandhills Region: Lumber River, Cumberland County, and Triangle South WDBs;*
- *Northeast Region: Region Q, Northeastern, and Turning Point WDBs; and*
- *Southeast Region: Eastern Carolina and Cape Fear WDBs.*

1. Identify the Workforce Development Boards comprising the configuration for regional strategic planning and the counties each Board serves. Provide a reference name for the regional group, if applicable.

The reference name for the 11 counties in southwestern North Carolina shall be the Western Region. The Western Region is comprised of the Southwestern Workforce Development Board and the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board. The Southwestern Workforce Development Board serves Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain counties. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board serves Buncombe, Madison, Henderson and Transylvania counties.

2. Describe the vision for the region and how the Workforce Development Boards collaborate to achieve that vision. Describe the regional goals that have been established and how performance towards those goals be measured?

The regional vision is for the region to recruit or produce a highly skilled quality workforce that provides an available supply of talent to meet the needs of our regional employers. To that end both the Southwestern Workforce Development Board and Mountain Area Workforce Development Boards have established similar customer service procedures and customer flow standards in our NCWorks Career Centers that ensure our customers get the services needed to become job ready or referrals needed to obtain employment throughout the region. Continuity of services and of how programs are administered such as On-the Job Training ensure that our programs are employer receptive in the border counties of

Haywood and Buncombe. OJT participants can readily cross county lines and the employer will have no issues with the specifics of the program if they hire an in-county or border county applicant. Both Local areas are also working on NCWorks Certified Career Pathways related to the Advanced manufacturing sector. Once completed we will determine what can be linked together to better be able to provide talent to our regional employers. The Western prosperity zone NCWorks partners (Regions A, B C) meet bi-monthly to discuss or be updated on issues relating to workforce development, regional and local area initiatives and performance measures.

3. Provide a brief synopsis of the region's significant accomplishments working together during the past year.

Both Local Areas are currently working on NCWorks Certified Career Pathways with an emphasis on the Advanced Manufacturing Sector. This will be very beneficial to the businesses and job seekers of our bordering counties, Haywood and Buncombe. A continuity of training for job seekers across county borders will allow them to obtain skills and to obtain employment in their home county or with employers in their bordering county while providing businesses with a steady stream of talent. Following the completion of the Advanced Manufacturing Pathways we intend to work toward the implementation of Certified Career Pathways in other common sectors such as Allied Medical and Hospitality. This process will alleviate any territorial issues and provide businesses with the assurance they can locate or expand in the region due to the presence of a trained workforce.

Mountain Area and Southwestern Area are working together to provide a continuity of services and are customizing reporting methods/reports to assist in tracking the performance of the NCWorks career Centers. Both areas are working together to discover best methods to streamline customer flow in the NCWorks Career Centers and implement the best customer service delivery methods.

We are also looking at supplying customized services to businesses on a demand basis. One example is providing short-term local certifications via training that is tweaked to needs of advanced manufacturing, hospitality and allied health business customers.

4. Describe how the regional vision aligns with the draft NC Unified State Plan.

The regional vision is for there to be a constant availability of highly skilled and trained workers to meet the needs of employers in the region. To accomplish this we will work with local employers to determine where skill gaps exist and then work with the local community colleges and economic

developers to address these skill gaps through career pathways, customized training, incumbent worker training, OJT and apprenticeships. We are also working to strengthen the NCWorks brand in the region and encouraging partners to utilize NCWorks Online and NCWorks marketing materials in order to promote system alignment and create brand recognition.

5. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)]

The following tables from EMSI show the existing and emerging in-demand occupation and industry sectors for the 11 county Western Region:

Occupation	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2015-2020)	% Change	2014 Median Hourly Earnings
Retail Salespersons	10,693	11,245	552	5%	\$10.76
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	8,849	9,676	827	9%	\$8.68
Cashiers	7,612	7,834	222	3%	\$9.00
Real Estate Sales Agents	7,316	7,420	105	1%	\$13.18
Registered Nurses	7,029	7,588	560	8%	\$28.89
Waiters and Waitresses	6,639	6,990	351	5%	\$8.98
Office Clerks, General	5,843	5,982	139	2%	\$12.66
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,587	6,078	492	9%	\$8.89
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,188	5,675	486	9%	\$10.61

Occupation	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2015-2020)	% Change	2014 Median Hourly Earnings
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	5,089	5,350	261	5%	\$14.75
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4,815	4,987	173	4%	\$14.41
Nursing Assistants	4,124	4,384	260	6%	\$11.10
Landscaping and Grounds keeping Workers	4,065	4,564	499	12%	\$10.99
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,043	4,129	86	2%	\$11.59
Carpenters	3,893	3,611	-283	-7%	\$13.65
Construction Laborers	3,854	3,814	-40	-1%	\$11.47
Customer Service Representatives	3,729	3,902	174	5%	\$12.85
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	3,612	3,761	149	4%	\$16.43
Managers, All Other	3,508	3,765	257	7%	\$15.17
Team Assemblers	3,427	3,259	-168	-5%	\$14.81

Industry	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2015-2020)	% Change	2015 Earnings Per Worker
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	13,906	14,806	900	6%	\$53,191
Full-Service Restaurants	12,213	12,953	740	6%	\$20,033
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	11,881	12,583	702	6%	\$50,960
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	11,472	12,343	871	8%	\$58,580
Limited-Service Restaurants	9,266	9,864	597	6%	\$15,069
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	7,630	8,077	447	6%	\$22,386
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (State Government)	6,502	6,846	344	5%	\$43,923
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	5,971	6,397	426	7%	\$105,962

Industry	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2015-2020)	% Change	2015 Earnings Per Worker
Religious Organizations	5,602	5,979	377	7%	\$16,011
Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	4,947	5,140	192	4%	\$26,533
Janitorial Services	4,438	4,959	521	12%	\$10,596
Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers	4,371	3,877	-494	-11%	\$14,917
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	4,318	4,494	176	4%	\$36,750
Landscaping Services	3,806	4,347	541	14%	\$19,765
Home Health Care Services	3,698	4,285	587	16%	\$31,906
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	3,642	3,717	75	2%	\$55,827
Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	3,586	3,993	407	11%	\$13,404
Crop Production	3,263	3,218	-45	-1%	\$32,835
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	2,953	2,996	43	1%	\$106,040
Lessors of Residential Buildings and Dwellings	2,925	3,409	484	17%	\$21,264

The knowledge and skills needed to meet the demands of the existing and emerging industries and occupations in our region range from a high school diploma to advanced degrees. While the above charts show a decline in manufacturing industry occupations, our region has many small to medium manufacturing companies that require skills beyond a high school education. Manufacturing related to the beverage/brewing industry has exploded in the Asheville Area over the past several years. The growth pattern appears to be continuing with some major expansions for existing companies and perhaps some new production facilities being built in the local area by other breweries from outside the State.

The community colleges are addressing the needs of regional manufacturers by providing training in advanced manufacturing and mechatronics. Also tourism and hospitality industry jobs are in-demand throughout the region and several of the community colleges in our region offer training in occupations such as table gaming, bartending, culinary arts, and hotel management.

6. Provide a thorough analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, and information on labor market trends, and the

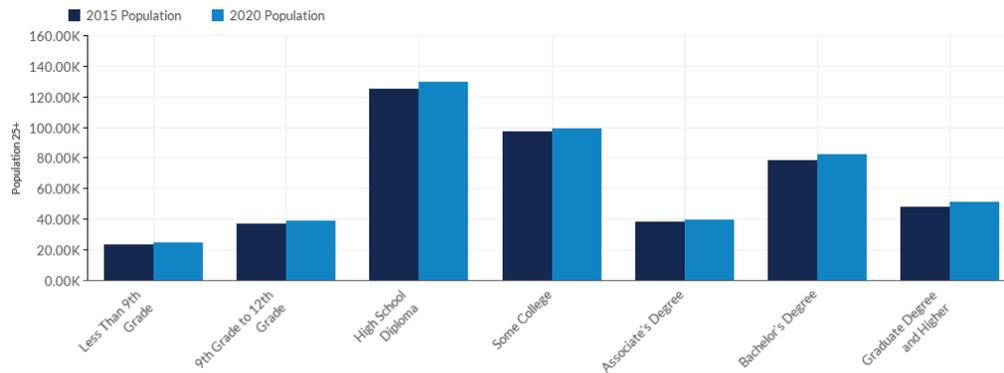
educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(C)]

The Western Region is comprised of Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Swain, and Transylvania Counties. The Western region is among the most rural and least populated of the North Carolina regions.

- **The Western Region's July 1, 2016 population is estimated at 626,665. Sixty-eight percent of the total population in the Western Region reside in the three counties comprising the Mountain Area LA, with the remaining 32% residing in the more rural 7 counties comprising the Southwestern Local Area. Most of the Western Region's net growth in population has come from in-migration of new residents in recent years.**
- **Preliminary labor force estimates for February, 2016 show 294,655 people in the labor force in the Western region. There were 9,818 more people working than in the same period one year ago.**
- **February 2016 Unemployment Rates in the region varied from a low of 4.4% in Buncombe County to a high of 13.3% in Graham County. The Mountain Area LA had an overall rate of 4.7%, while the counties in the Southwestern LA had an overall rate of 6.8%. The unemployment rate in the counties of the Southwestern LA is higher than the state rate of 5.7% and also higher than the national rate of 5.2%. In contrast the rate for the counties in the Mountain LA is below both the state and national rate.**

The Western Region's economy has benefited from positive tourism and migration trends, and has a diversity of jobs ranging from manufacturing to healthcare, among other industries.

- **The Western Region is most reliant on the Health Care and Educational career sectors with those providing 25 percent of sector employment.**
- **The Western Region is also reliant on Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services employment. Leisure and Hospitality jobs numbered nearly 38,000 for the quarter ending September 2014.**
- **Electrical Equipment & Appliance, Plastics & Rubber, and Paper are leading manufacturing employers in the Western Region. They provided nearly 9,000 regional jobs in 2013.**



Education Level	2015 Population	2020 Population	2015 % of Population	2015 State % Population	2015 Nat. % Population
Less Than 9th Grade	23,563	24,554	5%	7%	7%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	36,951	38,925	8%	9%	8%
High School Diploma	124,716	129,862	28%	27%	28%
Some College	96,897	99,123	22%	22%	21%
Associate's Degree	38,140	39,307	9%	9%	8%
Bachelor's Degree	78,528	82,047	18%	18%	18%
Graduate Degree and Higher	47,852	51,095	11%	10%	11%
Total	446,646	464,912	100%	100%	100%

- Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iii)]

The local area Business Consultant works closely with the Economic Development Directors in the various counties of the region to coordinate the services provided to local employers. The Business Consultant also serves on Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Boards whose members include EDC directors, employers, and community college staff. The managers of the Local Area NCWorks Career Centers also work closely with county EDC directors in their respective counties and respond to their requests for information and services that are requested for potential and current local businesses. Also the NCWorks Career Center staff is engaged in regular outreach activities with local businesses. This practice allows the NCWorks Career Centers and other workforce/economic development partners to stay abreast of local business trends/needs.

The Business Consultant in the Southwestern Local Area is in the process of setting up the Work Ready Communities teams that will include community college customized training directors, community college small business center directors, NCWorks Career Center staff, and local economic directors in each of the three Community College service areas (Haywood, Southwestern, and Tri-County). The ultimate goal is to have each of our seven counties certified as a Work Ready Community and then to apply for designation as a Regional Work Ready Community.

The workforce development system is a partner in the economic development process whenever businesses are interested in/concerned about the availability of skilled workers in the region. The workforce development system (NCWorks Career Center, LA Business Consultant) is consulted when concerns arise about recruitment, screening and referral or customized training. These concerns/needs initiate a quick, coordinated, and customer friendly response from the NCWorks partners in the business's local area.

8. Describe how the business services resources of each of the Workforce Development Boards work together on a regional basis to serve employers across the labor market.

Our Local Area Business Consultant works across county lines to provide employers and job seekers with work based training opportunities such as (OJT) On-the-Job Training. This is especially important because we have workers commuting daily between Haywood and Buncombe Counties which act as border counties for the two local areas. Here the use of standardized OJT processes and policies between the Southwestern LA and Mountain Area LA make it easier to work with jobseekers that are seeking cross border employment and the businesses that work with both local area OJT programs.

Another example is our work with Evergreen Packaging, Inc. in Haywood County. Evergreen Packaging, Inc. is the largest employer in Haywood County and because of its proximity to the Mountain Area Region, many potential applicants/employees come from Buncombe County. Recently Evergreen Packaging, Inc. transitioned from TABE testing to ACT WorkKeys assessment to identify and screen potential new candidates. The profile data, derived from Job Profiling conducted by Southwestern LA's Business Consultant staff, helped establish hiring criteria for Evergreen Packaging, Inc. Information on their hiring process and recruitment is shared with Mountain Area staff. Additionally, Mountain Area's Business Consultant staff share information with Southwestern's Business Consultant staff when recruiting for companies that draw employees from both Local Areas.

9. Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region is/will address needs identified. Include a description and/or map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Section 108(b)(11)]

Public transportation in the urban centers of Asheville and Hendersonville is available and provides transportation options that are appropriately scheduled for commutes to and from the workplace. However, many of the major employers with good paying jobs are not located in proximity to the bus routes.

Transportation issues for the purposes of attending work and training are very difficult to overcome in rural areas. There is little or no public transportation in most of the Western Region. Subsidized transportation is generally only available to those individuals who are elderly or who have physical disabilities. Scheduling for subsidized transportation rarely fits the scheduling needs for the working population.

The most feasible solution would appear to be the encouragement of ridesharing networks among employees of the largest businesses in the region. Those options can be explored with the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations in the Western Region's Councils of Governments.

The following table shows the commuting patterns of the counties in our region:

Commuting Patterns of Western Residents Primary Jobs, 2011

	Employed in County, Live Outside	Live in County, Employed Outside	Employed And Live in County
Buncombe	43,939	28,436	60,744
Cherokee	2,742	6,434	4,617
Clay	941	3,199	925
Graham	1,041	1,742	842
Haywood	6,149	10,402	8,948
Henderson	16,459	20,872	15,438
Jackson	8,714	6,483	4,878
Macon	3,931	4,451	5,816
Madison	1,957	5,406	1,535
Polk	2,906	4,292	1,624
Rutherford	7,378	10,659	9,438
Swain	4,035	3,576	1,649
Transylvania	8,546	5,249	3,762

Source: OnTheMap, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), U.S. Census Bureau



10. Describe how the region coordinates with area secondary education, community colleges and universities to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(10)]

The Mountain Area Region has three of its four NC Works Career Centers located on community college campuses (2-Blue Ridge, A-B Tech). The community college employs adult and dislocated worker staff, via a WIOA contract, in all four career center locations. WIOA case managers assist interested and eligible students with the community college enrollment process. Workforce Board funds are used to pay for tuition and books for eligible students to attend short and long-term training classes at the local community colleges.

In the Southwestern Area Region, there are three community colleges (Haywood, Southwestern, Tri-County) and one university, Western

Carolina University. The Local Area contracts with Tri-County Community College to provide WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker services in the counties of Cherokee, Clay & Graham. All three community colleges provide instructors at the NC Works Career Centers that teach job seeking skills workshops.

Many training initiatives and business services are closely coordinated between the workforce board and the community colleges' administrators and staff. Also the Southwestern Local Area and Mountain Area Local Area are each working on NC Works Certified Career Pathways tied to the Advanced Manufacturing sector. This will be extremely beneficial to the employers in the bordering counties of Buncombe and Haywood. Employers will be able to draw on a trained pool of talent with consistent skill sets whether the workers choose to work in their home county or across county lines.

11. Provide details on how the region addresses workforce issues specifically related to its: a) cities and/or towns; b) suburban areas; and c) rural areas.

Having the Regional Council of Governments as the administrative entities for the workforce development boards is particularly advantageous when it comes to identifying the workforce and economic development needs of cities, towns, suburbs and rural areas. All of the local governments (municipalities, cities and counties) are represented in the Council of Governments. This provides opportunities to identify workforce and economic development issues and to examine in depth the approaches that may yield the best response to these issues.

Both Councils of Governments in the Western Region periodically submit and update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plans for the region of the US Economic Development Administration. These plans, along with the economic development plans that are created for each County, provide useful information for the development of workforce strategies to be implemented by the region's Workforce Boards. Understanding the planning emphasis of economic development commissions, especially in rural counties, helps guide the development of training opportunities that will assist in preparing skilled workers for existing and future rural enterprises.

NCWorks Career Center Managers regularly attend local Chamber of Commerce meetings to stay in tune with what is occurring in the business community. These meetings are attended by small, medium and large business representatives who provide valuable information on what is being experienced in the local economy.

12. Provide details on how the region connects military skills to occupational demands to serve military veterans and families. Include methods the region uses to promote the hiring of military veterans.

All NCWorks Career Center staff is able and available to ensure that veterans and their families receive priority of service and access to training and employment opportunities. There are also full-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists on hand in the centers to assist those veterans with documented disabilities. Staff promotes My Next Move and My Skills My Future assessments as useful tools in helping veterans make career transitions from the military to civilian employment opportunities. The workforce boards' Business Consultants strongly encourage employers to consider veterans as strong candidates for on-the-job training opportunities. The Local Veteran's Employment Representatives are also active members of the Local Area's Business Services Team and work with area employers to develop job opportunities for veterans. OJT is one of the tools used to promote the hiring of military veterans. The business services team also promotes the use of the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) to employers. All of the career centers and workforce offices observe the "24-hour veterans' hold" policy on job listings that gives veterans an opportunity to be the first to apply for those job openings.

13. Describe the Workforce Development Board's use of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(B)]

The Local Area Business Consultant works closely with the Economic Development Directors in the various counties to coordinate the services provided to local employers. The Business Consultant also serves on Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Boards whose members include EDC Directors, employers, and community college representatives. The managers of the NCWorks Career Centers are also involved with the EDC's in their respective counties. The workforce system is a partner in the economic development process whenever businesses are concerned about the availability of skilled workers. The workforce system is consulted when concerns arise about recruitment, screening and referral or customized training. Initiatives such as the incumbent worker training programs, OJT, industry and sector strategies, veterans' employment and other business services are discussed with employers during employer visits and when

making other contacts. NCWorks Career Center staff is knowledgeable about the current and available workforce development initiatives and often refer employers to the Local Area Business Consultant for follow up with the employer in need. These concerns may also require a quick, coordinated and customer friendly response from other NCWorks partners if warranted by the situation.

PY 2016 Local Area Plan Instructions Attachment Checklist

Signed copy of Consortium Agreement

Administrative Entity Organizational Chart

Workforce Development Board List (*form provided*)

Workforce Development Board By-laws

Local Area Organizational Chart

Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment * (*form provided*)

Local Area Signatory Form* (*form provided*)

Local Area Services Flow Chart

One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding (*guide provided*)

Local Area NCWorks Career Center System (*form provided*)

Local Area Adult and Dislocated Worker Services Providers (*form provided*)

Local Area Youth Program Elements (*form provided*)

Local Area Youth Services Providers (*form provided*)

Local Area Youth Incentive Policy

Local Area Oversight Monitoring Policies and Tools

Local Area Equal Opportunity Procedures

Local Area Supportive Services Policies

Local Area Needs-Related Policies (optional)

Local Area Incumbent Worker Training Policy (optional)

Local Area On-the-Job Training Policy

Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy (optional)

Local Area Individualized Training Account Policy*

Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned Division Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Services Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4316.