



**North Central Arkansas
Workforce Development Area
Regional and Local Plan Program
Years 2020-2023**

MODIFICATION 2023

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North Central Arkansas PY 2020 – PY 2023 Regional Plan

WIOA requires regional planning– a broad strategic approach to planning focused on the overarching vision, goals, alignment and shared responsibilities within the region. Arkansas intends to implement a two-tiered regional approach to meeting this requirement by allowing a two-year transitional plan. This approach provides latitude for regions that may not yet be able to address all of the outlined elements required in a four-year regional plan.

1.1. Provide the following:

- A. A reference name for the planning region:**
North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area (NCAWDA)
- B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region;**
North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area
- C. Identification of the county(ies) each local workforce development area serves;**
Cleburne, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Sharp, Stone, Van Buren, White and Woodruff
- D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan;** The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board (NCAWDB), WIOA Core Partners, NCAWDB Youth Committee members, NCAWDB Planning Committee members, and North Central Arkansas Chief Elected Officials (CEO's). One person was the main contact from each partner, which made up the committee to help draft the regional plan.
- E. Indication of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with;**
North Central AR Workforce Development Area
- F. A list of key planning region committee meeting dates. [WIOA Sec. 106(a) and (c)]**
The WIOA Core Partners met on February 28, 2023. The NCWDB met on March 8, 2023 and the North Central Arkansas CEOs met on March 9, 2023.

1.2 Provide a labor market and economic analysis of the workforce development-planning region. This regional analysis must include:

- A. The economic conditions;
- B. Labor force employment and unemployment data;
- C. Information on labor market trends;
- D. Workforce development activities;
- E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers; and
- F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging- demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Indicate the sources of regional labor market and economic data. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(C)]

A. Economic Conditions

The economy of the North Central Workforce Development Area is very diverse in that it includes the Delta on the south and east and the Ozark Mountains on the north and west. Even though North Central Arkansas is very rural in nature and is not home to any of the seven Fortune 500 companies in the state, it is rich in agricultural businesses, large manufacturing businesses, and unique thriving small businesses. The largest manufacturing companies in the region include: Bad Boy Inc., Intimidator, Inc., PECO, Inc., Ozark Mountain Poultry, FutureFuel Corporation, Excel Boat Company, Fiber Energy Products, UniFirst Corporation, Riceland Foods, Sloan Valve, Land O’ Frost, Bryce Corporation, Eaton Corporation, Medallion Foods, Arkansas Steel Associates, Taylor Made Ambulances, Southwest Steel Processing, Broadwing, Microplastics, Unilin Flooring, Unimin Sand, Global Foods, Aromatic, and Defiance Metal Products. Other large employers in the region are fast food restaurants including McDonald’s and Sonic, all local hospitals, nursing homes, electric cooperatives, school districts, community colleges and four-year colleges, transportation services, and local grocery stores such as, Harps, Wal-Mart, and Kroger.

The North Central area has a variety of tourist attractions including the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, craft shops in downtown Hardy, Blanchard Springs Caverns, Buffalo National River, Spring River, and Greers Ferry Lake that draw millions of tourists each year according to the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission has identified fifteen (15) target industries in this area of the state: Health Care and Social Assistance; Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Educational Services; accommodations and food services; administrative and support and waste management; transportation and warehousing; wholesale trade; construction; professional, scientific, and technical services; management of companies and enterprises; information; agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting; mining; and utilities.

2019 Census Population and income data from Discover Arkansas
Information can be found on Discover Arkansas

County	Population	Total Personal Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income
Cleburne County	25,100	\$1,038,683,000	\$41,656	\$44,483
Fulton County	12,231	\$394,212,000	\$31,840	\$35,405
Independence County	37,427	\$1,444,825,000	\$38,266	\$44,319
Izard County	13,570	\$443,861,000	\$32,606	\$42,876
Jackson County	17,027	\$692,827,000	\$41,646	\$34,109
Sharp County	17,139	\$620,497,000	\$35,612	\$34,671
Stone County	12,475	\$415,107,000	\$32,753	\$38,188
Van Buren County	16,642	\$570,363,000	\$34,482	\$38,499
White County	78,762	\$3,117,497,000	\$39,598	\$44,029
Woodruff County	6,533	\$283,433,000	\$45,248	\$32,845

B. Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data

December 2021

Information can be found on [Discover Arkansas](#)

LWDA/County	Civilian Labor Force	Number of Employed	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)
North Central Arkansas	92,968	90,455	2,513	2.7
Cleburne County	8,889	8,628	261	2.9
Fulton County	4,867	4,763	104	2.1
Independence County	16,681	16,295	386	2.3
Izard County	4,326	4,163	163	3.8
Jackson County	5,585	5,391	194	3.5
Sharp County	5,614	5,444	170	3.0
Stone County	4,335	4,195	140	3.2
Van Buren County	5,750	5,578	172	3.0
White County	34,201	33,358	843	2.5
Woodruff County	2,720	2,640	80	2.9

C. Information on Labor Market Trends

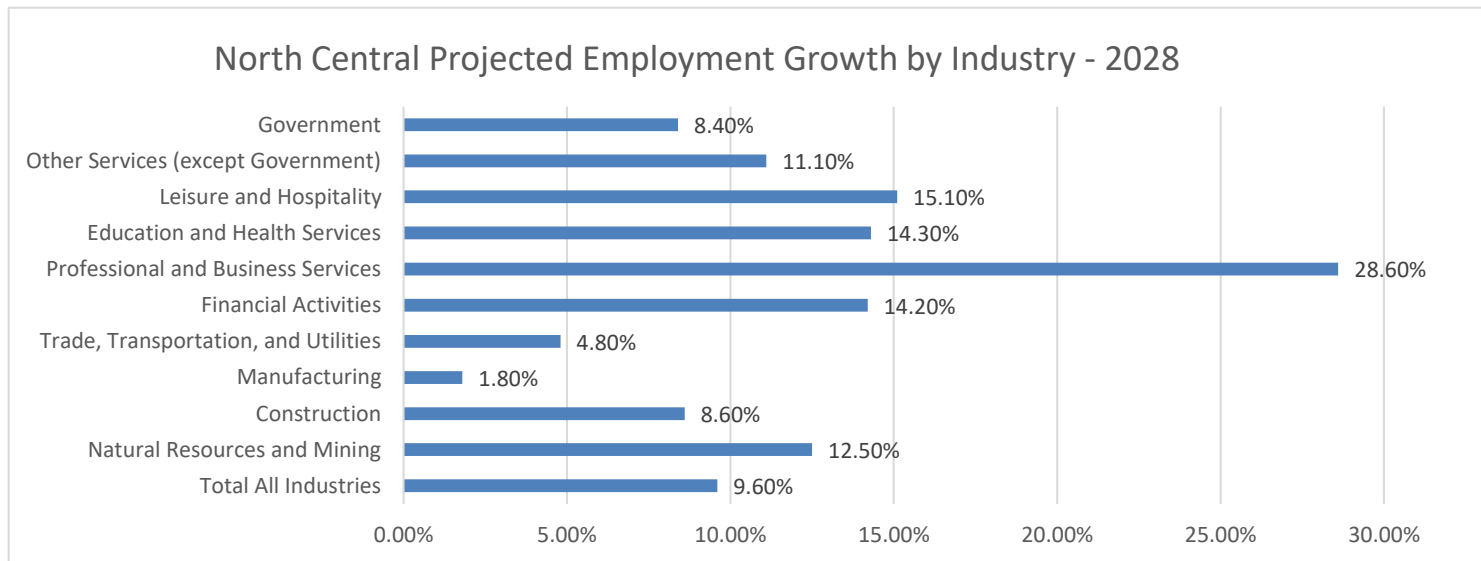
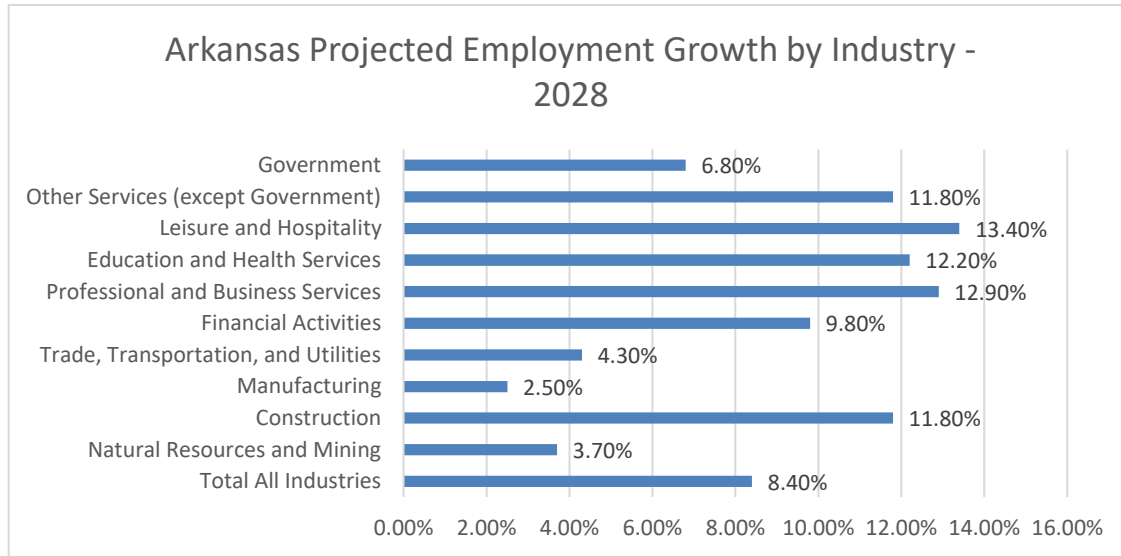
Labor Market Trends

All data below can be found at [Discover Arkansas](#).

North Central Projected Industry Growth by 2028	Estimated Employment
Total All Industries	83,593
Natural Resources and Mining	2,650
Construction	2,457
Manufacturing	8,645
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	14,981
Financial Activities	2,662
Professional and Business Services	3,149
Education and Health Services	21,672
Leisure and Hospitality	6,696
Other Services (except Government)	3,030
Government	5,609
Total All Industries	83,593

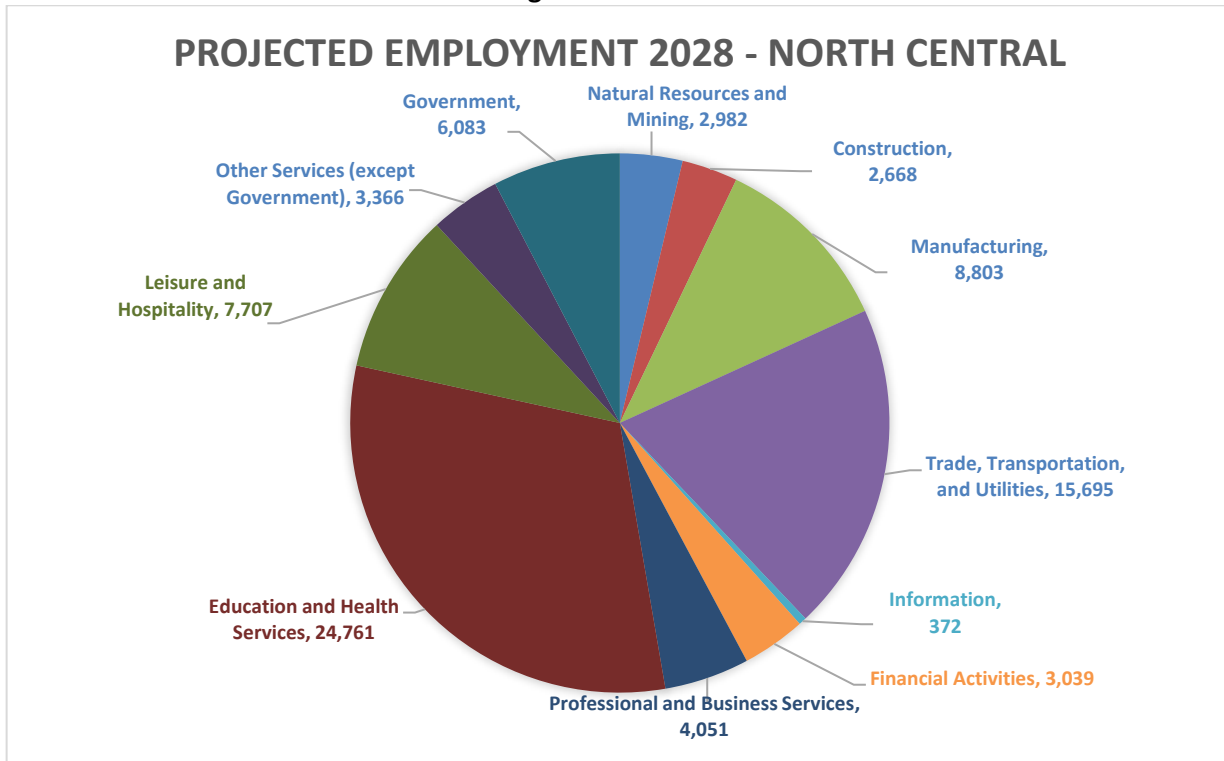
The chart above shows the current estimates for the percentage of workers in major industries. Compared to the state, the North Central region has a higher percentage of workers in health care and social assistance, retail trade, educational services, transportation and warehousing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining and utilities. The two industries that North Central currently falls below the state more than two percentage points is administrative and support and waste management and management of companies and enterprises.

Projected Job Growth by Industry – 2028



The chart above shows industries expected to have significant growth by 2028. The North Central area will excel above the state in professional and business services by 15.7%, financial activities by 4.4%, and natural resources and mining by 8.8%. The lowest industry growth is projected to be in manufacturing, which is just under the state’s projections. Overall, the North Central region is projected to have a substantial increase in jobs by the year 2028.

Percent Workforce 2028 – North Central Region



This pie chart represents what percent of the workforce is expected to be in each industry in the North Central Region in 2028.

The following data sourced from Discover Arkansas for the Northcentral region.

Projected Industry Growth 2018-2028

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change (%)
Total All Industries	83,593	91,651	8,058	9.60%
Natural Resources and Mining	2,650	2,982	332	12.50%
Construction	2,457	2,668	211	8.60%
Manufacturing	8,645	8,803	158	1.80%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	14,981	15,695	714	4.80%
Information	429	372	-57	-13.30%
Financial Activities	2,662	3,039	377	14.20%
Professional and Business Services	3,149	4,051	902	28.60%
Education and Health Services	21,672	24,761	3,089	14.30%

Projected Occupational Growth 2018-2028

Leisure and Hospitality	6,696	7,707	1,011	15.10%
Other Services (except Government)	3,030	3,366	336	11.10%
Government	5,609	6,083	474	8.40%

Occupation	2018- Estimated Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Numeric Change (Net Growth)	Percent Change (%)	Total Annual Openings
Total, All Occupations	83,593	91,651	8,058	9.60%	10,755
Management Occupations	11,862	12,467	605	5.10%	1,204
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	1,482	1,703	221	14.90%	170
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	320	363	43	13.40%	30
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	634	673	39	6.20%	52
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	246	267	21	8.50%	28
Community and Social Service Occupations	1,974	2,331	357	18.10%	265
Legal Occupations	286	336	50	17.50%	27
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	5,583	6,006	423	7.60%	537
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	643	672	29	4.50%	82
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	5,894	6,854	960	16.30%	475
Healthcare Support Occupations	2,142	2,513	371	17.30%	302
Protective Service Occupations	1,639	1,810	171	10.40%	167
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	6,662	7,749	1,087	16.30%	1,323
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,403	2,722	319	13.30%	366
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,778	3,602	824	29.70%	545
Sales and Related Occupations	7,557	7,933	376	5.00%	1,145

Office and Administrative Support Occupations	10,245	10,701	456	4.50%	1,266
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,312	1,472	160	12.20%	242
Construction and Extraction Occupations	2,768	3,052	284	10.30%	356
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,216	3,481	265	8.20%	351
Production Occupations	7,348	7,763	415	5.70%	924
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	6,599	7,181	582	8.80%	899

Top Ten Growing Industries, 2018-2028 Ranked by Net Growth

Industry	2018-Base Employment	Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Education and Health Services	21,672	24,761	3,089	14.30%
Leisure and Hospitality	6,696	7,707	1,011	15.10%
Professional and Business Services	3,149	4,051	902	28.60%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	14,981	15,695	714	4.80%
Government	5,609	6,083	474	8.40%
Financial Activities	2,662	3,039	377	14.20%
Other Services (except Government)	3,030	3,366	336	11.10%
Natural Resources and Mining	2,650	2,982	332	12.50%
Construction	2,457	2,668	211	8.60%
Manufacturing	8,645	8,803	158	1.80%

Top Ten Growing Occupations, 2018-2028 Ranked by Net Growth

Occupation	Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Personal Care Aides	1,422	2,050	628	44.20%
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	2,432	2,943	511	21.00%
Registered Nurses	1,718	2,073	355	20.70%
Cooks, Restaurant	699	888	189	27.00%
Nursing Assistants	1,459	1,646	187	12.80%

Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	8,348	8,515	167	2.00%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,005	1,154	149	14.80%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,048	2,180	132	6.50%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	884	1,014	130	14.70%
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	655	776	121	18.50%

The North Central region will see a significant increase in the Health Care, Accommodation and Food Services, and Professional and Business Services industries by 2028.

The following is the projected number of new jobs by 2028: Health care – 1,305 jobs; Accommodation and Food Services – 2,413 jobs; Professional and Business Services – 4,051 jobs.

D. Workforce Development Activities

North Central’s workforce development activities are coordinated through the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), White River Planning and Development District as the Title I Service Provider, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), the Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of County Operations (DCO), and Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs.

The Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Arkansas’s version of the American Job Centers. In North Central, there are two workforce centers throughout the region that provide access to the services. The majority of the North Central area is rural and the state’s mobile workforce center units assist in providing services to the rural communities. For instance, the mobile workforce center assists Jackson and surrounding counties every Thursday from 10a.m. to 2p.m.

The local workforce development board, comprised of local businesses, labor, partner agencies and other key stakeholders, oversees the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The board, in alignment with the State’s vision, provides front line strategic implementation for statewide initiatives such as sector strategies, career pathway development and delivery of standardized business services. The local priorities by the board include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, and work-based learning.

Local boards are tasked with procuring a one-stop operator for the daily operation of their respective center(s) in accordance with WIOA 121(d). These boards carry out workforce activities by collaborating locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement core, non-core, and other partner programs. Arkansas Workforce Centers are fully integrated with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Adult Education and Family Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation. Local partnerships and integration also exist in many areas with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs and others.

Typical customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process that is designed to identify the

needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. In some cases, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions and next steps to their questions, barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

Within the North Central Region, Adult Education Division (AED) funds five local adult education programs (ASU-Beebe at Searcy, ASU-Newport, University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton, Ozarka College, and University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville) through state and federal grants. The service delivery systems are diverse and funded through a variety of local administrative entities. Local programs provide adult education services to people with academic skills deficiencies. These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each program's service area. Services include GED Classes and testing, English as a Second Language Classes, family literacy, instruction to prepare for college or employment, customized workplace classes, and Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™). Locally, for the years of 2020 to 2022, North Central Adult Education Centers served roughly 2,210 adult participants with 150 of those being ESL students.

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) continues to support its accessible kiosks for consumers at Arkansas Workforce Center locations. The kiosks provide consumers the same access to the Internet to search for jobs as a sighted person seeking services from workforce centers. DSB provides training to workforce center staff and clients on the use of the kiosks. In the North Central region, kiosks are located at the Searcy and Batesville Comprehensive Workforce Centers.

Workforce System Services – Unemployed and Underemployed

Arkansas Workforce Centers offer the full array of career services outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers. Career services available at the centers vary because of local area inflexion and needs of particular communities. Basic career services are available at approximately 26 locations throughout Arkansas.

Each center has computers, printers, copiers, printed resources, and staff to assist jobseekers. Many of the services, including Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas LMI Portal, can be accessed virtually through the internet via computer, smart phone, or tablet. The LMI portal includes information related to employment and the workforce. The LMI portal helps customers make informed plans, choices, and decisions for a variety of purposes, including business investment decision-making; career planning; career preparation; education and training offerings; job search opportunities; hiring; and public/private investments. For most Department of Human Services public assistance programs, you can apply online. To apply for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), cash, and other supports through the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program, or Medicaid, ARKids, TEFRA, and health care under other categories of Medicaid, individuals can go to [Access.Arkansas.gov](https://www.access.arkansas.gov).

Arkansas Job Link is the state job matching system and the virtual one-stop-shop where Arkansans can centralize all their career search activities. It allows jobseekers to self-enter his/her resume(s) and job search 24/7. Arkansas Job Link also provides access to a toolbox of job search assistance links, including career exploration, training resources, self-marketing tools, Unemployment Insurance information, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, and other workforce activities.

The North Central area also began a pilot program in 2022 with Ready For Life, Future Fit A.I. This

system allows job seekers another avenue to plan their career. Through the Future Fit A.I. online portal, the unemployed can apply for WIOA services and be linked to community resources that they are need of.

Jobseeker Services

Individualized career services within the Arkansas Workforce Centers vary across the region, but all the offices offer a full line of activities to prepare jobseekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require such as:

* Labor exchange services must also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as job vacancies; skills necessary to obtain the jobs In-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations

* Workforce Centers provide the following career services including outreach, intake and orientation; initial assessment; labor exchange services; eligibility determination; referrals to programs; performance and cost information; information on unemployment insurance; financial aid information and follow-up services. Regarding the information on unemployment insurance: Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims are no longer handled in the local office. They are handled through the Unemployment Service Center and via the UI Hotline. Those needing to file for unemployment benefits still have access to computers located in the local office to file an UI claim. UI Claimants also have access to the UI Hotline Kiosk phones to speak to a UI Workforce Specialist regarding their UI claim. UI claimants can also provide their ID, submit documentation related to their claim needing to be submitted to the UI Service Center (the LO scans and emails all docs received at COB each day). The local office does have handouts available for UI claimants with information on how to file for unemployment, file a weekly claim, set up direct deposit, UI debit card information, file an appeal, and provide self-addressed envelopes for anyone needing to make repayment on an overpayment.

* Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to Individual Employment Plan (IEP); Individual Service Strategy (ISS); career planning and counseling; comprehensive assessment; occupational skills assessment; short-term prevocational services; internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships; workforce preparation; out-of-area job search; apprenticeship training; English language acquisition and financial literacy.

Training Services

Career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Arkansas Workforce Centers offer multiple training services such as occupational skills training; on-the-job training (OJT); Registered Apprenticeships; incumbent worker training; skill upgrading and retaining; entrepreneurial training, and adult education and family literacy activities.

Training services are funded through WIOA programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. The North Central area is responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. The individual participant spending limit will be set by the Local Workforce Development Board based on availability of funds and the funding projections.

Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies/partnerships and career pathway development. At the state level, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated pursuant to WIOA Sections 122 and 134. This list ensures that Arkansans are able to make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data including completion and placement rates; labor market information and wage expectations.

Supportive Services

In order to assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. North Central region is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include child care; transportation; testing fees; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; proper work attire; eye glasses; court fines; and minor vehicle repairs such as a new battery. The NCAWDB's supportive services policies and procedures provide guidance regarding the supportive services offered in the North Central area. The individual participant spending limit will be set by the Local Workforce Development Board, within the supportive services policy, based on availability of funds and the funding projections. The policies and procedures outline the steps taken by the career specialist to ensure all WIOA requirements are fulfilled. Policies can be accessed through the board website at www.ncaworks.com/local-policies.

Each core partner provides an array of valuable services to the program participants. The Division of Services for the Blind provides optical devices, visual treatments, educational services, employment services, and independent living training. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services provides a customer employer list, employment services, career readiness training, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which includes the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) and Work Pays programs. The ADWS also provides a Veteran's program. The Arkansas Rehabilitation Service provides educational services, employment services, career training, and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The Adult Education program provides adult education classes with integrated employability skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy skills; career readiness training; and GED testing.

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and may include access to facilities – Use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.; assessments – any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee; business education – seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.; business information – Information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business; hiring events – a customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; job fairs – event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; job postings – staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff; labor market information – information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and job vacancies survey results; Rapid Response – a variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits; screening – any

service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process; training and retraining - any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including OJTs, Work Experiences, Incumbent Worker Training, etc.

The NCAWDA website includes general contact information, board-meeting archives, general information about WIOA, services offered in the North Central Region, eligibility requirements, office locations, and a memorandum of understanding, which includes information regarding partnerships.

Services to Persons with Disabilities

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for individuals with disabilities in relation to attaining employment in Arkansas. ARS in partnership with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for individuals with disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

Through the Governor’s Executive Order 10-17, the Division of Services for the Blind and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services coordinate with other state agencies to increase employment of Arkansans with disabilities. The order also aims to focus consumer services first toward the goal of self-sufficiency through employment. The initiative also instructs agencies to provide consumer services with the goal of self-sufficiency through employment as the result, rather than the service as an end in itself.

E. Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce, Including Individuals with Barriers

Source for the chart below: Discover Arkansas.

Arkansas has a population with 84% of individuals with a high school diploma, a 29% average of individuals with some college through associate degree, and 30% average of individuals with a bachelor degree or higher.

	Less Than 9th Grade	%	9th Grade to 12th Grade	%	High School Diploma	%	Some College	%	Associate's Degree	%	Bachelor's Degree	%	Graduate Degree and Higher	%	Total
Cleburne	1,312	7%	2,493	13%	6,845	37%	4,145	22%	1,237	7%	1,679	9%	854	5%	18,563
Fulton	835	10%	800	9%	3,588	41%	1,906	22%	647	7%	521	6%	474	5%	8,771
Independence	1,542	6%	2,441	10%	9,529	38%	5,602	22%	1,812	7%	2,810	11%	1,665	7%	25,400
Izard	752	7%	1,026	10%	4,265	41%	2,244	22%	727	7%	853	8%	429	4%	10,295
Jackson	1,385	11%	1,709	14%	4,913	40%	2,440	20%	721	6%	748	6%	312	3%	12,227
Sharp	652	5%	1,464	12%	5,269	42%	2,891	23%	873	7%	985	8%	486	4%	12,620
Stone	1,445	15%	1,174	13%	3,365	36%	1,597	17%	767	8%	511	5%	499	5%	9,358
Van Buren	834	7%	1,049	9%	5,454	45%	2,411	20%	661	5%	1,104	9%	626	5%	12,138
White	2,949	6%	5,021	10%	20,247	39%	10,728	21%	3,154	6%	5,454	11%	4,186	8%	51,740
Woodruff	468	10%	528	12%	2,144	47%	730	16%	255	6%	388	8%	76	2%	4,588

F. Development/Implementation of Sector Initiatives for Existing/Emerging In-Demand Industry

Sectors or Occupations for the Region

North Central recently partnered with the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) as they received a Delta Regional Authority (DRA) workforce grant. This grant allows the Community College to administer a program called “*Future Fit-Working for Independence*” (otherwise known as the “WIN” grant) which is tailored to the needs of local in demand industries, specifically targeting manufacturing. The WIN grant program provides pre-employment training support and wraparound services designed to reduce employment barriers through a three-stage process. Stage one consists of ninety six hours of on-campus training. Stage two consists of one hundred and sixty hours of on-the-job training. Stage three consists of full-time employment with an hourly pay up to \$2.00 above the standard base hourly pay if employed by a participating business/industry partner. Participants also receive a stipend while attending the training. Currently there are nine local businesses participating in this project.

North Central also partnered with the Ozarka Community College to receive a DRA workforce grant in order to expand and upgrade its nursing program to address the shortage of licensed practical and registered nurses in the region. This grant will address the significant healthcare gap within the North Central area while also creating a possible impact on workforce development through increased educational opportunity in advanced healthcare skills. This grant will help offer a night and weekend option to participants who need to work during the day.

Lastly, North Central partnered with the Newport Economic Commission to add a new Information Technology center in Jackson County. This Tech Depot was funded through the Arkansas Office of Skills Development in collaboration with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences and ASU-Newport. The Tech Depot is a regional initiative to supply apprenticeship style training for individuals who would like to find a rewarding career in a technology field. Research demonstrated that businesses, in the region, were struggling to locate trained employees for technology jobs, often having to recruit from major cities and experiencing high turnover. The Tech Depot supplies a solution by locating individuals with the aptitude, desire, and work ethic to find a job in Information Technology and giving them the training that will lead to success and economic opportunity.

1.3 Based upon the regional labor market and economic conditions analysis and *Arkansas’s Workforce Development Plan*, describe the planning regions economic and workforce development oriented vision and strategic goals. [WIOA Sec. 106 (c) and Sec. 107 (d)]

The vision of the North Central Arkansas Workforce Development region is to have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled and working in order to keep North Central Arkansas’ economy competitive in the global marketplace. North Central believes that through the partnerships of core agencies, as well as non-core agencies, the vision to see a world-class workforce can be achieved.

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community –based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

- Continue to utilize the Business Services Team and the local Chief Elected Officials to identify areas of need in the in-demand occupations
- Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide

support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities

- Continue to partner with educational institutes such as the community and four year Colleges in the North Central area to identify skill gaps

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

- Improve upon the common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all partners
- Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certifications
- Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services as well as having material in easily accessible for versions for all types of people
- Utilize all avenues of communication whether that be through electronic means such as social media or print material
- Continue to use customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the North Central's talent development system
- Explore other non-core partners that might benefit employers and jobseekers

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the North Central Region's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

- Utilize an image-building outreach that educates individuals in the region about the services and the career development opportunities available in North Central Arkansas.
- Network with service area industries, core partners and other state agencies to increase communication in order to raise awareness of career-based information
- Conduct/participate in an open house twice a year at various core partner locations in the 10 county regions. The open house event will give individuals, partners, and business leaders the opportunity to explore the various partner locations which will ultimately help each partner understand the services offered at each location

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Objectives:

- Build fluid relationships with academic entities across the 10-county region to connect training providers with training gaps
- The North Central WDB will continue to monitor the level of interest in the 10 county region and the process involved in becoming an ACT Work Ready Community
- Explore the development of secondary technical training and career pathways to credentials which are industry specific to meet changing needs of workforce
- Focus on partnerships with the two workforce centers (Batesville and Searcy) to support job fairs for emerging and existing business and industry

1.4 Describe regional strategies used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the regional workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Sec. 106 (c)]

WIOA coordinates with partners to effectively target businesses and employers. The Business Service Team will provide an overview of all the agencies and leave a packet of services which the employer can review. This approach has been successful in maximizing information with minimal intrusion.

The North Central region has developed partnerships and alliances through the Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions and educational cooperatives and works closely with White River Planning and Development District to further alliances with these groups as well as engage employers. These partnerships have been effective in cross training the different agencies about the various services available, to help simplify the process of obtaining services, and providing an overall menu of services to businesses and industries.

The business services team previously worked with Thomas P. Miller and associates to develop a list of pertinent questions to ask businesses. North Central is also engaging with our local colleges that have workforce programs in order to reach the businesses that they work with.

1.5 Describe how the planning region will define and establish regional workforce development service strategies. Describe how the planning region will develop and use cooperative workforce development service delivery agreements. [WIOA Sec. 106 (c) (B)]

The North Central region will define workforce development strategies by working with partners to determine the best ways to provide services with guidance from the State regarding requirements and opportunities. Cooperative service delivery agreements can be memorandums of understanding for the local workforce system. This agreement allows the partners to ensure that all jobseekers, workers, and employers will be served in a way that all of their needs are addressed, the duplication of services is eliminated, and all programs are available.

1.6 Describe how the planning region will define and establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106 (c) (E)]

The North Central region will adhere to the administrative cost requirements as specified under WIOA. It will use memorandums of understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement for the local workforce system. The one-stop operating budget will be considered the master budget that contains a set of individual budgets that consist of costs that are specifically identified in the TEG 17-16 statute. The budget will be periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted according to the regional operational costs. Fiscal responsibility is a strength of the administrating agency with experience in federal funding regulations since its inception in 1967.

1.7 Describe how the planning region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(F)]

Transportation and other supportive services will be determined and coordinated through the

partner programs as allowable by their program. Transportation support will be provided to participants who are in individualized career services including job search activities, full-time WIOA funded training or related vocational training. These services will be coordinated with various partners throughout the North Central region, including but not limited to: WIOA Title IB, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Arkansas Career Pathways, and Housing and Urban Development. Additional supportive services will be provided to eligible WIOA participants as needed. Brochures have been developed to properly provide information on the supportive services available in the North Central region. These brochures have been disbursed in many locations throughout the region.

A website and social media platform presence will be maintained to reach participants and implementation of text messaging technology. Information can be obtained through www.ncaworks.com and www.facebook.com/northcentralwioa.

1.8 Describe strategies and services the planning region will employ to coordinate workforce development programs/services with regional economic development services and providers. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(G)]

North Central will continue to partner with regional economic development services and providers by leveraging resources with the White River Planning and Development District, Chambers of Commerce and other economic development organizations. NCADWA coordinates meetings to disburse information, to ensure non-duplication and braided services, and to cross-train partner agencies to provide better services to the needs of the community. The organizational website does include a communication page, which will provide a location for all partners to obtain information on events such as job fairs, hiring events, and community events.

1.9 Describe how the planning region will establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the State on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c), for local areas and the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(H)] [proposed 20 CFR 677.210(b) and (c)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2)]

Since the planning region is a single workforce development area, North Central will follow the federal and state guidance regarding negotiation and agreement with the state. The approved performance measures were negotiated by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services and the fiscal/program agents and have been disseminated to the North Central WIOA staff for reference.

North Central Arkansas PY 2020-2023 Local Plan

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 1.1** Provide an analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance).

The economy of the North Central Workforce Development Area is very diverse in that it includes the Delta on the south and east and the Ozark Mountains on the north and west. Even though North Central Arkansas is very rural in nature and is not home to any of the seven Fortune 500 companies in the state, it is rich in agricultural businesses, large manufacturing businesses, and unique thriving small businesses. The largest manufacturing companies in the region include: Bad Boy Inc., Intimidator, Inc., PECO, Inc., Ozark Mountain Poultry, FutureFuel Corporation, Excel Boat Company, Fiber Energy Products, UniFirst Corporation, Riceland Foods, Sloan Valve, Land O' Frost, Bryce Corporation, Eaton Corporation, Medallion Foods, Arkansas Steel Associates, Southwest Steel Processing, Broadwing, Microplastics, Beasley Flooring Products, Unimin Sand, Global Foods, Aromatique, Granges Americas Inc., and Defiance Metal Products. Other large employers in the region are fast food restaurants including McDonald's and Sonic, all local hospitals, nursing homes, electric cooperatives, school districts, transportation services, and local grocery stores such as, Harps, Wal-Mart, and Kroger.

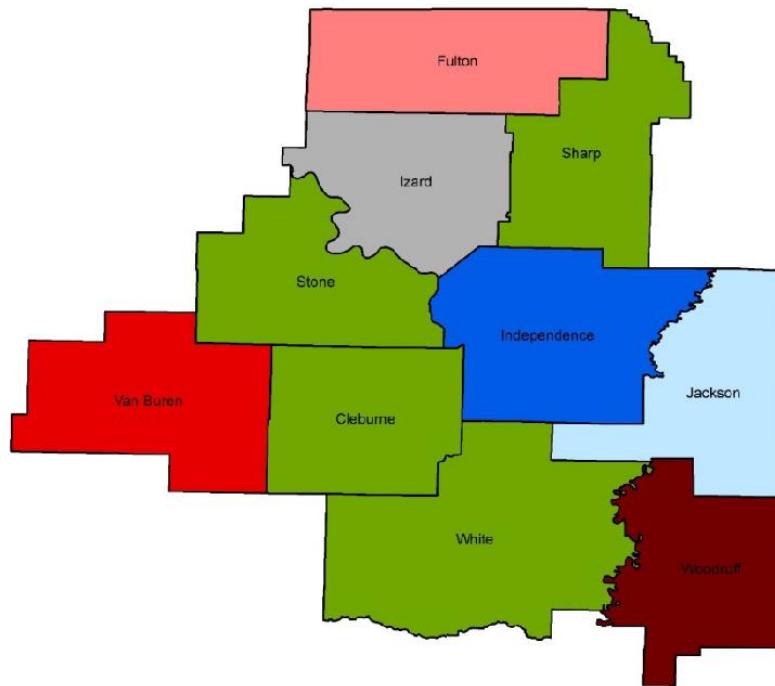
North Central consists of ten counties: Cleburne, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Sharp, Stone, Van Buren, White and Woodruff, with the state of Missouri bordering the area to the north.

The North Central area has a variety of tourist attractions including the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, craft shops in downtown Hardy, Blanchard Springs Caverns, Buffalo National River, Spring River, and Greers Ferry Lake that draw millions of tourists each year according to the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

The area is home to four public two-year colleges that are part of the Arkansas State University campuses located in Beebe, Heber Springs, Newport and Searcy. Also located in North Central are two four-year colleges including Lyon College in Batesville and Harding University in Searcy. Rounding out the area's educational community, technical and trade schools are UACCB in Batesville and Ozarka in Melbourne. In Izard County, the largest industry is manufacturing.

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information.

– Existing Industries and In-Demand Industry Sectors by County in North Central Region



Largest Industry

-  311- Food Manufacturing
-  331- Primary Metal Manufacturing
-  621- Ambulatory Health Care Services
-  623- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
-  624- Social Assistance
-  722- Food Services
-  Non-Disclosed Industry

Wages by County

Source: Discover Arkansas

2019 Median Household Income - Census

5-year estimates



County	Income
Cleburne County	\$44,483
Fulton County	\$35,405
Independence County	\$44,319
Izard County	\$42,876
Jackson County	\$34,109
Sharp County	\$34,671
Stone County	\$38,188
Van Buren County	\$38,499
White County	\$44,029
Woodruff County	\$32,845

1.2 Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Based on numerous surveys and discussions with employers, the number one skill they require in their employee is soft skills. This includes, but is not limited to, employee's attitude, professionalism, attendance, teamwork, work ethic, dress code and initiative. Other basic knowledge and skills that employers need include literacy and math, problem solving, computing, communication, work readiness and other skills.

These are things that almost every employer requires. In addition skills that are particular to each job are varied. Health Care employers are seeking individuals that have certain skills, depending on the job, whether it is in janitorial services, food service, patient care or other health care services. Employers hiring workers in the Accommodation and Food Service industry look for workers that possess math, communication and customer service skills to name a few. The advanced manufacturing industry seeks workers that have more technical skills.

1.3 Provide an analysis of the local workforce, 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 Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Labor Force Employment and Unemployment
December 2021

LWDA/County	Civilian Labor Force	Number of Employed	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)
North Central Arkansas	92,968	90,455	2,513	2.7
Cleburne County	8,889	8,628	261	2.9
Fulton County	4,867	4,763	104	2.1
Independence County	16,681	16,295	386	2.3
Izard County	4,326	4,163	163	3.8
Jackson County	5,585	5,391	194	3.5
Sharp County	5,614	5,444	170	3.0
Stone County	4,335	4,195	140	3.2
Van Buren County	5,750	5,578	172	3.0
White County	34,201	33,358	843	2.5
Woodruff County	2,720	2,640	80	2.9

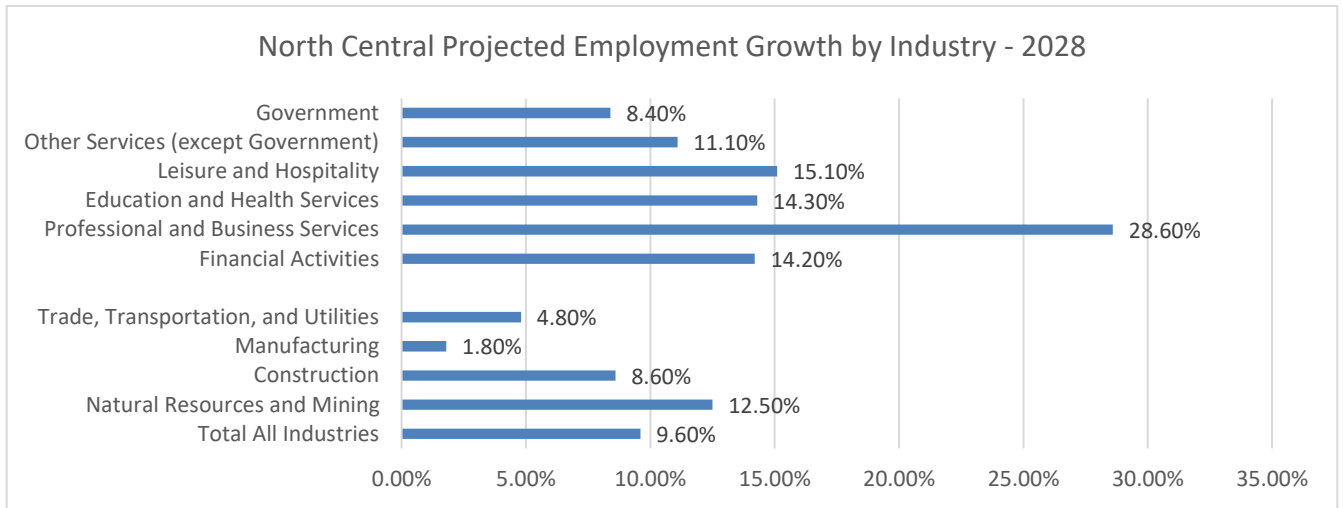
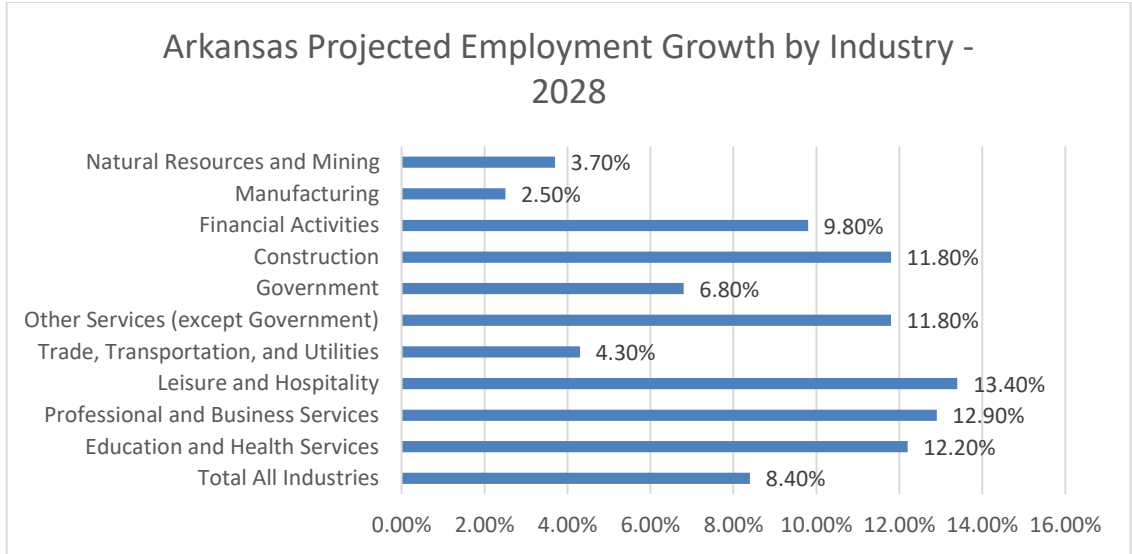
Source: Discover Arkansas

Labor Market Trends

All data below can be found at: Discover Arkansas

The chart above shows the current estimates for the percentage of workers in major industries. Compared to the state, the North Central region has a higher percentage of workers in health care and social assistance, retail trade, educational services, transportation and warehousing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining and utilities. The two industries that North Central currently falls below the state more than two percentage points is administrative and support and waste management and management of companies and enterprises.

Projected Job Growth by Industry – 2028

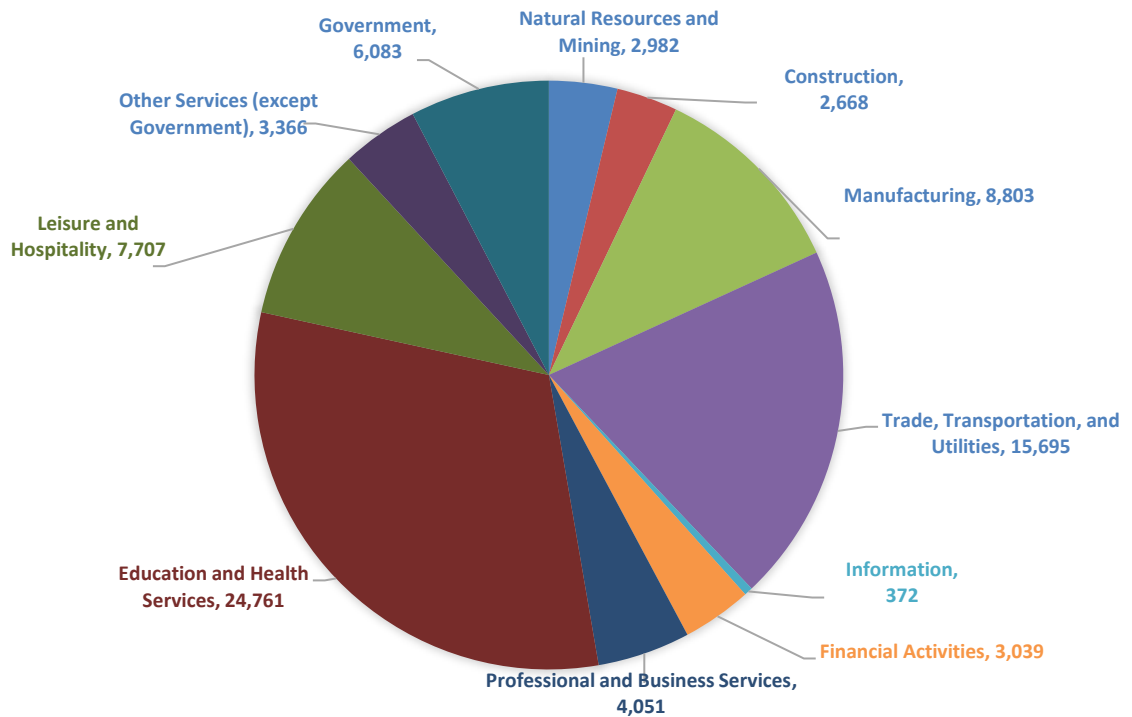


The chart above shows industries expected to have growth by 2028. The largest growth in the local area is professional and business services, at 28.6%. This is 15.7% higher than the state level. Education and health, Leisure and Hospitality, Financial Activities, and Natural Resources also show significant growth.

Percent Workforce 2028 – North Central Region

This pie chart represents what percent of the workforce is expected to be in each industry in the North Central Region in 2028.

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT 2028 - NORTH CENTRAL



The following data sourced from Discover Arkansas for the Northcentral region

Projected Industry Growth 2018-2028

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change (%)
Total All Industries	83,593	91,651	8,058	9.60%
Education and Health Services	21,672	24,761	3,089	14.30%
Leisure and Hospitality	6,696	7,707	1,011	15.10%
Professional and Business Services	3,149	4,051	902	28.60%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	14,981	15,695	714	4.80%
Government	5,609	6,083	474	8.40%
Financial Activities	2,662	3,039	377	14.20%
Other Services (except Government)	3,030	3,366	336	11.10%
Natural Resources and Mining	2,650	2,982	332	12.50%

Construction	2,457	2,668	211	8.60%
Manufacturing	8,645	8,803	158	1.80%
Information	429	372	-57	-13.30%

Projected Occupational Growth 2018-2028

Occupation	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change (%)	Total Annual Openings
Total, All Occupations	83,593	91,651	8,058	9.60%	10,755
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	6,662	7,749	1,087	16.30%	1,323
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	5,894	6,854	960	16.30%	475
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,778	3,602	824	29.70%	545
Management Occupations	11,862	12,467	605	5.10%	1,204
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	6,599	7,181	582	8.80%	899
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	10,245	10,701	456	4.50%	1,266
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	5,583	6,006	423	7.60%	537
Production Occupations	7,348	7,763	415	5.70%	924
Sales and Related Occupations	7,557	7,933	376	5.00%	1,145
Healthcare Support Occupations	2,142	2,513	371	17.30%	302
Community and Social Service Occupations	1,974	2,331	357	18.10%	265
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,403	2,722	319	13.30%	366
Construction and Extraction Occupations	2,768	3,052	284	10.30%	356
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,216	3,481	265	8.20%	351
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	1,482	1,703	221	14.90%	170
Protective Service Occupations	1,639	1,810	171	10.40%	167
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,312	1,472	160	12.20%	242
Legal Occupations	286	336	50	17.50%	27
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	320	363	43	13.40%	30
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	634	673	39	6.20%	52
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	643	672	29	4.50%	82
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	246	267	21	8.50%	28

Top Ten Growing Industries, 2018-2028 Ranked by Net Growth

Industry	Base Employment	Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Ambulatory Health Care Services	4,241	5,295	1,054	24.90%
Food Services and Drinking Places	5,543	6,524	981	17.70%
Social Assistance	2,545	3,244	699	27.50%
Administrative and Support Services	1,813	2,497	684	37.70%
Hospitals	3,683	4,217	534	14.50%
Educational Services	8,185	8,619	434	5.30%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,018	3,386	368	12.20%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,268	1,578	310	24.40%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	3,173	3,481	308	9.70%
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	1,529	1,765	236	15.40%

Top Ten Growing Occupations, 2018-2028 Ranked by Net Growth

Occupation	Base Employment	Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	9,337	10,173	836	8.95
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1,797	2,333	536	29.83
Personal Care Aides	954	1,391	437	45.81
Retail Salespersons	2,332	2,733	401	17.2
Helpers--Production Workers	773	1,069	296	38.29
Nursing Assistants	1,651	1,929	278	16.84
Waiters and Waitresses	1,251	1,503	252	20.14
Registered Nurses	1,465	1,710	245	16.72
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,240	2,425	185	8.26
Cooks, Restaurant	675	858	183	27.11

*Government excludes State/Local Education & Hospitals

Educational and Skill Levels of the North Central Workforce

Subject	Population 18 to 24 years	Less than high school graduate		High school graduate (includes equivalency), no college		Some college or associate's degree		Bachelor's degree or higher	
Arkansas	286,456	38,318	13.40%	93,821	32.80%	132,402	46.20%	21,915	7.70%
Cleburne County, Arkansas	1,673	323	19.30%	846	50.60%	415	24.80%	89	5.30%
Fulton County, Arkansas	809	135	16.70%	262	32.40%	404	49.90%	8	1.00%
Independence County, Arkansas	3,160	316	10.00%	995	31.50%	1679	53.10%	170	5.40%
Izard County, Arkansas	936	271	29.00%	338	36.10%	323	34.50%	4	0.40%
Jackson County, Arkansas	1,449	274	18.90%	599	41.30%	496	34.20%	80	5.50%
Sharp County, Arkansas	1092	335	30.70%	327	29.90%	413	37.80%	17	1.60%
Stone County, Arkansas	819	130	15.90%	231	28.20%	414	50.50%	44	5.40%
Van Buren County, Arkansas	1,087	175	16.10%	475	43.70%	362	33.30%	75	6.90%
White County, Arkansas	9404	717	7.60%	2089	22.20%	5935	63.10%	663	7.10%
Woodruff County, Arkansas	486	114	23.50%	150	30.90%	191	39.30%	31	6.40%

Subject	Population 25 years and over	Less than 9th grade		9th to 12th grade, no diploma		High school graduate (includes equivalency), no college		Some college, no degree	
Arkansas	1,985,770	103,458	5.20%	182,659	9.20%	681,486	34.30%	448,518	22.60%
Cleburne County	18,802	1,117	5.90%	1,821	9.70%	7,372	39.20%	4,284	22.80%
Fulton County	8,828	463	5.20%	908	10.30%	3,478	39.40%	2,401	27.20%
Independence County	25,097	1,366	5.40%	2,370	9.40%	9,431	37.60%	5,545	22.10%
Izard County	10,150	744	7.30%	996	9.80%	3,842	37.90%	2,224	21.90%
Jackson County	12,454	1,121	9.00%	1,690	13.60%	5,377	43.20%	2,463	19.80%
Sharp County	12,317	652	5.30%	1469	11.90%	5,189	42.10%	2,668	21.70%
Stone County	9,127	954	10.50%	1,168	12.80%	3,068	33.60%	1,961	21.50%

Van Buren County	12,321	583	4.70%	1,286	10.40%	5,607	45.50%	2,585	21.00%
White County	50,686	2695	5.30%	5129	10.10%	19,462	38.40%	9,161	18.10%
Woodruff County	4,827	485	10.00%	621	12.90%	2,040	42.30%	868	18.00%

Subject	Population 25 years and over	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree			
Arkansas	1,985,770	132,221	6.70%	280,677	14.10%	156,751	7.90%
Cleburne County	18,802	1,226	6.50%	1,800	9.60%	1,182	6.30%
Fulton County	8,828	506	5.70%	687	7.80%	385	4.40%
Independence County	25,097	1,863	7.40%	2,861	11.40%	1,661	6.60%
Izard County	10,150	1037	10.20%	874	8.60%	433	4.30%
Jackson County	12,454	653	5.20%	755	6.10%	395	3.20%
Sharp County	12,317	1048	8.50%	762	6.20%	529	4.30%
Stone County	9,127	757	8.30%	698	7.60%	521	5.70%
Van Buren County	12,321	671	5.40%	946	7.70%	643	5.20%
White County	50,686	3699	7.30%	6153	12.10%	4387	8.70%
Woodruff County	4,827	263	5.40%	436	9.00%	114	2.40%

North Central has an average of 83.6% of individuals with a high school diploma, a 9.2% average of individuals with a bachelor's degree and 5.5% average of individuals with a graduate degree or higher.

Sources for the above chart from: Factfinder.census.gov

1.4 Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

North Central's workforce development activities are coordinated through Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), White River Planning and Development District as the Title I Service Provider, Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), and Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs.

There are 18 ARS field offices located throughout the state. The only office in the North Central region is located in Batesville at 111 12th Street. The next closest office is located in Jonesboro at 2311 East Nettleton Avenue in Suite G. These offices offer services which enable Arkansans with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives. Services offered are career and technical education, on-the-job

training, post-secondary educational opportunities, and ancillary supportive services.

The closest Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) office is in Jonesboro, however, within the Workforce Centers at Batesville and Searcy clients have access to technology-based communications. DSB are being co-located with DWS either physically or with the use of technology. Each of these offices offer employment services for visually impaired and blind persons as well as rehabilitation by way of the development of life skills, accommodations, and adaptations of daily living.

The Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Arkansas's version of the American Job Centers. In North Central, there are two workforce centers throughout the region that provide access to the services. The majority of the North Central area is rural and the state's mobile workforce center units assist in providing services to the rural communities.

The local workforce development board, comprised of local businesses, labor, partner agencies and other key stakeholders, manages the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The board, in alignment with the State's vision, provides front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives such as sector strategies, career pathway development and delivery of standardized business services. The local priorities by the board include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, and work-based learning.

Local boards are tasked with procuring a one-stop operator for the daily operation of their perspective center(s) in accordance with WIOA 121(d). These boards carry out workforce activities by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement core, non-core, and other partner programs. Arkansas Workforce Centers are fully integrated with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Adult Education and Family Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation. Local partnerships and integration also exist in many areas with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs and others.

Typical customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process that is designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. In some cases, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions and next steps to their questions, barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

Within the North Central Region, Adult Education Division (AED) funds five local adult education programs (ASU-Beebe at Searcy, ASU-Newport, Ozarka College, and University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville) and one community-based and/or privately operated literacy council (Ozark Foothills Literacy Project) through state and federal grants. The service delivery systems are diverse and funded through a variety of local administrative entities. Local programs provide adult education services to people with academic skills up through a 12.9 functioning grade level.

These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each program's service area. Services include GED Classes and testing, English as a Second Language Classes, family literacy, instruction to prepare for college or employment, customized workplace classes, and Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™).

DSB continues to support its accessible kiosks for consumers at Arkansas Workforce Center locations. The kiosks provide consumers the same access to the Internet to search for jobs as a sighted person seeking services from workforce centers. DSB provides training to workforce center staff and clients on the use of the kiosks. In the North Central region, kiosks are located at the Searcy and Batesville Comprehensive

Workforce Centers.

Workforce System Services – Unemployed and Underemployed

Arkansas Workforce Centers offer the full array of career services outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers. Career services available at the centers vary because of local area inflexion and needs of particular communities. Basic career services are available at approximately 26 locations throughout Arkansas.

Each center has computers, printers, copiers, printed resources, and staff to assist jobseekers. Many of the services, including Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas LMI Portal, can be accessed virtually though the internet via computer, smart phone, or tablet. Arkansas Job Link is the state job matching system and the virtual one-stop-shop where Arkansans can centralize all their career search activities. It allows jobseekers to self-enter his/her resume(s) and job search 24/7. Arkansas Job Link also provides access to a toolbox of job search assistance links, including career exploration, training resources, self-marketing tools, Unemployment Insurance information, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, and other workforce activities.

The North Central area also began a pilot program in 2022 with Ready For Life, Future Fit A.I. This system allows job seekers another avenue to plan their career. Through the Future Fit A.I. online portal, the unemployed can apply for WIOA services and be linked to community resources that they are need of.

Jobseeker Services

Individualized career services within the Arkansas Workforce Centers vary across the region, but all the offices offer a full line of activities to prepare jobseekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require such as:

- Labor exchange services must also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as job vacancies; skills necessary to obtain the jobs In-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations
- Workforce Centers provide the following career services including outreach, intake and orientation; initial assessment; labor exchange services; eligibility determination; referrals to programs; performance and cost information; information on unemployment insurance; financial aid information and follow-up services. Regarding the information on unemployment insurance: Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims are no longer handled in the local office. They are handled through the Unemployment Service Center and via the UI Hotline. Those needing to file for unemployment benefits still have access to computers located in the local office to file an UI claim. UI Claimants also have access to the UI Hotline Kiosk phones to speak to a UI Workforce Specialist regarding their UI claim. UI claimants can also provide their ID, submit documentation related to their claim needing to be submitted to the UI Service Center (the LO scans and emails all docs received at COB each day). The local office does have handouts available for UI claimants with information on how to file for unemployment, file a weekly claim, set up direct deposit, UI debit card information, file an appeal, and provide self-addressed envelopes for anyone needing to make repayment on an overpayment.
- Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to Individual Employment Plan (IEP); Individual

Service Strategy (ISS); career planning and counseling; comprehensive assessment; occupational skills assessment; short-term prevocational services; internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships; workforce preparation; out-of-area job search; English language acquisition and financial literacy.

Training Services

Career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Arkansas Workforce Centers offer multiple training services such as occupational skills training; on-the-job training (OJT); Registered Apprenticeships; incumbent worker training; skill upgrading and retaining; entrepreneurial training, and adult education and family literacy activities.

Training services are funded through WIOA programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. The North Central area is responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies/partnerships and career pathway development. At the state level, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated pursuant to WIOA Sections 122 and 134. This list ensures that Arkansans are able to make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data including completion and placement rates; labor market information and wage expectations.

Adult education provides programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training to eligible persons who is at least 16 years of age, is not enrolled in a secondary school and is basic skills deficient, is an English language learner, or does not have an equivalent level of education.

Supportive Services

In order to assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. North Central region is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include child care; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; proper work attire; eye glasses; court fines; and minor vehicle repairs such as a new battery. From 2020-2022 approximately 496 clients received supportive services through the Title I program.

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and may include access to facilities – Use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.; assessments – any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee; business education – seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.; business information – Information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business; hiring events – a customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; job fairs – event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; job postings – staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff; labor market

information – information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and job vacancies survey results; Rapid Response – a variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits; screening – any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process; training and retraining any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including OJTs, Work Experiences, Incumbent Worker Training, etc.

Services to Persons with Disabilities

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and Division of Services for the Blind, provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for individuals with disabilities in relation to attaining employment. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS in partnership with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for individuals with disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Strengths

- Vast array of services offered by the core programs to assist individuals
- Large network of available community colleges and private universities to provide education
- Strong partnerships among the core programs
- The diverse knowledge and expertise of the local board members in a wide array of areas pertaining to the clients served
- Core programs have existed for many years and are well-established and experienced
- The area has growth in some “home grown” industries such as Bad Boy and Intimidator and in the poultry industry
- Short-term training to accommodate job seekers and employers

Weaknesses

- Projected job growth in Accommodations and Food Services are typically low-paying jobs
- The decline in funding over the years and, in some cases, the redirection of funding
- The number of unemployed is under-represented because many of the long-term unemployed have stopped looking for work
- Lack of skilled workforce that would entice employers to locate in the area
- Lack of incentive to participate in partner programs
- Public transportation is non-existent

Challenges

- Recruitment of out-of-school youth since youth are gaining College degrees before graduating High School
- Engaging employers to utilize services through the workforce centers
- Age of out-of-school youth and the liability concerns of the employers

- Parents are distrusting of government agencies

Through the myriad of partners and workforce development activities as indicated above, the North Central area has the capacity to provide the needed services. A strong network of communication among the region's leaders removes the boundaries of county-to-county and provides for cooperation to address pressing employment needs throughout the North Central workforce area.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 2.1 Describe the local 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 described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)]**

North Central has adopted the State's vision and goals and will adapt them to the local area. The local board will strive to prepare an educated and skilled workforce through partnerships with all core partners through various education training such as: Adult Education, Apprenticeship, Institutional Training, Literacy Training, On-the-Job Training and Work Experience.

The vision of the North Central Arkansas Workforce Development region is to have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled and working in order to keep North Central Arkansas' economy competitive in the global marketplace.

The strategic goals for North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area are listed in section 2.3.

- 2.2 Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State's workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)**

North Central Workforce Development Board's vision and goals align with the State's and will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled and working in order to keep North Central's economy competitive in the global marketplace.

- 2.3 Describe how the local board's vision and goals contributes to each of the governor's goals. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources) Note: The State Plan includes a number of objectives under each goal.**

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area shares the Governor's vision for Economic Development and the State's Strategic Plan that defines a stronger partnership between education, economic development and the State Workforce system to attract, retain and grow Arkansas' high growth industries.

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce

development partners, and community –based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

- Continue to utilize the Business Services Team and the local Chief Elected Officials to identify areas of need in the in-demand occupations.
- Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities.
- Continue to partner with educational institutes such as the community and four year Colleges in the North Central area to identify skill gaps.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

- Sponsor (pay for) training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification for incumbent workers in local industries. This could be through a consortium with colleges and industries. The goal would be at least one session annually.
- Sponsor one Career Fair annually at various locations in the 10 county areas. The Career Fair could be a two day event with the first day for agency personnel that would provide workshops on resumes, interviewing, work accommodations through ARS and DBS. The 2nd day would have employers booths set up for the public to visit.
- Develop a common business outreach strategy with a mission statement that will be utilized by all workforce system partners. The Business Services Team would represent each core partner and would elect a chair to serve annually. The Chair would organize industry visits, disseminate information to core partners, and make quarterly reports to the WDB.
- Improve upon the common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all partners.
- Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certifications.
- Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services as well as having material in easily accessible for versions for all types of people.
- Utilize all avenues of communication whether that be through electronic means such as social media or print material.
- Continue to use customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the North Central's talent development system.
- Explore other non-core partners that might benefit employers and jobseekers.

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the North Central Region's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

- Utilize an image-building outreach that educates persons in the region about the services and the career development opportunities available in North Central Arkansas.
- The common intake form that is being developed by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services will increase awareness because the core partners will be personally contacting clients. This will be measured through the state's management information system Arkansas Job Link.

- Conduct an Open House twice a year at various core partner locations in the 10 county regions. The open house event will give individuals, partners, and business leaders the opportunity to explore the various partner locations which will ultimately help each partner understand the services offered at each location.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Objectives:

- Partner with Adult Education Programs to address the soft skills gaps.
- The North Central WDB will survey the level of interest in the 10 county region and the process involved in becoming an ACT Work Ready Community.

2.4 Describe how the local board’s goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (1) (E)]

For participants enrolling in educational training, the goal is for the participants to complete their training and obtain their credential and accomplish measurable skills gain. These participants will also be directed toward higher paying jobs which lead to self-sufficiency to help ensure a much higher retention rate that extends beyond a year after exit. This goal also stands true for those participants receiving basic and individualized career services. The North Central region will strive to meet the needs of the employers by providing quality services, meeting performance requirements, maximizing financial resources, and carrying out directives of the North Central Workforce Development Board. The North Central region will strive to match quality participants to logical, long-standing employers.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

3.1 Taking into account the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board’s strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

- A. A description of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another;

The Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) of North Central Arkansas include 25 county judges and mayors of first class cities.

The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board was appointed by the area’s Chief Elected Officials in a meeting on June 30, 2015. The board composition includes members that represent the core partners as well as at least 51% business representatives and other groups according to the state guidelines. Standing committees of the board include the executive

committee, youth committee, one stop committee and disability committee.

The CEO's and the Workforce Development Board entered into an agreement to assure they will comply with all provisions of the WIOA Act and other policies and directives set forth by the State Workforce Development Board.

The White River Planning and Development District was designated as the Grant Recipient/Administrative Entity, Fiscal Agent and Title I Service Provider/One-Stop Operator under WIOA.

The core partners include Title II Arkansas Career Education, Division of Adult Education, Title III Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Wagner-Peyser, Title IV Arkansas Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.

- B.** A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers, and WIOA Title I-B offices, in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and

Arkansas Workforce Center of Batesville

396 Barnett Drive
Batesville, AR 72501
Phone: 870-793-4156
Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (M-F)

Arkansas Workforce Center of Searcy

501 West Arch St.
Searcy, AR 72143
Phone: 501-268-6650
Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (M-F)

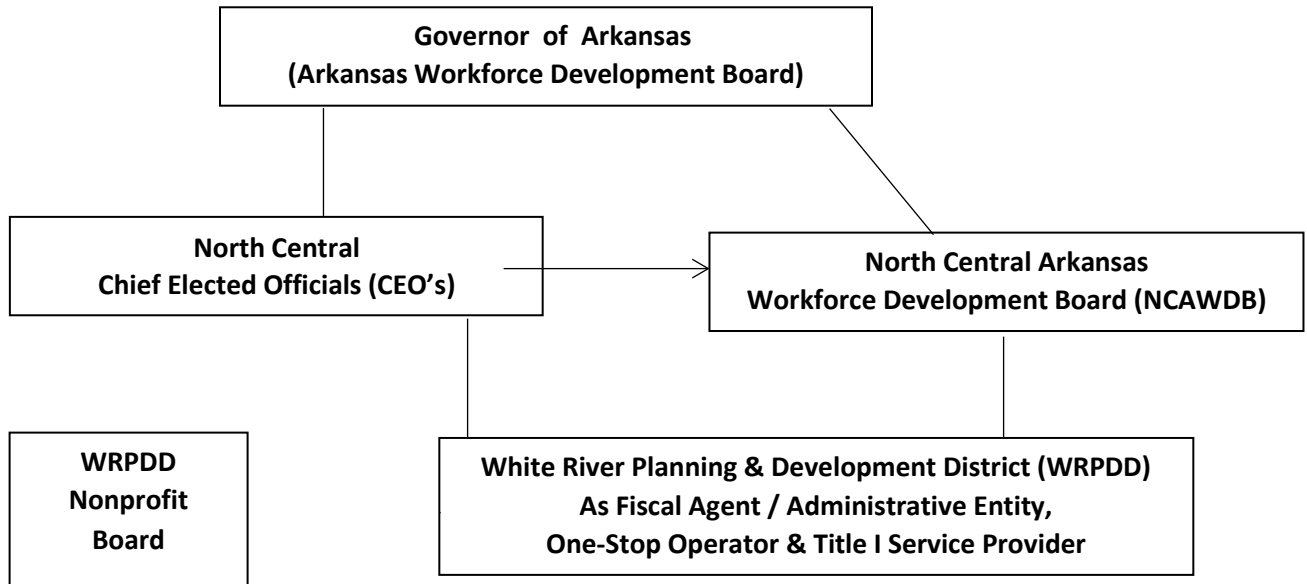
WIOA Title I-B of Melbourne

218 College Drive
Melbourne, AR 72556
Phone: 870-368-2370
Hour of Operation: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. M-Th and 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Fridays

WIOA Title I-B of Mountain View

211 Blanchard Ave Suite C
Mountain View, AR 72650
Phone: 870-269-4070
Hour of Operation: By appointment

NORTH CENTRAL ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA ORGANIZATION CHART



Note:

- 1) CEO's appoint Fiscal Agent to receive funds and to provide local oversight
- 2) NCAWDB selects WIOA Title I Provider and WIOA One-Stop Operator and appoints Administrative entity to be its staff.

North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board Members as of March 15, 2023

Title	First	Last	Type of association	Organization	Job Title	Counties served
Ms.	PaTricia	Cargill-Zelasko	Business	Carlee's Hallmark	Co-Owner	Independence
Ms.	Karen	Coltharp	Business	Clara Jane and Jax	Owner	Independence
Mr.	Gayle	Cooper	Business	Coopers in Melbourne	Owner	Izard
Ms.	Pat	Dunegan	Gov't & Economic Dev't	Batesville Housing Authority	Executive Director	Independence

Mr.	Shayne	Gaither	20% of workforce, Organized Labor	International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local Union 878	Union Steward	Independence
Ms.	Stacy	Gunderman	Business	Future Fuel Chemical Company	Director of Administration	Independence
Ms.	Raye Ann	Hager	Gov't & Economic Dev't	AR Department of Workforce Services	Local Manager	Independence, Fulton, Izard, Sharp, Stone
Mr.	Zach	Harber	Registered Apprenticeship / Higher Education	University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville	Director of Career and Technical Education	Independence
Mr.	Alvin	Hearyman	Business , Gov't & Economic Dev't	Mast Craft, Inc./Bald Knob Industrial Development Commission	Owner/President	White
Ms.	Robin	Hunt	Government - Vocational Rehabilitation	Arkansas Rehabilitation Services	Area Manager	White
Mr.	Garry	Lawrence	Business	Highland Cabinet Shop	Owner	Sharp
Ms.	Renee'	Martin	Business	Renee' Martin Insurance Agency, Inc.	Owner	Independence
Ms.	Laura	McGuire	Business	Main Attire	Owner	Independence
Ms.	Amber	Neal	Government - Vocational Rehabilitation	Division of Services for the Blind	Area Manager	All Counties
Mr.	Marcus	Orf	Higher Education	Ozarka College	Technical Center Director	Sharp/Izard
Mr.	Wiley	Osborn	Business	Intimidator Group	Director of Human Resources	Independence
Ms.	Jamie	Rayford	Gov't & Economic Dev't	Batesville Chamber of Commerce	Chief Operating Officer	Independence
Mr.	Chad	Vincent	20% of workforce, Organized Labor	United Steelworkers District 13, Sub-District 2	Sub-District Director	All Counties
Ms.	Gina	Wells	Representatives of the Workforce - Other	Goodwill of Arkansas	Career Services Manager	Independence
Ms.	Brittany	Baker	Business	Lion Haul Trucking, LLC.	Operations Manager	Independence
Ms.	Jill	Dockins	Representative of the Workforce- Other	Child Care Aware of North Central Ar	Director of the Child Care Food Program	Independence
Dr.	John	Kelly	Adult Education	Arkansas State University in Newport	Director of Adult Education	Jackson
Mr.	Michael	Arnold	Business	Precise Heat and Air	Owner	Independence
Mrs.	Amie	McBride	Business	UniFirst Corporation	Human Resources	Sharp

3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide 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), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b) (1) (E). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The local board will coordinate work with the core programs through a referral process that ensures an individual seeking services is made aware of the available core program services and will coordinate efforts through a memorandum of understanding. An on-line referral system will be provided that lists services and links to each core partner's website. Plans are to conduct an awareness campaign to have an open house at various core partner locations throughout the region at least once a year. The open house would provide an opportunity to conduct mini workshops such as developing a resume and pre-employment skills. A community calendar of events will be developed to share with partners. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place between the partner agencies. These give the agencies authorization to share information, minimize duplication, streamline services, and provide individuals with information on available services offered by each partner.

3.3 Describe how the local 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, including how the local 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 Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

Workforce center staff will review the individual's needs to determine what programs may be able to provide the appropriate services and then refer the individual. Outreach will be conducted by providing WIOA brochures and information to incoming Adult Education students. Partner with Adult Education programs so that eligible OSY may receive a monetary incentive upon achievement of milestones, including completion of the High School Equivalency Certificate or attending employment and educational workshops assigned by their career specialist. Join efforts with adult education centers that have Accelerating Opportunity programs where students are co-enrolled in credit programs. Notify partners and local board about the hard-to-serve groups in order to reach more that need our services. Use of a common intake system and collaboration to identify solutions to the barriers. Development of tracking and follow-up to ensure barriers are removed that will enable the participant to become employed and retain employment.

Each workforce center in the North Central region has a resource room in which the core services are made available to the potential participants. Job Search, resume building, and program assistance. The local board will ensure the NCAWDA website is up-to-date with the latest information related to the services provided.

3.4 Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (5)]

White River Planning and Development District, the Title I Service Provider, encourages and facilitates business development through referrals and small business loans. UACCB offers a technical certificate in entrepreneurship. UACCB is on the ETP list to offer entrepreneurship training. Individuals that need small business counseling, training and assistance can be referred to ASU's Small Business Program. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind offer Small Business Programs to allow clients with entrepreneurial pursuits to seek self-employment as a realistic employment goal.

3.5 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (10)]

The local board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities with secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities through input at partner meetings. There is also collaboration between the board and secondary and post-secondary education programs providing services to the youth. Adult Ed and the board have coordinated services by enrolling GED students as out-of-school youth improve their skills, and the students receive a monetary incentive as long as they progress in their studies. The local board will review local applications submitted under Title II Adult Education and Literacy to ensure that applications for providing adult education and literacy activities are consistent with the local workforce board plan.

3.6 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (11)]

Transportation and other supportive services will be coordinated through the core programs as well as other resources available.

The workforce services delivery team will work cohesively and comprehensively to determine how the needs of each participant will be met by the partners' different types and levels of supportive services.

Participants will be referred to outside agencies if those needs cannot be met with internal resources. Supportive services such as transportation will be coordinated through the provision of gas reimbursements, public transit passes, agency-owned or contracted transportation, or community-sponsored transportation.

Additional supportive services include tuition assistance, childcare vouchers, gas vouchers, rent/mortgage payments, job placement, resume building, soft skills training, follow-up services, apprenticeships program, and pre-employment planning. By meeting on a regular basis, the core partners are able to address supportive services ensuring all services available are offered and the duplication of services is eliminated.

3.7 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State's employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), and the local board's service providers in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (12)]

Central to WIOA is the integration of service delivery among multiple workforce and talent development programs. North Central has strong partnerships among state agencies, community colleges, economic development, and community-based organizations. A priority of the local board and central to the implementation of the strategic plan is to prevent and eliminate duplication across programs and align core programs. Alignment of core and optional programs will be made possible by the following strategies:

Reflect Robust Partnerships – Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The one-stop operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the core partners and other workforce center partners. They have regular partners meeting in each of the comprehensive centers.

Organize Service by Function – Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having workforce center staff who cross-trained to serve all customers seamlessly (including target populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope and requirements of each program.

3.8 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d) (11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (13)]

State guidance should be forthcoming regarding this review of the local applications by the local board. A draft document from the Arkansas Department of Career Education provided the following:

A function of local workforce boards, identified under section 107(d)(11) of the WIOA Act is to coordinate local workforce activities with education and training providers, including providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA. The coordination of education and training activities includes the review of applications for providing adult education and literacy activities submitted to the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division for funding under Title II. Local board review of Title II applications is to ensure that applications for providing adult education and literacy activities are consistent with local workforce board plans (WIOA, 107(d)(11)(B)(i)(I)). If a local workforce board determines that an application is not consistent with the local workforce board plan, the local workforce board shall make recommendations to the eligible provider that “promote” alignment of the application to the local plan (WIOA, 107(d)(11)(B)(i)(II)). Local workforce boards are not responsible for approving or denying applications submitted under Title II of WIOA. They are, however, expected to evaluate the extent to which an application submitted under Title II addresses the requirements of the local plan developed in accordance with WIOA (WIOA, 108(b)(13)). The adult education ad hoc committee reviews all applications. The following criteria are proposed:

Local boards will receive Requests for Proposals from Title II Adult Education and Literacy providers and should consider the extent to which the eligible applicant:

- Demonstrates its participation in carrying out activities related to the development and implementation of career pathways in the local area;
- Describes a plan for fulfilling its education and training and administrative responsibilities as a one-stop partner and for participating on the local workforce board;
- Aligns adult education and literacy activities with the education and training objectives and activities of the local workforce plan and the One-Stop Delivery System, including concurrent enrollment in Title I and Title II Programs under WIOA, as appropriate;
- Demonstrates a plan and strategies for effectively working with workforce partners identified by the local plan to share resources;
- Contributes to regional education and training efforts, including career pathways programs.

3.9 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Categorize the sector partnerships as active, emerging, or exploring as defined below:

Active

- Quarterly partner meetings that include partners and business leaders

- Monthly business services meetings that include business leaders and partners
- On the Job Training/Work Experience being provided to businesses that relate to trade industries such as plumbing, electrical work, and non-trade industries such as retail and education

Emerging

- Multiple job fairs being planned for this region
- Working with Excel Boats and Granges to incorporate work experience and OJT

Exploring

North Central is exploring the Health Care Industry. The local board identified four in-demand industries to focus on that include Health Care, Maintenance, Accommodation and Food Services and Educational Services. It plans to explore each industry and move forward over the next four years.

The North Central Workforce Development Board will continue the support of large-scale job fairs and community outreach activities. Advertisements and public service announcements will also be printed periodically to help with engaging additional partners with other services to offer.

3.10 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding to support the local workforce development system? Briefly describe the additional funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any future plans to pursue them; however, if additional funding was made available the funds would be redirected to serving additional participants in work experience and occupational training services.

North Central regularly partners with the community colleges of ASU-Beebe, Ozarka College, ASU-Newport and UACCB at Batesville to identify sector needs.

North Central recently partnered with the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) as they received a Delta Regional Authority (DRA) workforce grant. This grant allows the Community College to administer a program called “Future Fit-Working for Independence” (otherwise known as the “WIN” grant) which is tailored to the needs of local in demand industries, specifically targeting manufacturing. The WIN grant program provides pre-employment training support and wraparound services designed to reduce employment barriers through a three-stage process. Stage one consists of ninety six hours of on-campus training. Stage two consists of one hundred and sixty hours of on-the-job training. Stage three consists of full-time employment with an hourly pay up to \$2.00 above the standard base hourly pay if employed by a participating business/industry partner. Participants also receive a stipend while attending the training. Currently there are nine local businesses participating in this project.

North Central also partnered with the Ozarka Community College to receive a DRA workforce grant in order to expand and upgrade its nursing program to address the shortage of licensed practical and registered nurses in the region. This grant will address the significant healthcare gap within the North Central area while also creating a possible impact on workforce development through increased educational opportunity in advanced healthcare skills. This grant will help offer a night and weekend option to participants who need to work during the day.

Lastly, North Central partnered with the Newport Economic Commission to add a new Information Technology center in Jackson County. This Tech Depot was funded through the Arkansas Office of Skills Development in collaboration with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences and ASU-Newport. The Tech Depot is a regional initiative to supply apprenticeship style training for individuals who would like to find a rewarding career in a technology field. Research demonstrated that businesses, in the region, were struggling to locate trained employees for technology jobs, often having to recruit from major cities and experiencing high turnover. The Tech Depot supplies a solution by locating individuals with the aptitude, desire, and work ethic to find a job in Information Technology and giving them the training that will lead to success and economic opportunity.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

- A.** The local board's efforts to ensure the continued improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

The following are methods used to ensure continuous improvement and that providers meet employment needs:

- Internal financial and program monitoring
- Review of eligible training providers to ensure there is a range of programs included on the list that include the growth occupations.
- Annual audit of White River Planning and Development District
- Workforce Center Surveys

- B.** How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

The local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas by use of Facebook, online classes, Arkansas Job Link and the AR Workforce mobile unit. Clients in remote areas will be encouraged through marketing materials to contact their local workforce center where staff-assisted services can be made available. In addition, since access to a center in very remote areas may be limited, staff will travel to work with participants and employers.

- C.** How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)] (See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

The North Central area will provide training to staff on applicable provisions of the ADA using material jointly developed by the partners and state entities.

Bring together core program partners to integrate services and supportive services and leverage

resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities and other protected groups.

Encourage active engagement with the business sector to identify the skills and supports that workers with disabilities need and communicate these needs to the partners, education and training providers, as well as job seekers with disabilities.

Improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities and other protected groups who are unemployed, underemployed or receiving Social Security disability benefits, by utilizing services available through our local centers to connect them to existing successful career pathways programs.

D. List all required and optional program partners; indicate the program(s) each partner provides and the physical location where the program(s) can be accessed. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

The six core programs identified by WIOA are : Adult, Dislocated and Youth (Title I), Adult Education and Literacy (Title II), Wagner-Peyser Program (Title III) and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) including Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.

WIOA Title I Services – White River Planning and Development District (WRPDD) provides Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in the North Central area to help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services and assist employers through business services. Some of those services include supportive services, work experience, on-the-job training, occupational skills training, registered apprenticeships.

Locations:

Arkansas Workforce Center at Batesville, 398 Barnett Drive, Batesville, AR
Arkansas Workforce Center at Searcy, 501 W. Arch St., Searcy, AR

Arkansas Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) - To achieve its mission of preparing Arkansans with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives, ARS provides a variety of training and career preparation programs. Services include: career and technical education and training; transition services for high school students with disabilities who are moving from high school to post-secondary education or work; scholarships and leadership programs for students with disabilities; diagnosis and evaluation of capacities and limitation; guidance and counseling; job placement; on-the-job training; physical and cognitive restorative services; assistive technology; community rehabilitation programs and supported employment services.

Locations: North Central Arkansas is served out of two ARS field offices.

111 N. 12 Street, Batesville, AR
501 West Arch Street, Searcy, AR

Arkansas Division of Adult Education – Services include: GED Classes and Testing, English as a Second Language Classes, individual tutoring for beginning readers, Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE), Career Readiness Certificate Instruction, Career Counseling, digital literacy for the workplace or college prep, and customized workplace classes to bring skill levels up to post-secondary level.

Locations:

ASU-Newport Campus, 7648 Victory Blvd., Newport, AR
UACCM at Clinton, 100 Success Drive, Clinton, AR

UACCB, 2005 White Drive, Batesville, AR
UACCB Sharp Adult Education Center, 33 Choctaw Center, Cherokee Village, AR
Ozarka College, 218 College Drive, Melbourne, AR
Ozarka College Ash Flat, 64 College Drive, Ash Flat, AR
Ozarka College Mammoth Spring, 5th and Archer, Mammoth Spring, AR
Ozarka College Mountain View, 1800 College Drive, Mountain View, AR
ASU-Beebe Searcy Campus, 1800 E. Moore St., Searcy, AR
ASU-Beebe Campus, 1208 DeWitt Henry Drive, Beebe AR
Woodruff County Library, 201 Mulberry St., Augusta AR (ASU-Beebe services)
ASU-Beebe Heber Springs Campus, 71 Cleburne Park Road, Heber Springs, AR
Ozark Foothills Literacy Project serving Fulton, Sharp, Independence and Izard Counties
Educational Cooperatives – www.aresc.k12.ar.us/arkansas-education-cooperatives for locations.

Arkansas Division of Workforce Services – Wagner-Peyser Program – Services include job services, re-employment services, unemployment insurance, Trade Adjusted Assistance/Trade Readjustment Assistance (TAA/TRA), Veterans Services and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) and WorkPays Case Management), Career Readiness Certificate instruction, and Labor Market information. The Conway Workforce Center also offers the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) Program.

Locations:

Arkansas Workforce Center, 396 Barnett Dr., Batesville, AR – Serves Independence, Stone, Sharp, Fulton and Izard Counties.

Arkansas Workforce Center, 501 W. Arch, Searcy, AR – Serves White and Cleburne Counties.

Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) - The priority focus at DSB is to assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to secure and maintain employment in careers consistent with their skills. DSB provides assistance by helping individuals with:

- Counseling and guidance to aid greater independence and access resources
- Optical devices (magnifiers, etc.)
- Medical treatments and surgeries to prevent blindness, stabilize vision and when possible, to restore vision
- Training (technical, college and certificates like CAN) for the goal of obtaining employment
- Small business start-up costs
- Job services to prepare for the world of work (job readiness, job search, job placement)
- Supported employment
- On the job supports and accommodations
- Assessments (vocational, functional, technical, etc.)
- Independent living training
- Technology items (as accommodations to aid training or employment)
- Benefits counseling (Re: effects of working on SSI or SSDI benefits)

Locations

Offices are co-locating with DWS.

Arkansas Human Development Corporation (Title I) – Provides free assistance to seasonal and migrant agricultural workers in AR. Services include tuition assistance, adult basic education, English as a second language, occupational skills training programs, on-the-job training programs, work experience, child care assistance, employment assistance, job placement/follow-up, mileage while attending eligible training

programs, stipends while attending eligible training programs and supportive services.

Location – Serves North Central

2825 South Division
Blytheville, AR

Goodwill Industries Career Center– Provides an array of services including, but not limited to, the Transitional Employment Opportunity Program for persons that were incarcerated, program for youth that offers education and career opportunities, Horizons, a job training program for adults, support service, and helping employers recruit and retain employees for entry- and mid-level positions.

Locations in North Central AR

3209 Harrison Street
Batesville, AR
870-569-4030

2500 Malcom Ave, Suite D
Newport, AR
870-495-3318

Each of the partners plays a key role in the success of the workforce development system by providing a valuable service to the participant and/or employer to build our talent pipeline.

E. Describe how the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

Our Local Area advocates and supports an integrated information system at the state and local level that would allow entities that carry out core programs to better coordinate service delivery for mutual customers and cross program referrals. Currently, all DOL-funded partner programs utilize Arkansas Job Link (AJL) as a technology platform. The State is exploring Information Technology options that will assist in the transitioning to an integrated common intake component which acts as the front end to the state’s workforce programs. Until such an option exists, our workforce center staff maximizes the utilization of currently available technology to consolidate, streamline services and enhance the overall customer experience.

4.2 Describe the local board’s assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

The local board follows the WIOA Act in determining the type of employment and training activities that may be provided to adults and dislocated workers. With the many community college campuses dispersed throughout the North Central region, there are sufficient training providers available to meet the needs of the participants. Customers are provided with a variety of services depending on their needs such as basic career services, individualized career services, work experience, on-the-job training, Registered Apprenticeships, occupational skills training, supportive services such as transportation, housing and child care, individual training accounts, Job search, labor market information and career

counseling.

Occupational skills training and work experience are services provided to eligible adult and dislocated workers. Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training at 2 and 4 year colleges. Work experience provides another avenue for growing the skill set of job seekers in the local area. This provides a “hands on” approach to learning new job skills.

Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;

North Central plans to implement the following strategies: Individual Training Accounts (ITA’s), on-the job training programs, work-based learning programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs, continuation of partner meetings with employers to engage in strategic planning, and providing labor market data, and sharing economic analyses. The State has contracted with Maher and Maher to provide training and guidance in developing sector strategies throughout the state and local workforce areas. Community events, human resources meetings with major employers in the North Central area, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and community outreach programs are all instrumental in engaging employers.

The North Central Business Services team is comprised of local partners and business individuals. They meet at least quarterly to discuss strategies to help individuals of our region to engage in the programs that are available.

B. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses;

North Central will conduct a survey in 2023 to determine the needs of businesses. In prior surveys conducted soft skills was the number one skill lacking in potential employees. Consistent attendance was the top concern, followed by teamwork, customer service, troubleshooting, critical thinking, computer skills, and reading work-related instructions. Basic core skills such as business writing and math ranked low on importance. The survey encompassed many types of business but the focus was on small employers, as defined by the Small Business Administration. Based on those needs, and the needs that new survey exposes, the local board will work with the adult education coordinators and community colleges to develop soft skill workshops. Plans are to conduct future surveys to determine other training needs and coordinate with community colleges. The system will align education and training with business and industry needs.

Another strategy is to better educate the business industry on the full array of services at the Arkansas Workforce Centers in the area through open houses, business services, outreach, job fairs, on-the-job training and apprenticeships.

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and

North Central will focus its efforts on the major in-demand industry sectors identified in the economic analysis to place job seekers and will work closely with Chambers of Commerce and economic developers

throughout the region as well as the White River Planning and Development District to leverage resources. Continue working with the Chamber of Commerce, Arkansas Economic Development Commission staff, and economic developers throughout the region to ensure all employers are aware of the various services offered and the benefits to the employer by employing the participants who are receiving those services.

D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Partners at the workforce centers meet routinely and discuss methods to better serve all customers, including unemployed individuals. According to ADWS website the Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment Program provides the following:

- If you are collecting unemployment insurance, you may be selected to participate in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. The RESEA is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and helps certain unemployment insurance claimants return to work faster.
- If selected, you will be asked to attend an initial RESEA review, where you will meet one-on-one with an ADWS reemployment specialist. You must meet certain RESEA program requirements such as completing a Career Action Plan (CAP), conducting labor market research, tracking work search activities, creating or providing a resume, and participating in ongoing reemployment services.
- All program requirements are explained in the initial review. Failure to comply with the RESEA program requirements will result in a delay or loss of unemployment benefits.

This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].

4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

Rapid response is an early intervention designed to coordinate transitional services at the earliest point possible for employers and workers affected by mass layoffs or plant closure. Rapid Response works closely with the Local Workforce Development Board and local elected officials in adversely affected areas to insure that dislocated workers receive program information and services.

The Business Retention and Workforce Transition is a function of the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force. This task force is responsible for the statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities. Immediately upon receiving notice of a closure or workforce reduction, the Task Force contacts company officials. A community meeting is scheduled with elected officials and business leaders to create action plans to assist both the community and dislocated workers. To avoid duplication and confusion, local workforce center staff does not initiate contact with an employer regarding layoff without first speaking with the Task Force Coordinator.

The Business Retention and Workforce Transition team may conduct a worker assistance workshop, to be attended by representatives of local and state agencies and affected workers to review available resources. Services and needs discussed at the workshop may include retraining and educational opportunities, unemployment insurance, social service programs, credit counseling, insurance options

and resources to find a new job.

The Task Force Coordinator also serves as the liaison to the local chambers of commerce throughout the area. Information is provided to them about the affected workers, including their occupations and their educational and skill levels. The local AWC staff builds on the services provided through the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force by providing information and services to the affected employees.

Dislocated workers are given a full array of services through the Arkansas Workforce Center partnership and community organizations.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain veterans and individuals from other target groups with significant barriers to employment. There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify to claim the tax credit. In order to take advantage of these tax credit employers must hire from the target groups such as low income residents, ex-felons, veterans, youth, and individuals with disabilities.

State and local WIOA partners will continue to build and maintain relationships with the business community to help with early warning of potential layoffs and promote early intervention. Together, the following services will be provided:

- Layoff aversion activities such as developing and implementing a local layoff policy, creating partnerships that contribute to layoff aversion strategies, gathering information on economic transition trends within industries, communities, or at specific employers, developing early warning networks and systems, connecting employers and workers with short-term, on-the-job, and customized training.
- Immediate and on-site contact with employers and local community representatives
- Assessment and planning to address the layoff schedule, assistance needs of impacted workers, re-employment prospects and available resources
- Information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs; AWC services; and employment and training activities, including Trade Act, Pell grants, GI Bill and the WIOA DLW Program
- Necessary services and resources, such as workshops, resource and job fairs to support re-employment assistance
- Trade Act petition services through the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force

4.4 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Services may be provided through a referral basis if needed. When services are provided by organizations or individuals other than WIOA staff, written agreements and/or contracts will be utilized.

- Program element #1 - Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential;

Tutoring – designed to improve the academic knowledge and skills of youth in specific areas. It involves a tutor helping a youth acquire knowledge and skills in a specific area. The tutor provides instruction on a one-on-one basis, group setting or internet based. The tutor provides feedback on the youth’s performance allowing the youth to learn from his or her mistakes. Tutoring should be available to those who need additional help with school subjects, or who have fallen behind academically. Those transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education may also benefit from tutoring. Some youth have learning disabilities or have a learning style that requires additional instructional assistance.

Study skills - a set of abilities that allow youth to learn effectively and efficiently on their own. Good study skills allow a youth to do well in all phases of education and to make all phases of life an opportunity for learning. Study skills training involves instruction and practice activities on a range of strategies from planning and organizing time to reading comprehension, increasing concentration, and test taking. Instruction may be one-on-one or a group activity. Youth may work alone in some practice activities and in groups for others. The purpose of a study skills program is to help youth improve the skills needed to learn and understand information.

Dropout prevention strategies - interventions designed to keep youth in school until graduation from high school. These strategies ensure that youth stay in school to get their high school diploma and continue with some post-secondary education or long term employment. WIOA staff work with local guidance counselors to identify and address potential obstacles for graduation.

Recovery strategies - the Arkansas Workforce Centers collaborate with Adult Education who provides basic academic skills, basic computer skills, General Education Development (GED) preparation, and reading/writing proficiency, classes to WIOA Youth. These services can be provided at the Adult Education locations and some services may be provided online. Adult Education has the ability to assist 16-17 year olds who withdrew from high school in order to earn their General Education Development.

Referrals made to partners, including Adult Education, provide educational services and the use of on-line tutorials. The WDB authorizes incentives for the participants that achieve goals that contribute to their success. The primary goal of local WIOA youth programming is to insure youth completion of a HSD/GED.

- Program element #2 - Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate; Alternative schools offer specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public school system which may provide work, study, and/or academic intervention for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at risk of dropping out, who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth and/or youth who are in legal custody of the Department of Human Services (or similar entity) and are residing in an institution. This service will be offered through the local Alternative Schools.

North Central works closely with alternative schools throughout the area. Alternative schools will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED. ARS will provide and coordinate services to students with disabilities

- Program element #3 - Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences: (i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) Internships and job shadowing; and (iv) On-the-job training opportunities; Work Experience is a planned/structured learning experience that takes place in a private for-profit, non-profit, or public sectors workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience is temporary. Work experience for a participant in WIOA helps individuals obtain the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Work experience provides a helpful means for an individual to gain experience that leads to unsubsidized employment. It should promote the development of good work habits and work skills. The summer employment opportunities (SEO) include a planned and structured learning experience that takes place in a private or public worksite for approximately three (3) months. Summer employment opportunities provide new academic/work skills that will lead to future employment. SEO will offer work experience and provide academic enrichment activities to enhance employability skills.

Participants will prepare for employment opportunities through the provision of various services

including, but not limited to: basic skill remediation; supervised work experiences; pre-employment abilities such as career planning, resume preparation, labor market information usage, application completion, and interview skills attainment; attainment of core employability/work maturity skills such as dependability, honesty, problem solving, initiative, enthusiasm, team player, interpersonal skills, appearance, leadership, and cultural sensitivity with emphasis on in-demand jobs and emerging industries.

- Program element #4 - Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123; Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills for in-demand and emerging occupations. This service closes the gap between job seekers in the community and employers who need a skilled workforce for their industry. By meeting the needs of current employers, the skilled workforce will help attract new industry to the area.
- Program element #5 - Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; Local apprenticeship organizations will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to be trained and employed in a demand occupation that leads to self-sufficiency. Career Specialists work closely with the post-secondary school personnel to coordinate services.
- Program element #6 - Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors; Leadership development opportunities are a broad set of activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Other activities include positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work and other activities. The purpose of leadership development activities is to develop skills and attitudes that are important in all areas of life to include education, employment, family, and community. Many youth do not have those skills and attitudes. Leadership development provides encouragement and support to youth and assist in developing skills and instilling confidence as they transition into adulthood. Examples include community volunteering, peer mentoring or tutoring, character education, citizenship education, including how and why to vote, serving on a youth council, community or advocacy organization board, leadership training consisting of how to work in a team, how to run meetings, diversity training, and life skills training such as parent education, financial education, goal setting and conflict resolution.
- Program element #7 - Supportive services, including the services listed in §681.570; Supportive services for youth are to enable an individual to participate in WIOA youth program activities. Supportive services include assistance such as housing, transportation, child care, dependent care, medical care, school related supplies, training related supplies, etc., clothing, and related needs.
- Program element #8 - Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation; Adult mentoring is a one-on-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth that is based on trust. High-quality adult mentoring programs include an adult role model who builds a working relationship with a youth and who fosters the development of positive life skills in youth. Youth may receive adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months. The purpose of mentoring activities is to help youth succeed in the school or the workplace, facilitate positive social behaviors and learn leadership and citizenship skills. Benefits of adult mentoring include self-confidence/self-esteem, increase motivation, enhance achievements/aspirations, and ease transition to adulthood. Adult mentoring is available through several community based organizations throughout the local area.
- Program element #9 - Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in §681.580; Follow-up services are activities after completion of participation to monitor youths' success during their transition to employment and further education and to provide assistance as

needed for a successful transition. Follow-up services for youth include frequent interaction, including guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit.

- Program element #10 - Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth; Comprehensive guidance and counseling is a process of helping youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs impart skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development. An effective comprehensive guidance and counseling program develops a youth's competencies in self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning. Many at-risk youth need assistance in making informed decisions and choices. The purpose of comprehensive guidance and counseling is to promote growth in each youth's educational, personal, social, and employability skills. Career and employment counseling includes but is not limited to the provision of career and occupational information to include Labor Market Information (LMI). Participants may receive information on various occupations that will assist them in making career choices.

As needed, WIOA staff will refer participants to partner programs for counseling in drug, alcohol, mental health, etc. Career counseling will be an integral part of youth programming and provide the basis for individual employment plans.

- Program element #11 - Financial literacy education; Financial literacy education is supported by activities such as partnerships with financial institutions and to provide workshops at the local one stop. Youth will learn to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals. Staff may use online information to teach basic skills in bank transactions (bank statement reconciliation, debit/credit), debt management (loans, credit cards, etc.), budgeting (actual vs estimated, savings, etc.), and other useful real life skills as needed.

- Program element #12 - Entrepreneurial skills training; Entrepreneurial skill training is supported by activities such as partnerships with local colleges, local chambers of commerce, economic development agencies and referrals to business development organizations.

- Program element #13 - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and The North Central Arkansas Workforce Centers utilize www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov for up to date information about labor market information, employment information, in demand industry sectors. North Central partners with DWS to provide access for career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Workshops and other services prepare youth for in-demand careers and and/or emerging occupations. Information is provided in the local one-stops or on-line systems such as the Arkansas Job Link.

- Program element #14 - Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. North Central provides individual guidance and counseling, including career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions. The North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an Additional Assistance Youth Barrier Policy. A copy of the policy can be located at <https://www.ncaworks.com/local-policies>. Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Services for the Blind provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In addition to counseling and guidance, Division of Services for the Blind provides or arranges for the following core services: career exploration, work-based learning, internships, post-secondary training opportunities, work readiness training, self-advocacy, independent living and social skills. Activities may also include individual guidance and counseling; career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for FAFSA; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions. Activities offered provide exposure to post-secondary education options; assisting youth with placement into post-secondary education; and placement into training opportunities such as apprenticeships and

occupational training.

4.5 Describe local board actions to become and/or remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. These factors have not been determined but will include effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria for local boards. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(18)]

(See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)

The local board will continuously monitor the programs to ensure compliance with the laws and performance measures are met. Board members should have a complete understanding of their role and inventory its own resources. Policies and procedures should be in place. The board will carry out analyses of the economic conditions in the region; obtain needed knowledge and skills for the region as well as the workforce in the region and workforce development activities. The board will regularly update this information as it becomes available.

Board member training was provided by Rick Maher on April 27, 2016 in Little Rock and has continued with orientation for newly appointed members as necessary. The board worked through the basics of how to become a strategic rather than tactical board. Additionally, webinars and training was continued by Maher and Maher to Board Directors to continue the development process.

4.6 Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c) (3) (G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

Training services will be provided to eligible participants and may be for various types of training including on-the-job training, work experience, apprenticeship or classroom training.

The individual training accounts (ITA) system is used by participants who are eligible for training services and choose to attend training. The individual selects the course of study from the eligible training provider list. The individual must have made application and received determination from other funding sources and present the award letter to the career specialist to show the monetary amounts of unmet financial need. Consideration of all available funds, excluding loans, will determine the person's overall need for WIOA funding. The ITA may be used to cover expenses for tuition and fees.

The amount of monies available from all sources, the financial status of the family and the potential of the applicant prior to a determination of qualification are also taken into consideration. If approved, the ITA is sent to the eligible training provider (ETP). The ETP invoices the WIOA Program each semester, and the participant is informed of the account balance at his/her monthly meeting with the career specialist. ITA's may be adjusted up or down based upon case necessity. ITA's are only issued for training programs approved by the state and listed on the Eligible Training Provider List.

4.7 If contracts for training services are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The projected employment opportunities list is made available to the customers in order for them to select a training program that is in demand. Additionally, demand occupations and targeted industry sectors specific to the North Central area are focused on. Training services are funded through WIOA

programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. Local areas are responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Accounts (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations.

4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)] and [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

All training providers will complete an online electronic application. All training must be directly linked to employment opportunities either in the local area or in an area to which an individual is willing to relocate. Any training for a participant that is paid for by WIOA funds must be on the Projected Employment Opportunities List for the state or local area and be on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). To be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), providers must submit an electronic application to the local board for their approval.

Additionally, demand occupations and targeted industry sectors specific to the North Central area are focused on. Eligible participants must also apply for PELL Grant funds through the two or four year college they will be attending. Students must also apply for scholarships, additional grants, etc. in addition to obtaining WIOA funds.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d) (11), in place between the local board and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated in the area 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 Sec. 108(b)(14)]

Interagency agreements typically are memoranda of understanding. These will be developed by the State Transition Roundtable Policy Committee as part of the Workforce Certification document.

Local Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) field offices or other ARS organizational units will replicate cooperative agreements in part or whole with local divisions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core programs. These may include the following:

- provision of inter component staff training and technical assistance with regard to:
- the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services; and
- the promotion of equal, effective and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities in the State through the promotion of program accessibility, the use of nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, and the provision of reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology, for individuals with disabilities;
- use of information and financial management systems that link all components of the statewide workforce development system, that link the components to other electronic networks, including nonvisual electronic networks, and that relate to such subjects as employment statistics and information on job vacancies, career planning and workforce innovation and opportunity activities; use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information and human

- services hotline;
- establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to;
- facilitate job placement; and
- carry out any other activities that the designated State unit and the employers determine to be appropriate; identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources, and specification of the financial responsibility of each component of the statewide workforce investment system with regard to paying for necessary services (consistent with State law and Federal requirements); and specification of procedures for resolving disputes among such components.

Development of these agreements at the local level must include the local manager (field office district manager or the top executive at the organizational units of ARS). The agreement must be signed by the local manager, the supervising Senior Leader from ARS and the Commissioner of ARS or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and Chief Fiscal Officer of ARS.

The local rehabilitation committee provides oversight of the cooperative agreements as well as facilitates compliance as establish in the MOU's between core partners.

5.2 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official(s). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

White River Planning and Development District, Inc. is the entity responsible for disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Officials. Currently all correspondence regarding the disbursement of grant funds would need to be addressed to the following:

Jan Smith, Executive Director
 870.793.5233
jsmith@wrpdd.org

5.3 Describe the competitive processes to award the subgrants and contracts for activities funded by WIOA Title I programs within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

The local board uses an RFP or RFQ process to award subgrants and contracts. The notice advertising the RFP or RFQ is placed at least once in a statewide newspaper. Additional media sources may be used. Each proposal submitted is rated based on specific criteria. After the evaluation, the rating of each proposal is presented to the full board (or youth committee initially, if for youth providers). The provider is selected by the local board with agreement by the chief elected officials.

To prevent a conflict of interest in the competitive procurements all policies in the procurement process should have strict rules and regulations to ensure that a conflict of interest will not occur. If good policies are in place there will be no room for conflicts in the process.

5.4 Describe the local area's negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources "Performance Targets Template".

North Central has negotiated with the state and has come to an agreement on the local performance measures as reflected in the chart below.

North Central WIOA Performance Measures	NC Area PY 22-23 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	81.0%
Dislocated Worker	84.0%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	71.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	80.0%
Dislocated Worker	86.0%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	74.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	\$6,449
Dislocated Worker	\$7,427
Youth	\$3,600
Credential Attainment Rate Negotiated Goals	
Adult	81.0%
Dislocated Worker	81.0%
Youth	60.0%
Measurable Skill Gains Negotiated Goals	
Adult	69.0%
Dislocated Worker	70.5%
Youth	57.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers Negotiated Goals	
Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline

5.5 Describe the indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

Local and state monitoring of the fiscal agent, Title I Service Provider and One-Stop Operator will be conducted at least annually, and the local board will be made aware of any issues or concerns that may arise from the monitoring. Performance reports will be presented to the board on a quarterly basis at each board meeting in order for them to be informed. WRPDD, Inc., the fiscal agent, Title I service provider and one-stop operator shall be audited on an annual basis. The board will be presented the eligible training provider list and programs twice a year for their review and approval.

5.6 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education

were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(20)]

On February 28th 2023, the Local Plan committee met to discuss changes that needed to be implemented to the plan. This consisted of local partners and LWDB members. The CEOs discussed changes needed to be made to the local plan on March 30th, 2023. The LWDB consists of representatives of business, labor organizations and educational entities. The public had ample opportunity to have their input into the local plan by either electronic means or in person.

Workforce Center partners provided input into the plan at the ongoing partner meetings and via email. Businesses, labor organizations, partner agencies, educators and economic developers from throughout the local area are all represented on the board and had the opportunity to comment.

5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan, the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];

A public notice was placed in the newspaper advising that the public have 30 days from that date to submit comments on the proposed plan. The updated plan was made available on WRPDD's website, the North Central WIOA board website, through email, and at WRPDD's physical address.

B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and

Comments collected during the public comment period will be presented to the board for review and consideration. No comments were received during the comment period.

C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

Disagreements or concerns received during the public comment period will be addressed following the board's review of these disagreements or concerns. Concerns will also be included as an attachment to the local plan. However, no comments were received during the comment period.

5.8 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each workforce center within the local area.

Lee Hissong, EEO Officer
White River Planning and Development District, Inc.
P.O. Box 2396
4441 Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72503
Phone: 870-793-5233

Section 6: COVID Recovery, Readiness, Diversity, and Inclusion

Responses are focused on the local area's readiness to continue full operations in the post-COVID era as well as adherence to the Administration's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of Workforce Services Initiative.

6.1 What is the Local Area’s vision for equitable and inclusive recovery and reemployment? What are community partners’ roles in this vision? How much of this vision is accomplishable with current WIOA funding?

The North Central region, including core and non-core partners, wants to remove barriers for all workers, especially those impacted by COVID. We envision our area doing this in multiple steps:

1. Re-train and re-employ displaced workers through the use of WIOA programs and community partners
2. Ensure job creation efforts through the use of our business services team, which includes core and non-core partner members
3. Support local businesses to encourage upskilling of the already employed which will ultimately help avert layoffs
4. Strengthen our sector partnerships to drive industry specific training which will target the precise needs of these industries and the local workforce
5. Expand access to high quality training for everyone, especially the disabled

6.2 How has the local area modified their service delivery strategies and services as the Arkansas Workforce Centers have safely reopened? Is there a thoughtful strategy to deliver services safely and effectively to all individuals, reflective of the President’s emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion of workforce services, and this strategy has been put into action across the local area?

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services is operating as it did prior to COVID restrictions. The office is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. There is no COVID protocol in place at this time. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services is dedicated to improving the well-being of our state and show pride and enthusiasm in providing quality services to our customers. Arkansas Division of Workforce Services conducts business and abides by Title IX in which no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

6.3 What are the local strategies to identify, engage and enroll participants who may be unaware of the services available through the public workforce system? How have you ensured these strategies reach all populations, including marginalized and underserved populations?

To identify, engage and enroll participants who may be unaware of the services available through the public workforce system North Central takes the stance that outreach is a top priority. North Central is in partnership with the local Judges of the adult and youth court system, we continue to attend any job fairs in our local ten county area, and we stay connected to the human resource groups to ensure that all have the opportunity to hear about the services. North Central also utilizes Facebook to reach people who may not be at these events.

6.4 Has the Local Area created an outreach and engagement plan to make the public more aware of the available services of the public workforce system? If no, does the Local Area plan to create such a plan?

North Central has created an outreach and engagement plan; however, this was back in 2018 so we will be looking to update this by including staff, board members, and partners.

6.5 How are partners, including non-traditional and community organizations, being engaged to improve

access to services for all populations, including marginalized populations? Is this different for in-person vs. online services? What decisions were made regarding the capacity of the Local Area to provide remote and in-person services to marginalized populations?

To expand on question 2.3, North Central plans to continue to do outreach by collaborating with local agencies (whether they are core or non-core partners). North Central Partners meet quarterly and the Business Services team meets at least quarterly as well. Pertaining to in-person vs. online services, since COVID a shift has taken place to offer more online activities such as meetings and trainings. North Central has noticed that most people prefer in person activities unless the topic is informational. The decision to make as much in person activities was made by the partners unless the topic of discussion is purely informational to which online services are made available.

6.6 What is the Local Area’s plan for increasing the volume of paid and unpaid work experiences, which may include summer and other employment, youth apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on the job training? How does this strategy engage and meet the needs of all eligible youth, including those with disabilities or language barriers, and other marginalized or underserved populations?

North Central participants prefer paid work experiences opposed to unpaid. We continue to see an increase in participants who are seeking to gain the skills necessary to obtain full time employment. North Central works with businesses in our ten county area and ask that the business include our application with theirs. We let businesses know to send those to us, even if the business does not want to hire the individual because the programs that we offer might help the individual gain the skills necessary to reapply later.

Section 7: Plan Assurances

Planning Process and Public Comment	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.1 The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the general public for a period that is no less than 30 days.	WIOA Sections 108(d); proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.2 The final local plan is available and accessible to the general public.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.3 The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (including individuals with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIOA Section 107(e); proposed 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550
Required Policies and Procedures	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.4 The local board makes publicly-available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.390

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.5 The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent, and provides for the resolution of conflicts.	WIOA Section 107(h); proposed 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.6 The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.	WIOA Section 121(c); proposed 20 CFR 678.500-510
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.7 The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one-stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.	WIOA Section 121(c)(v)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.8 The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and the Governor.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(9) and 116(c); proposed 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.9 The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA.	WIOA Sections 121(d) and 123; proposed 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.10 The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; Proposed 20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) and 680.410-430
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.	WIOA Section 181(c); proposed 20 CFR 683.600
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.	WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); proposed 20 CFR 678.305
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements	2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.	WIOA Section 167
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sections 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; proposed 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
Administration of Funds	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIOA Section 108(b)(16); proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); proposed 20 CFR 680.300-310
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.22 The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.	WIOA Section 108(b)(15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.23 The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Section 184(a)(3); proposed 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.24 The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; proposed 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); proposed 20 CFR 680.850
Eligibility	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure	Proposed 20 CFR Part

adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	680 Subparts A and B; proposed 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A
☑7.27 The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); Proposed 20 CFR 680.300-320
☑7.28 The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); proposed 20 CFR 680.900-970; proposed 20 CFR 681.570
☑7.29 The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.	Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09

Appendix C: Performance Goals

Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of Local Workforce Development Area: North Central

North Central WIOA Performance Measures	NC Area PY 22-23 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	81.0%
Dislocated Worker	84.0%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	71.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	80.0%
Dislocated Worker	86.0%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	74.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) Negotiated Goals	
Adult	\$6,449
Dislocated Worker	\$7,427
Youth	\$3,600
Credential Attainment Rate Negotiated Goals	
Adult	81.0%
Dislocated Worker	81.0%
Youth	60.0%
Measurable Skill Gains Negotiated Goals	
Adult	69.0%
Dislocated Worker	70.5%
Youth	57.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers Negotiated Goals	
Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline

Appendix D: Planning References and Resources

I. State of Arkansas's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (*State Plan*)

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the State's ability to serve jobseekers and employers. WIOA will enable the State to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Arkansas will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system. We will do this by providing the highest quality of service to jobseekers and employers through well-coordinated approaches at the state and local levels. System access will be enhanced through the use of technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers. While access will be improved for all jobseekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve.

The four main goals in the State's Combined WIOA Plan are as follows:

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community -based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
2. Identify and promote best practices (private and public) for developing and sustaining partnerships.
3. Expand partnership with economic development to refine sector strategies.
4. Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
5. Increase accountability and clarity of action between all workforce related boards.
6. Increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities.
7. Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities.
8. Partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.
9. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).
10. Expand small business participation.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Develop a common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment that need to be addressed.
2. Develop an integrated data system that will enable the sharing of information between partner agencies to more efficiently service both employers and jobseekers.
3. Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
4. Support transportable skill sets for transportable careers.
5. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives as a way to meet business and industry needs.
6. Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services.
7. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
8. Develop a menu of services available at each service delivery access point that provides a list of the services and training opportunities available through Arkansas's talent development system.
9. Utilize customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the State's talent development system.
10. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services.
2. Change employer and jobseeker perceptions of the workforce system.
3. Develop an image-building outreach campaign that educates Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in the State.
4. Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Arkansas.
5. Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Conduct a statewide skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue.
2. Develop and implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Arkansas.
 3. Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program and the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) program.

II. State Policy and Guidance.

State policy can be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

III. Labor Market and Workforce Information.

A. Discover Arkansas

Labor Market Information Portal Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) is posted online using the Discover Arkansas web portal located at www.discoverarkansas.net and is available to the general public.

B. Arkansas State Plan Economic and Workforce Analysis

The Arkansas Combined State Plan includes an analysis of the current workforce. The data provided in Section II of the state plan under strategic elements may be very helpful to local boards in conducting a local area and regional economic and workforce analysis.

To provide local workforce boards in the state with tools for development planning in their own areas, data were downloaded and prepared from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Labor Market Information (LMI) website, <http://www.discoverarkansas.net>. These data were then turned into interactive visualizations, which are available at the following websites. These visualizations can be downloaded as an image or in PDF format. The goal is to help stakeholders at the state and local level better understand future industry and occupational needs and to provide workforce development boards with the tools needed to better serve their areas.

The data available at <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/> includes:

- Industries in 2018
- Job Growth in 2028
- Projected Job Growth by Workforce Development Area
- Projected Job Growth by Industry
- Percent Workforce in 2028

These data demonstrate the current makeup of the workforce by major industry, as well as projections of the number of jobs these industries will need in 2022. To the right of the visualizations are "filters" to help explore the data choosing multiple regions to compare, such as United States vs Arkansas, Arkansas vs. workforce region, or directly compare regions.

The data available at <http://arkansasresearchcenter.org/arc/index.php?cid=154> includes

- Arkansas Occupations, Current and 2022 Projections, which includes data visualizations concerning occupations in Arkansas, both currently and projections for 2022. Occupations are listed by their Standard Occupation Code (SOC) title. The SOC system is hierarchical. SOC Major codes are the top level occupational areas, such as "Construction and Extraction Occupations." At the next level would be SOC Minor, one of which for the above would be "Construction Trades Workers." Finally there is SOC Detail, such as "Stonemasons" or "Carpenters." This web tool allows users to manipulate the data by indicating the level of detail desired.

IV. Other Resources.

- TEN 1-15; Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section

188 Disability Reference Guide; July 6, 2015

- TEGL 37-14; Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System; May 29, 2015
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

