



Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District

**Northwest Arkansas  
Workforce Development Area  
Regional and Local Plan**

Program Years 2020 - PY 2023

Updated March 2023



A proud partner of the  **americanjobcenter** network

## **Northwest 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 fully 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:  
**Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area (NWAOWDA)**
- B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region;  
**Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area**
- C. Identification of the county(ies) each local workforce development area serves;  
**Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, Newton, Searcy and Washington**
- D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan;  
**The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board (NWAOWDB), WIOA Core Partners, NWAOWDB Youth Committee members, and Northwest Arkansas Chief Elected Officials (CEO's). One person was the main contact from each partner who made up the committee to help draft the regional plan.**
- E. Indication of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with;  
**Northwest AR Workforce Development Area**
- F. A list of key planning region committee meeting dates. [WIOA Sec. 106(a) and(c)]  
**February 23, 2023, sent to Review Committee, March 1, 2023 Board meeting.**

### **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 in- demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.**

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

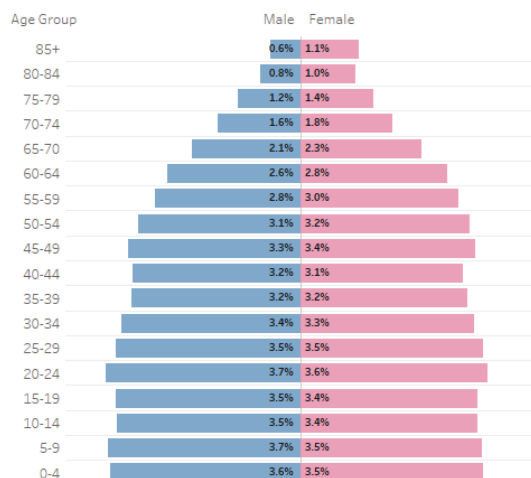
#### **A. The Economic Conditions**

The economy of Northwest Arkansas is robust and growing. As the fastest growing area of Arkansas, we are experiencing a resurgence of jobs. Infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the growth and construction in Benton and Washington Counties. The diverse region is home base to Fortune 500 companies - Walmart, J.B. Hunt, Tyson and many other corporations including Simmons Food, America's Car Mart and PAM Transportation. The Crystal Bridges Museum, the Amp, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Research Park, Arvest Ballpark which is the home of the Northwest Naturals Baseball Team, Buffalo National River, and the Ozarks National Forest are just a few of the many varied venues that bring tourists into our area. The Northwest Region includes the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers which includes Washington, Benton and Madison Counties in Arkansas. The region also includes the Micropolitan Statistical Areas of Harrison and Mountain Home as well as rural low population and poorer counties.

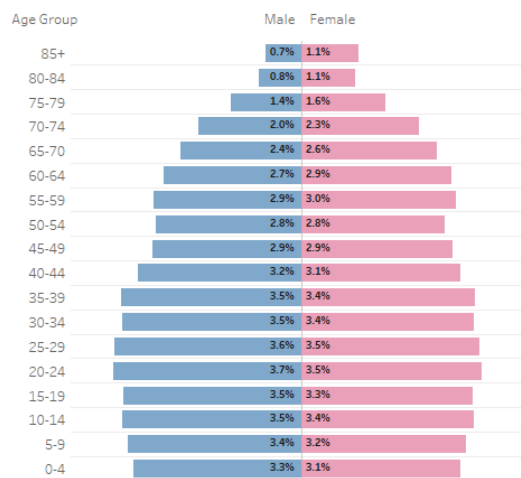
The Northwest Arkansas Council is a vibrant driver in Benton and Washington Counties. The Council conducts and reports in the NWA Regional Workforce Assessment each year. According to the website [findingnwa.com](http://findingnwa.com), Northwest Arkansas has seven times the U.S. average of headquarters and management employees in its workforce, home to over 1, 400 Walmart Suppliers and neighboring headquarters like J.B. Hunt, Tyson Foods, George's Poultry and Simmons. NWA has built a world-class infrastructure of professional and technical services to support its flagship industries and their employees. Regional employers have attracted a dynamic, culturally diverse workforce. Northwest has a per capita personal income almost 10% above the national average.

## Population Pyramids for Northwest Arkansas

**2010** Pop: **581,420**



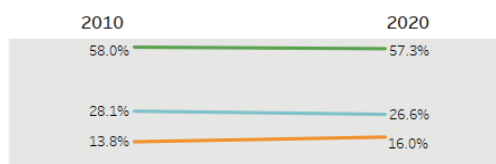
**2020** Pop: **689,011**



### Age Group Population Distribution

	2010	2020
Adults 65+	80,437	110,517
Adults 20-64	337,390	394,954
Under 20	163,593	183,540
Total	581,420	689,011

### Percentage of Population for Children (Under 20), Adults (24-64), and Older Adults (65+)



Prepared by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Labor Market Information using data from U.S. Census Bureau, County Population by Characteristics: 2010-2020. Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Vintage 2020. Release date, June 2021.

NWA has a consistently low unemployment rate, most recently at 2.0%. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics December 2022) Our population reflects the demand as well, NWA is adding about 42 new residents every day, making us one of the fastest growing metros in the U.S.

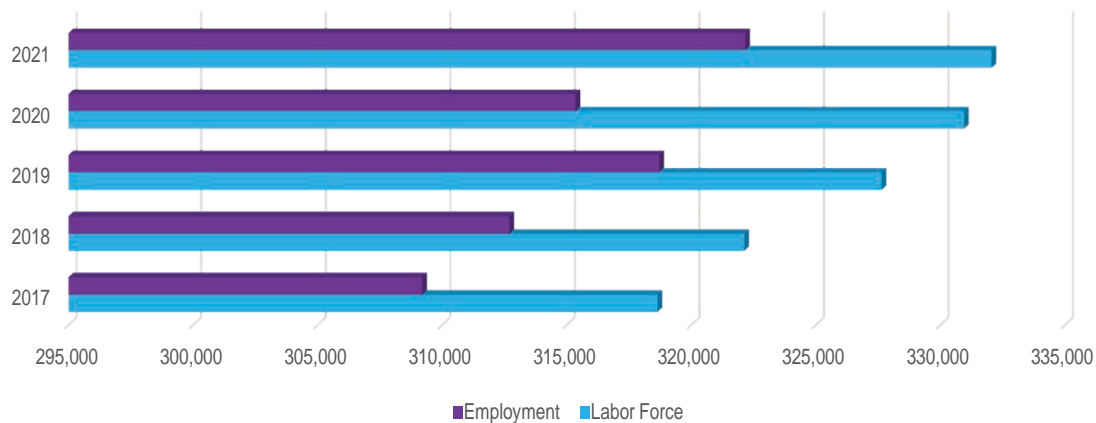
## B. Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data

The Northwest Arkansas LWDA labor force and employment increased from 2020 to 2021, with the labor force gaining 1,107 to 332,059 and employment increasing by 6,812 to 322,170. Unemployment decreased by 5,705 to 9,889 in 2021 but has seen an increase of 441 since 2017. The unemployment rate dropped from 2020 to 2021 by 2.7 percent to 3.0 percent. The area's unemployment rate fluctuated from 2017, but ultimately settled at 3.0 in 2021. The unemployment rate ended July 2022 at 3.0 percent.

## Northwest Arkansas LWDA 2017-2021 Labor Force/Employment

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Labor Force	318,648	322,131	327,641	330,952	332,059	350,997
Employment	309,200	312,701	318,720	315,358	322,170	342,190
Unemployment	9,448	9,430	8,921	15,594	9,889	8,807
Unemployment Rate	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	4.7%	3.0%	2.5%

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services



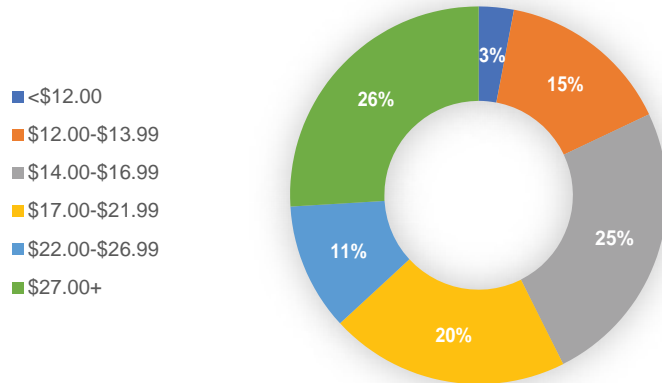
Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Sourced from <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Area/County	Civilian Labor Force	Number of Employed	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate %
Northwest	340,600	333,118	7,482	2.2%
Baxter	16,577	16,051	526	3.2%
Benton	146,786	143,701	3,085	2.1%
Boone	15,705	15,292	413	2.6%
Carroll	12,272	11,949	323	2.6%
Madison	7,424	7,264	160	2.2%
Marion	6,226	6,007	219	3.5%
Newton	3,130	3,046	84	2.7%
Searcy	2,872	2,755	117	4.1%

Washington	129,608	127,053	2,555	2.0%
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### Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate



### Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate

<b>Total</b>	<b>260,790</b>
<\$12.00	7,830
\$12.00-\$13.99	38,990
\$14.00-\$16.99	64,280
\$17.00-\$21.99	53,570
\$22.00-\$26.99	28,440
\$27.00+	67,680

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services,  
May 2021 Wage Survey

### C. Information on Labor Market Trends

#### Top 10 Growth Industries, Ranked by Net Growth 2018-2028

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

#### Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2021 Estimated Employment	2023 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102400	Professional and Business Services	49,937	52,664	2,727	5.46%
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	62,848	65,187	2,339	3.72%
102700	Other Services (except Government)	16,870	18,934	2,064	12.23%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	27,828	28,741	913	3.28%
102500	Education and Health Services	62,990	63,815	825	1.31%

### Projected Industry Growth

#### 2018-2028 Long-Term Employment Projections

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total All Industries	319,509	355,829	36,320	11.40%
Natural Resources and Mining	3,054	3,436	382	12.50%
Construction	11,961	13,965	2,004	16.80%
Manufacturing	36,644	38,407	1,763	4.80%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	61,289	67,038	5,749	9.40%

<b>Information</b>	<b>2,546</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>-101</b>	<b>-4.00%</b>
<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>10,040</b>	<b>11,147</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>11.00%</b>
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	<b>48,086</b>	<b>54,488</b>	<b>6,402</b>	<b>13.30%</b>
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	<b>60,561</b>	<b>68,631</b>	<b>8,070</b>	<b>13.30%</b>
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	<b>30,915</b>	<b>36,026</b>	<b>5,111</b>	<b>16.50%</b>
<b>Other Services (except Government)</b>	<b>12,516</b>	<b>14,395</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>15.00%</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>14,298</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>16.00%</b>

### Top 10 Growing Industries Ranked by Net Growth

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

SOC Code	SOC Title	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
<b>00-0000</b>	<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>306,128</b>	<b>348,474</b>	<b>42,346</b>	<b>13.83%</b>	<b>15,298</b>	<b>20,087</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>39,620</b>
11-0000	Management Occupations	31,751	36,051	4,300	13.54%	1,303	1,249	430	2,982
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	17,463	21,335	3,872	22.17%	607	1,185	387	2,179
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	8,544	10,301	1,757	20.56%	157	449	176	782
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,458	2,804	346	14.08%	66	121	35	222
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,362	1,634	272	19.97%	43	97	27	167
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	4,213	4,947	734	17.42%	197	296	73	566
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1,560	1,910	350	22.44%	43	65	35	143
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	17,073	19,241	2,168	12.70%	734	738	217	1,689
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,424	3,784	360	10.51%	144	201	36	381
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	14,492	17,243	2,751	18.98%	422	421	275	1,118
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	6,444	8,338	1,894	29.39%	420	403	189	1,012
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	4,139	4,593	454	10.97%	177	212	45	434
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	24,571	28,347	3,776	15.37%	1,965	2,470	378	4,813
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	9,424	10,731	1,307	13.87%	606	641	131	1,378
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	9,416	11,691	2,275	24.16%	809	710	228	1,747
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	32,061	36,827	4,766	14.87%	2,087	2,604	477	5,168
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	39,701	42,925	3,224	8.12%	2,104	2,479	322	4,905
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,008	3,248	240	7.98%	116	342	24	482
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,917	12,441	1,524	13.96%	409	772	152	1,333
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	10,468	11,914	1,446	13.81%	388	665	145	1,198
51-0000	Production Occupations	26,821	28,038	1,217	4.54%	1,173	1,997	122	3,292
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	26,818	30,131	3,313	12.35%	1,327	1,970	331	3,628

## Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area 2018-2028 Industry Projections by Major Division

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2018 Estimated Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
<b>000000</b>	<b>TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>319,509</b>	<b>355,829</b>	<b>36,320</b>	<b>11.37%</b>
<b>000671</b>	<b>Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs</b>	<b>29,567</b>	<b>31,553</b>	<b>1,983</b>	<b>6.72%</b>
006010	Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	27,818	29,473	1,655	5.95%
007010	Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs	1,749	2,080	331	18.93%
101000	Goods Producing	51,659	55,808	4,149	8.03%
<b>101100</b>	<b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING</b>	<b>3,054</b>	<b>3,436</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>12.51%</b>
110000	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,925	3,343	418	14.29%
210000	Mining	129	93	-36	-27.91%
<b>101200</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>11,961</b>	<b>13,965</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>16.75%</b>
<b>101300</b>	<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	<b>36,644</b>	<b>38,407</b>	<b>1,763</b>	<b>4.81%</b>
	<i>Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>	<i>23,376</i>	<i>24,655</i>	<i>1,279</i>	<i>5.47%</i>
	<i>Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>	<i>13,268</i>	<i>13,752</i>	<i>484</i>	<i>3.65%</i>
102000	Services Providing	238,283	268,468	30,185	12.67%
<b>102100</b>	<b>TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES</b>	<b>61,289</b>	<b>67,038</b>	<b>5,749</b>	<b>9.38%</b>
420000	Wholesale Trade	10,643	11,913	1,270	11.93%
440000	Retail Trade	31,595	34,987	3,392	10.74%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	17,911	18,995	1,084	6.05%
220000	Utilities	1,140	1,143	3	0.26%
<b>102200</b>	<b>INFORMATION</b>	<b>2,546</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>-101</b>	<b>-3.97%</b>
<b>102300</b>	<b>FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>10,040</b>	<b>11,147</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>11.03%</b>
520000	Finance and Insurance	7,026	7,696	670	9.54%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,014	3,451	437	14.50%
<b>102400</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES</b>	<b>48,086</b>	<b>54,488</b>	<b>6,402</b>	<b>13.31%</b>
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,940	14,910	1,970	15.22%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	23,608	27,137	3,529	14.95%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	11,538	12,441	903	7.83%
<b>102500</b>	<b>EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES</b>	<b>60,561</b>	<b>68,631</b>	<b>8,070</b>	<b>13.33%</b>
<i>610000</i>	<i>Educational Services</i>	<i>26,220</i>	<i>27,175</i>	<i>955</i>	<i>3.64%</i>
<i>620000</i>	<i>Health Care and Social Assistance</i>	<i>34,341</i>	<i>41,456</i>	<i>7,115</i>	<i>20.72%</i>
<b>102600</b>	<b>LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>30,915</b>	<b>36,026</b>	<b>5,111</b>	<b>16.53%</b>
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,238	3,544	306	9.45%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	27,677	32,482	4,805	17.36%
<b>102700</b>	<b>OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT)</b>	<b>12,516</b>	<b>14,395</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>15.01%</b>
<b>102800</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>14,298</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>15.96%</b>

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Among the 10 Local Workforce Development Areas, Northwest Arkansas has the largest employment base in the state. This region is projected to gain 36,320 jobs, an increase of 11.37 percent, from 2018 to 2028. The area is growing faster than the state's 8.42 percent growth. Goods-Producing industries are projected to gain 4,149 new jobs, while Services-Providing industries are predicted to add 30,185 jobs over the 2018-2028 projection period. An estimated 31,553 Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Workers are expected to be based in Northwest Arkansas by 2028, a gain of 1,983. The population grew 18.34 percent from 2008 to 2018, bringing the total population to 665,857. The not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for 2018 was 2.9 percent.

Education and Health Services is expected to be the top growing supersector with 8,070 jobs anticipated to be added. Construction could be the fastest growing among the supersectors, raising employment levels by 16.75 percent. *Food Services and Drinking Places* is estimated to lead the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area as the top growing industry, adding 4,461. *Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry* is predicted to be the fastest growing industry, increasing its workforce by 33.87 percent. On the negative side of the labor market, *Primary Metal Manufacturing* is predicted to lose 220 jobs, or a quarter of its workforce, while *Mining (except Oil and Gas)* could see a 31.30 percent reduction in employment, becoming the fastest declining industry in the area. Information is the only supersector expected to experience a decline, with a net loss of 101 jobs between 2018 and 2028.

Northwest Arkansas is projected to have 42,140 annual job openings over the 2018-2028 projection period. Of these, 14,790 would be due to employees leaving the workforce, 23,718 for those changing jobs, and 3,632 for growth and expansion. The **Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations** major group is predicted to add the most jobs, with

a net gain of 4,864, while **Personal Care and Service Occupations** is estimated to be the fastest growing major group with a 22.95 percent growth. *Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food* is predicted to be the top growing occupation, with a gain of 2,077 jobs. *Fundraisers* are expected to increase by 52.26 percent, becoming the fastest growing occupation.

[discover.arkansas.gov/local-workforce-development-area-statistics/northwest](http://discover.arkansas.gov/local-workforce-development-area-statistics/northwest)

#### **D. Workforce Development Activities**

Northwest Arkansas' workforce development activities are coordinated through the following agencies at the local level: the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Adult Education programs and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) and Division of County Operations (DCO) and the Title I Service Provider, Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District. These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs.

Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Arkansas' version of the American Jobs Center. There are four workforce centers spread across the Northwest Area providing access to many Arkansans. In addition to these locations, Arkansas has six mobile workforce center units that travel the state and provide service locations in rural parts of the State. Center staff travel to rural areas as needed.

The Arkansas Workforce Centers are overseen at the regional/local level by the local workforce development boards. Local boards are composed of local businesses, labor, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. The boards, in alignment with the State's vision, provide front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to their locally determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, work-based learning, and others.

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 Memoranda 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 provided referrals and next steps to their questions, by connecting them directly with the appropriate workforce system partner.

Adult Education Division (AED) funds six local adult education programs in Northwest Area and special projects through state and federal grants. The service delivery systems are diverse. Programs are funded through a variety of local administrative entities, including public school systems, community-based organizations, colleges, community colleges, technical institutes, and the Arkansas Department of Corrections. Local programs provide adult education services such as teaching academic skills to people who function from beginning reading through a 12.9 functioning grade level and English as a Second Language (ESL). These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each program's service area. Additional programs such as family literacy and Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) are also offered in workplaces and correctional institutions. In the 2014-2015 program year, 4,675 adult



Northwest Arkansans received services from programs receiving adult education funding; 2,253, or 48 percent, were ESL students and 35 were individuals in institutional settings such as correctional facilities or community corrections programs.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services have offices located in Fayetteville and Harrison; however, staff work out of the Arkansas Workforce Center offices in Harrison, Fayetteville, and Mountain Home on a regular basis. Services for the Blind provides computers with the JAWS program for consumers at all Northwest Arkansas Workforce Center locations. These provide consumers with the same access to the Internet to search for jobs as a sighted person seeking services from workforce centers. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provides training to workforce center staff and clients on the use of the computers. DSB staff is located in Fayetteville and Harrison in offices of the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services.

### **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 job seekers. Career services available at the centers vary because of local area inflection and the needs of particular communities. Basic career services are available 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 Discover Arkansas Portal offers region specific labor market information, tools for job seekers and employers, resources for youth including Real Life Arkansas, economic data by county or region and industry sector information. 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, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, and other workforce activities.

### **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 which address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require including:

- Labor exchange services provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include data 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; unemployment insurance information; financial aid information and follow-up services.
- Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include but are not limited to preparing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP); 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; skills upgrading and retaining; entrepreneurial training, and adult education and family literacy activities.

Training services are funded through WIOA programs, TAA, Pell Grants, partner programs, and state and local grants. The Northwest 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.

## **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. The Northwest region is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. The Title IB Supportive Services Policy adopted by the Workforce Development Board may be found in the Board Policy Manual. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Northwest has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

Adult Education does not offer support services; however, by working with and making referrals to partners and community resources the needs of its students are addressed.

Department of Workforce Services provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) childcare, transportation, vehicle repair, emergency rent and utility assistance, and relocation assistance.

Supportive services are coordinated based on program eligibility, the economic need thresholds of the partner agencies, and the availability of program funds. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are mandated to research and apply all comparable benefits for services from other resources prior to applying vocational rehabilitation funds. The most frequently applied comparable resources come from sources outside of the core partner agencies. For example, tuition assistance in the form of grant funding, housing assistance from Housing and Urban Development, the individual's own medical insurance must first be applied to physical and mental restoration services.

The supportive services provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind are arranged and coordinated according to an individual plan for employment which specifies a career goal and the areas that the individual may need support to reach that goal. The support needed is determined through assessments, evaluations, as well as the analysis and application of state and federal regulations and policies. The following support services are assessed, evaluated, and analyzed for applicability and comparable services/similar benefits to each individual case: maintenance assistance to participate in employment or training that leads to employment, personal care attendant services, physical and mental restoration services, rehabilitation engineering, rehabilitation technology, and transportation to participate in employment or training activities. These support services are time limited and must accompany a substantial service that is directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment.

## **Business Services**

The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District acquired a Business Services Coordinator in fall of 2021 to facilitate the implementation and delivery of business services, with the objective of addressing unmet workforce needs and narrowing employment and skills gaps.

The Business Services Coordinator assists employers and in-demand industry sectors with overcoming the challenges of recruitment, retention, and development of qualified candidates. The Business Services Coordinator is the primary point of contact and support for targeted businesses while connecting public resources, job seekers, and business sectors to achieve a shared understanding of industry needs and opportunities.

Employers are served through Arkansas Workforce Centers and have access to customized recruitment and hiring, human resource consultation, workforce development training, free job listings, labor market information, small business resources and referrals for aspiring entrepreneurs, layoff aversion strategies, tax credit information, and work-based learning opportunities such as on-the-job training, registered apprenticeship, and work experience. To market these services to the public and increase brand awareness, a business services webpage was created as well as WIOA rack cards for local distribution.

The NWA Business Services Team was conceived with the intent to enhance employer engagement and meet employer demands. The team is comprised of professionals from workforce development, education, human services, business and industry. To support area employers most effectively, in-demand occupations were identified, a needs assessment was conducted, innovative and flexible delivery methods have been utilized, and labor market information and evidence-based practices applied to enhance strategy and implementation of services. Key strategic partners have been invited to monthly business services meetings to provide insight into the workforce and economic development needs and opportunities. The goal is to leverage resources and industry experts in fulfilling the mission. Additionally, the team has been groomed on how to effectively process a business inquiry so a coordinated approach to meeting employer needs is established no matter who on the team responds to the inquiry.

The Business Services Coordinator will continue to have an active presence in the community engaging employers through one-on-one and group meetings, employer forums, job fairs, roundtables, conferences, and other meaningful events. The requests for business services continue to increase, meaning we are seeing a significant return on our investment in varied outreach approaches.

## **Services to Persons with Disabilities**

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Division of Services for the Blind, provide vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. According to the 2019 report on Disability Employment Statistics on individuals ages 16 and over from the Department of Labor Statistics, (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>) nationwide there is a 24.1% labor force participation for persons with disabilities and a 67.4% participation rate of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is 7.1%, while the unemployment rate of people without disabilities is 3.7. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people 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 in providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to obtain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) coordinates with other state agencies to increase employment of Arkansas with disabilities. The order also to focus consumer services first toward the goal of self-sufficiency through employment.

**E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers.**

County	Population 18 years and over	% High school grad or higher	% bachelor's degree or higher
Baxter	34,358	88.7%	18.6%
Benton	208,604	89.7%	34.6%
Boone	29,083	89.1%	17.8%
Carroll	22,082	85.2%	22.0%
Madison	12,750	84.9%	13.5%
Marion	13,820	86.2%	15.1%
Newton	5,928	85.2%	16.4%
Searcy	6,274	80.2%	15.3%
Washington	187,669	86.5%	33.7%

The Northwest Arkansas Region recognizes individuals with barriers to employment include those in one or more of the following categories as stated by WIOA Section 3(24): §680.320(b)(1-14):

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Persons with disabilities
- Older individuals, i.e., those 55 or older
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
- Individuals who are English language learners; individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, defined in WIOA Section 167(i)
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF (part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act)
- Single parents (including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Other groups determined by the Governor to have barriers to employment
- 

**F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.**

Northwest's Business Services Team (BST) oversees the execution of activities for the Regional Planning and Sector Partnership Grant that was awarded the District by the State. The BST is in the process of developing and implementing sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. To support area employers most effectively, in-demand occupations have been identified, a needs assessment was conducted, innovative and flexible delivery methods have been utilized, and labor market information and evidence-based practices applied to enhance strategy and implementation of services. Much work has been done by the Northwest Arkansas Council to address initiatives/industry sector initiatives. Two-year colleges participating in the Regional Workforce Grants have been moving forward in these areas. North Arkansas College targeted health care and advanced manufacturing; Northwest Arkansas Community College is focused on construction technology; University of Arkansas Global Campus is concentrated on information technology; Arkansas State University at Mountain Home pinpointed advanced manufacturing. All these schools are working with secondary schools to create

the talent pipeline of future workers. Partnerships with the Education Service Cooperatives in our area have proven to provide great dialogue and results.

*1.3 Based upon the regional labor market and economic conditions analysis and Arkansas's Workforce Development Plan (PY 2020 –PY 2023) describe the planning region's economic and workforce development-oriented vision and strategic goals. [WIOA Sec. 106(c) and Sec. 107(d)]*

Northwest has adopted the state's Vision and Goals and adapted them to the local area.

### **Vision**

Northwest Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas' economy competitive in the global marketplace.

### **Goals**

The local board will strive to prepare and educate a skilled workforce through partnerships with all core and other partners. Strategies for achieving these goals are found in the regional section of the Plan.

**Strategic Goal 1:** Develop and strengthen partnerships 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 Business Services Team, chambers of commerce, economic development partners and other opportunities.
2. Increase the use of all work-based learning programs as viable talent development opportunities by continuing the education and communication between partners, employers, and trainers.
3. Continue to partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, adult education, disability service providers, community-based organizations, and non-profits to understand barriers and resources available to individuals, so individuals can succeed in training programs in our region.
4. Analyze and address barriers to collaboration between state, regional, and local business services teams.

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

#### *Goal 2 Objectives:*

1. Promote and fund training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification in demand occupations through scholarships, on-the-job training, and work experiences.
2. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives to meet business and industry needs.
3. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by Northwest Workforce system partners.
4. Support the development of functional teams to enhance services.
5. Ensure a comprehensive array of services are provided to employers to meet unmet workforce needs.
6. Outline business solutions and provide training to LWDB staff and stakeholders on mobilizing resources, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

### **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 throughout the system.
2. Participate in an image-building outreach campaign to educate Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas.
3. Utilize technology, including social media, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Northwest Arkansas. Develop partnerships with libraries and other community organizations to provide access to the workforce system via computers.

### **Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps**

#### **Goal 4 Objectives:**

1. Participate in a skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue in Northwest Arkansas.
2. Work with partners in education at all levels to help implement a plan to close skills gaps in Northwest Arkansas. Review current job readiness standards and evaluations being used within the workforce system to find best practices that could be replicated.
3. Use labor market information provided by the Department of Workforce Services and contract with a vendor that will provide detailed labor and skills analysis as well as evaluation of post-secondary education performance to determine effectiveness of training to bridge the skills gaps.
4. Seek grants available to education and employers to fund training programs that address skills gaps.
5. Receive input from employers to address the skills shortages and identify alternative methods of recruiting and training workers, such as exploring nontraditional labor pools and methods of upskilling and offering efficient onboarding processes.

### **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)]**

Northwest Region has developed partnerships and alliances through the chambers of commerce, Educational Cooperatives, the educational institutions at all levels, economic development, the Northwest Arkansas Council, apprenticeship, and labor organizations in our communities.

One partnership is Carroll County Collaborative C3, which is working to develop a unique economic and workforce development model. A rural area, Carroll County is "where livestock meets Woodstock" and encompasses Green Forest to Berryville to Eureka Springs. Tyson Foods has two plants in the County and has broken ground to expand and add 85 more jobs. Eureka Springs is full of creative entrepreneurs and a favored tourist destination. Opportunities for small employers are great.

Additionally, we partner with adjacent and nearby out of state workforce areas including Southwest Missouri, Northeast Oklahoma and Southeast Kansas. The Local Area Board Directors continue to meet quarterly and have worked together for over 10 years to provide shared training, networking and research resources among other things. Workers cross state lines and it is imperative that we work together to provide employers with needed available workers. These are informal partnerships, but of great value to all the participants.

**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)]**

Northwest coordinates with economic development by working with workforce partners and the business community to identify skill gaps, training barriers and highlight high growth and high paying jobs that align with the local economic development strategy. Northwest will continue to work towards identifying training and educational barriers to attracting jobs in the identified sectors; identifying the existing skills gaps and provide ongoing review of sector priorities to develop regional service strategies.

This partnership includes, but is not limited to, the local chambers of commerce, apprenticeship, and local labor groups. These partnerships will conduct outreach to companies in identified sectors to identify skill gaps and what competency and curriculum development is needed to fill these gaps. Northwest will be a convener to bring business, labor, education and economic development together to address the regional needs.

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Service is taking the lead in developing the memorandums of understanding and infrastructure agreements. Those agreements will be subject to negotiation and mutual agreement.

**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)]**

Northwest will use resource sharing agreements and memoranda of understanding for the local workforce system to define how the cost of workforce center operations is shared as defined in TEG 17-16 with additional guidance from the State.

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

Partner programs within the Northwest region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services as allowable by their program. Communication among staff by phone, email and text will be used to coordinate supportive services and to avoid duplication of services.

**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)]**

Northwest will continue to partner with regional economic development services and providers by leveraging resources with the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, chambers of commerce and other economic development organizations. NWAEDD's Economic Development and Workforce Development Divisions have completed a Comprehensive Economic Development Survey of community needs which can be found on [nwaedd.org](http://nwaedd.org).

Employees from each of the Arkansas Workforce Center locations are active members of the local chambers of commerce, and frequently participate in Business After Hours and monthly Morning Brew gatherings sponsored by the Chambers, as well as strategic planning events. These memberships and continued participation in local business focus activities are instrumental in our ability to continue strengthening our ongoing professional relationships with the business community.

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)]

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)]

The State and Local Workforce area negotiated performance measure levels for PY 18 and PY 19 during a phone call November 7, 2022. The final performance levels can be found on [www.nwaedd.org](http://www.nwaedd.org).

### **Northwest 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).

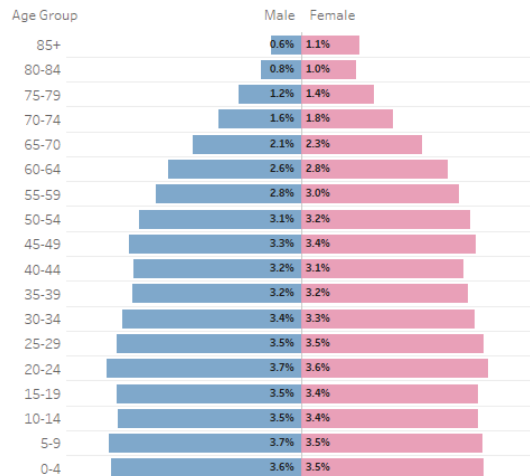
The Northwest Arkansas Council is a vibrant driver in Benton and Washington Counties. The Council conducts and reports in the NWA Regional Workforce Assessment each year. According to the website [findingnwa.com](http://findingnwa.com), Northwest Arkansas has seven times the U.S. average of headquarters and management employees in its workforce, home to over 1, 400 Walmart Suppliers and neighboring headquarters like J.B. Hunt, Tyson Foods, George's Poultry and Simmons. NWA has built a world-class infrastructure of professional and technical services to support its flagship industries and their employees. Regional employers have attracted a dynamic, culturally diverse workforce. Northwest has a per capita personal income almost 10% above the national average.



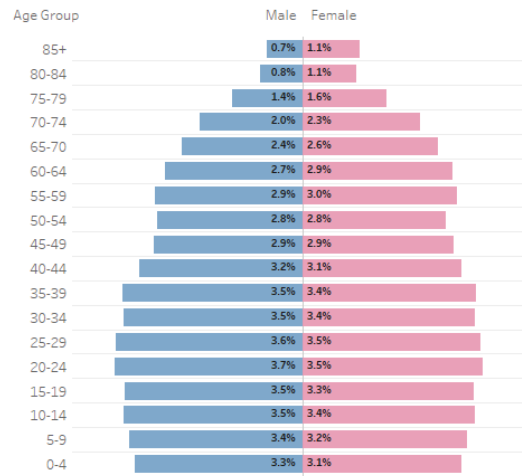
NWA has a consistently low unemployment rate, most recently at 2.0%. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics December 2022)  
Our population reflects the demand as well, NWA is adding about 42 new residents every day, making us one of the fastest growing metros in the U.S.

## Population Pyramids for Northwest Arkansas

**2010** Pop: **581,420**



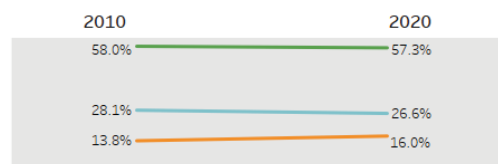
**2020** Pop: **689,011**



Age Group Population Distribution

	2010	2020
Adults 65+	80,437	110,517
Adults 20-64	337,390	394,954
Under 20	163,593	183,540
Total	581,420	689,011

Percentage of Population for Children (Under 20), Adults (24-64), and Older Adults (65+)



### A. Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data

The Northwest Arkansas LWDA labor force and employment increased from 2020 to 2021, with the labor force gaining 1,107 to 332,059 and employment increasing by 6,812 to 322,170. Unemployment decreased by 5,705 to 9,889 in 2021 but has seen an increase of 441 since 2017. The unemployment rate dropped from 2020 to 2021 by 2.7 percent to 3.0 percent. The area's unemployment rate fluctuated from 2017, but ultimately settled at 3.0 in 2021. The unemployment rate ended July 2022 at 3.0 percent.

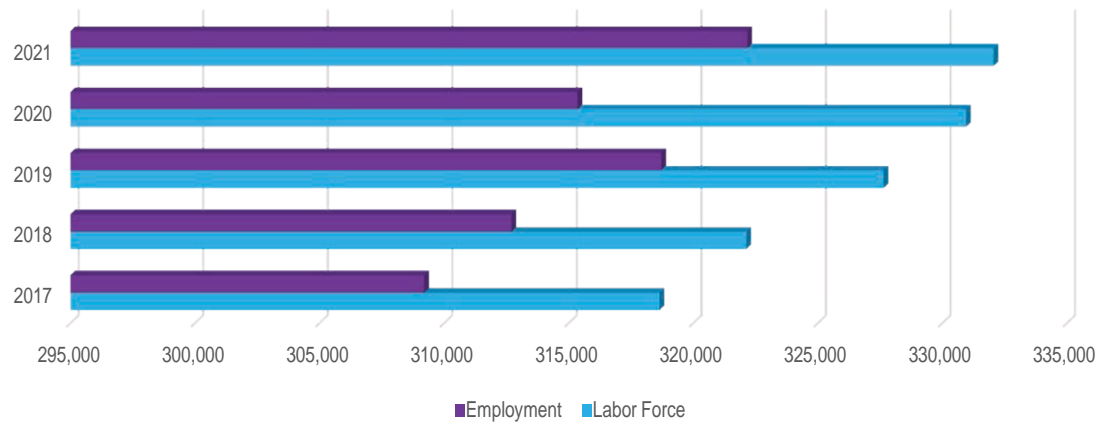
### Northwest Arkansas LWDA 2017-2021 Labor Force/Employment

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
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Labor Force	318,648	322,131	327,641	330,952	332,059	350,997
Employment	309,200	312,701	318,720	315,358	322,170	342,190
Unemployment	9,448	9,430	8,921	15,594	9,889	8,807
Unemployment Rate	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	4.7%	3.0%	2.5%

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

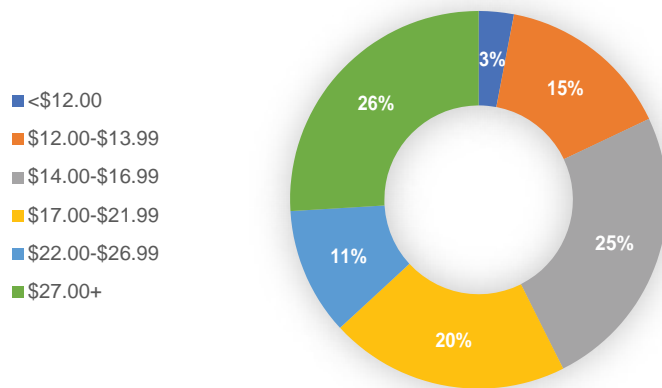


Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Area/County	Civilian Labor Force	Number of Employed	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate %
<b>Northwest</b>	340,600	333,118	7,482	2.2%
<b>Baxter</b>	16,577	16,051	526	3.2%
<b>Benton</b>	146,786	143,701	3,085	2.1%
<b>Boone</b>	15,705	15,292	413	2.6%
<b>Carroll</b>	12,272	11,949	323	2.6%
<b>Madison</b>	7,424	7,264	160	2.2%
<b>Marion</b>	6,226	6,007	219	3.5%
<b>Newton</b>	3,130	3,046	84	2.7%
<b>Searcy</b>	2,872	2,755	117	4.1%
<b>Washington</b>	129,608	127,053	2,555	2.0%

## Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate



### Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate

<b>Total</b>	<b>260,790</b>
<\$12.00	7,830
\$12.00-\$13.99	38,990
\$14.00-\$16.99	64,280
\$17.00-\$21.99	53,570
\$22.00-\$26.99	28,440
\$27.00+	67,680

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services,  
May 2021 Wage Survey

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

### B. Information on Labor Market Trends

#### Top 10 Growth Industries, Ranked by Net Growth 2018-2028

##### Top Growing Industry Supersectors

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2021 Estimated Employment	2023 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
102400	Professional and Business Services	49,937	52,664	2,727	5.46%
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	62,848	65,187	2,339	3.72%
102700	Other Services (except Government)	16,870	18,934	2,064	12.23%
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	27,828	28,741	913	3.28%
102500	Education and Health Services	62,990	63,815	825	1.31%

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

### Projected Industry Growth

#### 2018-2028 Long-Term Employment Projections

[discover.arkansas.gov/local-workforce-development-area-statistics/northwest](https://discover.arkansas.gov/local-workforce-development-area-statistics/northwest)

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total All Industries	319,509	355,829	36,320	11.40%
Natural Resources and Mining	3,054	3,436	382	12.50%
Construction	11,961	13,965	2,004	16.80%
Manufacturing	36,644	38,407	1,763	4.80%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	61,289	67,038	5,749	9.40%

Information	2,546	2,445	-101	-4.00%
Financial Activities	10,040	11,147	1,107	11.00%
Professional and Business Services	48,086	54,488	6,402	13.30%
Education and Health Services	60,561	68,631	8,070	13.30%
Leisure and Hospitality	30,915	36,026	5,111	16.50%
Other Services (except Government)	12,516	14,395	1,879	15.00%
Government	12,330	14,298	1,968	16.00%

### Top 10 Growing Industries Ranked by Net Growth

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

SOC Code	SOC Title	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
00-0000	<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>306,128</b>	<b>348,474</b>	<b>42,346</b>	<b>13.83%</b>	<b>15,298</b>	<b>20,087</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>39,620</b>
11-0000	Management Occupations	31,751	36,051	4,300	13.54%	1,303	1,249	430	2,982
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	17,463	21,335	3,872	22.17%	607	1,185	387	2,179
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	8,544	10,301	1,757	20.56%	157	449	176	782
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,458	2,804	346	14.08%	66	121	35	222
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,362	1,634	272	19.97%	43	97	27	167
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	4,213	4,947	734	17.42%	197	296	73	566
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1,560	1,910	350	22.44%	43	65	35	143
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	17,073	19,241	2,168	12.70%	734	738	217	1,689
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,424	3,784	360	10.51%	144	201	36	381
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	14,492	17,243	2,751	18.98%	422	421	275	1,118
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	6,444	8,338	1,894	29.39%	420	403	189	1,012
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	4,139	4,593	454	10.97%	177	212	45	434
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	24,571	28,347	3,776	15.37%	1,965	2,470	378	4,813
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	9,424	10,731	1,307	13.87%	606	641	131	1,378
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	9,416	11,691	2,275	24.16%	809	710	228	1,747
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	32,061	36,827	4,766	14.87%	2,087	2,604	477	5,168
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	39,701	42,925	3,224	8.12%	2,104	2,479	322	4,905
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,008	3,248	240	7.98%	116	342	24	482
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,917	12,441	1,524	13.96%	409	772	152	1,333
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	10,468	11,914	1,446	13.81%	388	665	145	1,198
51-0000	Production Occupations	26,821	28,038	1,217	4.54%	1,173	1,997	122	3,292
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	26,818	30,131	3,313	12.35%	1,327	1,970	331	3,628

Northwest is in the process of developing and implementing sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. Several sectors have been identified in preliminary analysis including health care, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and construction. Much work has been done by the Northwest Arkansas Council to address initiatives/industry sector initiatives. Two-year colleges participating in the Regional Workforce Grants have been moving forward in these areas. North Arkansas College targeted health care and advanced manufacturing; Northwest Arkansas Community College focused on construction technology; University of Arkansas Global Campus concentrated on information technology; Arkansas State University at Mountain Home pinpointed advanced manufacturing. All these schools are working with secondary (one even primary) schools to work to create the talent pipeline of future workers. Partnerships with the Education Service Cooperatives in our area have proven to provide great dialogue and results.

Arkansas contracted with Maher and Maher to support the deployment of sector strategies statewide and provide support for the local areas. They have launched consulting services in the Northwest region beginning March 2017 through June 2018 including facilitating a full day workshop for partners, Workforce Board members, employers and

other sector stakeholders. This was held on April 26, 2017 and focused on the sectors Northwest region has defined as important.

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Survey of community needs. The results of this survey are on [nwaedd.org](http://nwaedd.org).

Northwest has participated with the Baxter County Forward and Believe Boone County strategic planning processes in 2019. Northwest also participated in the Boone County WIN (Workforce Innovative Network) process in 2019 and 2020.

**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)]**

Most employers need their employees to have basic knowledge and skills of literacy and math, problem solving, computing, communication, work readiness and other skills. In addition, skills that are particular to each job are varied. Advanced manufacturing employers are seeking individuals who have more technical skills such as Computerized Numerical Controller (CNC), robotics, industrial maintenance; Construction needs individuals who are skilled in construction trades including plumbing, electrical, commercial and residential builders. Hospitals needs include the entire range of skills necessary for all the jobs in the facility – from food service, maintenance, and laboratory to all levels of nursing care and ancillary services. The need for Elder Care services including home health aides, personal care assistants, registered nurses, and nursing assistants is growing at an exponential rate.

**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)]**

See Regional Plan, Part B Section B for labor force employment and unemployment; Section C for labor market trends; and Section E for data on educational and skill levels including individuals with barriers to employment.

**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)]**

**Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers**

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Arkansas's version of the American Job Centers. There are two workforce centers located throughout the nine-county region to ensure access to all Arkansans residing therein. The Harrison center is a comprehensive center. Mountain Home, and Fayetteville centers are affiliate centers.

**Northwest Arkansas Workforce System Services-Unemployed and Underemployed**

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a full array of career services which are outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed. The workforce centers have computers, printers, copiers, and resources along with staff to help jobseekers. In addition, digital services are offered as well as Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas's Labor Market Information portal. These two tools allow for jobseekers to search for jobs 24/7 and make data informed decisions about which path is best for them.

## Jobseeker Services

Career services, found throughout the Northwest Arkansas region, offer a full line of services to help prepare jobseekers for the regional workforce. Soft skills and technical training are two examples which are provided, and which employers look for in a good candidate for a position.

Labor Market Information is updated regularly to ensure accuracy is provided to individuals seeking services. This data includes information pertaining to job vacancies, skills needed to obtain said jobs, in-demand occupations and related earning potential. In addition, information on career ladders which exist within those occupations is provided to help participants.

Other career services provided through our one-stop centers are outreach, intake, and orientation. Upon the completion of the initial assessment, eligibility will be determined, and the career coaches will begin to provide recommendations for various programs along with financial aid information. Services are also provided to individuals to assist them in obtaining and retaining employment. These types of services include:

- Career Planning and Counseling
- Occupational Skills Assessment
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- English language acquisition
- Financial literacy
- Individual Service Strategy
- Individual Employment Plan

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.

- 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.
- 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; the skills necessary to obtain jobs within in-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations.
- Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include but are not limited to preparation of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP); 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 help to equip a jobseeker with the skills needed to find sustainable employment, however such skills may not be enough to obtain sustainable employment. In those circumstances formal training may be required. Many training opportunities exist through the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers, such as occupational skills training which can be obtained from numerous educational partners at post-secondary schools and universities, as well as on-the-job training. Registered Apprenticeships are also available in a wide variety of traditional sectors and are in the process of being expanded into non-traditional sectors such as information technology and nursing.

These training services are funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and by other local and state partners. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board has established policies for the determination of eligibility, Individual Training Account Limits (ITAs) and training aimed at in-demand industry sectors throughout the region such as transportation, logistics and healthcare. Sector strategies have taken on a new role in the region, with the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board using data-driven decision-making to enhance the likelihood of employment of participants.

#### Supportive Services

To assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Northwest Arkansas Board is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Northwest Arkansas has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

#### Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities are business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and include a broad array of services to employers. Business Services assistance is broad; however, this assistance is tailored to the individual needs of each employer. The services provided to businesses can be identified into three broad categories:

- Assessments and Information

Through the Arkansas Workforce Centers, businesses can utilize assessments and tests to measure the skills, interests, or personality traits of job seekers or current employees. Businesses can also receive a variety of information pertaining to incentive programs such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Labor Market Information is available to businesses on market conditions, industries, occupations, and workforce characteristics as well. Also, short- and long-term industry trends and occupational projections are available.

- Direct Assistance

Businesses have access to Workforce Center locations for the purposes of meetings, trainings, orientations, and interviews. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Area can also host hiring events which are customized to the specific needs of businesses. Job orders which have been approved by staff can be placed through the workforce areas in Arkansas Job Link, along with job placement assistance and information on unemployment benefits. Businesses can also receive assistance with applicant screening which involves the initial evaluation of applicants.

- Response and Training

The Northwest Workforce Area partners provide rapid response measures in the event of a business downsizing or restructuring. These include a variety of workshops to assist employees who are in transition. Training and retraining services are also available for both current and future employees. The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force is the lead program.

- Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Division of Services for the Blind, provides vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for people with disabilities in relation to attaining employment. According to the 2019 report on Disability Employment Statistics on individuals ages 16 and over from the Department of Labor Statistics, (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>) nationwide there is a 19.3% labor force participation for persons with disabilities and a 66.3% participation rate of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate of

persons with disabilities is 7.3%, while the unemployment rate of people without disabilities is 3.5%. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people 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 people with disabilities to enable them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

### Strengths

- The Northwest Arkansas Region has strong workforce programs which provide assistance to jobseekers in any county in our region.
- The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area has a broad range of One-Stop partners who provide value-added services to jobseekers who enter the Workforce Centers.
- The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board has embraced and implemented expanded sector strategies.
- Quality of life is great throughout the region.
- Northwest is home to the flagship University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Medical Sciences in Fayetteville, John Brown University in Siloam Springs and Rogers, Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville, Northwest Technical Institute in Springdale, North Arkansas College in Harrison, and Arkansas State University at Mountain Home for post-secondary education as well as private providers.
- Secondary Schools in our area are leaders in innovative approaches to educating students in non-traditional ways. Several are working with employers to develop and provide training to address the future and current needs of business. The Career Academy of Siloam Springs, Pea Ridge High School and the Technology Center at North Arkansas College and the HALO program at Harrison High School are a few examples of these partnerships.
- Within the Northwest Arkansas region Adult Education Division (AED) funds six local adult education programs. North Arkansas College - Harrison, Arkansas State University – Mountain Home, Northwest Arkansas Community College – Rogers, Fayetteville Adult Education – Fayetteville, Northwest Technical Institute – Springdale, and Ozark Literacy Center – Fayetteville. 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 areas. 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).

### Weaknesses

- The Arkansas labor force is shrinking and being accelerated by the retirement of baby boomers.
- Marketing and outreach activities need to improve in the region to promote the State's talent delivery system.
- Unemployment is at an all-time low rate and that means that there are more openings than skilled workers.
- With some eligible training providers, relationships do not go beyond training jobseekers.
- Staff training programs are not in place across the workforce region.
- The decline in funding over the year.
- The number of unemployed is under-represented because many of the long-term unemployed have stopped looking for work.
- Rural areas do have limited job opportunities.
- Rural areas do not have public transportation

### Opportunities

- Expanding current registered apprenticeship opportunities present an opportunity for the Northwest Arkansas



Workforce Region.

- The expanded business services team has the resources needed to enhance industry sector partnerships.
- Tailored development opportunities with industry sector partnerships.
- Increased Internet access for rural areas.

#### Challenges

- Many industries may not feel the public sector can assist them in their workforce needs.
- Duplication of workforce development efforts not only causes redundancy for jobseekers and industry but is also a major waste of resources. Examples include basic career services offered by multiple partners and staff going to the same employers for duplication of business services.
- Decreased funding.
- Employees retiring from the workforce.

Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area capacity to provide services:

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area is equipped with the resource and staffing needed to provide workforce development activities throughout the region. The region has benefited significantly from the State Workforce Board's continued strides for improvement and innovation. The NWAOWDA's capacity is further amplified by its broad array of partners, both those that co-locate in the workforce centers and those that do not. Some of those partnerships include:

- Adult Education services include ABE/ASE, GED and WAGE; a career development facilitator to assist students with the transition from adult education to employment and/or post-secondary education; providing workplace training to employers; digital literacy; financial literacy; and referrals.
- Department of Human Services for Medicaid, childcare, Transitional Employment Assistance eligibility, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Post-secondary colleges and technical institutes for education.
- Arkansas Economic Development Commission for employer services.

Out of school youth is an area in which the region has struggled, partly due to the lack of staffing capacity to target and conduct outreach activities aimed specifically at this logistically challenging demographic. This is a priority of the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Youth Program to better serve out of school disconnected youth.

## Section 2: Strategic Vision & 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)]

Northwest has adopted the State's Vision and Goals and adapted 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 means including adult education, apprenticeship, institutional training, literacy training, on-the-job training and work experience.

Northwest has adopted the state's Vision and Goals and adapted them to the local area.

### **Vision**

Northwest Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas' economy competitive in the global marketplace.

### **Goals**

The local board will strive to prepare and educate a skilled workforce through partnerships with all core and other partners. Strategies for achieving these goals are found in the Regional section of the Plan.

**Strategic Goal 1:** Develop and strengthen partnerships 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:*

5. Expand employer partnerships through the Business Services Team, chambers of commerce, economic development partners and other opportunities.
6. Increase the use of all work-based learning programs as viable talent development opportunities by continuing the education and communication between partners, employers, and trainers.
7. Continue to partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, adult education, disability service providers, community-based organizations, and non-profits to understand barriers and resources available to individuals, so individuals can succeed in training programs in our region.
8. Analyze and address barriers to collaboration between state, regional, and local business services teams.

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

#### *Goal 2 Objectives:*

7. Promote and fund training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification in demand occupations through scholarships, on-the-job training, and work experiences.
8. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives to meet business and industry needs.
9. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by Northwest Workforce system partners.
10. Support the development of functional teams to enhance services.
11. Ensure a comprehensive array of services are provided to employers to meet unmet workforce needs.
12. Outline business solutions and provide training to LWDB staff and stakeholders on mobilizing resources, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

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

#### *Goal 3 Objectives:*

4. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services

throughout the system.

5. Participate in an image-building outreach campaign to educate Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas.
6. Utilize technology, including social media, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Northwest Arkansas. Develop partnerships with libraries and other community organizations to provide access to the workforce system via computers.

#### **Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps**

##### **Goal 4 Objectives:**

6. Participate in a skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue in Northwest Arkansas.
7. Work with partners in education at all levels to help implement a plan to close skills gaps in Northwest Arkansas. Review current job readiness standards and evaluations being used within the workforce system to find best practices that could be replicated.
8. Use labor market information provided by the Department of Workforce Services and contract with a vendor that will provide detailed labor and skills analysis as well as evaluation of post-secondary education performance to determine effectiveness of training to bridge the skills gaps.
9. Seek grants available to education and employers to fund training programs that address skills gaps.
10. Receive input from employers to address the skills shortages and identify alternative methods of recruiting and training workers, such as exploring nontraditional labor pools and methods of upskilling and offering efficient onboarding processes.

**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)

The Northwest 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 to keep Northwest Arkansas 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 Northwest 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.

**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 enrolled in educational and/or skills training, the goal is to have them complete training, obtain their credential and accomplish measurable skills gain. These participants will be directed toward higher paying jobs which have a livable wage to help ensure a higher retention rate well beyond program exit. For participants receiving basic and individualized career services the same goal applies.

For business services, the goal is to improve the Business Services Team's ability to effectively serve employers as a unified group between all partners. The Business Services Coordinator will develop, implement, and sustain the activities for

business services across the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. This position will focus on the delivery of business services through an integrated, solution-oriented approach by a cross functional team. The incorporation of an integrated and aligned business services strategy among partners presents a unified voice for the workforce center in its communication with employers and shall lead to improved skills, credentials, and employment attainment in areas driven by business demand. The Business Services Coordinator will develop new sector partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships to address local workforce needs and develop and maintain relationships with local businesses, industry representatives, and training agencies that will lead to participant career placements and stronger business relations. Under direct supervision of the WIOA Title I Administrator, the Business Services Coordinator will develop and execute strategic direction and vision for the Business Services Team in Northwest Arkansas.

### **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 Considering 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, 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 Consortium of Northwest Arkansas includes 27 members including county judges and mayors of first-class cities. They have selected Mayor Doug Sprouse as their chair and signatory. They reach agreement on negotiated levels of performance, enter into and sign an MOU, appoint local Workforce Development Board members, designate an entity to serve as the fiscal agent, serve as the local grant recipient and are liable for WIOA grant funds.
  - The Northwest Local Workforce Development Board is composed of 10 business representatives with a total of 17 members. Standing committees include the executive committee, youth committee, and one stop/disability committee. They reach agreement on negotiated performance levels, enter into and sign an MOU including Infrastructure costs, select the One Stop Operator, review and update the One Stop/Workforce Certification, develop and implement a four-year local plan, conduct oversight of the Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker activities, approve eligible training providers.
  - Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District was selected by the Chief Elected Officials as the Fiscal and Administrative Entity for the Northwest Workforce Development Area.
  - The Title IB program operator of the Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth programs is the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District.
  - Required program partners include Title II Adult Education providers Northwest Arkansas Community College Adult Education, Northwest Technical Institute/Springdale Adult Education, North Arkansas College Adult Education, Fayetteville Adult Education, Ozark Literacy Council, Arkansas State University Adult Education/Mountain Home; Title III Wagner-Peyser Arkansas Department of Workforce Services; Title IV Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.
  - All must enter into a MOU and share in the cost of operating the Workforce Centers.

B. A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and

Arkansas Workforce Center at Mountain Home, 1058 Highland Circle #20, Mountain Home, AR 72653, 870-425-2386. The Center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

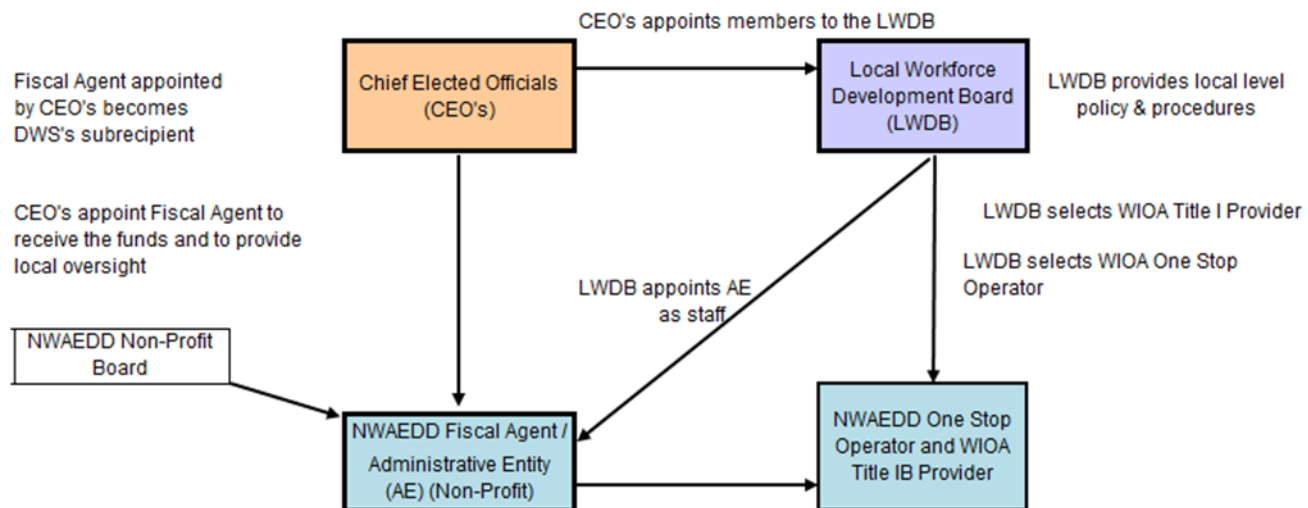
Arkansas Workforce Center at Harrison, 818 Highway 62-65-412 N, Harrison, AR 72601, 870-741-8236. The center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Arkansas Workforce Center at Fayetteville, 2153 Suite 201 E. Joyce Blvd., Fayetteville, AR 72703, 479-521-5730. The center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Arkansas Workforce Center at Rogers, 100 N. Dixieland Suite B1-5, Rogers, AR 72756, 479-636-4755. Center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

C. An attached organization chart depicts the chief elected official(s), local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

**Flowchart of the WIOA Governance and Flow of Funds in the Northwest Arkansas LWDA**



Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) is Fiscal Agent/Administrative Entity and provides staff to the Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board. NWAEDD is the One Stop Operator and is the provider of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs.

**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 supports the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b) (1) (E). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2)]**

The Northwest Workforce Development system includes the required core and other partners including, at a minimum,

Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, Vocational Rehabilitation providers. The One Stop Operator will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of partners to support alignment of services. 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. The Workforce Development Board will work with these entities through development of the MOU to identify services provided by the partners.

In developing the talent pipeline the Board and system are working closely with Ozarks Unlimited Resource Education Service Cooperative and Northwest Education Service Cooperative, Northwest Arkansas Council, Arkansas Center for Data Sciences as well as post-secondary schools including North Arkansas College, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Arkansas State University at Mountain Home and Northwest Technical Institute.

**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)]**

As staff to the local Workforce Board, we have been the leader of convening Core Workforce partners for over four years. These monthly meetings have resulted in a broader shared knowledge of programs and services provided by each partner which has resulted in referrals and co-enrollments. These discussions have included ways to help individuals follow a career path.

**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)]**

Entrepreneurial efforts are supported and promoted through the Harrison Regional Chamber of Commerce E-Ship program, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce Teen Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Small Business and Technology Center at the Walton College University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Arkansas Food Innovation Center, Startup Junkie, Young Entrepreneurs Academy in Bentonville, C3 Carroll County Collaborative, Revolving Loan Fund, Forge – Community Loan Fund and more.

**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 postsecondary education programs and activities through input at partner meetings. There is also collaboration between the board and secondary and postsecondary education programs providing services to the youth such as working with OUR Education Coop and Northwest Education Coop, the youth committee, and with school districts.

**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)]**

In order to assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. Northwest region is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. The Title IB Supportive Services Policy adopted by the Workforce

Development Board may be found in the Board Policy Manual. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Northwest has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

#### Adult Education and Literacy

Division of Workforce Services provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) that provide childcare, transportation, vehicle repair, emergency rent and utility assistance, and relocation assistance.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Services for the Blind may provide items needed for the individual to participate in employment and training activities such as glasses, rehabilitative technology, personal care attendant services, transportation and other supports as needs are determined.

### **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 to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (12)]**

Wagner-Peyser staff and the Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth provider staff are co-located in all the Northwest Workforce Centers which simplifies the process.

Central to WIOA is the integration of service delivery among multiple workforce and talent development programs. Northwest 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 align core programs to prevent and eliminate duplication across programs.

Alignment of core and optional programs will be accomplished 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 the services of the core partners and other workforce center partners. They have regular partners meetings.

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 that are 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)]**

The Local Board received the Requests for Proposals from the Arkansas Career and Technical Education Adult Education Department. The local Board had a committee appointed by the Board Chair to review and make comments for enhancing proposals. These were submitted to the Adult Education Department. The Board approved the comments before submission to the State.

### **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:**

3.10 Active

- Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;
- Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;
- Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;
- Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”
- Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
- Operates under some kind of shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.

Emerging

- Has at least an interim coordinator, convener, or convening team;
- Has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
- Includes individuals from workforce development, education, economic development and other programs or organizations in strategic partner roles;
- Actively working to implement strategic priorities outlined in a launch meeting.

Exploring

- Is in the infancy stage, but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership;
- Working to identify partners who would be involved;
- Determining if the partnership really makes sense for the community.

**Information Technology** - emerging and ongoing. The future of Arkansas's workforce lies in the State's ability to infuse STEM education into the mainstream of our educational system. STEM is short for “Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.” Another project goal is equipping Arkansas colleges with the tools they need to better educate the K-12 teachers in these core subjects. The Arkansas STEM Coalition is a statewide partnership of leaders from a diverse range of sectors, including 12 members of Arkansas businesses and industries, to enable programs that support excellence in STEM teaching and learning to expand the economy of Arkansas and produce higher paying jobs. We have also partnered with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences to assist the training of apprentices in Northwest Arkansas.

**Entrepreneurs and Innovators** - exploring. Northwest Arkansas has a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem that has already supported a number of successful startups ranging from e-commerce businesses to product-as-a service businesses. We have met with organizations such as StartupNWA, EforAll, Startup Junkie, and VentureNoire to secure partnerships for creating strategies that respond to current and future workforce



needs. With entrepreneurship on the rise, it is imperative that we sustain these partnerships to ensure that the next generation of new businesses flourish.

**Health Care and Social Assistance-** active and ongoing. Northwest Arkansas' economic future will be strengthened by targeted health-sector growth initiatives. Regional healthcare providers and academic institutions continue to expand service offerings in a bid to keep pace with population growth, and workforce development efforts are ongoing. The Northwest Arkansas Council's latest development strategy emphasizes the need for increased collaboration among healthcare providers, researchers, universities, and the business communities and the need for a dedicated roadmap for future healthcare sector investments.

**Retail** - exploring. Retail trade falls within Northwest Arkansas's top ten industries by gross regional product. With ideal available sites and a low cost of doing business, retailers can take advantage of a region with income levels much higher than the state average. Northwest Arkansas is a global center of excellence in retail, food, and logistics. We are home to the headquarters of three fortune 500 companies, Walmart, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt Transport. Additionally, Simmons Foods, America's Car Mart, PAM Transport, 1,450 corporate subsidiary offices, and internationally recognized consumer brands call NWA home. NWA has a world-class infrastructure of professional as well as technical services to support the flagship industries.

**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.**

The Board currently leverages and has oversight of funding outside WIOA Title I. Additional funding includes National Emergency Disaster Grants that provide temporary employment to assist counties and cities with cleanup after natural disasters and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grant. Employing the people equals the outcomes. Leverage resources include NWAEDD community and economic development funds for joint projects. We will apply for future grants as they become available.

NWAEDD was awarded \$25,000 to enhance sector-based service delivery and increase support to business and industry partners. The objective is to connect public resources and programs, job seekers and students, and business and industry to achieve a shared understanding of industry needs and opportunities available to strengthen the economic structure in the district. The grant will allow us an opportunity to strengthen and establish regional industry and sector partnerships for in-demand occupations. Through these partnerships, the region will be able to utilize shared resources, such as technology and infrastructure, to connect, interact, innovate, and leverage opportunities to maximize economic development outcomes. Robust partnerships will further implementation strategies that will stabilize and grow in-demand industry sector occupations across the nine counties we serve.

#### **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 Board ensures continuous improvement by the monitoring of service providers and review and evaluation of eligible training providers and applications closely to ensure that the training provided is meeting the needs of employers and that employers are hiring from those training programs, as well as meeting with the educational institutions to ensure needs are understood and conveyed on an ongoing basis. The Board will also use a report created by the Arkansas Research Center for the Division of Workforce Services pursuant to Act 852 of 2015 which provides Employment and Earnings Outcomes for Arkansas graduates of State supported higher learning institutions <http://dws.arkansas.gov/News/PDF/Act%20852%20Economic%20Security%20Report.pdf>

- 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)]**

With four Workforce Centers across the nine-county area, access to a comprehensive center may be limited in very remote areas. In those cases, staff will travel to work with participants and employers on an as needed basis. Arkansas Job Link is the State's technology system that allows participants and employers to access many services on a self-serve basis as well as in centers. As technology continues to evolve Northwest will continue to utilize it to reach out and serve participants and employers alike. The Arkansas Mobile Workforce Unit is available when needed.

- 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*)**

Northwest Workforce Development system will comply with WIOA section 188 by ensuring accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities by providing staff training and support by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Services for the Blind. The Job Access with Speech (JAWS) system is available at all Centers as assistance for customers that are visually impaired. MAGIC is currently installed in the Workforce Centers in Fayetteville and Harrison. This software is a screen magnification and screen reading solution for computer users with low vision.

- 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)]**

Roles and contributions will be described in the memorandum of understanding and infrastructure funding

agreements.

### Partners in Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area

Program	Provider	Location
Title I		
Adult	Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Dislocated Worker	Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Youth	Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Job Corps	Women Empowered Network	By appointment at Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Youthbuild	None	n/a
Native American	American Indian Center of Arkansas	By appointment at Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker	Arkansas Human Development Corporation	By appointment at Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Title III		
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	Arkansas Division of Workforce Services	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Title II		
Adult Education and Family Literacy	Fayetteville School District	612 South College, Fayetteville
	Northwest Technical Institute,	610 E. Emma Street, Springdale
	North Arkansas College	1320 N. Spring Road, Harrison 804 W Freeman, Berryville 102 Larimer Drive Suite 9, Green Forest 124 Lee Street, Huntsville Jasper Public Library, Jasper 402 Oak Street, Leslie
	Northwest Arkansas Community College	One College Dr., Bentonville; 1001 S. Mt. Olive, Siloam Springs Gravette Public Library, Gravette 6101 Watkins, Springdale
	Arkansas State University at Mountain Home	ASUMH Campus, Mountain Home
	Ozark Literacy Council	2596 N. Keystone Crossing, Fayetteville
Title IV		
Vocational Rehabilitation	Arkansas Rehabilitation Services	By appointment at Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers. Referrals to Field Offices at Harrison and Fayetteville.

	Division of Services for the Blind	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison and Fayetteville
Other partners		
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Experience Works	By appointment at Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Career and Technical Education postsecondary Carl Perkins	North Arkansas College	1515 Pioneer Ridge, Harrison
	Northwest Arkansas Community College	One College Dr., Bentonville
	Northwest Technical Institute	709 S. Old Missouri Rd., Springdale
	Arkansas State University at Mountain Home	1600 S. College, Mountain Home
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Arkansas Department of Workforce Services	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Arkansas Department of Workforce Services	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Community Services Block Grant Training and Education	Ozarks Opportunities	By referral
Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training	Northwest Arkansas Regional Housing Authority	By referral
Unemployment Insurance	Arkansas Department of Workforce Services	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home, Fayetteville, and Rogers
Second Chance programs	Goodwill Industries	Springdale
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Arkansas Department of Workforce Services	Arkansas Workforce Centers at Harrison, Mountain Home (effective 3/1/2023 by appointment only, Fayetteville, and Rogers)

**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)]**

Northwest's adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities are provided through the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District at the four Workforce Centers located across the region. NWAEDD has consistently produced excellent results by providing customers with case management, scholarships for institutional training, on-the-job training, work experience, apprenticeships, and supportive services. The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Northwest Technical Institute, John Brown University, North Arkansas College and Arkansas State University at Mountain Home as well as other schools provide a wide choice for those entering higher education.

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth provides services to individuals through basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. Title I assists clients in paying for training costs, as well as supportive services to alleviate barriers to employment.

#### **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 ensure that dislocated workers receive program information and services.

The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program provides an alternative for employers faced with a reduction in the work force. It allows an employer to divide available work or hours of work among a specific group(s) of employees in lieu of a layoff, and it allows the employees to receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force division of Business Retention & Workforce Transition 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 AWC staff do not initiate contact with an employer regarding a layoff without first speaking with the Task Force Coordinator. Layoff aversion may occur when word of a possible layoff or closure is addressed early by the Task Force. The Task Force will convene economic development agencies and others to try to find a solution to prevent the layoff.

The Business Retention & Workforce Transition team, as a part of the Dislocated Worker's Task Force, 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 Governors 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.

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
- 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 Governors 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.

The WIOA Title I provider will provide or make an appropriate referral to provide the fourteen required program elements to eligible youth participants in Northwest Arkansas. Northwest is creating a youth Program Resource Guide that will provide specific contact information for providers of each of the Youth Program Elements. This guide will be available upon request and on [nwaedd.org](http://nwaedd.org). A Memorandum of Understanding is in place for each provider of the services. A copy of this memorandum can be found at [nwaedd.org](http://nwaedd.org).

### WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Services may be provided by the service provider or on a referral basis if needed.

	Element	Implementation	Service Provider	Contact Information
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1.	<p>Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to high school completion, including dropout prevention strategies. Dropout prevention strategies can include, but are not limited to, placement in an alternative secondary school services setting, facilitating involvement of families and community, taking an individualized approach based on youth's individual needs.</p>	<p>Provision of on-line coursework, one-on-one instruction, peer-to-peer interaction, or in a group instruction. Referrals made to partners providing 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 ensure youth completion of a HSD/GED.</p>	<p>-Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education -North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>-Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education -Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Ed. -Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education</p> <p>-Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville -Goodwill</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p>	<p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:mina@ozarkliteracy.org">mina@ozarkliteracy.org</a> Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p>
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2.	Alternative high school services which 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, and/or who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth	WIOA youth programs will work closely with alternative schools throughout the area. Alternative schools will be one source for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. WIOA youth services will be designed to complement activities occurring within alternative schools. The primary goal will be for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED.	<p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>Youth Bridge Harrison/Fayetteville</p> <p>Chenal Family Therapy</p> <p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>Goodwill</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p>	<p><a href="mailto:Trisha.wiatt@arkansas.gov">Trisha.wiatt@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Fayetteville 479-575-9471 Rogers 479-636-0083 Berryville 870-423-1077 Harrison 870-741-8484 Mountain Home 870-425-5644</p> <p>Cindy Magness <a href="mailto:info@chenalththerapy.com">info@chenalththerapy.com</a></p> <p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p>

3.	<p>Paid and unpaid work experiences, including summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing and on-the-job training opportunities are short-term, planned, structured learning experiences that occur in a workplace and are focused on career exploration and the development of work readiness skills. The primary purpose of work experiences is to expose youth to the requirements of work and to employers' expectations. An employer may benefit from the work done by a youth, but the primary benefit must be to the youth.</p>	<p>Work opportunities with an emphasis on jobs in in-demand and emerging industries</p> <p>Participants will prepare for employment opportunities through the provision of various services including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic skill remediation</li> <li>• supervised work experiences</li> <li>• pre-employment abilities such as career planning, resume preparation, labor market information usage, application completion, and interview skills attainment</li> <li>• attainment of core employability/work maturity skills such as dependability, honesty, problem solving, initiative, enthusiasm, team player</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills, appearance, leadership, and cultural sensitivity.</li> </ul> <p>emphasis on jobs in in-demand and emerging industries</p>	<p>Division of Services for the Blind</p> <p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p> <p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>Goodwill</p>	<p>Kevin Estes  <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a>            Shane Bronson  <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a>            Heather Grigsby  <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Kevin Cook  <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Karen Henry  <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a>            James Moss  <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>Ben Aldama  <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner  <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius  <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins –  <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn  <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus  <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones  <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p>
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4.	Occupational skills training constitutes an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. These include programs that lead to the attainment of a certificate or credential, participation in Job Corps, apprenticeship programs, and training programs that provide skills necessary to enter or advance in a specific occupation.	Enrollment into programs that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills for in-demand and emerging occupations;	<p>Division of Services for the Blind</p> <p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p> <p>Goodwill</p> <p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>Goodwill</p>	<p>Kevin Estes <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Shane Bronson <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Heather Grigsby <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Kevin Cook <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p> <p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jroins@asumh.edu">jroins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p>
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5.	<p>Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation element reflects an integrated education and training model and describes how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.</p>	<p>Referrals made to programs that provide concurrent education. While programs developing basic academic skills, which are included as part of alternative secondary school services and dropout recovery services (program element 2), workforce preparation activities that occur as part of a work experience (program element 3), and occupational skills training (Program element 4) can occur separately and at different times (and thus are counted under separate program elements), this program element refers to the concurrent delivery of these services which make up an integrated education and training model.</p>	<p>Division of Services for the Blind</p> <p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p> <p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>Goodwill</p>	<p>Kevin Estes <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Shane Bronson <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Heather Grigsby <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Kevin Cook <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p>
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6.	<p>Leadership development opportunities, which include community service and peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. 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</p>	<p>Participation in community service learning projects, peer centered activities, teambuilding, life-skills training, healthy lifestyle choices, etc.☞</p> <p>The Pre-Employment Transition Program offered through ARS and DSB provide soft skills training which includes a focus on social behaviors intended to enhance the development of employment skills for transition age youth by fostering the knowledge and growth of independent living skills, communication, and interpersonal skills to gain understanding of employer expectations related to timeliness and performance on the job. ARS will provide or coordinate students with disabilities. ARS offers the Youth Leadership Forum on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas which is open to youth with disabilities and designed to foster leadership skills. This is part of a nationwide effort to join youth with disabilities and promote empowerment.</p>	<p>Division of Services for the Blind</p> <p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p>	<p>Kevin Estes  <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a>            Shane Bronson  <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a>            Heather Grigsby  <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Kevin Cook  <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Karen Henry  <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a>            James Moss  <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p>
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7.	Supportive services to enable an individual to participate in WIOA youth program activities. These may include, but are not limited to, housing, meals, medical care, day care, transportation, school related supplies, training related supplies, etc.	Assistance with transportation, childcare, clothing, supplies, and related needs;	<p>Division of Services for the Blind</p> <p>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p> <p>ADWS</p> <p>Goodwill</p>	<p>Kevin Estes <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a> Shane Bronson <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a> Heather Grigsby <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Kevin Cook <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>Aaron Johnson - Harrison <a href="mailto:aaron.johnson@arkansas.gov">aaron.johnson@arkansas.gov</a> John Jones – Fayetteville <a href="mailto:John.jones@arkansas.gov">John.jones@arkansas.gov</a> Jenny Patoka – Mountain Home <a href="mailto:jenny.patoka@arkansas.gov">jenny.patoka@arkansas.gov</a> Tridena Feaster – Rogers <a href="mailto:Tridena.feaster@arkansas.gov">Tridena.feaster@arkansas.gov</a></p> <p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p>
8.	Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months; this service may occur during program participation or during the follow-up period. Adult mentoring is a one-to-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.	Referral to community-, faith-based, and/or other organizations to provide one-on-one encouragement and direction;	<p>Big Brother Big Sisters NWA</p> <p>Youth Bridge Harrison/Fayetteville</p>	<p>479-966-4366</p> <p>Fayetteville 479-575-9471 Rogers 479-636-0083 Berryville 870-423-1077 Harrison 870-741-8484 Mountain Home 870-425-5644</p>

9.	Follow-up services include 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 must be provided for not less than 12 months after obtaining employment and/or completion of participation.	Frequent interaction, including guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit;	Division of Services for the Blind  Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  NWAEDD Title 1	Kevin Estes <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a> Shane Bronson <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a> Heather Grigsby <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a>  Kevin Cook <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a>  Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a>
10	Comprehensive guidance and counseling to help youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. It includes imparting skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development.	Career counseling will be an integral part of youth programming and provide the basis for individual employment plans.	Division of Services for the Blind  Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  NWAEDD Title 1	Kevin Estes <a href="mailto:kevin.estes@arkansas.gov">kevin.estes@arkansas.gov</a> Shane Bronson <a href="mailto:shane.bronson@arkansas.gov">shane.bronson@arkansas.gov</a> Heather Grigsby <a href="mailto:heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov">heather.grigsby@arkansas.gov</a>  Kevin Cook <a href="mailto:Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov">Kevin.cook@arkansas.gov</a>  Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a>

11	Financial literacy education to help youth gain the skills needed to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals. An example of financial literacy education is the FDIC approved Money Smart curriculum.	Financial literacy education is supported by activities such as partnerships with financial institutions and to provide workshops at the local one stop.	<p>Goodwill</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p> <p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p>	<p>Tammy Jones <a href="mailto:tjones@goodwillar.org">tjones@goodwillar.org</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p> <p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="http://minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p>
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12	<p>Entrepreneurial skills training, including the use of curriculum-based training modules that teach youth the value of being skilled and applying those skills to meet a consumer need or demand; to think creatively and critically; to problem solve; how to recognize opportunities, and other skills related to entrepreneurialism.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial skills training is supported by activities such as partnerships with economic development agencies and referrals to business development organizations.</p>	<p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>Harrison Regional Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Siloam Springs Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Rogers/Lowell Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Springdale Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Searcy County Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Newton County Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Marion County Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="http://minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>870-741-2659</p> <p>479-524-6466</p> <p>479-636-1240</p> <p>479-872-2222</p> <p>479-521-1710</p> <p>870-425-5111</p> <p>870-448-2948</p> <p>870-446-2455</p> <p>870-739-6041</p>
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13	Services that provide career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration by using labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area.	Workshops and other services that prepare youth for careers in in-demand and/or emerging occupations. Information is provided in the local one-stops or on-line systems such as the Arkansas Job Link. Information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations is available in areas, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.	<p>Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</p> <p>North Arkansas College – Adult Education</p> <p>Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</p> <p>Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education</p> <p>Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education</p> <p>Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</p> <p>NWAEDD Title 1</p>	<p>Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a></p> <p>Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a></p> <p>Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a></p> <p>Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a></p> <p>Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a></p> <p>Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a></p> <p>Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a></p>
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14	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training include the delivery of activities listed within the 14 WIOA program elements and other activities that 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	Individual guidance and counseling, including career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for FAFSA; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions.	NWAEDD Title 1  Career Pathways    Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education  North Arkansas College – Adult Education  Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education  Arkansas State University Mt Home – Adult Education  Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education  Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville	Karen Henry <a href="mailto:khenry@nwaedd.org">khenry@nwaedd.org</a> James Moss <a href="mailto:jmoss@nwaedd.org">jmoss@nwaedd.org</a>  Rebecca Martin North Arkansas College <a href="mailto:rmartin@northark.edu">rmartin@northark.edu</a> TRIO Richard Criger <a href="mailto:rcriger@northark.edu">rcriger@northark.edu</a> Northwest Arkansas Community College Career Pathways (479) 619-3128  Laura Yarbrough ASU MH <a href="mailto:Careerpath@asumh.edu">Careerpath@asumh.edu</a>  Ben Aldama <a href="mailto:baldama@nwacc.edu">baldama@nwacc.edu</a>  Cherie Conner <a href="mailto:cconner@northark.edu">cconner@northark.edu</a>  Robbie Cornelius <a href="mailto:Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net">Robbie.cornelius@fayar.net</a>  Jenna Robbins – <a href="mailto:jrobbins@asumh.edu">jrobbins@asumh.edu</a>  Nick Ryburn <a href="mailto:nryburn@nwti.edu">nryburn@nwti.edu</a>  Mina Phebus <a href="mailto:minaWozarkliteracy.org">minaWozarkliteracy.org</a>
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Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) have youth programs for youth with disabilities that focus on employment. ARS and DSB have Supported Employment program models that are appropriate for youth with disabilities and the Pre-Employment Transition Program, which serves youth that are also students in an educational program from ages 16 to 21 in the State of Arkansas.

The Supported Employment model provides job placement assistance, on-the-job supports and job coaching through a third-party vendor that is qualified and monitored through ARS or DSB. Regular meetings and updates are built into this program model. With the Pre-Employment Transition model ARS and DSB provide 5 core services to youth that are students. These services include self-advocacy, work readiness, work-based learning, counseling on opportunities in post-secondary training, and job exploration. These services can be arranged through 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors, schools, or directly through ARS counselors. This program is qualified and monitored by ARS or DSB staff.

**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*)

Continuous monitoring of the programs to ensure compliance with the laws and performance measures are met. Ensuring that Board members should have a complete understanding of their role . Workforce Board staff works diligently to make sure all appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The Northwest Business Services Team works with businesses and training providers to help determine employment opportunities and needs.

Board meeting agendas have been restructured so that the tactical requirements are handled first. Time is then allowed for the board to have discussions on strategies for effectiveness and continuous improvement.

The Youth Additional Barrier policy adopted by the Workforce Board may be found in the Board Policy Manual and at [nwaedd.org](http://nwaedd.org).

**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 will include on-the-job training, work experience, apprenticeship, classroom training, customized training or incumbent worker training.

The individual training accounts (ITA) system is used by participants who are eligible for training services and choose to attend training. A career advisor uses the ITA request form to determine a participant's financial need. The individual selects the course of study from the eligible training provider list. The individual must have made an application and have received determination from other funding sources and present the award letter to the career specialist to show the monetary amounts of unmet financial need. He/she must also present a statement of how much the family will be able to contribute to the cost of the training. 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, books, fees, supplies, and/or tools. Employment/Training Advisors will make sure that there is no duplication of services.

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 completed by the career advisor. The Eligible Training Provider bills the WIOA Program each semester. ITA's may be adjusted up or

down based upon case necessity. ITA's are not issued if the training program is not on the Arkansas Consumer Report System (ACRS) list.

Registered Apprenticeship is another viable option for individuals in career development. It is earn and learn, individuals are employed and receive training to earn a credential and even become licensed in the field in which they are working. Examples include but are not limited to electrical and plumbing, IT and Bilingual Administrative Assistants.

**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 primary avenue for training services is through the Individual Training Account; however, contracts may be used but should reflect a training program that is in demand. On-the-job training and customized training are other options available to serve a single employer with its training needs.

**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)]**

The Board uses the Projected Employment Opportunities List as the basic guide for determining in-demand occupations. Additionally, demand occupations and targeted industry sectors specific to the Northwest Area are focused. Employer feedback regarding employment success may also be a considering factor. Demand occupations from neighboring Workforce areas may be used as well. When developing on-the-job contracts with an employer an open position would indicate it is in demand.

## **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 ARS Field offices or other ARS organizational units will replicate cooperative agreements in whole or in part with local divisions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core programs. These may include the following:

- provision of staff training and technical assistance with regard to the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services
- 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 hotlines
- establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate job placement
- 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)
- 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 Arkansas Rehabilitation Services). The agreement must be signed by the local manager, the supervising Senior Leader from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and Chief Fiscal Officer of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

To ensure compliance the local workforce board rehabilitation committee will review and provide oversight of the cooperative agreements as well as facilitate compliance.

**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)]**

The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District is responsible for disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Officials. Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District is located at 818 Highway 62-65-412 North, Harrison, Arkansas 72601. Joe Willis is the Executive Director.

**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)]**

During Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Board Chair appointed the One Stop Operator Procurement Task Force and approved hiring a consultant to guide the Board through the procurement process.

The NWAEDD One Stop Operator RFP was released on April 5, 2021. Notices were sent to Board members, Chief Elected Officials, One Stop partners and bidders list. The Notice of Publication appeared April 4, April 11 and April 18, 2021, in the Statewide edition of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. 5 requests for the RFP were received.

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board One Stop Operator Procurement Task Force met on May 5, 2021 to review and score the responses to the RFP. The Task Force approved Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District RFP to be the One Stop Operator.

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board Executive Committee met on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Executive Committee approved the recommendation from the One Stop Operator Task Force to award the One Stop Operator to NWAEDD. The Northwest Chief Elected Officials also approved NWAEDD as the One Stop Operator.

**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)]

Performance measures for each local area will be the same as the State's goals.

#### **Northwest WIOA Performance Measures**

<b>WIOA Adult</b>	<b>PY20 &amp; PY21 Performance Goals</b>
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	82.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	77.00%
Credential Attainment Rate	66.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$5653.00
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline
<b>WIOA Dislocated Worker</b>	<b>PY20 &amp; PY21 Performance Goals</b>
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	81.90%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	77.00%
Credential Attainment Rate	68.50%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,300.00
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline
<b>WIOA Youth</b>	<b>PY20 &amp; PY21 Performance Goals</b>
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	67.50%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70.30%
Credential Attainment Rate	67.50%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Baseline
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline
<b>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</b>	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. 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 at the end of each program year for the board to approve/disapprove. 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 quarterly for its 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)]

The Northwest Workforce Development Board was asked for input into the development of the local plan at its March 1, 2023, board meeting. The vision of the Arkansas Workforce Development Delivery System was shared, providing the board with an overview of the Governor's vision for the system under WIOA. A draft of the local plan was emailed to all board members as well as members of the Northwest Business Services Team, with a request for help with the development of the plan. An initial draft of the plan was forwarded to the board volunteers for input and review. CEOs had the opportunity to provide input as well. Workforce Center partners, businesses, labor organizations, educators, and economic developers from the local area are all represented on our board and Business Services Team 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 proclamation was released by newspaper, advising members of the public to submit comments on the proposed plan 30 days from March 12, 2023. Additionally, the proclamation was made public via NWAEDD's website and physical location, as well as through email notification. The public comment period was March 12 to April 10, 2023.

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

At the conclusion of the public comment period, all comments will be reviewed and submitted.

- 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)]

Concerns or apprehensions received during the public comment period will be addressed succeeding the local board's review of said concerns. Any concerns presented will be included in the attachment of this plan.

There were no comments.

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

Michelle Ryan  
Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District  
818 Highway 62 65 412 North  
Harrison, AR 72601  
[mryan@nwaedd.org](mailto:mryan@nwaedd.org)  
870-741-6882

## **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 local area will focus more on equity, education, and training as it is crucial to creating more skilled workers, deeper talent pools, and a more resilient workforce. As the skill requirements of jobs increase and change rapidly, businesses need a diverse, highly skilled pipeline of workers ready for the jobs they create, and Arkansans need access to training so they can be equipped for those jobs. This vision will be accomplished, in part, by utilizing resources provided by partner organizations to support the upskilling efforts of participants; this will allow the local area to accomplish this vision with our current level of funding.

**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 local area has resumed pre-pandemic levels of service. We are utilizing a flexible, accommodating approach to deliver workforce services safely and effectively to all individuals.

**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?**

Local strategies to identify, engage and enroll participants who may be unaware of the services available through the public workforce system include, at a minimum, developing partnerships with community-based organizations to generate referrals, hosting informational exchange events for local non-profits and members of the public to make them aware of services provided by the workforce system. Northwest held the first Circle of Success event in 2022 that included over 30 non-profits to convene and learn about each other's services and the best ways in which we can support participants. Beginning April of 2023 NWAEDD will be hosting WIOA Orientations at the Fayetteville office. Circle of Success partners and stakeholders will be encouraged to refer their participants to us. This also provides an opportunity for the business services to gather information from these individuals on the workforce barriers they face and influence strategy for regional planning and sector partnerships.

**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?** The local area has developed an outreach and engagement strategy to make the public more aware of the available services of the public workforce system. The local area is utilizing face-to-face outreach, printed marketing materials for distribution to partners and community-based organizations, social media platforms and upgrading the local area provider website. WIOA staff have met with chambers of commerce throughout our area, been highlighted in Chamber newsletters and participated in radio and television interviews.

**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?**

The local board staff has worked together to develop a strategic outreach plan that emphasizes partnerships core partners and with many local community organizations to target and serve all populations, including marginalized populations. Local board staff are utilizing a traditional outreach and service approach and have purchased software and begun utilizing a shared database to improve our capacity to provide remotes services to marginalized populations in our local area.

**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?**

Northwest area is working to increase the volume of work experiences by encouraging more out of school youth to participate in Work Experience (WE) activities to help them determine if an identified career path is suitable for their needs and abilities. WE activities will take into account, at a minimum, the skills, abilities, desired career path, and barriers to self-sufficient employment opportunities of all eligible youth, regardless of disabilities, language barriers or cultural marginalization. Accommodations and supports will be provided, as needed and allowable, to overcome any barriers to success. The Summer Youth program provides Work Experience for a large number of in-school students. This program has proven vital for our students as well as our business partners who serve as work-sites.

## Section 7: Plan Assurances

	Planning Process and Public Comment	References
X	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 public for a period that is no less than 30 days.	WIOA Sections 108(d); 20 CFR 679.550(b)
X	7.2 The final local plan is available and accessible to the public.	20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
X	7.3 The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (Including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIOA Section 107(e); 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550
	Required Policies and Procedures	References
X	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.	20 CFR 679.390
X	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); 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)
X	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); 20 CFR 678.500-510
X	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)
X	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); 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b)
X	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; 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400
X	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; 20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) and 680.410-430

Required Policies and Procedures (Continued)		References
X	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); 20 CFR 683.600
X	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); 20 CFR 678.305
X	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)
X	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
X	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
X	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)
X	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
X	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
X	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

X	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; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
X	7.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable	WIOA Section 108(b)(16); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15);
	federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-310
X	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)
X	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); 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410
X	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; 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
X	7.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.850
<b>Eligibility</b>		<b>References</b>
X	7.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure 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.	20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A

X	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); 20 CFR 680.300-320
X	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 I WIOA Title programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570
X	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

Plan modifications must identify expected levels of performance for each indicator of performance for the two years covered by the plan modification. The local boards must reach an agreement with the ADWS, on the negotiated levels of performance for each of the two years of the plan modification.

The Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following levels of performance for the following indicators for **Program Years 22-23**:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skills Gains

### PY2022 – PY 2023 Performance Targets Template

#### Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: Northwest

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY22-23 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	
Adult	81%
Dislocated Worker	81%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	71%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	
Adult	80%
Dislocated Worker	83%
Youth (Education or Training Activities or Employment)	74%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	
Adult	\$6,449
Dislocated Worker	\$7,227
Youth	\$3,450
Credential Attainment Rate	
Adult	79%
Dislocated Worker	77%
Youth	60%
Measurable Skill Gains	
Adult	69%
Dislocated Worker	66.5%
Youth	57%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	
Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline

## Appendix D: Planning References and Resources

**Local Areas must list each of the state's strategic goals in their plans and develop their own objectives for inclusion in the local plan.**

### **State of Arkansas 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 using 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 to meet business and industry needs.
6. Expand service delivery access points using 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 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.

PY 2020 – PY 2023 Combined State Plan to be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

### **State Policy and Guidance.**

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

### **Labor Market and Workforce Information.**

#### **A. Discover Arkansas**

Labor Market Information Portal Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) is posted online using the <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/> and is available to the 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, [www.discover.arkansas.gov](http://www.discover.arkansas.gov). 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://arkansasresearchcenter.org/arc/index.php?cID=153> includes:

- a. Industries
- b. Job Growth
- c. Projected Job Growth by Workforce Development Area
- d. Projected Job Growth by Industry
- e. Percent Workforce

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.

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

Arkansas Occupations, which includes data visualizations concerning occupations in Arkansas, both current and projections. 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.

## **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 t

Northwest has adopted the state's Vision and Goals and adapted them to the local area.

### **Vision**

Northwest Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas' economy competitive in the global marketplace.

### **Goals**

The local board will strive to prepare and educate a skilled workforce through partnerships with all core and other partners. Strategies for achieving these goals are found in the Regional section of the Plan.

**Strategic Goal 1:** Develop and strengthen partnerships 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 Business Services Team, chambers of commerce, economic development partners and other opportunities.
2. Increase the use of all work-based learning programs as viable talent development opportunities by continuing the education and communication between partners, employers, and trainers.
3. Continue to partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, adult education, disability service providers, community-based organizations, and non-profits to understand barriers and resources available to individuals, so individuals can succeed in training programs in our region.
4. Analyze and address barriers to collaboration between state, regional, and local business services teams.

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

#### *Goal 2 Objectives:*

1. Promote and fund training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification in demand occupations through scholarships, on-the-job training, and work experiences.
2. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives to meet business and industry needs.
3. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by Northwest Workforce system partners.
4. Support the development of functional teams to enhance services.
5. Ensure a comprehensive array of services are provided to employers to meet unmet workforce needs.
6. Outline business solutions and provide training to LWDB staff and stakeholders on mobilizing resources, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

**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 throughout the system.
2. Participate in an image-building outreach campaign to educate Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas.

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Participate in a skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue in Northwest Arkansas.
2. Work with partners in education at all levels to help implement a plan to close skills gaps in Northwest Arkansas. Review current job readiness standards and evaluations being used within the workforce system to find best practices that could be replicated.
3. Use labor market information provided by the Department of Workforce Services and contract with a vendor that will provide detailed labor and skills analysis as well as evaluation of post-secondary education performance to determine effectiveness of training to bridge the skills gaps.
4. Seek grants available to education and employers to fund training programs that address skills gaps.
5. Receive input from employers to address the skills shortages and identify alternative methods of recruiting and training workers, such as exploring nontraditional labor pools and methods of upskilling and offering efficient onboarding processes.