New York State
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Four Year Combined State Plan

Program Years 2016 through 2019

CONTENTS

STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS **1**

STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS **4**

Economic, Workforce and Development Activities Analysis 4

Workforce Development Activities 15

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS **27**

State Board 27

Implementation of Strategy 28

State Operating Systems and Policies 52

Program Data 68

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS **75**

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities 75

Adult Education and Academic Standards 86

WAGNER-PEYSER **93**

Agricultural Outreach Plan 95

Trade Adjustment Assistance 106

NEW YORK OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND (OCFS/NYSCB) **113**

Description a: Input of the State Rehabilitation Council 113

Description b: Request for Waiver of Statewideness 115

Description c: Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System 115

Description d: Coordination with Education Officials 118

Description e: Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Organizations 122

Description f: Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services 123

Description g: Coordination with Businesses 124

Description h: Interagency Cooperation 125

Description i: Comprehensive System of Personnel Development: Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development 125

Description j: Statewide Assessment 129

Description k: Annual Estimates 141

Description l: State Goal & Priorities 142
Description m: Order of Selection 142
Description n: Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds 142
Description o: State's Strategies 143
Description p: Evaluation And Reports Of Progress: VR And Supported Employment Goals 148
Description q: Quality, Scope And Extent Of Supported Employment Services 157

NEW YORK OFFICE OF ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 160
Input of State Rehabilitation Council 160
Request for Waiver of Statewideness 161
Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System 162
Coordination with Education Officials 163
Cooperative Agreements With Private Nonprofit Organizations 166
Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services 167
Coordination With Business 169
Interagency Cooperation 170
Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development 172
Statewide Assessment 177
Annual Estimates 195
State Goals and Priorities 196
Order of Selection 197
Goals And Plans for Distribution Of Title VI Funds 197
State's Strategies 198
Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion 202
Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services 203

ASSURANCES 207
Common Assurances (For All Core Programs) 207
Title I-B Assurances 211
Wagner-Peyser Assurances 212
Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs Certifications And Assurances 214
NYS Office of Children and Family Services Commission for the Blind 221
Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications And Assurances 221

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES 225

GLOSSARY OF TERMS..... 231

APPENDICES 236

APPENDIX 1: WIOA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 236

APPENDIX 2: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS..... 237

STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

Vision

New York State (NYS) envisions a unified workforce development system that is regionally coordinated and programmatically seamless, delivering workforce training, business services, and statewide job linkages to all New Yorkers.

Goals

This vision is supported by three high level goals that address: Governance; Service Delivery; and Accountability:

- **Governance** –Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs will be governed in a seamless system that is coordinated with regional sector-based workforce strategies that align with NYS Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) strategic planning.

  It is a goal of this plan to build partnerships and strategic alliances to create a unified workforce vision that brings government, education, and business into an integrated force. Progress has been made towards integration; however, it is important that this continues so that the workforce system can most effectively collaborate on the mission, vision, curriculum, and outcome.

  The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) will recommend policies to continuously improve the system; support REDC efforts across the State; develop channels to communicate best practices to better serve customers; and serve as a proactive and visionary entity to improve the statewide workforce development system.

- **Service Delivery** – Services will meet the needs of businesses through public-private sector partnerships such as education, government, and community, with priority given to removing barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities, veterans, formerly incarcerated persons, disconnected youth, individuals in economically distressed communities, adults with limited literacy or English language proficiency who lack a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma, adults with limited literacy who have a HSE diploma, New Americans including immigrants and refugees, and other special populations.

  Services include: job development, job posting, job match and referral, basic skills training, occupational training in career pathways, HSE preparation, and employment support services.

  Services are easily accessible to provide all individuals with equal opportunity to work or obtain training, and frontline staff can seamlessly move individuals to applicable services.

- **Accountability** – Meaningful performance metrics will be reported to support evidence-based and data-driven workforce investments and decisions, and accountable and transparent programs. This includes alignment of technology, metrics, and data systems across programs.

Strategies

The following provides specific strategies for accomplishing each goal:

Governance

a. Revise state guidelines and internal processes to expedite and empower REDC projects across State government, which serve as the main State strategy for job creation.

b. Make program decisions across the system based on data from current and projected job growth, and utilize partnerships with businesses and REDCs to supply this data.

c. Share labor market data across workforce partners to inform training decisions and encourage further dissemination of this information to uncover other areas where it might be useful.

d. Focus ongoing system integration plans beyond core program partners to encompass all available programs that serve the needs of businesses and job seekers.

e. Improve collaboration with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program within the workforce system, and explore the ability of the system to expand program support beyond mandated Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) career services.

Service Delivery

a. Improve comprehensive referrals, program accessibility, and service connections in every workforce area to promote measurable outcome improvements for New Yorkers facing barriers to employment.

b. Further develop partnerships with State entities, including the higher education system, and secondary schools to align activities, training, and resources that lead to improved employment outcomes for all parts of the workforce, including individuals with disabilities.

c. Improve workforce partner outreach to business regarding hiring individuals with disabilities and adults who obtained their HSE diploma or other such credentials in order to meet their workforce needs.

d. Promote and incentivize the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) strategies across all programs in the system, and work with business to identify how such strategies could be modified to increase use, especially for individuals facing barriers to employment.

e. Identify and develop training programs that best align with the needs of business and bridge skill gaps of existing job seekers and low skilled workers.

f. Seek to identify new funding opportunities to support workforce investments and base workforce system investment decisions on data gathered from strong regional sector partnerships.

g. Incentivize businesses to make internal systems compatible with access technology, enabling individuals to overcome barriers to gainful employment.

h. Prioritize program funding and financial incentives to serve New Yorkers who are basic skills deficient and/or face barriers to employment, including those who need a HSE diploma for employment, training, or postsecondary transition.

i. Invest in ongoing development of program staff to provide efficient career services across the full spectrum of workforce programs, including all required partner programs.

j. Promote program accessibility as a guiding principle system-wide, leverage the experience and ability of programs with a proven record of serving individuals with barriers to employment, and provide financial support of such efforts across the system.

Accountability

a. Develop system improvement measures that reflect NYS priorities and goals, and can be reported on a regular basis.

b. Continue to integrate information technology across programs and pursue new technologies. Align performance and financial reporting systems to better allocate funding, improve accountability, and address systemic issues.

c. Develop effective mechanisms to communicate and share performance information to system stakeholders to be used for continuous improvement.

Performance

WIOA performance reporting seeks to improve accountability across all the core programs by requiring that they report on a set of uniform measures. The core programs are required to regularly report to the federal government and to the public on program performance, to ensure the system is accountable and transparent in the pursuit of NYS's workforce vision and goals. As of the beginning of PY17, the core programs have updated their case management systems to collect the data elements required by WIOA, and have begun updating data entry policy to include the new requirements. This data collection will facilitate setting accurate performance goals measures new to the programs in PY18. In particular, WIOA Title II and IV program staff is in the process of gathering the necessary information to establish valid and reliable data for the required performance measures. Additionally, the core programs continue to work on establishing data sharing agreements for the programs that do not have access to Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data. With the understanding that the new data collection will take time to establish a baseline for performance, the Federal agencies will not be holding states accountable for performance goals in PY17.

Assessment

The federal government uses the primary indicators of performance as the main assessment of the effectiveness of the NYS workforce development system. In addition to these, NYS plans to develop intermediary performance indicators designed to support the primary indicators and system goals. The intermediary indicators will be designed to improve communication between system partners, leverage new technologies NYS has developed, or influence the behavior of frontline staff in NYS Career Centers to improve services to participants as needed by the system. NYS has had success with intermediary indicators in the past, such as the Customer Service Indicators, which were designed to improve performance in the Common Measures under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

With regard to Adult Education and Family Literacy, attached in Table 2 of Appendix 2 are the performance targets approved by the U. S. Education Department's Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) for 2017-18. The NYS Education Department (NYSED) will continue to refine measurable skill gain targets for 2018-19, including definitions of measures and approved assessments for individuals with barriers to employment "who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers."

Adult Education and Family Literacy will continue to comply with WIOA in a number of areas. This includes a data exchange with the Unemployment Insurance database at the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and adapting the NYSED reporting data system and reporting requirements with final mandates. Seven Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) centers and the National Reporting System (NRS) accountability specialist, funded with WIOA leadership funds, are preparing to mount professional development and training for agencies that will be WIOA-funded. The federal office has set the new reporting deadline for NRS data to August 15, 2018. ACCES-Adult Education Policies and Programs (AEPP) has taken steps to comply with required deadlines. All training and performance reporting policies will be closely coordinated with partner programs to ensure a smooth transition.

STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

Economic Analysis

Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.

Occupations with Largest Number of Online Ads, NYS, August 2017

Occupation	SOC Code	Volume
Registered Nurses	29-1141	12,891
Software Developers, Applications	15-1132	7,068
Marketing Managers	11-2021	6,819
Retail Salespersons	41-2031	6,813
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	41-1011	6,682
Computer Occupations, All Other	15-1199	5,755
Financial Managers	11-3031	4,976
Social and Human Service Assistants	21-1093	4,830
Accountants and Auditors	13-2011	4,759
Management Analysts	13-1111	4,707

Source: Help Wanted Online
Note: Data are not seasonally adjusted and reflect seasonal hiring patterns

- Data from the Help Wanted Online (HWOL) series, which is compiled by the Conference Board, was consulted to determine which occupations and industries are currently in demand.
- The table above shows the 10 occupations with the most online ads.
- These top 10 occupations represent a broad range of industries including: financial services, health care, retail trade, and information technology.
- Six occupations had more than 5,000 online jobs postings in NYS in August 2017.
- The occupations most in demand in NYS in August 2017, according to online advertised job openings, are: Registered Nurses (12,891); Software Developers, Applications (7,068); Marketing Managers (6,819); and Retail Salespersons (6,813).

Industry Sectors with Largest Number of Online Ads, NYS, August 2017

Industry Sector	NAICS Code	Volume
Administrative and Support Services	56	25,645
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	22,427
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	54	18,093
Retail Trade	44-45	18,088
Finance and Insurance	52	14,464
Educational Services	61	9,191
Accommodation and Food Services	72	7,865
Information	51	5,850
Manufacturing	31-33	5,248

Wholesale Trade	42	5,192

Source: Help Wanted Online

Note: Data are not seasonally adjusted and reflect seasonal hiring patterns. Roughly half of NYS's online job ads do not have an industry assigned.

- The HWOL data series also provides information on the industry sectors that are posting help wanted ads.
- The table above shows the 10 industry sectors with the most online ads in August 2017.
- The industry sectors with the highest current demand for workers include: Administrative and Support Services (25,645); Health Care and Social Assistance (22,427); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (18,093); Retail Trade (18,088); and Finance and Insurance (14,464).

Occupations with Largest Number of Online Ads, Upstate and Downstate New York, August 2017

Rank	SOC Code	Occupational Title	Number of Online Job Ads
Upstate New York			
1	29-1141	Registered Nurses	7,978
2	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,895
3	41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,538
4	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,137
5	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	2,359
6	21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	2,235
7	35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,003
8	43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,931
9	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,838
10	15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	1,684
Total Ads (Top 10)			**30,598**
Total Ads (Upstate Region)			**136,337**
Downstate New York			
1	15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	5,579
2	11-2021	Marketing Managers	5,453
3	29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,913
4	15-1199	Computer Occupations, All Other	4,107
5	11-3031	Financial Managers	3,932
6	13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	3,260
7	13-1111	Management Analysts	3,231
8	15-1134	Web Developers	3,158
9	41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,144
10	43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	2,959
Total Ads (Top 10)			**39,736**

Total Ads (Downstate Region)	**158,679**

A regional breakdown of online job ads provides a more nuanced look at how job titles in demand differ between the Downstate (New York City & Long Island) and Upstate (balance of NYS) areas. Among our findings:

- Downstate ads are dominated by high-paying, white-collar jobs concentrated in the management, business and financial operations, and computer and mathematical occupational categories, which account for seven of the top ten job titles.
- The mix of online ads in the Upstate area is more diverse than the Downstate list, dominated by middle class jobs such as retail salesperson, but also including blue-collar titles such as truck driver and maintenance and repair worker.
- Only two occupations are common to both top ten lists: registered nurses and first-line supervisors of retail sales workers. This shows that these occupations are in demand everywhere in the state.
- The quantity of online ads in the Downstate area (158,679) is greater than the number in the Upstate area (136,337).

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Emerging Industries in NYS

Industry Code (NAICS)	Industry Title	2016 (2nd Qtr.) Jobs	Projected 2018 (2nd Qtr.) Jobs	Net Change	% Percent
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	8,048	8,677	+629	+7.8%
5112	Software Publishing	9,359	11,219	+1,860	+19.9%
51913	Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals	30,359	36,263	+5,904	+19.4%
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	72,100	77,527	+5,427	+7.5%
7132	Gambling Industries	8,844	12,991	+4,147	+46.9%

Source: New York State Department of Labor Division of Research and Statistics

Analysts from NYSDOL's Division of Research and Statistics (R&S) identified five emerging industries in NYS, based on short-term industry projections spanning the 2014-2016 period. This set of emerging industries covers three broad industry sectors including: manufacturing; information; and entertainment.

The five emerging industries had combined statewide employment of 127,710 in the second quarter of 2016. The two industries with the most employment in the second quarter of 2016 were Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services (72,100) and Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals (30,359). The total job count for the five emerging industries is expected to rise by almost 18,000, or 14.0%,

between 2016 and 2018. This percentage rate of increase is more than 10 percentage points greater than the state's projected overall increase in jobs (+2.6%) over the 2016-2018 period.

For each of the emerging industries, we present a brief profile as well as information on that industry's top five occupations (i.e., staffing patterns). In general, employment in these emerging industries is relatively concentrated, with the top five occupations accounting for anywhere from 32% to 50% of overall industry employment.

Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing (NAICS 312)

Top 5 Occupations in the Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing Industry

Occupational Code (SOC)	Occupational Title	Share of Industry Employment %
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	13.6%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	13.2%
51-9012	Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	5.9%
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	5.3%
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	4.2%
Total, Top 5 Occupations		**42.2%**

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

One of NYS's emerging industries is the Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing industry (NAICS 312). In recent years, much of the industry's job growth has been centered in craft beverage manufacturing (i.e., brewers, wineries, distillers).

Expanding the state's craft beverage manufacturing industry has been a focal point of economic development efforts by Governor Andrew Cuomo. As a result of these economic development efforts and the surging popularity of craft beverages, industry employment is projected to grow by 7.8%, from 8,048 to 8,677, between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2018.

NYS Software Publishing (NAICS 5112)

Top 5 Occupations in the Software Publishing Industry

Occupational Code (SOC)	Occupational Title	Share of Industry Employment %
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	24.6%
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	7.6%
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	6.2%
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	5.5%
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	5.2%

Total, Top 5 Occupations	49.1%

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

Another one of New York's emerging industries is Software Publishing (NAICS 5112). In recent years, economic development initiatives such as the Cuomo administration's START-UP NY program have sought to create a favorable business climate in the state for start-up companies.

As a result of these initiatives -- as well as businesses and consumers increasing their investments in software, computers, and mobile devices -- NYS's software publishers are flourishing. Looking ahead, the industry's statewide employment count is projected to grow by 19.9% (from 9,359 to 11,219) between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2018.

Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals (NAICS 51913)

Top 5 Occupations in the Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals Industry

Occupational Code (SOC)	Occupational Title	Share of Industry Employment %
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	13.6%
15-1133	Software Developers, Systems Software	7.9%
41-3011	Advertising Sales Agents	6.9%
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	6.0%
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	4.2%
Total, Top 5 Occupations		**38.6%**

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

The Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals industry (NAICS 51913) has grown, with demand driven by consumers and business needs for information and on-demand entertainment. The Internet has exploded over the past 20 years. In 1995, only 1% of the world's population had an Internet connection. That figure has increased from one billion in 2005, to two billion in 2013 and three billion in 2014.

As more people access the web, there has been a rapid increase in demand for skilled workers in this industry. Although the Internet is now over 20 years old, the rapid proliferation of smartphones since Apple introduced the first iPhone in 2007 has contributed to ongoing demand for web services and skilled workers. As Internet penetration and smartphone ownership increase, industry employment is expected to grow accordingly as advertisers continue to shift resources toward Internet and mobile platforms. The number of Internet users is forecasted to double by 2019, while digital advertising spending is also expected to grow to almost $83 billion by 2018.

New York City, sometimes referred to as "Silicon Alley," is home to a thriving tech sector with over 300,000 employees. As such, New York is in a unique position to benefit from the increasing connectivity trends. Between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2018, industry employment is projected to increase by 19.4% (from 30,359 to 36,263).

Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services (NAICS 5416)

Top 5 Occupations in the Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services Industry

Occupational Code (SOC)	Occupational Title	Share of Industry Employment %
13-1111	Management Analysts	15.9%
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	8.0%
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	7.5%
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	5.3%
41-3099	Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	4.7%
Total, Top 5 Occupations		**41.4%**

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services is the largest of the five emerging industries within the state (NAICS 5416). Between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2018, industry employment is projected to increase by 7.5% (from 72,100 to 77,527).

Gambling Industries (NAICS 7132)

Top 5 Occupations in the Gambling Industry

Occupational Code (SOC)	Occupational Title	Share of Industry Employment %
33-9032	Security Guards	9.4%
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7.0%
41-2012	Gaming Change Persons and Booth Cashiers	5.8%
39-3011	Gaming Dealers	5.4%
39-3012	Gaming and Sports Book Writers and Runners	4.8%
Total, Top 5 Occupations		**32.4%**

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

A nascent emerging industry in NYS is Gambling (NAICS 7132). With many casinos recently opened or soon to be opening as a result of the Governor's support, industry employment between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2018 is projected to increase by 46.9% (from 8,844 to 12,991). Gambling is projected to be the fastest growing of our five emerging industries.

Businesses' Employment Needs

Identifying employment needs of businesses in New York State requires developing and maintaining current business customer relationships. This is essential due to the dynamic economic environment which drives business needs.

Developing and maintaining these relationships is accomplished through targeted daily outreach by NYS Career Center business service representatives. Multiple lead sources are used to perform this outreach. Foremost among these is analysis of existing business demand based on current job openings posted on the New York State Job Bank, which averaged about 125,000 unique job openings per day over the past year. In addition, analyses of labor market information on emerging business demand; and business needs identified through the State's REDC strategic planning are used to target business outreach efforts.

The NYS Career Center system served 31,000 businesses in Calendar Year 2017. Employment needs identified by these business customers include: human resources consultation and technical assistance; hiring and training incentives; providing labor market information; layoff aversion planning; and various recruiting services. The most common services used to assist the business in recruiting candidates are: Job development and Job postings; Customized recruitments (972 in 2017); and Career fairs (250 in 2017).

Workforce Analysis

Employment and Unemployment

From the beginning of Governor Cuomo's administration through August 2017, NYS's economy has added more than a million private sector jobs, experienced employment growth in 68 of the past 80 months and added an average of 12,500 private sector jobs per month. Over this timeframe, the statewide unemployment rate has fallen from 8.4% to 4.8%.

Labor Market Trends

Three industry sectors – Educational and Health Services (+360,100), Professional and Business Services (+241,300), and Leisure and Hospitality (+224,800) – are responsible for more than 75% of the private sector jobs added in NYS since August 2010. The two private sector industry groups that lost the most jobs in August 2010-August 2017 include Manufacturing (-22,400) and Natural Resources and Mining (-200).

Of the state's 10 labor market regions, New York City (+22.6%) is the only one that has added jobs at a faster pace than the nation as a whole (+15.1%) since August 2010. Other regions that have seen their private sector job counts grow by at least 5.0% since August 2010 include: Long Island (+11.9%), Hudson Valley (+11.2%), Capital (+10.1%), Finger Lakes (+5.7%) and Western New York (+5.2%). Regions adding private sector jobs at the slowest pace in August 2010 - August 2017 include: Central New York (+3.8%), Southern Tier (+2.3%), Mohawk Valley (+2.2%) and North Country (+2.0%).

In August 2017, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.9% in New York City and 4.8% in the balance of the state (NYS-New York City). While the unemployment rate has increased in both New York City and the balance of the state since March 2017, the rates remain slightly below their pre-recession levels of 5.2% and 5.0%, respectively. In August 2010-August 2017, the rate in New York City dropped from 9.3% to 4.9%. This steep rate drop reflects, in part, the strong private sector job growth experienced in New York City over the past seven years. The rate decline in the balance of state's unemployment rate has been more gradual, falling from 7.9% to 4.8% over the same seven-year timeframe.

The table below shows the change in unemployment rates by labor market region between August 2010 and August 2017. The rate in New York City has dropped the most (-4.4 percentage points) over the past seven years – from 9.5% to 5.1%. Most other regions in the state experienced rate drops in the range of 2.5-3.5 percentage points.

Unemployment Rates, NYS, by Region, August 2010 and August 2017
(not seasonally adjusted)

Region	August 2010	August 2017	Change (in percentage points)
Capital	7.1%	4.2%	-2.9
Central New York	8.1%	4.8%	-3.3
Finger Lakes	7.6%	4.8%	-2.8
Hudson Valley	7.4%	4.5%	-2.9
Long Island	7.3%	4.4%	-2.9
Mohawk Valley	7.7%	4.9%	-2.8
New York City	9.5%	5.1%	-4.4
North Country	8.7%	5.5%	-3.2
Southern Tier	7.9%	4.9%	-3.0
Western New York	8.2%	5.3%	-2.9

Relative to other states, NYS's economic recovery has been robust as it experienced the third largest net gain in private sector jobs in the country (calculated as jobs gained during the recovery/expansion minus jobs lost in the recession). However, the job gains have been uneven, with the New York City, Long Island and Hudson Valley regions adding private sector jobs at a much more rapid rate than other regions in the state.

In addition, New York City and the balance of the state experienced much different trends in their labor force participation rates since August 2010. In New York City, the participation rate has increased slightly, from 59.9% to 61.4%. Outside of New York City, the participation rate has decreased sharply, from 63.9% to 60.5%, over the same period. As a result, overall labor force levels in New York City are up by approximately 298,000 since August 2010, while they are down by almost 210,000 in NYS outside of New York City.

Businesses in a variety of industries in the state continue to report some level of difficulty in filling their job openings. Some of the most difficult-to-fill titles include various finance and accounting occupations, skilled trades occupations (e.g., HVAC technicians, plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters, or sheet metal workers), retail salespersons, truck drivers, customer service representatives, advertising managers, various IT job titles (e.g., network architect, web developer), engineering job titles (e.g., biomedical engineer), health care practitioners (e.g., surgeon, optometrist), and health care support titles (e.g., home health aide, nursing assistant).

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Educational Attainment for Population Age 25+: NYS and Labor Market Regions

Area	Population Age 25+ (in 1000s)	Less than high school diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or Associate degree	Bachelor degree	Graduate or Professional degree
New York	**13435.8**	**14.4%**	**26.7%**	**24.7%**	**19.4%**	**14.8%**
Capital	748.7	8.5%	29.3%	29.4%	18.1%	14.8%
Central NY	527.4	10.6%	30.3%	30.2%	16.3%	12.6%
Finger Lakes	828.7	10.3%	28.9%	30.0%	17.4%	13.5%

Hudson Valley	1552.0	11.6%	24.5%	25.0%	20.7%	18.1%
Long Island	1954.8	9.7%	26.9%	25.2%	21.1%	17.2%
Mohawk Valley	339.9	12.2%	34.9%	31.0%	12.7%	9.2%
New York City	5801.3	19.7%	24.1%	20.6%	21.0%	14.6%
North Country	287.9	12.3%	35.7%	31.0%	11.2%	9.8%
Southern Tier	436.2	10.0%	33.4%	29.4%	14.2%	13.0%
Western NY	958.9	10.0%	31.1%	30.8%	15.6%	12.6%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B15002.

The above table presents information on the educational attainment of the state's population age 25 and older. 59% of the state's population (age 25+) have at least some college or an associate degree, including 19.4% who have a bachelor's degree and another 14.8% who hold a graduate or professional (e.g.., medical or law) degree.

Looking at the state's labor market regions, populations in the Hudson Valley (38.9%) and Long Island (38.2%) have the highest share with at least a bachelor's degree. In contrast, the North Country (21.1%) and the Mohawk Valley (21.9%) have the smallest share.

Conversely, 19.7% of New York City's population (age 25 and older) has less than a high school diploma. This reflects in large part the large share of the city's population that is foreign born. The Capital (8.5%) and Long Island (9.7%) regions have the smallest share of population with less than a high school diploma.

Despite having a highly-educated population and a readily available talent pool, anecdotal accounts indicate that many businesses in the state are still having trouble finding workers with the skills they require. This suggests that local workforce boards need to continue working closely with businesses to develop the worker skills that are in demand.

Almost one in seven New Yorkers do not have a high school diploma. Anecdotal accounts suggest that many businesses will not consider a job applicant, even for the lowest-level positions, unless they have a high school degree.

Another barrier facing many workers in NYS, especially those without a high school diploma, is a lack of English proficiency. This can frequently be attributed to the large number of foreign-born residents in the state. Therefore, it is critical for any workforce development plan to implement a strategy to increase the percentage of potential workers with a high school diploma as well as provide English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

School Status of Population Age 16-19 (levels in 1000s), NYS and Labor Market Regions

Area	Population Age 16-19	Enrolled in School	Not Enrolled in School	Not Enrolled in School		
				High School Graduate	Not High School Graduate	% Not High School Graduate
New York	**1049.0**	**922.3**	**126.7**	**84.2**	**42.4**	**4.0%**
Capital	61.0	53.4	7.6	4.9	2.7	4.4%
Central NY	51.0	45.8	5.2	3.4	1.8	3.5%
Finger Lakes	71.1	62.0	9.1	5.7	3.4	4.8%
Hudson Valley	135.2	119.7	15.5	10.5	5.0	3.7%
Long Island	158.5	143.3	15.3	11.8	3.4	2.2%

Mohawk Valley	29.0	25.0	4.0	2.4	1.6	5.4%
New York City	393.6	342.6	51.1	32.1	19.0	4.8%
North Country	25.9	21.9	4.0	2.8	1.1	4.4%
Southern Tier	45.3	40.3	5.0	3.8	1.2	2.6%
Western NY	78.3	68.4	9.9	6.6	3.3	4.2%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B14005.

Among the more than one million New York youth aged 16-19, about 42,400, or 4.0%, are not enrolled in high school and have not graduated high school. Almost half of the youth (44.7%) in this category reside in New York City. As noted, in the discussion above, persons without a high school diploma are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to finding a job in today's competitive labor market. The share of this age group not in school and without a high school degree ranges from a high of 5.4% in Mohawk Valley to a low of 2.2% on Long Island.

Civilian Population with a Disability (in 1000s), NYS and Labor Market Regions

Area	Total civilian population	With a disability	No disability	Percent with a disability
NYS	**19,427.3**	**2,159.4**	**17,267.9**	11.1%
Capital	1,065.6	132.8	932.9	12.5%
Central NY	779.8	98.4	681.4	12.6%
Finger Lakes	1,197.4	155.5	1,041.9	13.0%
Hudson Valley	2,277.2	241.9	2,035.3	10.6%
Long Island	2,830.7	252.0	2,578.7	8.9%
Mohawk Valley	484.5	73.0	411.5	15.1%
New York City	8,364.7	869.1	7,495.6	10.4%
North Country	406.6	59.9	346.8	14.7%
Southern Tier	642.9	90.4	552.5	14.1%
Western NY	1,377.9	186.6	1,191.3	13.5%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1810.

The table above presents information on the number and share of the overall civilian population with a disability. Note that demographic information on the skill level of this population is not available. As shown, 11.1% of the overall civilian population has a disability. This means more than two million NYS residents have a disability. More than 40% of NYS residents with a disability live in New York City. Another 22.9% of NYS residents with disabilities reside in the Hudson Valley or Long Island.

Long Island (8.9%) is the only labor market region in which the disability rate is below 10%. In contrast, there are five regions in which the disability rate is at or exceeds 13%. The regions with the highest disability rates in the state are: Mohawk Valley (15.1%); North Country (14.7%); Southern Tier (14.1%); Western NY (13.5%); and the Finger Lakes (13.0%).

Share of Population in Poverty and Percent of Households Receiving Public Assistance, NYS and Labor Market Regions

Area	% of Population with Income	% of Population Under 18 years	% of Households with cash public	% of Households with Food Stamp/SNAP

	below poverty level	with Income below poverty level	assistance income	benefits in the past 12 months
NYS	**15.7%**	**22.2%**	**3.4%**	**15.4%**
Capital	11.5%	16.2%	2.5%	11.0%
Central NY	15.3%	22.1%	3.6%	14.4%
Finger Lakes	14.3%	21.1%	4.0%	13.7%
Hudson Valley	11.1%	16.0%	2.4%	9.8%
Long Island	6.6%	8.5%	1.9%	5.9%
Mohawk Valley	16.8%	25.6%	3.2%	16.6%
New York City	20.6%	29.5%	4.1%	20.6%
North Country	16.4%	23.5%	3.5%	16.3%
Southern Tier	16.6%	22.1%	3.5%	14.2%
Western NY	15.4%	23.6%	3.2%	16.3%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables DP03, S1701, B17001.

One of the major challenges facing the state's population as it seeks to attain the education, skills, and training needed to obtain employment is achieving economic security. Data in the above table from the American Community Survey tell us about poverty rates as well as the percentage of NYS households receiving cash public assistance or Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits within the past 12 months.

About one in seven New Yorkers, or 15.7%, were living in poverty, per the American Community Survey. This figure, however, was much higher (22.2%) for those under the age of 18 in NYS.

These statewide figures mask wide variation in poverty rates across the different labor market regions. For example, less than 10% of residents in the Long Island (6.6%) region lived in poverty, while over 20% of New York City residents were in poverty.

The contrast in poverty rates is even greater for residents under the age of 18. For example, only 8.5% of Long Islanders under the age of 18 lived in poverty, while the comparable rate was three times higher (25.6%) in the Mohawk Valley and almost three and a half times higher (29.5%) in New York City.

Over 3% of households in NYS received cash public assistance income. As with the various poverty measures, discussed above, Long Island had the lowest rate (1.9%) of households receiving cash public assistance income, while New York City had the highest rate (4.1%). Similarly, Long Island had the lowest percentage share (5.9%) of households receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months, while New York City topped the list (20.6%).

Description of Apparent Skill Gaps

In today's global economy, industries in the United States, Europe and elsewhere are experiencing significant growth in "middle skill" occupations, which require more than a high school diploma, but less than a Bachelor's degree. In NYS, average annual wages for middle skill occupations range from $20,180 to $146,280, with an average of $56,248 per year across all occupations. It is these jobs that many businesses in NYS, and the nation, are struggling to fill.

Occupational projections from the NYS Department of Labor indicate there will be 3.6 million job vacancies in New York between 2014 and 2024 as a result of new jobs (i.e., growth need) and openings from retirements and career changes (i.e., replacement need). Over a third of these available vacancies will require some type of formal education beyond high school, with 335,000 of these jobs available for those who fall into the "middle skill" category. This is approximately 10,000 more openings than those that will, in total, require a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral/Professional degree.

Failure to address this gap will erode the state's ability to strengthen middle class economic justice, and cause NYS businesses to be less competitive in the global economy due to losses in productivity.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

NYS's workforce development system is strong. Through the SWIB, the SWIB's committees, and the Interagency Team, the WIOA partners have developed a workforce system dedicated to providing job seekers and businesses with the tools necessary to support a growing economy.

1. SWIB Description

The SWIB is the governance body for state workforce development programs in New York. Appointed by Governor Cuomo, membership includes the WIOA-required partners from business, labor unions, local government, NYS Executive and Legislative branches, and other representatives with experience addressing the workforce needs of those with barriers to employment.

The Commissioners from the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL), the NYS Education Department (NYSED), and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services/NYS Commission for the Blind (OCFS/NYSCB) are ex-officio members of the Board. These three agencies are responsible for the six WIOA core programs as follows:

- *NYSDOL, Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (NYSDOL/DEWS)* – Administers Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and the Title III Wagner-Peyser program;
- *NYSED, Adult Career & Continuing Education Services (ACCES)* – Administers the Title II Adult Education and Literacy program through ACCES-Adult Education and the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program through ACCES-Vocational Rehabilitation (NYSED/ACCES-VR); and
- *OCFS/NYSCB* – Administers the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program for legally blind individuals.

2. Other Required WIOA Partners

In addition to the core program partners, there are several mandatory partner programs for which career services must be delivered under WIOA. These mandatory partner programs are:

- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA);
- Unemployment Compensation;
- Job Corps;
- YouthBuild;
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW);

- Indian and Native American programs (INAP);
- Jobs for Veterans;
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE);
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Employment and Training (TANF);
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP);
- Community Services Block Grant Employment and Training (CSBG);
- Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training (HUD); and
- Second Chance Act of 2007.

Other entities carrying out workforce development programs may also be partners in the local area if approved by the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and Chief Elected Official (CEO).

3. Interagency Team Partners and Description

Staff from the WIOA core programs participate on the SWIB's committees, which led to the development of the NYS WIOA Interagency Team in 2015. The Interagency Team was formed under the SWIB's Aligning Workforce Programs committee to work together on the NYS Combined Plan. Since the Plan was submitted, the committee has continued to meet bi-weekly with the goals of:

- Reviewing existing workforce programs for best practices and current performance barriers;
- Fostering dialogue between workforce organizations to ensure program alignment with labor market information and business needs; and
- Developing strategies to ensure workforce programs are aware of WIOA requirements and receive technical assistance when necessary.

Staff from the TANF and SCSEP programs joined the Interagency Team in late 2015, and the group has met approximately 70 times over the last three years. About 50 additional meetings have also been held between the various workgroups within the Interagency Team.

4. Interagency Team Workgroups

To help facilitate the work identified during the WIOA Interagency Team meetings, workgroups were created to address specific needs. The workgroups meet outside of the regular Interagency Team meetings, and due to their smaller size and specific purpose, are more focused than the Interagency Team can be. Generally formed to complete a specific task, the workgroups are dissolved after completing the task they are designated to accomplish. To date, eight (8) workgroups were formed out of the Interagency Team. The following provides descriptions of these workgroups.

a. Accessibility Workgroup – Collaborates with the NYS Career Centers to make the centers and workforce development services accessible to all New Yorkers. The goals of the Accessibility Workgroup are to:
    - Create a base standard of equipment throughout the System that will be more uniform;

- Evaluate program accessibility and examine how assistive technology may open up programming options for participants;
- Understand Career Center staff training needs pertaining to assistive technology; and to
- Create a channel to distribute up to date information on accessibility compliance and best practices.

The workgroup immediately set out working with content experts within the respective NYS agencies, as well as tapping into knowledge from community partners. From this information, a base list was developed for uniform technology for the Career Centers. Data from a digital survey was also evaluated to determine what technology already exists within the Centers and what specific training areas the Career Centers feel they can use assistance with. The workgroup then worked to identify and braid funding sources for the purchase of adaptive equipment for the Career Centers. The initiative continues to move forward with a goal of uniform equipment for the upcoming program year.

b. Business Engagement Workgroup – Focuses on the development of a common system for agencies to track their engagement of businesses.

Since its inception, the workgroup has worked to collaborate more closely at both the local and state levels to ensure all partners are included in the Regional Business Service Teams and activities related to business engagement.

c. Combined Plan Workgroup – Tasked with updating the WIOA Combined Plan document with a focus on making the Workforce Development Activities section more cohesive between the four WIOA Titles.

Several comments were submitted to the 2016 Combined Plan indicating that the Plan was more of a siloed description of the services of each of the four WIOA Titles. This workgroup was established in late 2017 to focus on integrating the Workforce Development Activities section, and provide highlights of the work being done by the NYS Interagency Team.

The group met several times to assess and update this section based on the work being done by the other Interagency Team workgroups. The result is a more integrated Combined Plan for the 2018 update.

d. Customer Outreach Workgroup – Collaborates to gather customer feedback on the use of the Career Centers and their services. The goals of the Customer Outreach Workgroup are to:

- Better understand customer group experiences using the Career Center System;
- Create and utilize focus group methodology to gather customer feedback;
- Identify areas that each core partner can improve to better meet customer expectations;
- Develop cross agency strategies/training to improve customer experience/service; and to
- Identify strategies to better promote the Career Center to customers.

A series of critical conversations were held to more fully understand how NYS Career Center stakeholders, including WIOA partner staff and customers from various populations, view the delivery of services that are provided. NYSDOL, along with other WIOA core program partners, sought the feedback of NYS agency staff and community based organizations starting in the summer of 2016. These partnering agencies represent individuals with disabilities, adult learners, and TANF recipients. Feedback was also solicited from customer

groups in the winter of 2016 representing TANF participants, VR customers (including those who are blind), and Adult Education customers. In spring of 2017, customer outreach was expanded to Veterans, Ex-Offenders, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) customers. Customer outreach sessions were held in Albany, Utica, Harlem, and Brooklyn.

The feedback provided in the 18 outreach sessions held were invaluable and included suggestions to:

- Increase awareness among the public of the Career Centers and the services provided;
- Provide additional training to staff to help meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and other individuals with barriers to employment (veterans, ex-offenders, TANF, adult learners, etc.);
- Increase and improve assistance of staff to help Career Center customers effectively access and navigate Career Center services (resource rooms, job searches, online resources etc.); and
- Increase collaboration between partnering agencies to ensure continuity of services for shared customers.

These suggestions were shared with the appropriate Interagency Team workgroups to be sure customer feedback is heard and worked on appropriately.

e. Data Integration Workgroup – Tasked with determining how NYS can best comply with WIOA's requirement for integrated data reporting.

The workgroup was formed in early 2016. To work towards compliance with WIOA, the workgroup took inventory of existing systems and worked to update systems to comply with new data collection requirements. The group also discussed creating a combined database for all partners to use, as the use of a single case management system is not feasible in NYS now. Through these efforts, the team fostered better relationships between the partners.

f. MOU Workgroup – Tasked with developing the guidance and template for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which WIOA requires workforce systems partners in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) to sign.

Following the direction provided by the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's (USDOL/ETA) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 17-16, the MOU was split into two parts; the Service Delivery MOU and the Infrastructure Funding MOU. A template for each part was provided to the local areas to streamline the signature process for up to 19 Career Center partners, as appropriate. Negotiators from each partner program participated in LWDB meetings to develop the MOU.

g. Referral and Release Workgroup – Tasked with developing a seamless referral process among system partners as well as a confidential release of information form.

This workgroup was formed at the end of 2017 and is working with the agency Counsels toward developing a cross-partner referral and release of information form that will abide by each partner's confidentiality rules.

h. Training and Assistance Workgroup (TAG) – Tasked with ensuring direct training and skill building that occurs in the NYS Career Center System is consistent across all partner programs, the workgroup focuses on the following:

- Gathering and sharing a training inventory of what is being provided by NYS agency partners;
- Developing a statewide plan to identify and deliver important training to staff (some based on the feedback outlined by the Customer Outreach group);
- Identifying ways of sharing what has been developed and delivered and what is still needed to support WIOA Implementation;
- Identifying NYS agency points of contact for training; and
- Identifying regional or local points of contact for training.

This workgroup began with the goal of developing an NYS training plan to assist with consistent staff development across all partner programs for WIOA implementation. The workgroup first met in the summer of 2017 to develop an understanding of the current landscape of staff development and training. The NYS partners led this process by identifying training offered to staff in the past year that fell under one of these competency areas: customer service, interviewing skills, labor market information, communication, systems training, disabilities, career development, language access, and business services. A broad "other" category was also included to capture training that may be critical for only one or two of the NYS partners.

A survey is under development to gather similar information from local partners as well as their training needs from across NYS in early 2018. The information will be added to the NYS partner training inventory to identify strengths and gaps in professional development. From there an NYS training plan will be developed to guide professional development in the coming years. The workgroup is also thinking through ways to share what the workgroup developed and to receive feedback from professionals who are engaged in WIOA Implementation. This includes identifying NYS agency points of contact for training as well as regional or local points of contact for frequent communication.

There are also multiple training opportunities made available to System participants, including soft skills training and resume building. Moving forward, the workgroup will match System area needs to existing trainings and identify mechanisms for sharing or providing the training. Additionally, if there are any gaps between identified needs and available training, curriculums will be developed or other methods sought for meeting those needs.

Strengths and Challenges of Workforce Development Activities

1. Strengths

a. Wide-ranging Education and Training Programs

NYS places a priority on ensuring the secondary education system, the postsecondary education system, and certificate training programs are of high quality and offer a wide-range of curricula and attendance options to ensure a diverse workforce is prepared to meet the evolving needs of a 21st century labor market. Multiple pathways for students and adults have been developed to ensure full participation of all students and adults.

The NYS Career Center System serves as the center of the system by:

- Linking directly to the education/training systems for specific purposes;
- Connecting workforce system participants to training options;
- Providing career pathway opportunities; and
- Providing support to assure that participants are successful in both completing training and subsequently achieving employment.

b. High-quality Services to Students and Youth

WIOA requires partners to provide services to both in-school and out-of-school youth, ages 14-24. NYSCB has maintained a commitment to serving transition age youth as young as 10 through the VR program and has done so since 2011, leading to a focus on increasing programs and services available for this age group statewide. Collaboration across all NYS partners in serving students and youth has led to increased business engagement, stronger linkages with secondary and postsecondary systems, and additional employment opportunities for youth with various barriers to employment.

Work experience is an essential part of youth programs in NYS, and most programs are spending more than the 20% required funding on youth activities. The programs have developed innovative ways to help build work readiness skills, business relations, and work-site mentoring options via the work experience. Youth programs are engaged with Regional Business Services Teams, many of which include partner staff, to further their skills and knowledge of developing work experience and employment opportunities with businesses for youth. Continual promotion of the NY Youth Jobs Program (a tax credit for hiring youth) and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program has facilitated business engagement.

NYSED/ACCES-VR is housed within NYSED, which has made the partnership and linkages between the NYS VR programs and the special education system stronger and more seamless. The VR programs are working collaboratively on agreements with education officials so that students are provided with pre-employment transition services (as appropriate), transition services, and other VR services that may be required for youth in school settings. Both the NYS VR programs are working closely with the secondary and postsecondary systems, and workforce system partners to develop additional opportunities for the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. Specifically, NYSED/ACCES-VR will be executing new contracted services for pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities in 2018. These services were identified as critical for establishing a solid foundation for in-school youth with disabilities, ages 14-21. The providers will be expected to build partnerships with the local Career Centers, school districts, and businesses. The VR programs also work closely with System partners to develop work experience opportunities and facilitate the integration of youth needs into local planning.

NYSCB and NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborate to implement new requirements for students and youth consistently. Together, the agencies are committed to providing pre-employment transition services for students and for providing additional VR services for transition age youth statewide. The VR agencies will continue to develop, implement, and assess programs and services that prepare NYS youth with disabilities for entering the workforce.

In many local areas, core program staff is working together and receiving cross training to improve skills associated with serving youth with disabilities. Most programs are spending more than 75% of their funds to serve out-of-school youth. To meet the needs of out-of-school youth, they are building collaboration with

core programs, Youth Bureaus, alternative schools, and not-for-profit organizations to make all 14 program elements available to youth.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) serves to introduce youth into the labor market, helping them acquire skills that can be used to improve school performance and become responsible adults. All youth are paid at least the current NYS minimum wage and receive supportive and educational services including financial literacy training. Worksites are public, private or non-profit and include employment at day care centers, summer camps, senior citizen centers, school districts and community-based organizations, and county government. The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) allocates SYEP funds to all Social Services Districts, and many districts opted to transfer their allocations to their LWDBs for program operation in 2017.

In an effort to further collaboration across System Partners, NYSDOL is in contact with the OCFS Bureau of Youth Development, OTDA Employment and Income Support Programs, and NYSED/ACCES-VR to collaborate on issues and initiatives pertaining to youth in NYS. A series of bi-monthly meetings are planned to explore opportunities for greater System alignment of service delivery to youth, and to share best practices in combatting the high youth unemployment rate. NYSDOL continues to engage NYSED on issues related to aligning the CareerZone website with NYS learning standards, promoting the use of the Career Development and Occupational Standards (CDOS) Commencement Credential as a measure of work readiness for youth, and to provide clarity to youth program providers on appropriate pathways to High School Equivalency (HSE) diplomas in NYS.

In 2017, NYSDOL Youth Office staff offered training for OCFS Youth Bureau directors to understand the changes in WIOA youth program eligibility and started exploring ways to collaborate at the NYS level. The NYSDOL Youth Office is also exploring ways to collaborate with the Youth and Workforce Development Unit of OCFS, which focuses on youth in facilities and their transition back to communities after release.

c. Collaboration between the NYS Partners

NYS agencies including NYSDOL, NYSED, OCFS/NYSCB, OTDA, and the NYS Office for the Aging (SOFA) have a strong history of collaboration that has served as a foundation for the successful implementation of WIOA strategies.

1. WIOA Implementation

Beginning in late 2016, partners obtained One-Stop Operator and MOU assistance from a renowned national consultant. The consultant presented to NYS partner program staff, LWDB Directors and Board members, Career Center staff, and MOU negotiators and signatories on infrastructure funding expectations, options, and partnering opportunities.

Partner Program and Counsel staff also worked together to develop and approve guidance for the One-Stop Operator and MOU processes, which were released to the Career Center System. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are using MOU planning as an opportunity to review service offerings and availability to leverage resources and reduce duplication, and to establish effective referral systems, career services offerings, and co-location of partners where appropriate. A joint technical assistance document regarding the MOU will be released by partner programs participating on the Interagency Team.

In addition to discussions on the One-Stop Operator and MOU process, the national consultant discussed:

- Building a collaborative workforce development system through identification of career services to be offered and methods of shared service delivery;
- Serving youth; and
- Business collaboration and performance accountability.

Furthermore, in a webinar targeted for VR field staff, the consultant focused discussion on performance and the role of the VR program as a partner of the workforce system, expected to meet and contribute to achieving NYS's performance measures.

2. Joint Presentations

Together the program partners have presented to a number of different organizations in NYS, including the NYS Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA), the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP), and the NYS Association for Continuing and Community Education (NYACCE).

3. WIOA Local Planning

NYSDOL staff worked with Title II Adult Education staff on the Title II component of the WIOA Local Plan, meeting a new federal requirement that all WIOA Title II competitive applications be reviewed by the LWDB for alignment with dedicated plans to serve Title II populations. Title II information is posted to the NYSDOL website for assistance in developing the remainder of the Plan.

Through the statewide business engagement team, all program partners are committed to understanding regional and local business needs and developing statewide strategies that can link to and/or guide regional and local efforts.

There are also examples of NYS partner collaboration affecting local service provision. For example, One-Stop Career Centers and Social Services Districts in many local areas have longstanding working relationships, coordinating workforce resources to maximize their funding streams, meet the specific needs of the locality, and improve outcomes for their shared customers. These relationships have strengthened due to collaboration between NYSDOL and OTDA at the NYS level since the implementation of WIOA.

2. Challenges

a. Funding

Federal appropriations for WIOA are flat funded at best, with significant cuts being proposed by the President and Congress, making it impossible to meet the full potential of the statute. Even now, funding reaches only a fraction of the need.

b. Fragmented Federal Guidance

Federal policy guidance and requirements are delivered to each partner individually. This results in:

- Conflicting information;
- Necessary front-line staff training;
- Essential cross-training for all System partners on cross-program knowledge and requirements;
- Reduction of staff availability to focus on collaborative efforts;
- The need for new processes, forms, and policies; and
- Significant modification to data collection systems.

c. Data Integration

The previously mentioned Data Integration Workgroup has also identified several barriers that need to be addressed before further progress can be made:

- Changes in reporting requirements make it difficult to commit to a solution;
- No targeted date has been provided for joint reporting; and
- No estimate has been provided for the funding required for this project.

State Workforce Development Capacity

NYS agency partners work together to provide seamless service delivery. Partners are providing this service in the following ways:

1. Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth

NYS has a robust Title I service program, serving over 300,000 individuals in Program Year 2016 across the Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW) and Youth programs. The services to Adults and DWs are provided through an extensive network of One-Stop Career Centers, over 90 in total, across NYS. The centers are staffed by a variety of front line staff, including a mix of county and state staff.

NYS policy requires that all participants who are served in the Career Center System be provided first with an Initial Assessment. The Initial Assessment is used to determine the participant's current circumstance, including but not limited to job status; work history; knowledge, skills and abilities; barriers to employment, etc. This information is then used to determine if the individual is Job Search Ready or is in need of Career Development Services (CDS), and the service delivery plan is developed to meet the needs of the individual.

Youth services are provided by an extensive network of Youth Providers across NYS. These providers report to the LWDB on services and outcomes, and ensure that all 14 Youth Elements are available to youth being served.

In addition to the services provided through the Career Center System, state-level Title I funds are used to develop and fund solicitations targeted at different workforce needs. A prime example is the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), which utilizes approximately $5M in Title I funds, awarded competitively to applicants across NYS, to operate targeted Workforce Development Programs.

2. Title II - NYS Adult Education

NYS has one of the largest and most diverse adult education systems in the country (over 170 programs administered by school districts, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), 14 City University of New York (CUNY) colleges and other postsecondary institutions, not-for-profit community based organizations, unions, library systems). This includes 49 literacy zones.

NYS will competitively bid over $40 million in WIOA Title II funding by July 1, 2018 to create new capacities and instructional approaches, including:

- Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs that provide training and contextualized English Literacy instruction leading to employment in high demand occupations ($9.5 million);
- Integrated education and training that combines contextualized academics with training;
- Corrections Education programs that develop career pathway connections with $18 million in federal and state postsecondary resources through the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Services;
- Education programs that develop career pathway connections with $18 million in federal and state postsecondary resources through the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Services;
- Integrated education and training that combines contextualized academics with training;
- Single points of contacts for workforce referrals in each funded program;
- Workplace literacy skills integrated into all instruction;
- New Title II representatives for each of the 33 LWDBs who will provide information to, and receive input from, funded programs;
- Alignment of all funded programs with LWDB-approved plans for serving out-of-school youth and adults without a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Integration of career exploration through 10 sector-based NYSED/CUNY CareerKits into all instruction;
- Expanded case management, including the responsibility to enter students into JobZone/CareerZone;
- Over 50 Literacy zones in high poverty communities, both urban and rural, with expanded responsibility for connecting with career pathways and resources from NYS Career Centers and workforce partners; and
- Implementation of Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11/12 beginning July 1, 2019.

Beginning July 1, 2017, NYSED began a process of separating out state matching funds from WIOA Title II and creating a broader, more flexible state-funded adult education system that could focus on providing instruction such as family literacy and civics education, and more responsive accountability requirements to complement the employment focused WIOA programming.

Since 2014, NYSED has developed state of the art professional development through CUNY and seven Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) centers to train Master Teachers and turn key training to 5,500 adult education teachers. NYSED funded instructional resources are provided to teachers through www.CollectEDNY.org.

3. Title III - Wagner-Peyser Act

NYS merit staff funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant are located in Career Centers throughout NYS. Through functional alignment, NYS workforce professionals are trained to provide seamless services to unemployed customers, from providing meaningful assistance with customers interested in filing for unemployment insurance benefits, to providing job search assistance, career counseling, and seamless referrals to partners within the workforce system.

Staff capacity building is a NYS priority. NYSDOL provides high quality continuous development to workforce professionals to ensure excellent customer service to both job seekers and businesses. Professional development activities are provided weekly through Workforce Career Center Operator conference calls, monthly statewide management informational systems (MIS) webinars, UI training webinars, video conferencing, and train the trainer workshops. Professional Development activities are posted on a WebEx platform for easy system access and training events are viewable on a shared calendar at http://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/training-events.shtm.

Training includes such topics as: assisting UI customers in the Career Center, identifying and reporting UI issues, case management, identifying barriers to employment, eligibility requirements of WIOA partner agency services, and providing labor market information and labor exchange services within the NYS Career Center System.

4. Title IV - NYS Vocational Rehabilitation

NYS's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs employ VR counselors statewide who are trained to work with individuals with disabilities to prepare them for employment. The VR programs only employ individuals who meet the NYS Department of Civil Service's personnel standard for VR counselors.

The VR program staff effectively provide services to all individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services. Each of the VR agencies in NYS have multiple District Offices and outstations for easy access to services by individuals with disabilities statewide. Also, in some areas NYSED/ACCES-VR program staff are co-located at the local Career Centers. If VR program staff (NYSED/ACCES-VR or OCFS/NYSCB) are not located at a Career Center, information and services are seamlessly and promptly made available through processes that have been established by the local area.

Additionally, VR programs must confirm, where a need is identified, that required pre-employment transition services are made available to potentially eligible students. For OCFS/NYSCB, students in this pre-employment transition services category are known through the state-funded children's program and have been made eligible in VR, if appropriate by age 14. NYSED/ACCES-VR is approaching service provision of pre-employment transition services for potentially eligible students through contracted service and the potentially eligible student would not be required to apply and be found eligible to receive those services.

OCFS/NYSCB and NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborate on a regular basis to provide guidance to educational agencies, vocational rehabilitation personnel, and community rehabilitation providers responsible for facilitating pre-employment transition services, transition services, and to provide information about consultation and technical assistance resources to assist schools and related community support entities in planning for transition of students who are legally blind and those who have other disabilities. At the state level, both agencies have designated personnel that provide oversight and leadership for the development of policies, procedures, interagency training and other state-level partnership activities for transition services. At the local level, VR counselors work closely with school district staff and local school districts have transition specialists that

collaborate. The VR program will continue to work closely with schools to enable the provision of transition services to students with disabilities.

NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/NYSCB have expanded supported employment services for individuals to 24 months. In addition, they will provide extended services for youth (up to age 24 or for 4 years).

Additionally, individuals known to the VR Programs employed in subminimum wage will continue to be counseled on the Career Center System services available to them in order to work towards obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment.

5. TANF

Social Services Districts (districts) in NYS offer employment and training services to recipients of public assistance to help them obtain and maintain employment. As TANF is an employment focused program, recipients who are able to work have to meet federal and state work requirements, and they are engaged in activities to improve their work readiness and to support job placement. NYS places strong emphasis on entries to employment using TANF funding. Each year, districts in NYS are allocated funds through the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) to support a range of services to address the needs of low income families consistent with local priorities, including employment services.

NYS is also committed to providing TANF resources to supplement local districts' investments in skills development programs. In addition to the FFFS allocations provided to districts, NYS has invested TANF funds in a variety of employment, education, and training initiatives, including:

- The Career Pathways II Program, which provides funding to 13 selected nonprofit contractors to link education and occupational training to subsequent employment through a continuum of educational and training instruction combined with integrated support services for eligible individuals age 16 and over. The Career Pathways Programs are organized as a series of steps that lead participants toward job placement and increased earnings opportunities. Individuals eligible for the program include unemployed young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 and individuals receiving public assistance. Targeted sectors include health care, construction, manufacturing, hospitality, and business services.
- The Wage Subsidy Program (WSP), a longstanding program in which nonprofit contractors work to develop job opportunities for public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals using wage subsidies. The WSP targets those individuals who are unable to obtain employment through conventional job search techniques. Where public assistance recipients are served, close coordination with districts for the identification and referral of participants is mandatory. OTDA contracts with 13 nonprofit organizations across NYS.
- The Metropolitan College's Welfare to Careers Consortium Program, a unique collaboration among three major higher educational institutions in New York City (Metropolitan College, Medgar Evers College, and Pace University). The program links educational opportunities to internships and job placements, offering TANF-eligible individuals with the case management and other support services needed to pursue career goals through higher education. This includes the opportunity to earn a two-year degree or a baccalaureate degree, greatly increasing the chances of gaining permanent, full-time employment at a sustainable salary level.
- The Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) program, a partnership between OTDA and the State University of New York (SUNY). The program is a network of technology laboratories

located in some of NYS's most economically challenged communities. ATTAIN utilizes state-of-the-art technology to improve the user's academic and employability skills in an increasingly demanding technological world. There are currently 35 ATTAIN labs in locations established to reach individuals in receipt of public assistance or within the 200% of poverty designation. ATTAIN works with WIOA partners including NYSDOL and NYSED to provide TANF-eligible individuals, public assistance recipients, dislocated workers, individuals receiving unemployment benefits, out-of-school youth, and SYEP participants with Microsoft Office training and other associated certifications.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

STATE BOARD

The SWIB is the governance body for state workforce programs in New York. Appointed by Governor Cuomo, membership includes WIOA required partners of business, labor unions, local government, NYS Executive and Legislative branches, and other representatives with experience addressing the workforce needs of those with barriers to employment. Through careful examination and discussion of specific workforce challenges, the SWIB develops concrete strategies for broader system improvement. These strategies can then be advanced as recommendations for Board approval to advise the Governor, Board of Regents, and REDCs on workforce development policy.

NYSDOL staff serves as staff to the Board, assisting in managing its many responsibilities. Other partner agencies and entities also provide staff support to the multiple SWIB subcommittees and serve as subject matter experts as needed.

Key responsibilities of SWIB members include:

- Development and review of the Combined State Plan;
- Review of statewide policies and programs involving workforce development;
- Review of statewide policies and programs to develop recommendations;
- Development of strategies for aligning core and other programs;
- Improving access to the workforce development system;
- Supporting industry partnerships and career pathways;
- Disseminating best practices to the workforce development system; and
- Supporting the Career Center system and all core program delivery systems.

Governor Cuomo reconstituted the SWIB at the beginning of 2014 and directed it to work with the ten REDCs to develop recommendations for improving the state's workforce development system and to strengthen the importance of workforce development initiatives across the state. As the preeminent partnership of business, labor, and workforce system providers involved with workforce policy, the SWIB is well positioned to provide a strong supporting role to the REDC economic development strategy.

In 2010, NYSDOL, Empire State Development Corporation (ESD), and the NYS Education Department (NYSED) regions were aligned for purposes of collaborating on sector initiatives. In 2011, the 10 REDCs were created and tasked with developing long-term strategic plans for economic growth. The goal of the REDCs is to improve coordination and capacity of state and regional workforce systems to fulfill businesses demand for skilled labor

with qualified workers. Since their creation, REDCs changed the way NYS invests in jobs and economic growth through a community-based, bottom-up approach.

The REDCs are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations, and are a community-driven, regional approach to economic development. Each of the ten REDCs was tasked with developing a five-year strategic plan to include a comprehensive vision for economic development in that region; regional strategies to achieve that vision; and specific priority projects that are significant, regionally supported, and capable of stimulating economic investment. These plans are updated each year.

In order to fulfill its responsibilities and support the REDCs, the SWIB uses a subcommittee structure organized around these responsibilities. These subcommittees meet as needed to discuss policy direction and craft recommendations. A SWIB SharePoint site was developed for all Board members to have the opportunity to review and comment on subcommittee activities, as well as policy guidance issued to NYS workforce development partners. During the May 2015 full SWIB meeting, members approved by-law amendments to govern their activities to align with WIOA. Materials from past SWIB meetings are available at: http://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibagenda.shtm.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

Core Program Activities

To implement New York's strategy, New York's core programs have and will continue to seek to achieve several goals for the Career Center system. These goals ensure that Titles I, II, III, and IV work together to align and coordinate services, providing job seekers and businesses seamless service delivery in a way that advances the implementation of NYS's strategy by creating a unified workforce development system. These goals include:

- Aligning workforce development and economic development functions to create systems that align the needs of businesses with job seeking customers, including individuals with disabilities;
- Incentivizing robust business partnerships to best inform workforce decision making at all levels of the system;
- Recognizing the essential role of education and literacy as the foundation for a strong, versatile workforce and provide priority to serving New Yorkers who are basic skills deficient and have barriers to employment;
- Sharing labor market data across workforce partners to inform policy and service decisions;
- Developing training for front line program delivery staff to provide efficient and seamless services with other mandated programs and partners; and
- Continuing to integrate information technology to improve service delivery.

Under Titles I-IV, NYS will implement these goals over the next several years. The Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth and Title III Wagner-Peyser programs, overseen by NYSDOL, have and will continue to communicate with Titles II and IV, overseen by NYSED and OCFS, to ensure customers are provided appropriate referrals for services they require; deliver training to staff from all core programs so that Title I and III staff in every Career Center are aware of the services available from Title II and IV staff. Title I-V staff has begun discussing a common customer information system for simple cross-title service delivery leading to successful implementation of NYS's strategy.

Services provided by the mandatory Career Center partners and other optional partners have been coordinated and aligned through the development of the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among all local partner agencies and providers participating in each LWDA. The local MOU has been broken into two pieces, based on guidance from USDOL/ETA. The first piece is the Service Delivery MOU, which defines shared responsibilities as well as individual responsibilities, and outlines services to be offered, including career services, training services, and supportive services offered by the various mandatory and optional partner programs; how services will be coordinated, including methods for referral of individuals between one-stop partners for appropriate services and activities; sharing of applicable customer information (taking confidentiality requirements into account); and how intake, enrollment, and assessment processes will be handled. The Service Delivery MOU was due on July 1, 2017.

The second piece of the MOU is the Infrastructure Funding and Shared Services MOU. This piece of the MOU addresses allocating of costs and sharing of resources to support the system

One-stop operators are the entities that coordinate the service delivery of required Career Center partners and service providers. While able to perform additional functions if so desired by the LWDBs, this coordination role is the minimum requirement of the Operator. LWDBs were required to select new operators through a competitive selection process during Program Year 2016. Generally, a Request for Proposal (RFP) clearly articulating the role of the one-stop operator was used to satisfy this requirement. LWDBs were asked to complete this selection by June 30, 2017.

A priority for all partner programs in the system--and the system as a whole--is to quickly respond to the needs of the local communities and its businesses and workforce, and to continually evolve to address those needs. The further alignment and consolidation of programs and activities, and the identification of areas where further sharing and coordination of efforts can occur, will continue to be a priority of the NYS SWIB as well as the individual programs in the system. The SWIB's Aligning Workforce Programs Workgroup is tasked with examining ways to improve coordination of workforce programs to avoid unnecessary duplication and better align services. One-stop system operations will continue to be streamlined as common data systems, administrative procedures, and performance measures are further developed and utilized by the partners. Shared input and access to information by partners, cross-training of staff, and coordinated program planning will further streamline and enhance the services and operations in the local one-stop systems.

Local partnerships, which form the foundation of the workforce delivery system, are especially effective in meeting the workforce needs of NYS's diverse population. Local plans describe how these partnerships will be coordinated to enable all customers to receive the full range of employment and training programs and supportive services, especially those that lead to jobs in high-wage, high-growth occupations along career pathways. The needs of individuals with multiple barriers to employment are being addressed quickly and thoroughly due to the wide spectrum of service providers joined together under the local workforce system. The NYS Office for the Aging, NYSED (including NYSED/ACCES-VR), the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), OCFS (including OCFS/NYSCB), the Office for Alcohol and Substance Abuse (OASAS), the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the State University of New York (SUNY), NYSDOL, and local community based organizations apply knowledge gained through regular communication, partnership collaborations, and cross-training to develop comprehensive service strategies to address the varying needs of our common participants. With the functional alignment approach and common customer flow in the Career Centers, partners are more aware of each agency's involvement with the participant instead of working in a vacuum. This greatly helps reduce duplication of services to participants.

Operating under a holistic philosophy, NYS also successfully integrated several employment services systems into a single system, using the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant as a catalyst. This comprehensive employment system is called the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) and provides all New Yorkers, regardless of their (dis)ability, with a single point of access to all employment-related services and supports, including job matching with the approximately 125,000 jobs currently posted by businesses on the NYS Job Bank. NYESS includes the following state-level agencies: NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH), NYSDOL, NYSED, OASAS, NYS Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), NYS Office for the Aging, and the NYS Division of Veterans Affairs. Providers of employment-related supports and services licensed by, or contracting with, one of the participating state agencies are also able to sign up to utilize this system. NYESS creates the ability to centralize employment service/support information, greatly improving the ability to coordinate employment supports and services among multiple providers and across multiple systems.

Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

This plan is primarily focused on the goals and operations of the core programs; however, the Career Center System involves a variety of partner programs (previously listed) to support the core. This section discusses relevant details for two notable non-core partners.

In order to best serve our system customers and reduce program redundancies, NYS is committed to aligning partner programs with core services. Through capacity building exercises and ongoing training, the system's ability to integrate services at the delivery level will be enhanced, and the value of such collaboration will be reinforced. The core program partners are planning toward a common case management platform, and the ideal solution has been envisioned as a single system for all workforce development partners. At the governance level, continued solicitation of input beyond the core partner programs, through entities such as the Aligning Workforce Programs committee of the SWIB, will reinforce the goal of continued cross system integration.

NYS also continues to expand its outreach efforts to make individuals on public assistance and other low-income individuals aware of all the career services, income supports, and other services available through various state and local agencies. Efforts to enhance coordination and awareness of program services and supports available to these priority target populations are ongoing. Close working relationships between the local social service planning districts and the one-stop partners will help assure that this critical population receives seamless workforce development services. Migrant and seasonal farm workers and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older workers, persons with limited English proficiency or literacy, those who are low-skilled, and individuals preparing to re-enter the workforce will be well served by the ongoing functional alignment in the Career Centers.

Registered Apprenticeship

NYSDOL continues to look at ways to strengthen the existing relationship between Registered Apprenticeship and the Career Center system. The NYSDOL CareerZone website was integrated with the Apprenticeship website to provide career information for each of the apprentice-able trades. CareerZone is targeted towards youth, who as a population face a tough economic climate. It allows individuals to explore careers related to their individual strengths, skills, and talent, including apprentice-able occupations.

The alignment of the Registered Apprenticeship Program with other WIOA programs allows for the marketing of Apprenticeship opportunities to those receiving services within the Career Center system. Apprenticeship program sponsors connect to the Career Center system and unemployed and underemployed individuals by having their apprentice recruitment announcements posted on the NYSDOL Apprenticeship website and through the NYS Job Bank. Apprentice Training Representatives (ATRs) are located throughout NYS and work with

current and potential sponsors to develop new programs in new and emerging industries and to provide technical assistance. In addition, ATRs in some regions of NYS are stationed within the Career Centers, which facilitates direct communication amongst Apprenticeship and Career Center staff. This includes working with individuals responsible for Business Services and Veterans Programs. Working closely with NYSDOL, NYSED approves the related instructional program component of apprenticeship programs. Additionally, NYSDOL expects to expand relationships between Registered Apprenticeship and the state's education system by encouraging an increase in the number of articulation agreements.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

In NYS, the TANF program is state supervised and locally operated by 58 social services districts (57 counties and the City of New York). TANF employment service delivery varies from county to county depending on local needs and resources.

In some counties, Social Services District staff is co-located at Career Centers; others contract with local workforce providers for all or a portion of their employment services; and in other counties Social Services Districts provide employment services directly and through contracts with community providers.

NYS is committed to the strong functional alignment of programs and with TANF as a mandatory WIOA partner, will seek to build upon existing partnerships to improve service delivery for NYS residents. As mentioned earlier in the plan, the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), who is responsible for state administration of the TANF funded program, is an active member of the NYS WIOA Interagency Team and various sub-workgroups. Through these workgroups, NYS will provide robust cross-program training for all partner staff on available economic supports and workforce services.

- Career Centers will all have the myBenefits (myBenefits.ny.gov) web site short cut icon on all resource room computers and partner staff will be trained on how to promote and use the site with customers. myBenefits was developed to help increase access and awareness of various public benefit programs.

  It takes about 10 minutes for an individual to enter the required information on this site, and it takes seconds for the system to conclude what services that individual might be qualified to receive. A number of program pre-screenings are supported through myBenefits including: Temporary Assistance (TA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Nutrition Education, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), School Meals, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) State Supplement Program, public health insurance options, and a range of tax credits including federal and state earned income tax credits.

  Once an individual enters his/her information on the site, a summary report is generated. This report indicates the services for which that individual appears to be eligible. Each category of service will give him/her an idea of what he/she can expect from that specific program. Some programs provide hot links directly to the individual's on-line applications; some provide phone numbers for additional information and/ or directions on how to apply for benefits and what documentation is required.

  At the conclusion of the individual's report, a self-sufficiency calculator is generated. This calculator gives the individual the opportunity to graph his/her earnings and potential supplemental earnings in chart format, giving the individual a clear picture of his/her financial situation and of the benefits gained by working.

- Social Services Districts and Career Centers will be encouraged to clearly establish liaisons with each other to serve as a point person(s) for each other on day to day client cross-system needs. For instance, Career Center partners can contact their district liaison when specific questions regarding TANF or other public

benefit programs under their purview arise with customers that cannot be addressed through myBenefits, etc. A Career Center liaison would be responsible for coordinating major workforce initiatives, recruitments and training programs with the district so a broader range of residents are able to benefit from these efforts and the various agencies involved can leverage resources.

- To support the WIOA priority to serve individuals in receipt of temporary assistance, NYS will expect each Local Workforce Development Area to establish specific procedures to consult with the Social Services Commissioners on the provision of prioritizing services to youth and the availability of job skills training and job readiness activities provided by Career Center partners. Areas will also be expected to establish streamlined procedures to enable districts to enroll temporary assistance recipients and other low-income individuals in these services.
- NYS agencies delivering workforce services will continue to collaborate on workforce policies, trainings and service delivery. This collaboration includes a review of labor market data by region, dissemination of labor market data to workforce providers, and collaboration on funding and policy decisions.
- NYS will place specific emphasis on the coordination of youth services to allow youth served through the Social Services Districts to also have access to specialized youth services delivered through WIOA. This partnership will improve the recruitment of out of school youth and improve the range and quality of services available to this population.
- As no additional federal funding was provided to meet the new WIOA mandates, and as the federal TANF block grant amount has not been increased for over 19 years, NYS will not impose unfunded mandates requiring Social Services Districts and the Career Centers to co-locate when local areas have mutually determined that co-location is not the best way to provide customer service, or for Social Services Districts to establish a physical on-site presence at the Career Centers. Instead, NYS will allow flexibility for Social Services Districts to develop service strategies that meet the needs of the local area and create a direct linkage to TANF services via technology or direct contact with Social Service staff. In the long term, technology solutions, such as state-funded kiosks will be placed in each Career Center to enable customer access to Integrated Eligibility System (IES) functionality for on-line applications for non-crisis TANF funded assistance. In the interim period before IES is functional, WIOA-TANF partnership requirements may be met through a combination of the following types of services:
    - The prescreening functionality of the myBenefits and ACCESS New York City portals;
    - The provision of TANF applications and meaningful program-specific information; and/or
    - Direct connection to Social Service staff at the Career Centers.

Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

Expeditious Entry into the Workforce System

NYS agencies participating in NYESS have a shared case management system and WIOA combined enrollment process. This allows for streamlined services to customers; coordination of services; the ability to provide real time referrals; and delivery of comprehensive service to participants. Although all WIOA core and partner programs are not yet using the same case management system, an interagency workgroup was established to explore potential options.

Identification of Customer Needs

NYS workforce policy was established to enable job-seeking customers to receive an initial assessment as their first staff-assisted service to identify their employment and training needs, and determine whether they are in

need of Job Search Ready Services (JSRS) or Career Development Services (CDS). This determination is based on a one-to-one initial assessment interview with the customer, where the career advisor takes into consideration: the customer's occupational goals; existing skills, including literacy; English language proficiency and skill gaps; work search readiness and any potential barriers to employment; local labor market conditions; and desire for skills upgrading and/or training.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has 15 district offices and 10 satellite offices located throughout NYS. In addition, counselors are available at Career Centers and schools. If an individual cannot visit a location, noted counselors can arrange for a home visit or schedule a visit at a location that is accessible to both, such as a library. Applicants have options for seeking service. It is encouraged that individuals attend a Group Orientation, which is an overview of the VR program. This can help determine if he/she wishes to seek service and can speed the process as eligibility requirements are clarified. However, those for whom a Group Orientation might not be appropriate are seen individually from the first intake session.

OCFS/NYSCB provides services to individuals who are legally blind through seven district offices as well as several outstations located throughout NYS. Counselors will arrange to meet with an individual at a convenient location to discuss the array of services provided by OCFS/NYSCB. If the individual is interested in participating in vocational rehabilitation services, the counselor will gather information from the individual to assist in determining their eligibility for services. Once a determination of eligibility is made, the counselor and the consumer will work together to identify a vocational goal and the services required to enable the consumer to meet that goal. The goal and planned services are documented on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Coordination of Services and Development of Individual Service Plans

A quality initial assessment results in information, similar to a résumé, being recorded in the customer's case file and submitted into NYSDOL's JobZone website, which utilizes the Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART) system. Job matching and referral takes place on multiple levels, from automated JobZone Job Scouts emailing job openings directly to the customer, to staff making referrals during seated interviews at the Career Center.

Career Center staff work with all job seekers to plan the services best suited to their individual needs. Those needing CDS or seeking training receive a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that helps guide the customer as he/she works toward his/her employment goals. Customers identified as having barriers to employment such as language proficiency, disability, skills gaps, and ex-offender status, are provided services directly at the Career Centers by workforce experts. They may also be referred to supportive services and other agencies to work through perceived barriers and provide coordinated services via a case management system.

Trade Act eligible individuals who access services via the Career Centers are co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and receive all applicable and available basic and individualized career services. Co-enrollment allows the process of needs and skills assessment to begin immediately, even before these workers may become eligible for TAA, giving individuals more time to consider all of the options available to them. Local career planners record the co-enrollment in the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), and NYSDOL's state-level TAA Unit staff confirms that co-enrollment is documented in the record when approving training programs at the state level.

OCFS/NYSCB provides services to eligible individuals in accordance with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). VR counselors coordinate service provision and work with consumers to assess progress in meeting their objectives and goal. OCFS/NYSCB works with students, families, and school districts to facilitate the coordination of transition services for students who are legally blind and transitioning from school to the world

of adult responsibilities and work. OCFS/NYSCB recognizes these efforts are critical to enable students to achieve maximum success in employment, post-secondary education, independent living, and community participation, and is committed to being an active partner in the transition process.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to maintain its relationship with other NYS agencies involved in workforce development, including the OPWDD, OMH, OASAS, and NYSDOL. Across the state, OCFS/NYSCB staff conduct outreach in their respective territories to develop a network of local businesses, establishing working relationships to identify business needs and potential employees. District Offices developed a running list of business networks where communication is ongoing, counselors are contacted by local businesses in regard to matching individual skills with employment needs. Outreach was also accomplished through collaboration with partner agencies.

NYSED/ACCES-VR developed a strong infrastructure and provides a wide range of services to eligible individuals. Counselors work directly with consumers to develop an IPE, which identifies the services and strategies necessary for achieving the plan goals. The IPE is the foundation of service for the consumer. The employment goal is established based upon consumer choice and labor market information. Often, achievement of the goal requires services obtained from postsecondary educational institutions or contracted providers.

In addition to contracts with service providers, NYSED/ACCES-VR has several agreements in place with other entities, including sister state agencies, to guide cooperative work. Many of these agreements will be reviewed to ensure they are fully reflective of the new commitments WIOA established.

Initiatives and Infrastructure

OCFS/NYSCB entered into a Partnership Plus Agreement, which enables consumers with a Social Security Ticket to Work to obtain VR services from OCFS/NYSCB, as well as broad access to community providers to assist in the coordination of Social Security payments and other benefits and services.

Eleven non-profit organizations across NYS were approved as vendors to provide benefits advisement and support the development of economic self-sufficiency. The increased access to DRCs and other ENs increases support in maintaining employment after a consumer's closure from VR services.

OCFS/NYSCB uses funds to contract with two private agencies for individuals who are blind to provide pre-college programs for OCFS/NYSCB consumers entering their senior year of high school. The program goal is to provide students the opportunity to refine their academic, social, and independent living skills before beginning college.

Work Experience Training services are provided to a wide range of VR services recipients. This service provides employment experiences and resume building for youth transitioning from school to employment and for adults with minimal work histories.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to work closely with community rehabilitation providers to create new pre-vocational and vocational training programs for both adults and transitioning youth. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB district offices engage new providers when specialized training is required for a consumer to reach his/her vocational goal. OCFS/NYSCB reviews curriculum for all pre-vocational programs for transition-age youth to evaluate the nature and quality of the program with the goal of providing quality programming preparing youth to enter the 21st century workforce.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to encourage development of vocational training programs that meet the requirements of business and will work with providers to create and approve curricula, especially in fields with in-demand jobs where vocational training was not previously available.

OCFS/NYSCB Children's Consultants and VR Counselors will continue to emphasize to school district personnel the importance of integrating the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) into standard academic instruction and routine daily tasks, and encourage school staff to work closely with itinerant vision teachers and staff from local private agencies for individuals who are blind to provide comprehensive services needed by students.

OCFS/NYSCB also provides assistive technology services and devices to individuals during each stage of the rehabilitation process through Assistive Technology Center (ATC) contracts and private vendors. The outcome-based services of ATC Readiness Evaluation, ATC Assessment, and ATC Training provide a comprehensive and rigorous array of assessments and training with the goal of preparing students for success in school and employment. ATC Centers and a network of more than 30 private assistive technology trainers provide on-site needs evaluation and training for those whose needs require intervention at their education or employment site.

In addition, OCFS/NYSCB provides assistive technology devices and training to current managers and manager trainees in the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program, enabling them to manage their newsstands and food service operations in accordance with industry standards.

NYSED/ACCES-VR also has many initiatives in place that assist in opening opportunity for youth and adults with disabilities. For example, NYSED/ACCES-VR is a partner in the Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) demonstration project. This project is aimed at improving education and career outcomes for low-income children with disabilities and will advance postsecondary education and employment outcomes for 14- to 16-year-olds receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

NYSED/ACCES-VR participates in the Partnerships in Employment Systems Change grant, which enhances collaboration among OPWDD; the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC); NYSED's Office of Special Education (NYSED/OSE); and NYS's three University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs). The grant will lead to policy and implementation changes to significantly increase the number of young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are competitively employed in an integrated environment.

Recently, NYSED/ACCES-VR contracted to provide Community Employment Specialists. These individuals will work with the NYSED/ACCES-VR Transition Unit and provide information to school districts on vocational rehabilitation and post-school employment options for youth with disabilities.

Continuous Engagement

NYS strives to keep job-seeking customers engaged with all partners in the Career Center system until they are successful in achieving their employment goals. Continuous engagement strategies include participation in career services, individual counseling, assessments, provision of labor market information, job referrals, job clubs, workshops, virtual services, and business recruitment events.

Staff Development

NYS values staff training and recognizes the importance of having a strong capacity building program to train workforce staff on serving customers, providing resources, and understanding and complying with policies and procedures to meet changing workforce needs. NYSDOL staff development opportunities are offered weekly

and trainings are continuously developed to support Career Centers in providing high quality customer-centered services. Likewise, OCFS/NYSCB continues to provide training for staff on the consumer's potential eligibility for the use of Blind Work Expenses (BWE) as well as other work incentives to support consumer financial independence.

Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Businesses

Mission

The mission of New York Works Business Services is to provide business customers with a competitive advantage in the labor market. This mission is executed through a holistic business-centric understanding of the customer, rather than the compliance-centric employer view of a business (i.e., how can we help the business versus how can the employer help us).

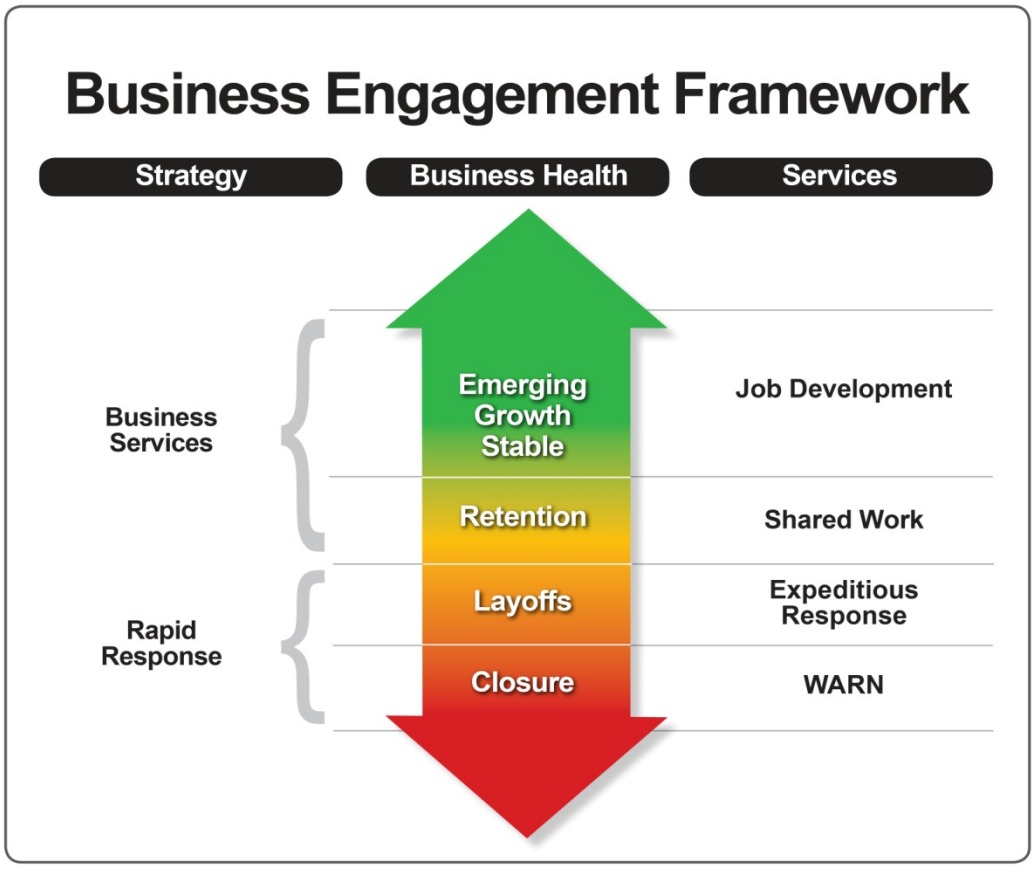
Business Engagement Framework

The New York Works business engagement framework begins with referring to the customer as a "business" rather than "employer" and continues with understanding the business customer's needs relative to its health. Figure 1 illustrates NYS's business engagement framework, and how the "health" of the business determines service strategy and service type. Understanding where a business is on a "business health" spectrum allows targeted outreach with meaningful services.

For emerging, growing, and stable businesses, Business Services provides Job Development services such as customized recruitment assistance, hiring and training incentives, and/or other services in the Business Services toolkit. For businesses classified as retention, the Shared Work program reduces the need for layoffs by reducing staff work hours and supplementing wages with partial unemployment insurance benefits.

Rapid Response focuses on reemployment services for any workers impacted by layoffs.

Figure 1 – Business Engagement Framework



Strategy, Goals, and Implementation of the Business Engagement Framework

The Business Services strategy is to continuously increase exposure within the business community and the number of businesses receiving services to advance job development. This requires setting goals that support far-reaching and sustainable engagement with the business community, deploying resources to achieve these goals, and setting metrics to measure success. These goals include:

- Increasing visibility within the business community;
- Increasing the number of businesses listing jobs with the NYS Job Bank/Jobs Express;
- Increasing the number of job seeker resumes available for search in NYTalent;
- Increasing the amount and efficacy of job matching; and
- Generating positive reciprocal messaging with the business community.

The operational strategy for business-centric service delivery is to build business relationships that will generate a conduit for future services, and ultimately produce job seeker placements.

The resources used to support this strategy include:

- Conducting an outreach campaign, targeting various business associations, that provides presentations on Business Services and Rapid Response services with a customized regional approach;

- Expanding existing lead generation methods through development of a business survey that gauges interest in services and utilizes lead generation tools such as business intelligence from business associates, Dun & Bradstreet data, and current events/media; and
- Expanding the Business Services staff role as account executives servicing business accounts, monitoring services received, and engaging with businesses to ensure job openings are matched to qualified candidates.

Cultivating relationships with businesses is a multi-stage process beginning with an initial contact to identify business needs and evolving to meet specific business needs. Three elements central to building and forging these connections are daily staff outreach goals, the Priority Jobs Initiative, and regional performance measures.

The NYS Department of Labor's Business Services unit continues to expand the network of businesses by requiring staff to engage five businesses each day with the goal of providing a quality service. Each day, staff reviews the new job openings on Jobs Express to identify which hiring business have not recently been serviced. This has proven to be an effective way for staff to foster positive relationships with businesses, and connect job seekers to employment opportunities. Staff connected over 54,000 times with more than 24,000 unique businesses in calendar years 2014 and 2015, resulting in an increase in the number of businesses receiving services. In calendar year 2016 staff engaged 17,536 businesses; and 13,802 in 2017.

The Priority Jobs Initiative is a concentrated effort by staff to build ongoing relationships with businesses to provide job seeking customers with a competitive advantage in obtaining employment.

Priority jobs are generally defined as:

- In-demand and quality jobs;
- Job openings that need to be filled immediately;
- Job openings that align with the Career Center talent pool; and/or
- Job openings from businesses with existing relationships.

Job orders that meet this definition are shared with a Career Center Match Team responsible for identifying candidates and securing resumes from those who are interested. Business Services then shares the resumes with the businesses for consideration.

The Priority Jobs model engages the Career Center staff to take a larger role in the front-end matching process of job order fulfillment. This shift enables Business Services staff to function as account executives focused on building relationships with businesses to provide more intensive services and capture placement data, and to follow-up at regular intervals to ensure customer satisfaction.

Beginning in PY2015, NYSDOL established a new Business Services Customer Service Indicator (CSI) for the combined WIOA/Wagner-Peyser program. Specifically, the measure was to affect that 95% of businesses who receive referrals on staff entered job orders received a follow up contact. The new measure was designed to ensure that the needs of business customers are met and to help build NYS's business customer base. This business customer follow-up has now become a regular, integral part of NYSDOL's business engagement. It continues to be important for ensuring the quality of services we provide and for fostering long-term, reciprocal relationships with businesses.

Regional Sector Based Approaches

All regions developed successful, long-standing, informal relationships between NYSDOL and LWDA Business Services staff. NYS sought to build on these partnerships by creating Regional Business Service Teams (RBST) to align services with regional strategies across all levels of the workforce system. A number of the REDCs already have sectoral workforce strategies in place and NYS has embarked upon specific regional sector strategies for the health care workforce in New York City and Central regions. NYS has also utilized sector strategies in advanced manufacturing in Southern Tier and Western regions. Regional strategies were also utilized when developing the Unemployment Strikeforce Initiative to meet the need for a coordinated inter-agency plan to link unemployed individuals to jobs, while piloting a sector-based approach.

The RBSTs convene regularly to develop regional strategies for Business Services; share business intelligence, labor market information, and information on new programs; and co-host career fairs and customized recruiting events. The RBSTs opened lines of communication that are important when navigating logistical issues due to new policy; collaborating to meet performance measures; and expanding and rolling out new initiatives, including OJT programs.

It is important to note that the Regional Business Services Team:

- Is not a policy-making body, but rather is intended to help align business services provided at the local level with regional sector initiatives/strategies and regional labor market information;
- Does not supersede existing partnerships and/or business relationships that are working effectively, but rather is intended to build upon them;
- Does not preclude an LWDA from partnering with entities in other regions to address specific workforce needs (i.e., Transformational Sector Strategy Projects under Grant 13N); and
- Does not provide direct services to business in the region, but rather is intended to identify and disseminate information regarding services that will benefit businesses.

Regional Business Services Team membership is as follows:

- In regions comprised of more than one LWDA, membership includes:
    - The NYSDOL Business Services Associate Representative and Occupational Analyst assigned to the region;
    - One representative from each LWDA in the region designated by the area's LWDB. The LWDA representative can be LWDB or Career Center staff, and must have specific responsibility for providing services to businesses in the LWDA; and
    - Steps are being taken to expand the RBSTs to include all core programs of WIOA as regular members of the team.
- In regions comprised of a single LWDA (i.e. New York City), membership includes:
    - To be determined - Executive staff from NYSDOL and the New York City LWDA will meet to determine appropriate representation.

Other one-stop system partners are not formal members of the RBST, but may participate on team projects/tasks requiring their expertise and resources.

RBSTs are responsible for developing and implementing guidelines which, at minimum, must address:

- The team's purpose, goals, and key functions;
- Convening of regular meetings, including structured agendas and meeting notes;
- Facilitating consensus-based decision-making among team members; and
- Communicating team activities with LWDBs and Career Center managers.

The Unemployment Strikeforce employs a sector-based model that relies on a network of partnerships among business intermediaries, government, educational institutions, training providers, economic developers, and labor and community organizations. This type of model requires active staff engagement in job development (business demand) and customer case management (worker supply) with intensive referral and job brokering.

The Strikeforce model implemented a 'gold standard' of intensive job placement services connecting the unemployed to jobs while providing those services in convenient community locations with the assistance of community partners. Career Centers and Business Services worked seamlessly as a team to ensure job seekers became employed by:

- Stationing Career Center staff in convenient community locations to provide case management of customers; ensure each had a quality resume able to be sent to businesses; receive multiple job leads and referrals; and supply interview preparation assistance and follow-up for further assistance; and
- Stationing Business Services staff at the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation to engage local businesses to develop job openings; post and match the orders to the Strikeforce customers; and refer qualified candidates. Staff developed customized recruitments and career fair events to facilitate hiring; advocated on behalf of customers with the hiring business; and followed-up to ensure customer satisfaction.

Bronx County, NY was selected as an Unemployment Strikeforce pilot beginning on May 1, 2014. This was based on several years of the borough suffering with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. In May 2014, the unemployment rate in the Bronx was 10.6% and the statewide rate was 6.2%. By May 2015, those unemployment rates were 8.0% and 5.3% respectively.

In 2014 and 2015, the initiative was rolled out to nine other counties in NYS. The counties added (Jefferson, Lewis, Kings, St. Lawrence, Oswego, Orleans, Montgomery, Franklin and Steuben) had the highest unemployment rates in the state at the time of selection.

In 2016, the initiative was further expanded into Western New York to provide intensive placement services to specific parts of Buffalo, Lackawanna, and Niagara County.

Competitive Advantage Assets

New York Works Business Services deploys a number of services and a network of partnerships to enable businesses to meet their needs. The nine key assets listed below are designed to provide a competitive advantage in the labor market to New York Works Career Center business customers, and are described in greater detail in the narrative that follows.

- Inter-Agency Collaboration
- NYS Job Bank and Jobs Express
- Customized Recruiting Assistance
- Focus Talent

- On-the-Job, Existing Worker and Unemployed Worker Training
- Tax Credits
- Virtual Career Fairs
- Ensuring Business Integrity

Business Services built a network of partnerships used to attract businesses, develop funding opportunities, and create talent pipelines for businesses. This includes collaboration with NYS agencies including NYSED/ACCES-VR, ESD, OTDA, and the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

The mission of Business Services is aligned with the ESD goal of encouraging job creation and economic opportunities. Accordingly, Business Services collaborates with ESD to provide information and services to businesses considering developing new sites in NYS. This partnership was evident in the effort to attract United Natural Foods, Inc. to the Hudson Valley region. Local, regional, and state economic development and workforce development entities created a package of labor market and talent pool information, as well as available hiring and training incentives to encourage the development of a 525,000-square foot distribution center that will employ 400 individuals.

Business Services promoted and connected job seekers to the NYSERDA-funded Clean Energy OJT program, and partnered with OTDA for the Green Jobs/Green NY efforts. OTDA provided more than $1 million in funding and worked as a referral partner of candidates for green career opportunities in residential and commercial weatherization retrofits. Community based organizations (CBOs) were selected by a competitive procurement process to train candidates.

Business Services also partners with higher education on multiple levels, including utilizing colleges, universities, and training providers as strategic partners for regional growth; as referral sources for qualified job seekers; and as business customers when they need to fill job openings.

Business Services acted as an intermediary between the business community and community colleges in the Next Generation New York Job Linkage Program. This program provides incentives to SUNY and CUNY community colleges for certificate or degree programs that prepare students for current and future in-demand employment opportunities.

Other community college partnerships have been sector or business specific. Hudson Valley Community College developed its TEC-SMART facility and corresponding curricula that seek to provide students with the skills for careers in the burgeoning semiconductor and clean and renewable energy industries in the Capital Region. Similarly, collaboration between Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) and General Electric (GE) developed a program that provides training to work in the renewable energy field as required by the GE Energy Transportation Energy Storage Technologies division that neighbors the SCCC campus. In recruiting for these businesses, Business Services promoted the training programs to applicants looking for training to make them marketable to these in-demand occupations.

Business Services works closely with many high-profile businesses on large projects of significant jobs impacts. These include coordinating with the business to create a customized recruitment plan and application process, followed by matching, referring and/or assessing qualified candidates in our talent bank or the job seeking public. A sampling of recent top projects includes:

- Maximus - Finger Lakes Region - 600+ Customers Hired

  In 2016, Maximus contracted with NYS to administer its health insurance exchange, i.e., Medicaid and Child Health Plus and a need to fill 2,000 related openings. NYSDOL Business Services worked with the business to develop job descriptions; post and match job orders; and contact qualified candidates. Business Services developed and staffed customized recruitment and interview events that saw 3,546 applicants assessed and advanced to interviews.

- NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) – North Country Region - 164 Customers Hired

  In June of 2015, the OPWDD requested assistance with hosting Civil Service Tests for Direct Support Professionals needed to staff their Tupper Lake location. An ongoing series of exams was scheduled, advertised, and staffed at four career centers in the North Country. As of September 2017, 28 exams have been hosted at 4 North Country Career Centers resulting in 240 customers attending and 164 hires recorded. The partnership between OPWDD and NYSDOL has helped in maintaining OPWDD's staffing levels to the point where they no longer need to implement mandatory overtime.

- Nassau Coliseum - Long Island Region - 1,052 Customers Hired

  This landmark Long Island entertainment center reopened in 2017 after a year of reconstruction with a need to fill 1,000 positions. NYSDOL staff worked hand-in-glove with AEG Worldwide and Levy Restaurants (event and food and beverage providers) to develop a coordinated application process, and to identify, match, contact, and schedule 3,546 applicants for assessment. Staff staged and staffed assessment and recruitment events for what was our largest recruitment project to date.

- Barclay's Center – New York City Region - Hires Pending

  Spawned off a successful partnership with AEG Worldwide and Levy Restaurants (event and food and beverage provider) around the Nassau Coliseum project, New York City's Business Services supported the recruitment needs of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Barclay's Center is a multi-purpose indoor arena in Brooklyn, NY currently home to the Brooklyn Nets and New York Islanders. Staff worked hand-in glove to develop a coordinated application process and assist with preliminary candidate assessments. In total, 400 positions needed to be filled for the 2017-2018 season. Approximately 1,000 candidates were assessed and multiple hiring events were staged and staffed.

- Commercial Casino Projects - 1,280 Customers Hired

  In 2016, four commercial casino projects awarded licenses in NYS with a combined impact of 6,500 expected openings. To date, three of the projects have come to fruition: Rivers Casino, del Lago, Tioga Casino. A fourth project, Resorts World Catskills, is beginning to ramp up. NYSDOL staff worked closely with project HR staff to provide customized recruitment assistance. Staff developed job orders; posted and matched job orders; contacted candidates; and developed and staffing of information sessions, interview sessions and new employee orientations. To date, 1,280 customers have been hired.

The NYS Job Bank provides a great value to business customers, allowing them the opportunity to post jobs at no cost and save thousands of dollars a year in fees from Internet job boards and print media.

Businesses have several options of how to post jobs:

- Send job listings directly to Business Services to be posted;
- Post jobs themselves manually; or

- "Index" jobs directly from their own corporate websites. By choosing to index jobs, all jobs that are posted on the business site are automatically uploaded to the NYS Job Bank. This method provides the convenience of entering the job only once, with any changes to the job order on the corporate site also reflected in the posting on the Job Bank.

There are currently more than 210,000 jobs from more than 8,000 businesses on the NYS Job Bank. There are approximately 15,000 unique page views by job seekers on a weekly basis.

Jobs Express is a subset of the NYS Job Bank that sorts all the job openings in NYS by region and occupation in a user-friendly website (www.jobs.ny.gov). There are approximately 130,000 jobs listed on the Jobs Express website each day on average (over the last three months). This enables businesses and job seekers the ability to search jobs based on zip code and travel distance, and serves as a critical lead source for business service outreach.

Customized recruiting assistance is core to the Business Services strategy and is promoted to all businesses with current job openings. NYSDOL, partnering with WIOA staff, facilitates recruiting events, including providing space in Career Centers and providing staff to assist at the direction of the business. This service creates connections for job seekers while fostering relationships with business customers. It also helps Business Services staff better understand the needs of the business to make enhanced matches and referrals in the future. NYSDOL seeks to adopt promising practices to ensure continuity across regions and increase the number of quality outcomes (i.e. placements) from these events.

Business Services works with Career Center partners to create and expand the Talent Bank with a wide variety of qualified and capable workers to fit the needs of business customers. The Talent Bank is an online collection of customer resumes made available for business search. It is currently hosted through the Job Bank, and customers are encouraged to post their resume online to be viewed by businesses and notified when new openings become available.

Adding to our available self-service tools for businesses, Focus Talent, allows businesses to search the Talent Bank for qualified candidates. It also assists businesses with developing quality job postings for the Job Bank.

OJT has become one of the principal tools to make connections between businesses and job seekers. The value of these training incentives is demonstrated by the large percentage of businesses that hired job seekers using OJT, and used the program for multiple hires. Local WIA OJT was utilized effectively throughout the state, with particular success in the Mohawk Valley, Southern Tier, and Western regions. These three regions were responsible for more than 50% of the total statewide local OJT hires.

National Emergency Grants (NEGs) with an OJT focus have also proved successful in providing training to dislocated workers and the long-term unemployed. The OJT-NEG produced a significant number of hires, all of whom are dislocated workers who experienced prolonged unemployment. The Dislocated Worker Training NEG was available to businesses to provide occupational training to dislocated workers, with an emphasis on long-term unemployed. The Jobs Driven OJT-NEG was available to businesses looking to expand their workforce and included On-the-Job, Apprenticeship, or Customized training, depending on the individual needs of the business. In 2017, the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant became available to provide opportunities for sector approaches to reconnect Dislocated Workers to the workforce through work-based training such as OJT, Apprenticeships, or unpaid occupational skill-based training.

While the programs are administered at the local level, NYSDOL and LWDA staff promotes these programs interchangeably. All staff is active in business and participant identification, development of training plans, and monitoring of contracts.

Business Services staff promotes tax credits to all businesses to incentivize hiring certain eligible populations. This includes the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the Hire-a-Veteran Tax Credit, and the Urban Youth Jobs (UYJP) Program.

When promoting hiring and training incentives, WOTC has traditionally been a key tool in the Business Services toolkit. Business Services staff continues to promote awareness of the program to ensure businesses are positioned to take advantage of the credit. The Hire-a-Veteran Tax Credit encourages businesses to hire Post-9/11 Veterans who have not been employed in full-time (35+ hours/week) employment for at least 180 days. A business can receive up to $5,000 by hiring and retaining an eligible veteran or $15,000 if the veteran is disabled. This program became active on January 1, 2014. The UYJP program (formally New York Youth Works) is currently active and widely promoted to encourage businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth, 16 to 24 years of age, who reside in 13 specific targeted areas in eight regions of the state. Businesses utilizing this program can earn up to $5,000 in tax credits. The UYJP has helped 1,541 NYS businesses place youth participants in 27,133 jobs across targeted urban communities with high youth unemployment.

Business Services employs multiple methods to capture placement data. These include leveraging relationships that provide a flow-through of placement information from business customers as well as accessing data from New Hire Reports.

The initiatives previously mentioned (i.e., Business Outreach, Priority Jobs, Customized Recruitment) were designed to build the type of solid and trustworthy relationships with businesses that naturally lead to the sharing of placement data. Through these initiatives, staff provides the quality service that becomes the foundation of strong relationships and open dialogue, which are then leveraged to glean hire information.

Business Services works closely with NYSDOL's R&S Division to retrieve data from New Hire Reports, identifying candidates from OSOS that attained employment with business customers. This enables staff to capture supplemental placement data outside of the direct relationships with businesses.

Ultimately, it is only at the point of placement where the business customer and job seeker come together to validate the vision of Business Services and its execution. Together these methods provide a means to assess the number of placements occurring as a result of Business Services efforts and an understanding of which strategies produce the greatest successes.

Last, monitoring staff activities plays a large role in the success of Business Services operations by ensuring staff provides quality services and document their activities. Outreach to businesses is tracked on a weekly basis to capture data and report on the daily outreach activities, services, and number of businesses served by Business Services staff across the state. This is done through multiple reports, and sent to supervisors and staff so individuals are held to standards for outreach goals and the quality of their work. Data is compiled and analyzed by staff; region; industry sector; type of outreach; and services offered.

Like NYSDOL, OCFS/NYSCB and NYSED/ACCES-VR offer workforce development services to businesses, monitor the activities of business outreach staff, and provide linkages between businesses and job seekers.

OCFS/NYSCB monitors contract compliance with comprehensive services contracts, vocational evaluation/job placement services contracts, and assistive technology services contracts through a centralized Quality

Assurance process. Each contractor is evaluated at least once during the contract period through an internal review of randomly selected consumer cases. The review evaluates the contractor's adherence to contract guidelines and the quality of services delivered. The review team includes staff from OCFS/NYSCB home office and district offices. A final report is submitted to the contractor, and additional follow-up monitoring is conducted if corrective actions are needed.

In addition, on-going monitoring of eligibility, plan development, services provision, and case closure takes place through checks built into the OCFS/NYSCB consumer caseload management system and through supervisory review of consumer cases.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has a workforce development and business relations team, including a statewide coordinator, who develops relationships with businesses to ensure a statewide presence; five regional business coordinators who develop relationships with regional companies based on labor market demand; and 15 local workforce development and business relations staff, who develop local business relations and work with the regional and statewide coordinators and other core partners to implement activities on a broader scale.

The whole team works directly with businesses to understand their employment needs and to find candidates who are appropriate matches. Team members also work closely with job seekers, discovering their skills and placing them in On-the-Job Training (OTJ) and work tryouts. NYSED/ACCES-VR reimburses 100% of an employee's wages for up to 480 hours for OTJ and work tryouts. Recently, the team met with the Workforce Development Committee of the NYSED/ACCES-VR State Rehabilitation Council and partnered with a member to roll-out Champions of Change events. These events were designed to link businesses to information about hiring individuals with disabilities.

The NYSED/ACCES-VR team also provides job coaches, who work with the business and the employee to understand the needs of both. Team members offer assistance on accommodations, financial incentives, accessibility, and diversity training. They provide publications about hiring people with disabilities, and celebrate National Disability Awareness month by giving awards to businesses that are committed to hiring people with disabilities in their communities. Staff attends business-related events, including job fairs, to provide information about NYSED/ACCES-VR services to business and to link specific job applicants to business needs.

The ACCES workforce development and business relations team is aligned with the CSAVR national employment team.

Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

The SWIB, working in collaboration with all 33 LWDBs, is responsible for implementing a statewide vision designed to increase partner engagement with educational institutions. The Education and Credentials subcommittee of the SWIB will lead the charge for NYS by designing strategies to engage the state's education and training providers, including community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

To better understand the fundamentals attached to a strategic vision designed to increase partner engagement with educational institutions, it is important to highlight what NYS is currently doing in the area of education as it relates to the public workforce system. This includes public-private partnerships with community colleges and universities, and creating career pathways.

The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) partnership continues to chart new territory in the reform of secondary and postsecondary education in the United States by providing high school students with a private sector business mentor and an Associate degree at no cost, putting them first in line for jobs at partnering businesses when they graduate. The public workforce system in various local areas makes a good partner in this initiative.

SUNY has created regional planning councils ensuring that the 29 community colleges outside of New York City cooperate with the other colleges within the regions of the state, and that the colleges in a region, along with stakeholders from other NYS agencies (including the public workforce system), local government, and business and industry work together. Under this structure, multiple colleges in one region will come together under a regionally assembled council. These councils set program development, enrollment, and transfer goals on a regional basis. This initiative limits competition by colleges for students within a region; better align education and training program offerings to regional economic development goals and activities; and improve student outcomes.

To promote student success and institutional excellence, NYS began the process of shifting support from an enrollment-driven formula to one that bases a portion of state aid on performance. The state budget for 2015-16 include $30 million in new investment and performance funds allocated to SUNY and CUNY campuses that develop performance improvement plans. These plans include goals to improve access, completion rates, academic and post-graduation success, research potential, and community engagement, including the involvement of the public workforce system.

Building upon the initiatives already in place to better align the public workforce system and educational entities, an increased emphasis will be placed on managing and enhancing the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). The ETPL was established in compliance with WIA and amended by WIOA to provide customer-focused employment training resources for adults and dislocated workers. Training providers who are eligible to receive Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) through WIOA Title I-B funds are listed on the ETPL. NYS will work diligently to ensure the ETPL provides prospective training participants with reliable and objective information regarding program successes and affordability, useful for making training and career decisions that lead to employment in the state's workforce.

In an effort to maximize the benefit of strong collaboration between the public workforce system and the education community, a stronger emphasis at the state level has been placed on Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships. Career Pathways is a system-wide framework that aligns education and training with specific advancement opportunities for a broad range of job seekers. All core partners under WIOA overseeing workforce development programs continue to re-orient their services toward career progression instead of stopping at job placement. This effort will include sector-focused bridge programs, skills training, job-relevant curricula, and work-based learning opportunities. The Career Pathways framework can build upon existing efforts in the state, such as the Career Pathways program operated by OTDA through 13 community based providers. These programs offer participants a clear course of action for building skills and obtaining industry recognized credentials to progress in their career. Individuals between 18 and 24 years of age are a priority population for these Career Pathway services.

Career Pathways connect education, training, credential attainment, and wraparound services to support new and incumbent workers as they advance to higher levels of employment. The core partners under WIOA will work with SUNY and NYSED, and other educational institutions to align education (including career and technical education programs), postsecondary education (including certificate, Associate, and Bachelor's degree

programs), and credential training with specific career advancement opportunities as job seekers' needs evolve over time.

Lastly, Sector Partnerships will be a statewide priority under WIOA and will necessitate a strong collaboration of various partners. Sector partnerships are partnerships of businesses from the same industry and in their natural labor market region, with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations that focus on a set of key priority issues identified by the target industry. It is recognized that sector partnerships must have an active convener, and for this reason, the SWIB as the workforce development leader will take on the role of convener to implement state-level initiatives around sector partnerships. Similar to Career Pathways, the SWIB, in collaboration with the LWDBs, must customize an individual approach to Sector Partnerships for each of the 33 LWDBs in NYS.

Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

NYS recognizes that the realities of today's global economy make it imperative that the public workforce investment system be demand-driven, fully integrated, and focused on talent development in support of regional economic growth. This involves providing services that prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth/high-demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. It is imperative that NYS leverages the hundreds of millions of dollars it receives annually from the federal government to support the pubic workforce system in such a way to meet critical workforce challenges to create a competitive global workforce, including an increase to educational access.

NYS plans to strategically invest and leverage the resources of the multiple federally funded-programs delivered through Career Centers by adopting a shared vision and collaboration of all partners in the state and local system, including the Governor and Local Elected Officials, the State and Local Workforce Development Boards, and the Career Centers. By aligning resources at all levels, the workforce system serves as a leader and catalyst for talent development strategies.

More defined strategies for leveraging resources will include:

- A formal commitment to leveraging resources by all required One-Stop System Partners via the MOU process;
- Utilizing a portion of WIOA statewide activities funds for educational and training purposes;
- Collaborating with the REDCs throughout NYS to prioritize and allocate funding opportunities for educational and training purposes;
- Applying for all educational and training funding opportunities announced at the federal level; and
- Developing effective Career Pathways and Sector Partnership strategies that encourage all partners (i.e., businesses, workforce system, educational entities, etc.) to commit to a certain level of resources, including an allocation for education and/or training for active participants.

Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Postsecondary and Industry-Recognized Credentials

Access to and attainment of postsecondary and industry-recognized credentials is an integral step in helping job seeking customers obtain middle-skill employment that pays family sustaining wages. The skilled workforce this creates will meet the needs of business customers and help NYS attract and retain businesses. The state is implementing a demand-driven sector partnership strategy to align the goals of the workforce, business, and

education communities to ensure the correct mix of training and credential programs are available to meet the needs of business and job seekers alike.

The state is supplementing these efforts with Sector Partnership (SP) NEG funding. This will reinforce and expand existing efforts, as well as provide startup capital for new initiatives that will be sustained when the grant period ends. The SP-NEG seeks to streamline the assessment and referral of job seekers to training opportunities that match their career goals and the needs of the regional labor market.

Priority for Individual Training Account (ITA) funds assignment for youth and adults is provided to training that result in industry-recognized credentials. State-issued solicitations for training projects award additional technical merit points to those that offer training leading to industry-recognized credentials in the demand industries. These additional points are currently available to CFA and SP-NEG applicants; and will be written into future training solicitations. The state's strategic vision extends to the development of a middle-skills employment program designed specifically to support the hiring needs of business that employ individuals in titles that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree.

The state's strategic vision for improving access to credentials is exemplified by the REDCs' identification and creation of demand industry lists. These regional lists become the foundation for determining which credential training programs to offer, the establishment of statewide demand industries, and creation of industry partnerships.

Actionable labor market information is the core of any effective sector partnership strategy. Combining the resources of the key economic development, workforce development, and education entities in NYS ensures that the goals of our essential partners are aligned and that appropriate credential training programs are made available (or developed to meet projected need) to job seekers.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a time-honored approach to training skilled workers through a combination of OTJ and classroom instruction, and is used to develop tomorrow's competitive workforce. Apprentices earn wages and produce high-quality work while learning skills that enhance their employability. An apprentice operates under the close supervision of an accomplished worker (journey-worker) on the job and takes related classroom instruction often at night or on weekends. A graduated pay scale assures that salary reflects the degree of skill achieved.

NYS's Registered Apprenticeship program is aligned with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser within NYSDOL's DEWS office. The alignment of these programs ensures that dislocated workers and unemployed individuals are exposed to current apprentice opportunities, educated on the increasing role of apprenticeship in the workforce, and are encouraged to apply for apprenticeship opportunities through job fairs and Career Centers. Many Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors recruit publicly through their local Career Centers for new apprentices. In addition, businesses that elect to conduct area-wide recruitments are required to submit their recruitment information to the NYSDOL. A press release is developed for each area-wide recruitment, and is distributed to local media and posted on NYSDOL's webpage, in addition to listing the positions on the NYS Job Bank.

Upon successful completion of a Registered Apprenticeship program, NYSDOL awards the apprentice with a Certificate of Completion. Each certificate is a nationally recognized portable credential. A new trend in Registered Apprenticeship is for sponsors to partner with education so that apprentices also earn an educational degree. This builds on the current required related classroom instruction. Some Registered Apprenticeship

program sponsors do this by combining the standard on-the-job skill component of training with expanded classroom instruction in a particular field. This classroom training is offered at the community college level. As a result, apprentices earn both a Certificate of Completion from the NYSDOL and an Associate degree from a community college.

Apprentice Training Representatives (ATRs) located throughout NYS work closely with Career Centers, as well as NYSDOL/DEWS's Business Services staff, to promote Registered Apprenticeship to businesses as a proven vehicle for preparation of a skilled workforce. Registered Apprenticeship offers businesses a steady supply of competent workers, is economical, helps improve employee relations, reduces turnover, and is recognized by industry and labor alike. ATRs network with businesses at job fairs and also avail themselves to industries and associations to present at meetings such as advanced manufacturing. They follow the local business climate and provide outreach to new and expanding businesses to market and promote the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship.

NYS intends to diversify Registered Apprenticeship by encouraging more opportunities for underrepresented populations. NYS Governor Cuomo announced a state-wide Pre-Apprenticeship program for disadvantaged out-of-school individuals age 18-24 which is expected to steer underrepresented populations into Registered Apprenticeship programs. On July 13, 2016, NYSDOL released an RFP in order to secure the services of eligible community-based; nonprofits, including public schools and BOCES; and not-for-profit organizations to assist this new Pre-Apprenticeship program. Under the RFP, six grantees were awarded $1.1 million to serve 191 out-of-school disadvantaged individuals age 18-24 and to connect these individuals with NYS Registered Apprenticeship construction programs working on state-funded projects.

NYS's economic well-being is developed and sustained with a highly skilled workforce and Registered Apprenticeship plays a leading role in ensuring a reliable and constant source of skilled workers in demand industries. Over the course of the year, NYSDOL's Apprenticeship Division was awarded two grants from USDOL to aid in the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship. On June 2, 2016, NYDOL was awarded a $200,000 State Accelerator Grant for developing strategic plans and building partnerships for apprenticeship expansion and diversification with state education, workforce and economic development systems. Additionally, on October 21, 2016, NYSDOL was awarded $1.5 million from USDOL to fund NYS's apprenticeship expansion through the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (AEG). In combination with the Accelerator Grant, NYSDOL is utilizing these funds to expand Registered Apprenticeship throughout the state in new and emerging occupations and to reach underserved populations.

To facilitate the expansion of apprenticeship, NYSDOL is making up to $4.2 million in funding available under the AEG Request for Applications (RFA). The purpose of this RFA is to expand Registered Apprenticeship training by increasing employment opportunities for approximately 800 new apprentices with a focus on underrepresented populations. These new apprentices will enter trades in high-demand occupations, with a focus on the emerging fields of Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology (IT), as well as other in-demand occupations. This funding will cover costs associated with the provision of training apprentices through Registered Apprenticeship, such as Related Instruction (RI), OJT, books, and tools.

In April 2017, the NYS budget was passed for the fiscal year 2018. The budget included the Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit Program. Forty million was allocated under this tax program which continues until 2022 (up to $10 M annually is available for expenditure). Employers are eligible to apply for the tax credit beginning in 2018 and can receive tax credits for apprentices under certain criteria.

As part of the effort to focus on the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship in new and emerging industries, during the past year, NYSDOL approved five new trades. These trades include: Quality Assurance Auditor, Precision Optics Manufacturing Technician, Computer Support Technician, Community Health Worker, and Centerless Grinder Machinist. The approval of these new trades facilitates the expansion of RA into demand industries. Each trade has unique tasks, skills, and follows an approved Training Outline. Quality Assurance Auditors work with production personnel to ensure an employer's products meet standards. Precision Optics Manufacturing Technicians assist manufacturers of precision lenses. Computer Support Technicians identify, install, configure, and troubleshoot issues with computers and IT networks. Community Health Workers are front line public health workers who help bridge the gap between medical facilities and social service agencies. Centerless Grinder Machinists perform production runs on all manner of machined parts using manual and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) grinding machines. Also during this year, the trades of Lather (Wood, Wire and Metal) and Linoleum, Resilient Tile & Carpet Layer were updated to reflect the changing needs of the industries.

In addition to these trades, there are two new trades which are under review for approval: Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic and Software Developer. The approval of new programs in these emerging industries will help build and diversify NYS Registered Apprenticeship.

Traditionally, apprenticeship programs were only approved as time-based programs where apprentices had to complete a specific number of hours in each on-the-job task but did not have to demonstrate competency. However, NYS's Apprenticeship Regulations permit the use of hybrid and competency-based approaches to training. The hybrid approach is a combination of the time-based and competency-based approaches and requires a minimum number of OTJ hours for each skill prior to testing. Previously, NYSDOL approved a hybrid program for the Carpenter trade and a competency-based program for Direct Support Professional. In the past year, two new hybrid training outlines were approved for Linoleum, Resilient Tile & Carpet Layer and Community Health Worker. In addition, NYSDOL has recently approved a competency-based training outline for Computer Support Technician. Approval of competency-based and hybrid programs allows sponsors and apprentices additional flexibility in the length of time needed to complete a program. NYSDOL anticipates developing and moving more trades into alternative training approaches which allows for diversity and expansion into new and emerging industries.

Coordination with Economic Development Strategies

Regional Economic Development Councils

In order to empower each region to chart its own course, Governor Cuomo created ten REDCs to encourage an approach to economic development driven by the people and businesses from within each region. Membership reflects the myriad of interests in each community, including major industries, small businesses, higher education, community organizations, and labor. The Regional Councils turned around Albany's top-down approach to economic development, shifting to a community-based, performance-driven model that empowers localities to develop and invest in their own economic future. Each REDC developed a strategic regional plan to capitalize on the established strengths and unique resources of each of the ten regions of NYS.

In their various plans, the REDCs listed priority areas specific to their region. Based on information in the plans, the Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing sectors continue to be priorities for most of the state's regions. Other priorities in at least three REDC plans include Agriculture and Tourism (including Hospitality, Food, and Beverage). There is also a more diverse set of priority sectors than in previous years; many priority sectors are unique to one region.

A majority of the REDC plans identified both the K-12 educational pipeline and post-secondary education (undergraduate and higher) as priority areas. In terms of sources of non-academic training, those that were cited in several REDC strategic plans as priority areas include:

- Apprenticeships and OTJ;
- Customized training; and
- Worker skills upgrading/incumbent worker training.

In addition, a majority of the REDC strategic plans cite the pressing need to align worker supply with worker demand. Other workforce issues mentioned by the REDCs in their regional plans include: addressing workforce shortages, concerns about skill gaps, and a need for extensive training.

In addition, the State University of New York (SUNY) and the accompanying Community College system have begun to recognize this established regional structure for economic development and the synergy that organizing around this geography can produce. Accordingly, colleges have begun to collaborate on a regional basis to address sectoral training needs identified through data and prioritized by the REDCs.

Five-Year Regional Economic Development Strategic Plans

In 2011, each council was required to develop a five-year strategic plan to compete for regional economic development resources. Over the past six years, as part of a process that has awarded over $2.25 billion for job creation and community development, the REDCs produced innovative plans and implementation agendas that truly reflect the distinct characteristics of each of the ten regions of NYS. In addition, state agencies provide additional resources to support regional growth strategies. These funds are made available through a CFA. The CFA was created to streamline and expedite the grant application process for stakeholders within each region, and is now in its seventh year.

The success of the REDCs' work led to additional initiatives, including the Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) and the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The DRI looks to transform downtown neighborhoods such as Kingston and Watkins Glen, into vibrant, highly developed communities. The URI was modeled after the success of the Buffalo Billion Initiative, and sought to develop the economies and workforces of communities upstate. Three regions received URI awards in 2015, and the revitalization efforts are ongoing.

NYSDOL aligned its Business Services goals with the goals of the REDC in each region, including focusing on serving businesses in priority sectors identified by each Council and promoting the yearly CFA to businesses. The CFA streamlines the way businesses apply for economic development funds by bringing together resources from 12 state agencies including ESD, NYSERDA, New York Power Authority (NYPA), NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), NYS Department of State (DOS), and NYSDOL. Business Services assists with contract development for NYSDOL programs and provides ongoing technical assistance to award recipients.

State Agency Coordination

The Governor charged state agencies with providing support to Regional Councils in four main ways:

- Identify existing funding and resources to support the implementation of Strategic Plans;
- Conduct a due diligence review of the CFA submissions for relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns;
- Work with REDCs to address obstacles to long-term economic growth statewide; and
- Revise state guidelines and internal processes to expedite REDC projects across NYS government.

REDC strategic plans are to be comprehensive and address needs in a holistic fashion. Accordingly, ESD, the state's economic development agency, reached out to approximately 20 other NYS agencies to identify resources and strategic support for the Regional Councils. As guided by ESD research, each agency provided data and other information that summarized some aspect of the ten regional economies. For example, business climate was captured in part through state and local tax data and traditional regional economic data was provided by NYSDOL. ESD research staff formatted and restructured the data as needed to fit the REDCs' objectives creating a "regional snapshot" presentation for each region and a "data warehouse" of databases and other information to support the snapshots. This groundbreaking innovation was recognized as an example of outstanding achievement in economic development research by The Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) in June 2012.

Regional Workforce Planning

NYSDOL has long encouraged Regional Planning as a way to further inform and enhance the regional progress reports developed by the REDCs, and requested that LWDBs develop formal Regional Plans for a number of years under WIA. Regional Planning is now a required function of the LWDBs under WIOA.

WIOA requires Regional Plans to address the following:

a. Regional Service Strategies, including cooperative service delivery agreements;
b. Sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
c. The collection and analysis of regional labor market data;
d. The establishment of a regional spending plan that includes administrative cost arrangements between LWDBs and the pooling of funds where applicable;
e. The coordination of supportive services;
f. The coordination of services with Economic Development partners; and
g. An agreement concerning performance accountability measure negotiation and reporting.

In addition to these required elements, NYSDOL requires that LWDBs ensure their Regional Plan aligns with the Priority Projects of their associated REDC by reviewing the appropriate REDC Progress report.

STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

State Program and State Board Overview

State Agency Organization

Within the NYS workforce delivery system, the Governor oversees NYSDOL and OCFS, including OCFS/NYSCB, while the Board of Regents is responsible for NYSED, including NYSED/ACCES-VR and ACCES-Adult Education Program and Policy (AEPP). NYSED, OCFS, and NYSDOL are linked through the SWIB, with each agency being an ex-officio member of the board. Both NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/NYSCB include a State Rehabilitation Council, responsible for providing advice and support to both programs in the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities.

NYSED oversees Title II-Adult Education and Literacy and Title IV-Vocational Rehabilitation. Under program delivery, Adult Education and Literacy oversees seven RAEN centers and additional Adult Education providers,

while NYSED/ACCES-VR utilizes its District Offices to provide services to participants. OCFS/NYSCB also oversees Title IV-Vocational Rehabilitation, and like NYSED/ACCES-VR, utilizes its District Offices for program delivery to participants. NYSDOL oversees Title I-Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and Title III-Wagner-Peyser, and utilizes the state's 96 Career Centers and partner programs for service delivery.

All three agencies refer participants to one another to provide the best service possible to all. In addition, the workforce development system includes additional partners who are also represented on the SWIB. These partners include ESD, OTDA, SUNY, and CUNY. ***Appendix 1*** presents the Organizational Chart for administration of WIOA.

State Board

For detailed information on the SWIB, please see the State Board Functions section under Operational Planning Elements on pages 27 and 28. The membership roster and each member's affiliation for the SWIB are presented in the following table.

Name	Organization	Affiliation
Gov. Andrew Cuomo	Chamber	Governor
Baird, Tony	Tony Baird Electronics	Business
Carro, Noreen	LMN Printing Co.	Business
Cozzolino, Vincent	FALA Technologies	Business
Diodati, Richard	Charles T. Sitrin Health Care Center	Business
Esteban, Sergio	LaBella Associates PC	Business
Fancher, Michael	College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering (CNSE)	Business
Fitzgerald, Carol	Life Medical Technologies, Inc.	Business
Fuest, Norbert	Morton Salt	Business
Johnson, Jessica	Johnson Security Bureau Inc.	Business
Kondra-DeFuria, Suzanne	Potter Heating & Air Conditioning	Business
Madison, Allison	Madison Approach Staffing, Inc.	Business
Maier, Peter	INFICON	Business
McNally, Michael	United Health Services	Business
Miner, Kathleen	Univ. of Rochester Medical Center & Strong Memorial Hospital	Business
Papale, Shawna	Candella's Produce LLC/ Mohawk Valley Edge	Business
Sansone, Chris	Keller Technology Corp.	Business
Schneider, Shelby	Shmaltz Brewing Co.	Business
Shybunko-Moore, Anne	GSE Dynamics	Business
Townsend, Kimberly	Loretto	Business
Weber, Nancy	Mexican Pride Farm	Business
Commissioner	NYS Education Department	Core Program/Executive
Commissioner	NYS Department of Labor	Core Program/Executive
Commissioner	NYS Office of Children and Family Services	Core Program/Executive
Commissioner	Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance	Executive
President & CEO	Empire State Development Corporation (ESD)	Executive
Chancellor	SUNY	Executive
Titus, Michele	NYS Assembly	Legislative – Assembly
Savino, Diane	NYS Senate	Legislative – Senate
Ossenfort, Matthew	Montgomery County	Local Elected Official (County Executive)

Name	Organization	Affiliation
Quill, Michael	Mayor, City of Auburn	Local Elected Official (City)
Catalano, Albert	Int'l. Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers	Apprenticeship Representative/Organized Labor
Costello, Patrick	IBEW Local 43	Organized Labor
Ayala, Plinio	Per Scholas	Youth
Mathis, David	Oneida County Workforce Development	Youth
McDermott, Joseph	Consortium for Worker Education	Workforce
Milliken, James	CUNY	Workforce
Murphy, Ed	AFL-CIO, Workforce Development Institute	Veteran

According to SWIB bylaws adopted in May 2015, nominations to business and labor representative positions are solicited from appropriate state-level business/labor organizations, consistent with WIOA. NYS had a WIOA-compliant State Board prior to WIOA implementation and there were no subsequent membership changes prior to Combined State Plan submission.

Board Activities

The SWIB created committees that focus on specific goals that align with the goals and strategies of WIOA and the REDCs. Each committee chair is a member of the Executive Committee and led by SWIB Chairman Vincent Cozzolino.

In October 2014, SWIB Chairman Cozzolino announced the establishment of five standing committees with all members participating on at least one committee. The committees are:

- Communications & Improving Regional Planning (chaired by Nancy Weber) – coordinates SWIB efforts with those of other workforce entities, such as REDCs and LWDBs, to incorporate regional feedback to statewide initiatives and/or foster new ideas. Within this subcommittee, there is an emphasis on SWIB members attending local board meetings to solicit local level feedback to build stronger partnerships that foster system responsiveness and improvement.
- Education & Credentials (chaired by Tony Baird) – identifies and promotes ways to increase employment and meet business needs through education and training opportunities or reforms. The subcommittee is studying career pathways development within in-demand industries.
- Significant Industries (chaired by Shelby Schneider) – identifies and addresses concerns such as skills gaps and needs of significant and emerging industries in NYS to promote employment and growth. Members reviewed each of the regions' priority sectors and are currently reviewing labor market information This subcommittee is building upon the REDC planning process and helping to further a "demand driven system" by focusing on meeting the needs of businesses to align our talent (job seekers).
- Aligning Workforce Programs (chaired by Sergio Esteban) – coordinates with workforce programs to ensure compliance with federal goals (WIOA) to avoid unnecessary duplication of services and ensure better alignment. The subcommittee examines how various workforce programs contribute to NYS economic development and can better serve individuals in a streamlined manner. An interagency team comprised of core program staff was formed under this subcommittee at the beginning of 2015 to begin discussions on the WIOA Combined State Plan and continues to meet to find ways to progress on WIOA goals of better system integration and alignment. The Interagency group has formed a number of teams, ranging from the Training and Assistance Workgroup to the Referrals and Waivers Workgroup.

- Outcomes & Metrics (chaired by Chris Sansone) – evaluates current performance measures and makes recommendations on new ones that should be established to study results of workforce programs for inefficiencies. This subcommittee will make recommendations for improvement and promote best practices.

Each committee chair discusses long and short-term goals with Executive Committee members and communicates action items to the entire board at the full membership quarterly SWIB meetings. As topics or issues needing specific attention are identified, workgroups are formed with appropriate subject matter experts assisting in discussion facilitation and research with the goal to produce a deliverable. Committees may refer issues or concerns to another committee for further consideration if it aligns more with the objective and function of that committee. For example, if the Significant Industries committee identifies a training skills gap within a specific business sector, it may be referred to the Education & Credentials committee for further study in order to develop a recommendation to address the problem.

State Policies

NYS directs the Career Center system through ongoing technical assistance on state policy and the release of workforce development system technical advisories. As these policies are initially developed, stakeholders across the system are consistently engaged to provide valuable input and commentary. Through a variety of methods--including webinars, teleconferences, in-person meetings, and written document-- the LWDBs, chief local elected officials, and local one-stop partners are engaged as necessary to reinforce a working knowledge of established and newly-developed state workforce policies. In addition, most policies will require a more formal release to serve as a point of reference for the state workforce system. These releases are developed in collaboration with the SWIB, core program partners, and local workforce system stakeholders. The list of topics covered by these written technical advisories is significant so they cannot all be commented on in the Plan, but some key topics include:

- Universal Accessibility of Career Center Services;
- WIOA Regional and Regional Workforce Planning;
- Veterans' Priority of Service;
- One-Stop System Operator Selection; and
- Performance Measures.

A comprehensive list of current NYSDOL technical advisories and their text may be found at the following link: https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/tas.shtm.

Regarding Career Center partner program contributions to the Centers as required by WIOA, the state is still in the process of developing final technical assistance in this area and has been working in close collaboration with program partners, the Local Boards, and the State Board. The core program partners worked to improve the state approval process for Service Delivery MOUs and continues to work on guidance related to the Infrastructure Funding and Shared Services MOU. NYSDOL has issued general assistance on establishment of cost allocation methodologies in the form of a webpage (http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/bull1-99cap.shtm) that contains information about General Cost Allocation principles set forth be the Office of Management and Budget, development of cost allocation plans, and the types of data that can be used as a basis for cost allocation..

Core Program and One-Stop Partner Assessments

Under WIA, NYSDOL tracked several Customer Service Indicators (CSIs). CSIs are designed to assist LWDAs in meeting their WIOA Common Measure goals and to move the Career Center System in NYS toward specific goals that NYSDOL deems important to the good of the state. First instituted during PY07 under WIA, NYSDOL has used many different CSIs that have evolved over time. They have included measures to reinforce data entry policy for staff, categorize participants based on their job readiness and prescribe additional services, leverage new technology, and effectively serve business customers. Over the past year, we have focused our efforts on ensuring we comply with the mandated WIOA Common Measure reporting requirements of WIOA. NYSDOL now expects to return to developing additional CSIs to assist local areas in achieving further performance goals.

As discussed previously, NYSDOL, in partnership with NYS OMH, developed and implemented NYESS. NYESS is made up of various computer applications and data sets. Employment related data collection is accomplished by all NYESS partners using the existing NYSDOL case management system, OSOS. Legacy data sets from the partners and current data sets, which include but are not limited to, OSOS; vocational rehabilitation agencies; DOH; Social Security Administration (SSA); and others are pulled together in a data warehouse. A web-based reporting portal designed and maintained by OMH will provide cross-agency report card like information to the general public (aggregate data) and to the individual agencies and their contracted partner staff.

The Adult Education and Literacy Programs Adult Student Information System and Technical Support (ASISTS) is an ACCES-AEPP-funded, custom built management information system. This system has been used by funded programs in NYS since PY2007-08. In addition to serving as the database for all program data related to adult literacy, it also provides reports designed to check for data quality and compliance with NRS. To ensure consistent and continual availability of training support, ASISTS produced a number of training videos, focusing on daily required action with program data. Round table discussions are scheduled quarterly to promote data quality.

Leadership will continue to support a contract for technical assistance, training, and troubleshooting to improve data quality and monitor program performance in every program. The NRS accountability specialist funded by this NYSED contract works directly with ACCES-AEPP staff. Duties include focusing on the largest providers with significant enrollments and programs who need intensive technical assistance to achieve improvement. In 2016-17, under the Combined State Plan, three programs from each region (for a total of 21) were selected for inclusion in the Individual Technical Assistance Program (ITAP). The Big 5 city school district programs (New York City, Yonkers, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo) consistently receive support from ITAP, given their large size. All ITAP programs are desk monitored, accompanied by monthly conference calls and an annual scheduled site visit. All communication and quarterly data analysis is collected electronically and stored on the NYS accountability website in a secure portal for each program. The portal is accessible by the NRS specialist, the NYSED Regional Liaison, the RAEN Director, and the program manager.

Each fiscal year, report card data is reviewed by NYSED. The NYS report cards quartile rank all funded programs. When a program's performance places that program in Quartile 1 and the program has missed one or more of the state benchmarks, the program is placed under Corrective Action. The program is required to submit a program improvement plan and must correspond electronically on the accountability website. Quarterly data reviews are conducted by the NRS Accountability Specialist and subsequent conference calls are scheduled with those programs exhibiting poor performance or inconsistent data patterns. The NRS Accountability Specialist assists in identifying problems and trends on a statewide and regional level.

Professional development in the areas of data collection, recording, and reporting continues to be a priority. Added to that is the constant need for NRS training at all levels. The Accountability Specialist will provide a

minimum of two training events in each of the seven geographic regions annually. Topics include NRS Foundations, NRS for Teachers, and NYS Report Card Training.

Beginning in 2007, all funded agencies have continued to receive NYS-issued report cards. This will continue in 2016-19. The report cards evaluate programs under two distinct methodologies. The first is a standard benchmark measurement. NYS benchmarks for performance in Measurable Skill Gain (MSG), Post Test Rate, and Follow up Outcomes are set each year by NYSED based on the averages derived from the prior year's state data. When programs meet all three benchmarks, they are scored as "proficient."

The second method of evaluation is based on a quartile ranking among all programs in the state. In the case of Measurable Skill Gain, the program's scores are weighted based on the NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) indicating the strongest proponent for gain. The weighting of each EFL is determined by the aggregate data analysis of the prior year's data. The quartiles are determined using the following rubric:

- 50% of the score is from the weighted Measurable Skill Gain;
- 20% of the score is from the post-test rate;
- 20% of the score is based on the four follow-up measures; and
- 10% of the score will be based on High School Equivalency (HSE) achievement.

Local program data will be entered quarterly into ASISTS, according to the following dates:

- Quarter I (7/01-9/30) data entered and reviewed by 10/31;
- Quarter II (10/01-12/31) data entered and reviewed by 1/31;
- Quarter III (1/01-3/31) data entered and reviewed by 4/30; and
- Quarter IV (4/01-6/30) data entered and reviewed by 7/31. Note that the program has until 10/31 each year to finalize the annual data submitted over the previous four quarters. It is the responsibility of the program to have data entry up to date for each quarter. ITAP continues in PY 2016-19. ITAPs identify agencies in need of intense technical assistance. The contracted Accountability Specialist, NYS regional staff, and RAEN directors work closely with these programs to identify gaps in quality and performance, and implement an effective program improvement plan. Effective use of webinars and conference calls provide a consistent line of communication with these programs as they implement change to improve their performance. As programs improve their performance, they are removed from ITAP status and others are then identified.

Beginning in November 2014 and continuing through PY 2016-2019, NYSED issues a Program Evaluation Report for each funded program. The annual Program Evaluation Report will identify whether the agency met the NYS benchmarks for Measurable Skill Gain, Post Test Rate, Follow up Outcomes, and HSE achievement. These are aggregate benchmarks set annually by NYSED based upon NRS targets negotiated with the U.S. Education Department and previous year performance data from programs funded by ACCES-AEPP. Programs that do not meet these NYS annual benchmarks will be required to undertake a formal Corrective Action Planning process. The program must submit and receive NYSED approval for a comprehensive Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that identifies specific steps for meeting NYS annual benchmarks by June 30 of the current year. For programs identified for corrective action in November of 2017 or 2018, they must meet their annual benchmarks by June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019, respectively.

Both the CAP and Continuous Evaluation Process processes will be reported and tracked through the accountability website at: http://www.adult-education-accountability.org for each program funded through this RFP.

Under the federal NRS for adult literacy programs, NYS, and ultimately local service providers, will be evaluated based on performance indicators. Successful applicants must submit data based on the federal requirements of the NRS. Information on the NRS may be found on the web page www.nrsweb.org.

Tracking data in ASISTS follows a four-category process. These categories are sequential and allow for the diversity among NYS's adult literacy programming. The categories are as follows:

Category I – Setup.

Programs enter the following categories of data to set up their data account in ASISTS:

- Funding sources - Programs can track services funded by multiple sources.
- Sites - Providers enter data pertaining to each of their sites and connect it to services so they can run reports separately by site.
- Outcomes - In addition to tracking required outcomes, programs may also track outcomes that are specific to their own specialized programming, such as training or career pathways.
- Personnel - Providers add teacher information including name, experience, certification information, and longevity.
- Classes/Services - Providers create their roster of classes adding the schedule, teacher, and type/level of classes.

Category II – Registration.

All state funded programs must use a standard registration form, the Individual Student Record Form (ISRF).

- Student information - This includes name; DOB; contact information; and demographic information such as gender, ethnicity, employment status, educational background, and public assistance status. ASISTS also allows providers to note whether a person is a parent or disabled. Social Security Numbers are also recorded when made available by the student.
- Initial Assessment - All providers use one of two standardized assessments (the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for Adult Basic Education (ABE) students or BEST Plus for English Language Learner (ELL) students with registrants at intake or within 12 hours of contact with the student. This assessment is used to place students in literacy classes and diagnose learning needs.
- Enrollment - Once registration is complete, registrants are assigned to classes based on their assessments and availability.

Category III – Services.

- Contact Hours - Adult Education providers use ASISTS to track attendance hours on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.
- Test scores - Post-tests are given by providers at regular intervals based on NYS Assessment Policy submitted to the U.S Education Department's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education to demonstrate learning gains. ASISTS calculates the Measurable Skill Gain based on their standardized assessment scores.

Category IV – Outcomes.

Adult Education providers track student outcomes regularly, both during and after their participation in a program.

- Measurable Skill Gain - NRS guidelines define a student as demonstrating Measurable Skill Gain when his or her test score places him or her in an NRS level (one of six predefined educational functioning levels) that is higher than the one determined by that student's initial or pre-test.
- Primary follow-up outcomes - Providers focus on the following key NRS outcomes:
    - Employment;
    - Median wage earning;
    - Attaining the NYS HSE diploma;
    - Attaining an industry recognized credential; and
    - Entering postsecondary education or training.
- Other Outcomes - ASISTS also facilitates the tracking of a wide variety of outcomes that are customized per program.

Review – Reports and Downloads.

ASISTS includes the following reports to review the data and use it for reporting and management purposes.

- Funding reports - Reports that present data critical to reporting following state funding guidelines. The most critical report is the Program Evaluation report indicating on one page the most critical performance statistics NYSED uses to evaluate programs. The state-funded Employment Preparation Education (EPE) state aid claim forms are also generated from ASISTS.
- Data management reports primarily meant for tracking and internal program management purposes.
- Data checks that are specifically designed to help providers detect and correct issues relating to data quality and completeness.

All of these resources will serve as the basis of core program alignment to support WIOA success.

Distributing Funds for Core Programs

Distribution of WIOA funding by the federal government to NYS for each of the four titles is determined by formula. In general, the formulas are based on factors related to programmatic need across the states. State-level discretion regarding the use of this funding for each of the four WIOA Titles is provided in the following descriptions.

Title I

The majority of funding for the Title I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker (DW) programs is provided directly by formula to 33 LWDAs for administration of program services as directed by the Governor-certified LWDBs. As authorized by WIOA and the annual federal budget appropriation, the remaining funding—up to 15% of each Title I Program for Statewide Activities, plus an additional up to 25% of the Dislocated Worker Program for Rapid Response Activities, is set aside for required and allowable state-level activities including administration, policy and program development, rapid response services, business services, fiscal and programmatic oversight and monitoring, and state-level employment and training programs as directed under the discretion of the Governor and with the assistance of the SWIB.

NYS's use of state-level WIOA funds for workforce investment activities is in compliance with the laws required and allowable activities for these funds. The Governor's 10 REDCs help guide the use of these funds by establishing priority projects, including sector-based workforce strategies in each region regions. The LWDBs are also consulted for feedback on uses of these funds.

Each year from 2011-2014 Congress either appropriated no Statewide Activities programmatic funds, or significantly reduced these funds. During this time, NYS used Rapid Response funds to provide employment and training programs to dislocated workers, especially for the long-term unemployed. The restoration of the 15% Statewide Activities funding in 2015 provides an opportunity for state-level programs to expand services to disadvantaged adults, incumbent workers, and youth, as well as continue to serve dislocated workers. Current and upcoming programs include incumbent worker skills upgrading training, unemployed worker training, OTJ, customized training, middle skills training, occupational training for the incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, pre-apprenticeship training, and youth employment and training programs.

The local area formula funding is distributed according to factors indicating local area need. For the Adult and Youth programs, funds are:

- Number of unemployed persons in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or more;
- Number of unemployed in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force; and
- Number of Adults/Youth whose income, or whose family income, was below poverty or below 70% of the lower living standard income level.

For the Title I Dislocated Worker Program, funds are distributed according to:

- Total number of UI beneficiaries and long term unemployed;
- Number of unemployed persons in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or more;
- Number of unemployed under the Mass Layoff Statistics program;
- Change in employment in industries with job losses in past five years; and
- Number of farms with net losses.

Greater detail on these Title I formula fund distribution factors, and the actual funding allocations for the local areas, can be found at:

https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/WIOA-New-York-State-Allocation-Formulas-to-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas.docx

https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/alloc/py16-py17-lwda-funding-allocations.pdf.

Title II

WIOA Adult Education and Literacy Core Program (Title II) funds will continue to support one of the largest and most diverse state adult education programs in the country. Since 2013, NYSED has dedicated Workforce Investment Act (WIA), from 2013 through 2018, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), beginning July 2018, Title II funds to support a comprehensive and coordinated literacy system that increased the skills of approximately 105,410 out-of-school youth and adults in adult basic education, adult secondary education and English as a second language (ESL).

- Approximately 21% are between the ages of 16 and 24 (22% in FY16).

- 45% of adult students enter literacy programs employed.
- 57,963 were unemployed upon entry in FY17.
- In terms of the numbers and demographic profile of students served:
    - 172 programs provided literacy education;
        - 63% of students are ESL learners.
        - 37% of students are preparing for the HSE.
- More than 11 million hours of instruction are recorded;
- 64.2% of learners moved one or more educational functioning levels; and
- ESL instruction for adults is the largest and fastest growing component of America's adult education system and the fastest growing program of any kind at many community colleges. Virtually all of our ESL students are immigrants. According to the U.S. Census, half the growth of the American workforce in the 1990s was due to immigration.

NYSED requested and received from the U.S. Education Department a one-year waiver to extend the competitive bidding of WIOA Title II funds to July 1, 2018. ACCES-AEPP used 2016-17 to plan and prepare for the competitive bidding of all local WIOA funding using an approach and format for multi-year funding. The RFP was released on December 27, 2017 and posted to the ACCES procurement webpage. The direct link to the RFP is:
http://www.acces.nysed.gov/aepp/rfp-gc18-016-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-title-ii-and-welfare-education-program.

The RFP bids $38,299,003 million in WIOA Title II funding and $1,843,000 in State Welfare Education Program funds for an annual total of over $40 million. The funding includes carry-over WIOA Title II funding to support multi-year awards. Successful applicants will be funded for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021 with the possibility of two (2) one-year extensions. All applicants for all funds must meet WIOA eligibility requirements, with the exception of NYS WEP funds which are only open to schools and BOCES.

There are four separate competitions:

- $21,269,614 in Section 211 funding for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services
- $ 9,501,967 in Section 243 funding for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)
- $ 2,962,72 in Section 225 funding for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals
- $ 6,407,702 for at least 50 Literacy Zones

Program Area 1. Funding for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services will be allocated to 33 local workforce areas based on the area's percentage of the state's adult population who are under-educated and lack a high school diploma or equivalency, adults in poverty, and the area's percentage of the state's adult population who speak English "less than very well" according to the latest U.S. Census American Community Survey. Competition is for funding within each Workforce Development Board area, based upon the funds allocated to that area.

The allocation and competitive process for this funding is fully described in Attachment 1 of the RFP Awards will be made to the highest-ranked proposals in each LWDB Area until the funds allocated are insufficient to fully fund the next ranked proposal with a passing score. The next ranked applicant that received a passing score but could not be funded in full within the LWDB Area will be offered partial funding within the same LWDA. If funds

remain after all eligible proposals have been awarded within any given LWDB Area, the remaining funds will be added to the amount available for distribution under the Literacy Zone competition.

Funded activities include literacy activities as defined in section 203 (9) and English Language Acquisition as defined in section 203 (6). Integrated Education and Training is fundable under this section. Per state policy, WIOA Title II funding will only fund the academic component of integrated education and training in order to maximize the leveraging of training dollars.

Program Area 2. Funding for Integrated English Language and Civics Education will be distributed through a separate Statewide Competition. Individual awards will be capped at $300,000 for New York City applicants and $250,000 for applicants elsewhere in the state. Per state policy, WIOA Title II funding will only fund the academic component of integrated education and training in order to maximize the leveraging of training dollars.

Program Area 3. Funding for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals will be distributed through a separate Statewide competition. There is a $250,000 cap for individual awards. Integrated Education and Training (IET), career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring and transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism are fundable. Per state policy, WIOA Title II funding will only fund the academic component of integrated education and training in order to maximize the leveraging of training dollars.

All program area must include a program of instruction that:

- Includes curriculum, lesson plans, and instructional materials aligned with NYSED/ OCTAE College and Career Readiness standards;
- Offers educational and career counseling service that assist an eligible individual to transition to postsecondary education or employment;
- Is part of a career pathway.

Program Area 4. Funding for Literacy Zones will be distributed based upon a separate statewide competition. Literacy zones (www.nys-education-literacy-zones.org) support case management and interagency coordination in family welcome centers in high poverty communities and communities with high concentrations of limited English speaking adults and connect eligible individuals with community resources, including instruction funded under Program Areas 1, 2 and 3 of the RFP and programs and services in Career Centers and workforce development system partners. Only Literacy Zone proposals submitted by applicants that resulted in a grant or grant contract under the previous Program Area 1 and/or Program Area 2 will be reviewed. Awards will be made to the highest-ranking applications in rank order until funds remaining are insufficient to fund the next ranked proposal in full. The next ranked applicant will be given the opportunity to operate a reduced program using the remaining funds in this pool.

Each Program Area has its own criteria for evaluation using requirements for the appropriate Section of WIOA. A separate application must be submitted for each of the four Program Areas. All of them include the thirteen required considerations.

Every applicant receiving funds in each of the four Program Areas in the RFP will receive multi-year awards for three years, with the option of two one-year extensions. Competition for NYS Welfare Education Program funds will be integrated into this WIOA Title II-WEP RFP to fund Literacy Zones administered by school districts and

BOCES. WEP grants will follow the same three-year award timeframe and the possibility of two one-year extensions under WIOA.

Consistent with state procurement procedures and WIOA, NYSED has made the RFP available to the public and all eligible WIOA applicants by: posting the comprehensive RFP in the State Contract Reporter and broadly notifying, through email blasts, members of associations and organizations of eligible WIOA providers, including but not limited to, the New York Association for Continuing and Community Education, NYS Corrections Education Association, the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy, SUNY and CUNY community colleges, NYS District Superintendents, current awardees, and past applicants. The RFP is also posted on the NYSED ACCES website under funding opportunities and on seven RAEN websites which provide regional information to adult education providers and potential applicants in each region of the state.

To determine if an applicant is an organization of "demonstrated effectiveness," all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate and English language proficient out-of-school youth and adults in the content area related to the RFP using the required academic standards as outlined in the National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines and requirements. All adult education programs currently receiving NYSED funding from WIOA Title II, NYS Employment Preparation Education (EPE) state aid, or NYS Welfare Education Program (WEP) operate under one performance and accountability system using the NRS requirements and NYS negotiated performance targets. Performance is based upon the NRS Educational Functioning Level descriptors. For currently funded applicants, each receives a NYSED performance report card that ranks its performance into four quartiles based upon NRS approved targets for NYS. Each applicant that is currently funded will be required to submit the 2015-16 NYSED NRS Report card to demonstrate effectiveness. This report card shows how they met state-negotiated performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English Language Learners. New organizations that apply will be required to fill out a "Demonstrated Effectiveness Chart" (Attachment 3 of the RFP) that provides evidence of demonstrated effectiveness based upon equivalent performance under NRS using the NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors. An applicant will also be required to demonstrate its record of improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to postsecondary education, skills training, or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness.

A process for LWDB review has been established for all WIOA applicants. This process is fully described in Attachment 5 of the RFP. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) review WIOA Title II applications for funding under this RFP to determine how well the applications align with local workforce plans for the workforce system to serve adult education students who have low literacy skills or are English Language Learners.

NYSED, working closely with the NYS Department of Labor and 33 Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) directors, has developed a process for LWDBs to review and provide input to potential applicants to ensure that applications are aligned with the local workforce plan and priorities.

1. LWDB priorities that relate to Title II applicants will be clearly outlined in the local plan. Local plans can be found on the NYS Department of Labor website: https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/wda.shtm.

   Each local plan will:

   - Provide a description of the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, specifically addressing priorities and strategies for serving out-of-school youth and adults who have low literacy skills, are English Language Learners, or lack a high school diploma or the equivalent;

- Provide a description of how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the NYS Career Center system for Title II participants with barriers to employment;
- Identify how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in academic and training programs; and
- Provide a description of how the local board will work with the entities that carryout out WIOA Title II programs.

2. The WIOA Title II LWDB Application Review Form (Attachment 5) should be used to demonstrate alignment between the applicant's WIOA Title II proposal and the strategy and goals of the LWDB plan:
   - The applicant completes Section 1 of Attachment summarizing the alignment to the LWDB plan.
   - The applicant agency submits all Attachment 5 forms to the LWDB for review.
   - The LWDB assesses alignment using Section 2 of Attachment 5 and advises the applicant on how well the application aligns with the local plan as appropriate by completing the form and sharing their recommendations.
   - When recommendations are made, the applicant completes Section 3 (Attachment 5) to demonstrate how the proposed application has been revised to take into account LWDB recommendations.

A separate Attachment 5 must be completed for each Program Area for which the applicant is seeking funding including each Literacy Zone application.

The following steps will be taken in conducting the WIOA Title II AEFLA competition, given the full and timely cooperation of partner state agencies such as the State Division of the Budget and State Comptroller:

- August 31, 2017: Approved dedicated plans for serving Title II populations with barriers to employment and priority career pathways for each of the 33 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) are posted on DOL website to enable applicants to align their applications with local board priorities
- December 27, 2017: NYSED issues the comprehensive RFP approved by the State Division of the Budget
- January 10, 2018: Applicant questions due to NYSED
- January 24, 2018: Q & A posted on NYSED website
- February 7, 2018: Applicants submit proposal summaries aligned with the LWDB priorities
- March 21, 2018: Each LWDB returns proposal summaries for alignment with priorities. These summaries, including how the applicant responded to LWDB recommendations to strengthen alignment, are submitted to NYSED for rating with the April 4 applications.
- April 4, 2018: All applications are due to NYSED
- May 23, 2018: Review and final award recommendations by NYSED ACCES
- May 29, 2018: Award recommendations approved by State Comptroller
- June 2018: NYSED ACCES announces AEFLA grant and contract awards
- July 1, 2018: AEFLA grant and contract providers being grant cycle, programming and funding.

The WIOA Title II-WEP RFP to award funds under WIOA sections 225 (Corrections Education), 211 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible providers), and 243 (Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education) will adhere to direct and equitable provisions for awarding WIOA Title II funds.

NYSED directly conducts the WIOA Title II competition and awards Section 231, 225 and 243 WIOA grants and contracts. NYSED does not fund a sub-state entity to conduct the WIOA competition.
The same announcement, application, and process are used for all WIOA Title II-WEP Comprehensive RFP applicants. All applications are treated in the same manner in terms of review and evaluation. Applications received for each competitive program of the RFP are independently reviewed by teams of two raters who are provided with the evaluation rubric and scoring criteria. Prior to rating, training is also provided to all reviewers on the evaluation rubric and scoring criteria.

In order to be considered for funding, proposals must receive a minimum score of seventy (70) points.
The applications will be reviewed and independently rated by two reviewers. A third review will be performed if there is a difference of at least 15 points between the two scores. In cases where a third review is necessary, the two closest scores in numeric value will be added and averaged to obtain the final average score. If the third reviewer's score is equal to the average of the two original scores, the third reviewer's score will become the final score.

In the event of a tie score in Program Areas 1, 2, or 3, the higher Project Description score will be used as a tie breaker. In the event that the Project Description is a tie score, Performance Accountability will be used for the final score. In the event of a tie score in Program Area 4, the higher Family Welcome Center will be used as a tie breaker. In the event of a Family Welcome Center tie score, the higher Literacy Zone Approach will be used as a tie breaker. Proposed budgets will be reviewed and items deemed inappropriate, unallowable or inconsistent with project or program activities will be eliminated. These revisions will result in a lower rating score on the budget section of the evaluation rubric.

If additional federal funds become available, NYSED will allocate those funds according to the specific funding streams (Section 225 Corrections Education: Section 243 Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education; with the remaining funds allocated to Program Area 1 and Literacy Zones. If additional state Welfare Education Program funds become available, they will be allocated to literacy zones at school districts or BOCES. NYSED will first fund applicants that were partially funded and continue down the rank ordered scoring list of passing applications to fully fund those programs in each respective competition. If funds remain after all eligible partially funded proposals have been awarded either a grant or grant contract, the remaining funds will be added to the amount available for distribution under the Program Area 4 Literacy Zone competition.

The review process is fully described in the RFP found at:
http://www.acces.nysed.gov/aepp/rfp-gc18-016-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-title-ii-and-welfare-education-program.

All applications will meet the requirements set forth in Section 232 and eligibility for WIOA funding under the RFP will meet direct and equitable requirements. Eligible providers for WIOA Title II funding will include organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in provide adult education and literacy activities, and may include: a school district; Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES); a not-for-profit Community Based Organization (CBO) or faith based organization; a library or library system; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education, including a two- and four-year college, an Educational Opportunity Center, SUNY or CUNY Research Foundation; unions; a public housing authority; a nonprofit organization that has the ability to provide adult education and literacy instruction; a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations,

institutions, libraries or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and one of the above entities where the non-profit is the fiscal agent.

In 2017-18, NYSED will continue support major state leadership investments and adapt them to WIOA requirements.

1. Seven Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) centers-RAEN centers will provide high quality professional development to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction; instruction related to the needs of adult learners; and dissemination about models and promising practices, including career pathways and bridge programs.

   Each of the seven RAENs will work with ACCES-AEPP staff, the designated Title II provider on each local workforce board, and other funded programs in the local workforce area to ensure a constant and timely input on workforce development policy, and implementation and dissemination of information to funded Title II providers.

   The RAEN centers are funded to be instrumental in the alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, and support the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. In partnership with ACCES-AEPP regional staff and the NRS accountability specialist, the RAENS will provide the technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under Title II as outlined in Section 223 (C), and support the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement in adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices in NYS as required by section 223 (D).

2. RAEN centers are funded to provide turn-key training to 5,500 adult education teachers on aligning adult education instruction with rigorous academic standards approved by the NYS Board of Regents through professional development provided through: CUNY developed Teacher Leader Institutes; the filming of effective college and career readiness/common core instructional modules based on the CUNY training; support for the peer review instructional process; and effective use of adult education teacher websites www.TeachingtothecoreNY.org and www.CollectEDNY.org.National Accountability Specialist – In June 2015, leadership funds were re-bid to support a full time national accountability specialist dedicated to help ACCES-AEPP develop and disseminate accountability and performance under WIOA. Specifically, this initiative is to promote understanding of the federal accountability system as defined by WIOA legislation. One of the major goals is to keep current with the United States Department of Education (USDOE) Office of Career Technology and Adult Education (OCTAE) guidance regarding accountability.

   In 2017-18, the following deliverables will be developed and annually updated to reflect new state and federal guidance: NYS NRS Manual; interactive training workshops; train the trainer workshops; and monthly and annual reports based upon performance data entered in ASISTS. In collaboration with the NYSED regional staff and the RAEN director, technical assistance will be provided to local adult education program practitioners to improve program performance in adult basic education, English language acquisition, and HSE preparation classes, including performance on NYS's new HSE assessment, the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), as well as implement new performance requirements under WIOA. This training and technical assistance will be directed to local adult education program administrators, professional development coordinators, data managers, and instructors across the state. The purpose of the training sequence is to assist local adult literacy program staff to set local performance standards; improve internal

data monitoring and quality; improve data collection procedures; use data to improve instructional approaches; and support the transition in data collection and performance measurement from WIA to WIOA.

3. ASISTS NRS Student Data and Reporting System: ASISTS is the state performance database system operated by the New York City Literacy Assistance Center (LAC). Since WIOA accountability and reporting requirements were defined in final regulations and agreements reached for data reporting with NYSDOL, NYSED will work with the New York City LAC to change ASISTS to meet WIOA requirements. It will still be used for state specific needs such as Employment Preparation Education state aid claims, corrective action, report cards, and diagnostic information for TASC.

4. National External Diploma Program: The fourth leadership project is funding the National External Diploma Program (NEDP), a non-traditional experiential adult learning assessment program which serves as an alternative pathway to high school credentialing.

5. Distance Learning: The fifth leadership project is a WIOA priority that supports strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the one-stop system. This continues the licensing agreements between Kentucky Educational Television and NYS's Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS). These licensing agreements include distance learning programs across NYS.

Title III

WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser funds are utilized by NYS to support employment services for unemployed job seekers and business customers in the New York Career Center System. The Career Center System physically embodies the required coordination of core and local partner program services, as all programs are present at these locations across the state, and is operated under the concept of universal accessibility. Title III funds support state staff, facilities, and information technology needed for partner program delivery at Career Centers and for improving the overall capacity of the workforce system to match labor demand with labor supply. NYS directs these funds as necessary to best support the system and to most efficiently fulfill federal mandates. PY2017 funding for NYS is $38,225,469, representing a $931,907 reduction from PY2014.

Title IV

The determination of how funds are distributed between the two vocational rehabilitation agencies in NYS has historically been made by governing state officials. The process and factors used to make this fiscal determination continue to be acceptable by both NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/NYSCB.

WIOA Title IV VR Program funds received by OCFS/NYSCB are used to provide services to eligible individuals in accordance with an IPE. Funds are also used to provide diagnostic services to assist in determining eligibility for services. OCFS/NYSCB established three outcome-based contracts for the provision of these services: comprehensive services; vocational evaluation/job placement services; and assistive technology services. Contractors provide agreed upon assessment and training services within a specific geographic area. If an individual's needs call for specialized services outside the scope of these three contracts, or where there is no service available in a geographic area, OCFS/NYSCB district offices purchase services from other providers. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB district offices receive allocation to purchase other allowable services such as college training, medical evaluations, and low vision evaluations and devices. Fifteen percent of Title I funds will be reserved to provide services to student with disabilities. OCFS/NYSCB also receives Title VI, Part B funds for the

provision of supported employment services for individuals who meet the definition of "most significantly disabled."

NYSED/ACCES-VR uses Section 110 funds to provide WIOA Title IV VR services. Fifteen percent of these funds will be devoted to pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. A combination of Title VI, Part B and Section 110 funds will be used to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Title VI, Part B funds typically represent less than 6% of the total funds NYSED/ACCES-VR uses for intensive supported employment services.

NYSED/ACCES-VR maintains agreements with other agencies for ongoing coordination of the implementation of supported employment intensive and extended services. NYSED/ACCES-VR is responsible for the provision of extended services to individuals who are not eligible for such services through other sources. NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with providers in a performance-based contracting system with payments being based on the attainment of specific milestones and outcomes for supported employment. Program performance and costs are reviewed at least annually. Service re-negotiations occur based on overall performance, including performance on projected outcomes agreed to by NYSED/ACCES-VR and the provider.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

Federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program benefits include funding for Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA), out-of-area job search, job relocation, and Trade-approved training. In NYS, WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded staff and services are functionally aligned within each of our local Career Center offices. This allows services to be provided to TAA customers in a seamless and efficient manner. Trade funded services can be layered on top of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded services already provided through the Career Center. NYSDOL allocated sufficient resources to each LWDA to support outreach (including Rapid Response services), orientation, case management, job development, and follow-up services for dislocated workers eligible for TAA benefits.

PROGRAM DATA

Alignment of Data

NYS recognizes that aligning and integrating workforce and education data is important in order to fulfill the goals of WIOA. However, this is a difficult task that will take many resources and time to achieve. To begin the process, NYS established a Data Integration Workgroup as a sub-workgroup to the Aligning Workforce Programs committee of the SWIB. The workgroup meets regularly and has identified the primary steps to take to work towards alignment and integration. The Title I, Title III, Trade Act, and Unemployment Insurance program data is already integrated in OSOS; therefore, NYS will focus on how to align and integrate with the Title II and Title IV programs.

The Data Integration Workgroup began by creating a gap analysis for WIOA compliance, evaluating the current systems, and reviewing the combined/join Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) reporting requirements. The core programs then worked with their respective vendors to update existing system to be compliant with WIOA data collection and reporting requirements. However, this will be an ongoing process as the Federal departments have continued to update requirements and release additional policy.

The workgroup has identified some of the obstacles to overcome in the move towards alignment and integration. These include, but are not limited to, awaiting guidance from the federal Departments regarding

the level of integration; the specific data required; common enrollments and common exits; developing data sharing agreements and other legal hurdles; fiscal data integration; confidentiality of customer information; meeting NYS requirements and integration with other systems such as the Statewide Financial System (SFS) and NYESS; funding for alignment and integration, and funding for future maintenance and system modernization costs; and the different stages of each agency's systems (for example, one agency is in the process of issuing an RFP for a new case management system).

In light of these obstacles, the Data Integration Workgroup determined that the most feasible level of integration would be to either purchase or internally develop a data warehouse. The WIOA partners would load their program data into the warehouse at regular intervals and the warehouse could be used to integrate reporting across the core programs. Achieving even this level of integration will present unique challenges, including developing methods for identifying and combining records for common participants without a common unique identifier. The workgroup has begun viewing demonstrations from potential vendors as well as researching the solutions other states have implemented. We believe that the Federal agencies understand that integrated reporting is a long-term goal as they have not provided a deadline for integrated reporting.

NYS used quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability for Title I, Title III, and Trade Act programs under WIA, and will continue to do so under WIOA. NYS is currently developing UI wage data sharing agreements with Title II and Title IV programs to align with Federal requirements. The state 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.

Going forward, NYS will continue to take advantage of grant funding made available for system alignment and integration, as well as opportunities for technical assistance from the Federal Departments.

Priority of Service for Veterans

NYSDOL has established a veterans' priority of service policy for the use of self-service resources and staff assisted services. Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program. A veteran or an eligible spouse either receives access to a service earlier in time than non-veterans or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the service instead of or before the non-veteran.

When a veteran or eligible spouse undergoes eligibility determination for enrollment (i.e., in WIOA Adult programs), staff initiate verification of veteran or eligible spouse status. At the point of eligibility determination and enrollment, if a veteran or eligible spouse does not have documentation verifying their eligibility for priority of service, they are afforded access on a priority basis to all services provided by program staff, including intensive services, while awaiting verification.

In order for priority of service to be implemented successfully, NYSDOL recognizes that veteran identification plays a pivotal role. Career Center staff are trained to ask about veteran status at intake. If an individual self-identifies as a veteran or an eligible spouse at the Career Center, that individual is scheduled with the next available staff person

In addition, NYS has designed, published, and distributed appropriate signage to all local Career Centers and affiliate service sites throughout the state. Signage is placed prominently at or near the entrance to the Career Center. The placement of additional signage is required; however, the location of this additional signage is at

the discretion of the Career Center. Centers are strongly advised to place the additional signage in strategic locations and high traffic areas throughout the center, such as resource rooms and common waiting areas.

In addition to NYSDOL's website, all LWDAs are advised to ensure that their websites include language advising visitors of the veterans' priority of service policy. Language alerting users to veterans' priority of service is also included in any self-registration processes.

All LWDAs must include the priority of service provision in their contract template, RFPs, and sub-agreement language.

NYSDOL performs on-site visits to Career Centers and reviews Quarterly Manager's Report on Services to Veterans to monitor priority of service. NYSDOL policy was established to ensure Career Center professional staff is proficient in accurately recording veteran status in the OSOS case management system. If a veteran customer enters through a partner organization serving veterans, that organization can utilize OSOS to support priority of service to their Veteran customer base.

The U.S. Secretary of Labor, through the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, has identified certain categories of veterans most in need of intensive services to mitigate their barriers to employment. Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) and veterans between 18-24 years of age remain the highest priority. Within these categories, certain populations of veterans must be targeted for service:

- Special disabled or disabled veterans;
- Homeless veterans;
- Veterans who are 18-24 years of age;
- A recently-separated service member who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- A formerly incarcerated individual who was released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Veterans lacking a high school diploma or high school equivalent certificate; and
- Low-income veterans.

NYSDOL will provide immediate services to veterans who attest to belonging to one or more of the six criteria listed above.

Regardless of the service delivery program under which the veteran customer is served, Career Center staff complete the Military Service Questionnaire (MSQ) with every customer who identifies himself/herself as a veteran or eligible spouse. The MSQ is used to determine if the veteran customer has a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) and is eligible to meet with a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. Customers are informed that the information is being requested on a voluntary basis; that it will be kept confidential; that refusal to provide it will not subject them to any adverse treatment; and that it will be used only in accordance with law.

Veteran customers collecting UI benefits, who are not work search exempt, are scheduled to attend individual appointments for reemployment services at the Career Center. In Career Centers that have DVOP specialist coverage, and when characteristic information is available in OSOS indicating the veteran customer is DVOP

eligible, the veteran customer is scheduled first from the UI weekly download to meet with the DVOP specialist to receive services.

When a veteran being served under another service delivery model is assessed as DVOP eligible, staff refers the Veteran to the DVOP specialist, if that office has DVOP coverage. If the veteran is determined ineligible for DVOP services, or a Career Center does not have an available DVOP specialist, the veteran continues receiving one-on-one services from Career Center staff.

For walk-in Veteran customers not collecting UI, Career Center staff use the MSQ to determine DVOP specialist eligibility. Veterans eligible for DVOP services are referred to the DVOP specialist, if that office has DVOP coverage. If the veteran is determined ineligible for DVOP services, or a Career Center DVOP specialist is not available, the veteran receives one-on-one services from Career Center staff.

Workforce Development System Technical Advisory (TA) *Effective Use of Initial Assessment in the Career Center System* requires that all Career Center customers, including veterans with SBE, be provided with an Initial Assessment. The Initial Assessment process first identifies any individual barriers to employment. If barriers exist, the customer is determined to need Career Development Services (CDS). If no barriers exist, the customer's employment goal is evaluated. If the knowledge, skills, and abilities are deficient to meet the customer's employment goal or if the employment goal does not suit the local labor market, the customer is identified as needing CDS.

The comprehensive assessment can include an in-depth, formal, structured interview with the veteran. Tools such as Job Zone's Interest Inventory, Ability Profiler or Skills Profiler may also be used to help the veteran determine employment goals. Once the local labor market has been reviewed and an employment goal is determined, an individual employment plan will be developed. The plan will include a long-term goal, a short-term goal (if appropriate) and steps to meet the goals. Referral to supportive services (including needs related payments) may be necessary to assist the veteran in overcoming barriers or to utilize veteran benefits to further their education/careers. If a DVOP Specialist is not available, other Career Center staff members will provide priority of service to these veterans.

For additional details on priority of service to veterans, view the NYS Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) State Plan, available at https://www.labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/docs/jobs_for_veterans_state_plan.pdf**.**

Special Populations and Accessibility

Employment First

Through the Employment First policy, NYS seeks to build on important economic development investments to ensure that individuals with disabilities equally benefit from the improving economy and have sustained opportunities to engage in the competitive labor market. Specifically, NYS aims to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities by 5%; decrease the poverty rate of individuals with disabilities by a comparable 5%; and engage 100 businesses in adopting policies and practices that support the integrated employment of individuals with disabilities. The driving force behind this initiative is the principle that everyone has the right to work.

The Employment First policy commission has made the following recommendations:

1. Cultural Modeling: NYS agencies can model the integrated employment of individuals with disabilities. Whether through enhancements to the governor's programs to hire persons/veterans with disabilities

(sections 55-b and -c of NYS Civil Service Law), or through community-based organizations directly hiring individuals, a strong culture of employment first must be established.

2. Energizing the "Demand-Side" of the Equation: Redesign and reinvigorate the New York Business Leadership Network to pursue the aggressive goal of engaging 100 business partners. A business first platform can be established through promoting existing financial incentives, supporting businesses to pursue federal contracts, and harnessing the power of NYS's regional economic development efforts.
3. New York Employment Services System (NYESS): The NYESS system has already distinguished NYS as the leader in moving individuals with disabilities into the world of employment as the largest Social Security Administration Ticket to Work (TTW) network in the nation. Ensuring the full adoption of the system across community providers and state agencies will utilize the power of NYS's integrated employment case management system to comprehensively monitor and support employment outcomes in NYS.
4. Benefits Advisement: Benefits systems are complex and only limited resources are available to help individuals accurately understand eligibility requirements and the impact of employment on benefits. NYS can utilize emerging tools like Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) and a network of "life coaches" to expand benefits advisement.
5. Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD): NYS can integrate the MBI-WPD program into the online NYS of Health application portal, automating and standardizing eligibility determinations and referring applicants who require additional assistance.
6. Transportation: Transportation to work is a key element for employment success. A cross-agency taskforce can examine barriers to integrated transportation; identify potential solutions, such as a rural transportation tax credit; and build on initiatives like the proposed mobility transportation project.
7. Education: NYS will continue to support schools in embracing approaches that increase the integration of students in their communities. The Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) grant will guide ongoing policy and practice around early employment supports for individuals with disabilities and offer coaching for their families. Options for local school districts include implementation of a "school of choice" for students, and revisiting the array of available credentials/diplomas. Local school districts should be supported with best practices that give them the ability to place a greater emphasis on career planning and counseling for all students, resulting in better long-term outcomes.
8. Creating an Employment First Service Culture: Training is recommended for direct support professionals, with an emphasis on the skills needed to deliver employment support services focused on achieving individualized goals.
9. Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship: Expanding upon the NYS Education Department's Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (NYSED/ACCES-VR) model of engaging NYS entrepreneurial assistance programs and/or small business development centers will facilitate the development of small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities.
10. Expanded Access to Assistive Technology: Increasing access to assistive technologies through a strategic partnership with the Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS), NYSED/ACCES-VR, and the Justice Center administered Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID), the inventory of employment-related devices can be expanded and training increased on the use of such devices.
11. Outcome Measures: Progress toward these goals can be measured using NYESS to compare Medicaid data to NYS wage data, enabling the detection of changes in the employment and poverty rates. Timeframes associated with attainment of these rigorous goals should be established in conjunction with a strategy for

implementation. An independent academic body should be engaged to review the ongoing progress toward attainment of the projected goals.

While NYS has made significant progress in developing an Employment First framework, through a variety of collaborations across federal, state, private, and public partners, NYS's full potential has yet to be realized. The Employment First Commission believes that NYS can accomplish the goals of Employment First by engaging in a statewide comprehensive, cross-disability, cross-sector approach to removing employment barriers and by establishing clear policies to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. The commission believes that the recommendations, when adopted, will prove to be the catalyst for realizing the Employment First vision in NYS.

Special Populations

Individuals in special populations are those who have barriers to employment. WIOA defines individuals with barriers to employment as a member of one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low income individuals, Native Americans, individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals or homeless youth, 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, individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs), individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (TANF), and single parents (including single pregnant women).

NYS supports the implementation of universal access to programs and activities to all individuals, including those with barriers to employment, through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, services delivery, partnership development, and numeric goals.

Specially trained staff are stationed at various Career Center locations to serve individuals who identify as having a barrier to employment. For example, DVOP specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) are trained to assist Veterans; DRCs are trained to assist individuals with disabilities; and Offender Employment Specialists are trained to assist ex-offenders. In addition, central office staff provides periodic webinars and/or technical assistance conference calls to engage all Career Center staff on topics around serving customers with barriers to employment.

Case management of customers with barriers to employment is further enhanced by the availability of NYESS. NYESS (implemented in December 2011) currently provides system access to the following seven state agencies and their network of service providers: OMH; NYSDOL; OPWDD; NYSED/ACCES-VR; OCFS/NYSCB; OASAS; and NYS Office for the Aging.

NYS continues to be at the forefront in providing services to individuals with disabilities with the implementation of NYESS and the opportunities the system allows. For example, in February 2012, the federal Social Security Administration announced that NYESS (www.nyess.ny.gov) was designated as the first statewide Administrative Employment Network (AEN) in the United States. An Employment Network (EN) is an entity that enters into an agreement with the SSA to either provide or coordinate the delivery of services to Social Security disability beneficiaries through the Ticket to Work program (https://www.ssa.gov/work/). The statewide AEN designation allows SSA the ability to collaborate directly with NYS to document employment outcomes for Ticket holders, and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Ticket-To-Work program. As a statewide AEN, NYESS creates a network of EN providers working with multiple state agencies using a single, real-time employment data/case management system. This statewide effort generates thousands of dollars in incentive payments that are reinvested in expanded job supports for individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an important component within the public workforce system. NYS assures that all partners in the workforce development system described in this plan recognize the importance of the physical, programmatic, and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities and English language learners in the Career Centers.

Under WIA, NYSDOL's Methods of Administration outlined the policies, procedures, and systems NYS designed and put in place in order to provide a reasonable guarantee that NYS and its recipients of Title I WIA funds complied with the Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity requirements of WIA Section 188 and its implementing regulations. It is still available online at https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/ta02-101.htm. The guidance is currently being revised to reflect new WIOA regulations, and will now be known as the Non-Discrimination Plan (NDP).

Additionally, NYSDOL will revise a Technical Advisory (TA) on the topic of "Accessibility of One-Stop Systems to Individuals with Disabilities." The TA on this topic, released under WIA on May 16, 2000, will be revised to reflect new accessibility regulations under WIOA.

In 2011, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 26, requiring all state agencies to provide language assistance services to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including interpretation and translation. Agency staff is required to complete language access training each year, and posters are featured in each Career Center to notify customers of the availability of language assistance services.

Technical Advisory #17-2, on the topic of "Language Interpretation Services Available at Career Centers," requires certain actions to be taken to ensure LEP individuals receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to all programs, services, and information within the Career Center system free of charge. Career Centers receive instructions on how to access and utilize the vendors to provide interpreting services when needed. The following services are available to Career Center customers:

- Over the phone interpreters;
- Consecutive Interpreters (in-person oral interpretation and/or written translation); and
- Sign language interpreters.

Career Center staff can also utilize available bilingual staff and "language banks" of volunteers who are fluent and able to interpret/translate in other languages.

A Language Access Plan was also developed by NYSDOL and a Language Access Coordinator was identified to oversee the plan. Based on U.S. Census data, NYSDOL chose to translate all vital documents into the six most common non-English languages spoken in NYS. These languages are Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Korean, and Italian. Based on experience or other federal requirements, the agency may choose to translate vital documents into other languages as well. Determination of what documents are considered vital is based on the Language Assistance Guide issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. Vital written documents include, but are not limited to, consent and complaint forms; intake and application forms with the potential for important consequences; written notices of rights; notices of denials, losses, or decreases in benefits or services; notices of disciplinary action; signs; and notices advising LEP individuals of free language assistance services.

For customers utilizing online resources at the NYSDOL's website, all accessibility-related issues are addressed at the following link: https://www.labor.ny.gov/agencyinfo/accessibility.shtm.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Regions and Local Areas

NYS's 33 local areas were designated during the transition from the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to WIA in accordance with the parameters outlined in the statute. These original local area designations remain intact under WIOA and are provided below within the ten NYS Regions. Designation of the local areas took into account consistency with labor market areas and regional economic areas in NYS, and the availability of Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to administer workforce development activities, including appropriate education and training providers. The 33 local areas are:

Capital Region:

- Albany/Schenectady/Rensselaer
- Columbia/Greene
- Saratoga/Warren/Washington

Central Region:

- Cayuga/Cortland
- Onondaga
- Oswego

Finger Lakes Region:

- Genesee/Livingston/Orleans/Wyoming
- Monroe
- Ontario/Seneca/Wayne/Yates

Long Island Region:

- Hempstead/Long Beach
- Oyster Bay/North Hempstead/Glen Cove
- Suffolk

Mid-Hudson Region:

- Dutchess
- Orange
- Rockland
- Sullivan
- Ulster
- Westchester/Putnam
- Yonkers

Mohawk Valley Region:

- Fulton/Montgomery/Schoharie

- Herkimer/Madison/Oneida

New York City Region:

- New York City

North Country Region:

- Clinton/Essex/Franklin/Hamilton
- Jefferson/Lewis
- St. Lawrence

Southern Tier Region:

- Broome/Tioga
- Chemung/Schuyler/Steuben
- Chenango/Delaware/Otsego
- Tompkins

Western Region:

- Allegany/Cattaraugus
- Chautauqua
- Erie
- Niagara

Local Area Designation

On April 14, 2014, a Technical Advisory was released to notify local areas that WIOA requires LWDAs to be designated by the Governor in order to receive federal funding allotments. On behalf of the Governor, NYSDOL will accept requests from current LWDB Directors for LWDA initial designation for local areas that meet three criteria: Successful Performance; Sustained Fiscal Integrity; and local Chief Elected Officials(s) (CEOs) Agreement executed for WIOA. CEOs were contacted, and a standardized agreement, "Sample Multi-Jurisdictional CEO Agreement or Template for use by single CEO local areas" was sent to them with instructions on completion. Requests included information on the following: Counties/cities included in the proposed Local Area; CEOs; Designation of Grant Recipient and Local Governmental Grant Subrecipient/Incorporated Fiscal Agent; Composition of and Designation of Workforce Development Board; Designation of One-Stop Services; and other responsibilities.

Local designation requests were received from each of the existing 33 LWDAs, reviewed, verified, and organized by NYSDOL staff and approved on behalf of the Governor.

As outlined in New York's WIA State Plan, appeals from units not designated would have been directed to the SWIB for review, in conjunction with the Governor. An appeal of a negative determination on a request for designation as an LWDA could be accepted from any, or all, of the Chief Local Elected Officials who had requested the designation. The appeal was required to be:

- Postmarked within 30 days of the issuance of the notice of disapproval;
- Submitted to the Director of DEWS; and
- Provided concurrently to any other Chief Local Elected Officials affected but not parties to the appeal.

The appeal would need to clearly address the question of how the decision being appealed is contrary to the best interest(s) of the businesses and residents of the local area, and should provide documentation to address the following:

- Geographic areas served by local educational agencies and intermediate educational agencies;
- Geographic areas served by postsecondary educational institutions and area vocational education schools;
- The extent to which the proposed local area is consistent with the labor market area;
- The distance individuals would need to travel to receive services provided in the proposed local area; and
- The resources of the local area available to effectively administer the activities carried out under Title I, Subtitle B, of WIOA.

The State would respond to the appeal after consultation with the Chair of the SWIB, and if appropriate, all SWIB members. If a response was not possible within 30 days, NYS would notify the appellant (and any other Chief Local Elected Officials) of the reason for the delay and a reasonable date by which a decision would be issued.

NYS received no appeals of the original local area designations, and has received no requests for re-designations.

The State continues to seek to release policy to the workforce development system to define the formula to be used in the development of a state infrastructure funding mechanism as well as a defined process for required one-stop partners to follow when appealing a determination by the State regarding the portion of funds provided for infrastructure costs. In drafting such policy, the State will seek guidance from USDOL, consult with other states and related national organizations including the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and the National Governor's Association, and analyze the final WIOA regulations. The policy will include language that advises any one-stop partner of the right to appeal a determination by the State on the basis that such determination is inconsistent with the State infrastructure funding requirements. The policy will also emphasize that the appeal process will be structured to arrive at a prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner.

Statewide Activities

A portion of the Title I funding stream supports staff administration and systems maintenance, but also allows for a limited amount of funding for statewide initiatives at the Governor's discretion. As this allocation has been minimal in recent years, there has been little funding available to support creative and innovative workforce development initiatives. In NYS, this funding is primarily used in support of a strong regional sector strategy approach. One example is the support of the annual Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) process, for which funds have been set aside over the past six years to support work-based training proposals recommended by the Councils. These training proposals directly support NYS's economic investments, and reflect the workforce priorities of the state and the regions. In addition to initiatives like this, the Governor uses this funding stream to incentivize proven workforce strategies and reward best practices. Since WIOA now requires a regional planning process, NYSDOL has proposed the use of these funds to incentivize regional planning by rewarding LWDAs in regions that succeed in reaching collaborative workforce goals.

Rapid Response

In NYS, Rapid Response has a team presence throughout the ten regions for intensive job placement services. Each Rapid Response team is attached to Business Engagement and remains the responsibility of the region's

Associate Business Services Representative. The team conducts onsite customized service orientations for affected workers, covering topics such as securing OSOS registration information, reemployment services; state public healthcare enrollment options; and when appropriate, an overview of Trade Act benefits that includes the Trade Adjustment Assistance individual eligibility process. Both the business and affected workers are coded in OSOS with a specific Rapid Response or Expeditious Response Event Number for intensive reemployment service tracking.

Rapid Response makes a concerted effort to begin reemployment services before layoffs occur. The Regional Rapid Response Coordinator (RRRC) crafts each service plan by involving the business, labor union (if attached), local NYSDOL management, and WIOA partners, in addition to providing account updates that also include the Statewide Rapid Response Coordinator, Statewide Trade Act Coordinator and the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Unit.

Onsite information and service include, but are not limited to:

- Customized service orientation involving a slideshow or alternate use of an abbreviated service orientation leading into immediate one-on-one service;
- Use of testimonials (business and job seeker) for encouraging new customer engagement;
- Information on pertinent expanding industries (where the job openings are) and a Jobs Express regional screenshot (e.g., vacant positions by industry and companies with the most job openings);
- Initial assessment;
- Development of a skills-based resume (template for consistency) and customizing for specific job openings;
- Sending interim job leads (template for consistency) that includes discussion with Business Services for maximum efficacy;
- Employment referrals;
- Customized career fairs;
- Local training funds and Trade Act information when a petition is certified for classroom training or OTJ; and
- When necessary, requesting use of Revised (July 1, 2010) Procedure for Requesting Discretionary WIA Dislocated Worker Funds for the Provision of Services to Dislocated Workers due to Substantial Layoffs or Plant Closings.

Rapid Response teams (including supervisory staff) maintain and case-manage job seeker caseloads with a goal of five meaningful service contacts daily. In addition, each staff person has a goal of meaningful discussions with three businesses daily for job seeker advocacy; layoff aversion (promoting Shared Work consideration); and uncovering Business Service needs. Also, Rapid Response aggressively pursues media Red Flags for generating Expeditious Response leads or even anticipating service before a WARN notice is submitted. Note that the Trade Act Assistance section later in this document for additional information on the coordination between the two programs.

Natural Disaster Preparedness

The NYS Department of Labor can deliver the following to assist with Natural Disaster Preparedness:

- Disaster National Emergency Grant (NEG);
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); and

- Mobile Disaster Worker Response Team.

Disaster DWG:

Disaster DWG funds are available to assist with clean-up and other activities under three circumstances:

- The FEMA Disaster Declaration for NYS includes the availability of public assistance funding for the affected counties;
- Federal agency declarations, other than FEMA. Federal declarations from the Department of Commerce and the Small Business Administration are examples of eligible federal declarations; or
- Relocation of large group. Circumstances where a substantial number of individuals, defined as 50 or more, relocate to another area from a disaster area.

Eligible Applicants

All Disaster DWG applications must be submitted by the state agency or outlying area designated by the Governor to receive WIOA Dislocated Worker formula funds or by an organization eligible for funding through the Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166(c)).

Participants must be determined eligible as defined in WIOA Sec. 170(d)(2). The following eligibility requirements apply to the following individuals residing within the declared disaster area, or who are forced to relocate due to the disaster or emergency event:

- Individuals who are temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the disaster;
- Other eligible dislocated workers as defined in WIOA Section 3(15);
- Long-term unemployed workers, as defined by the state; and
- Self-employed individuals who become unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the emergency or disaster. Outreach efforts should emphasize workers who lost employment as a result of the disaster. Veterans' preference applies within these eligible groups.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance:

- DUA provides UI benefits to individuals who are dislocated (unemployed) due to natural disaster.
- The FEMA Disaster Declaration for NYS will support justification for implementing DUA.
- NYSDOL's Telephone Claims Center (NYSDOL/TCC) staff are refreshed on DUA procedures so that they may assist customers calling the center who have questions related to filing for benefits.
- Given the seven (7) day waiting period for original claim filing, the availability of DUA aligns with claims currently filed as a result of the disaster.

Mobile Disaster Worker Response Team:

- Career Center staff, Business Services staff, and Rapid Response staff form Mobile Disaster Worker Response Teams.
- The Mobile Disaster Worker Response Teams visit community locations in significantly impacted areas (i.e., shelters, libraries, schools, etc.) to assist businesses and impacted individuals, and to provide on-the-ground information and support regarding state-level efforts.

- Staff does the following for impacted businesses and individuals:
    - Register them in OSOS to facilitate eligibility for program services;
    - Connect impacted workers with appropriate employment opportunities through the Disaster NEG;
    - Assist impacted workers to apply for DUA benefits; and
    - Post links and emergency phone numbers where businesses and workers can contact NYSDOL for services (this includes using the NYSDOL/TCC as the point of contact for all incoming telephone calls).

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Apprenticeship

Dislocated workers and unemployed individuals are encouraged to apply for apprenticeship opportunities through various job fairs and Career Centers. Many Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors recruit publicly through their local Career Centers for new apprentices. Sponsors that elect to conduct area-wide recruitments are required to submit their recruitment information to NYSDOL, which is then distributed to local media, posted on the Department's webpage, and listed in the NYS Job Bank.

Training Provider Eligibility

Potential providers access an online application via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) website (https://applications.labor.ny.gov/ETPL/). Providers fill out an in-depth electronic application and submit it. The application collects the following information on the provider: name, training school name (if different), Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), address, website, and administrative and admissions contact information. If the provider is licensed, the provider will need to upload a copy of their license. For each training course, the provider will need to provide course information including the course title and skill level, course description, and course curriculum. The provider must also provide the tuition cost, and any other required or additional costs (i.e., books, lab fees, uniforms, tools, etc.). The completed application is forwarded to the appropriate LWDB, based on location, for review and approval. For approval, the LWDBs review against cost, performance (based on performance measures identified in WIOA) and legal matters, (i.e. is the provider licensed to operate in NYS, etc.). All of this information is captured on the ETPL during the application process. Note that while the state maintains the ETPL, it is the LWDBs that actually populate it through approvals of training providers and courses in their LWDA. LWDBs also determine if the training is eligible for funding.

For continued eligibility, the ETPL has a functionality built in to ask providers for updated information on a yearly basis. Once submitted, the LWDBs will be asked to review the new data and reapprove. If nothing is submitted, the providers are automatically removed from the list.

Priority of Service for Special Populations

The core program partners will work together to implement and monitor priority of service for individuals with barriers to employment, public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Technical assistance is being developed around this topic and disseminated to the Career Center System.

Local Transfer of Funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

NYS's criteria regarding local transfer of funds between Adult and DW programs is shared with the local areas annually in a NYSDOL Technical Advisory entitled "Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Title 1B Adult and Dislocated Worker Transfer Requests and Administration to Program Funds Transfer Requests." No funds may be transferred to or from the Youth Program.

Current guidelines for transferring funds are as follows:

1. All transfer requests must be received by NYSDOL no later than June 30 of the program year of the allocation of local funds.

2. Funds retain their year of appropriation identity and must be tracked, accounted for and reported as follows:

- Transfers between Adult and Dislocated Worker funds will be reported on the Monthly Accrued Expenditure Report separately in a section identified expressly for expenditures associated with the transfer.
- Administration funds transferred to the originating program funds will be reported as part of the originating program.
- When transferring funds from administration back to the originating program funds, no more than the original ten percent (10%) designated as Administration can be returned to a program. For example, if $100,000 were awarded as Adult funds and this allocation was split on the NOA between Adult ($90,000) and Administration ($10,000), the maximum transfer that could be made between Administration and Adult funds would be $10,000.

National Emergency Grants:

<u>Sector Partnerships National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG):</u>

On June 25, 2015, NYS was awarded a $7 million Sector Partnerships NEG (SP-NEG) by USDOL. NYSDOL plans to use the majority of the awarded funds to administer enhanced career services and work-based training programs serving the long-term unemployed. Funding will support work-based training in the form of OJT, Incumbent Worker Training, transitional employment opportunities, and trainings customized to the specific needs of businesses in high-demand sectors.

Up to $500,000 of funding awarded will be utilized on regional planning initiatives that develop new, or strengthen existing, sector partnerships. Information provided by the REDCs identified Advanced Manufacturing as a significant industry in all regions. As such, funds will be allocated to support a state level partnership development in Advanced Manufacturing. Funds will also be available for partnership development activities in regionally significant industry sectors.

NYSDOL uses a number of online employment tools to support better skills measurement and job matching. These tools are made available to the customer through the JobZone self-service interface of OSOS. The integrated suite of tools will be upgraded to improve their availability and accuracy for use with SP-NEG participants. Upgrades will include refinement of the Your Employability Score (YES) tool. Funds will also support the upgrade and enhanced integration of the Burning Glass Focus Suite (BGFS) of skills-based match and referral tools into the JobZone/OSOS system.

Future Initiatives:

HOME2 Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Help Obtaining Meaningful Employment and Education (HOME2) RFP was released on July 17, 2015. In September 2015, HOME2 will award up to $500,000 in WIOA funding to a service provider based in New York City that assists homeless, primarily Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Queer (LGBTQ), transitioning-aged young adults (between 18-24 years of age) who are out of school and unemployed, with gaining meaningful employment that leads to a self-sufficient and independent lifestyle. NYSDOL renewed the contract starting January 1, 2017 for a year. NYSDOL may renew the contract on an annual basis for an amount up to the year-one award, and for up to three additional years depending on contractor performance, the availability of funds, and the approval of the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC).

Governor Cuomo Initiative for Re-Entry of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

In September of 2015, 12 recommendations to remove barriers faced by formerly incarcerated New Yorkers were made by Governor Cuomo's appointed "Council on Community Re-entry and Reintegration". The recommendations addressed employment, housing, and healthcare. Governor Cuomo approved all 12 recommendations. Five of the recommendations directly address employment for those re-entering the workforce:

- Streamline the application process for Certificates of Relief from Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct;
- Amend 10 NYS licensing and employment regulations;
- Set uniform guidelines that evaluate qualified applicants for state occupational licenses;
- Launch job search efforts for the formerly incarcerated aided by new technology donated by the job search technology company Apploi; and
- Adopt Fair Chance Hiring for all NYS Agencies.

The last recommendation will allow for greater consideration for positions within the state. Fair Chance Hiring will remove the requirement that applicants for competitive positions within state agencies, disclose information on prior convictions until and unless the agency interviews the candidate and is interested in hiring him or her for a specific position.

In 2017, NYSDOL's Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (NYSDOL/DEWS) sent staff in the Albany Central Office to a curriculum developed by the National Institute of Corrections and facilitated by staff at the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), to obtain Offender Workforce Development Specialist certification. This will allow central office staff to be of more value to Career Center Workforce staff and partner with DCJS in future projects and initiatives. NYSDOL/DEWS staff is also recognized as a partner with the Albany and Rensselaer Re-entry task forces, which are comprised of community partners providing service to the formerly incarcerated.

Youth Programs

NYSDOL's Program Development Office is responsible for oversight and coordination of the WIOA youth programs and serves as a single point of contact on youth issues and for other youth-serving state agencies (i.e., NYSED, OCFS, and OTDA), as well as the core partner programs, in support of youth initiatives statewide. Through the dual lens of career and youth development, the NYSDOL Program Development Office seeks to

provide policy guidance; offer professional development opportunities; develop curriculum and tools; and identify best practices from the state, nation, and the globe. The ultimate goal is to help position youth for a successful transition to adulthood and to help them make decisions regarding career/college/training opportunities.

LWDAs develop comprehensive strategic plans for youth services for those activities required under WIOA. Local areas provide year-round comprehensive youth programs to eligible youth that include the provision of the youth program design framework activities as well as the 14 required program elements. These services are provided to both in-school and out-of-school youth. Some local areas serve only out-of-school youth and appropriately refer the in-school youth.

Consistent with the strategic visions and goals advanced in the Combined Plan, NYS is committed to enhancing program alignment and service delivery. NYS has established an Interagency Work Group to analyze service delivery strategies and identify opportunities for improvement across all participant populations including Out-of-School Youth (OSY). NYS seeks to expand the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model to OSY without regard to their disability status and provide the same level of service integration demonstrated in our multiple Disability Employment Initiative. The WIOA expanded maximum age (up to age 24) of OSY and the increased flexibility in the provision of Youth services found in the Final Regulations increases the opportunity to serve OSY in a Career Center environment and more fully engage the required and optional partners found therein. NYS believes that combining the system level intervention of the Interagency Work Group with the customer level coordination of services provided through IRTs creates an optimal service environment for OSY that will lead to improved outcomes.

LWDBs have the option to provide service elements through their staff and/or a network of competitively procured youth providers across the State's 33 local areas. The specific services vary by local area. This local control is essential in a state as large and diverse as NYS, providing the program flexibility that a statewide program model would not.

The NYSDOL Program Development Office coordinates and supports youth activities across the state through many strategies including technical assistance; local area data monitoring; bi-monthly conference calls and webinars; and outreach.

The need for local flexibility carries over to the development of criteria/policy for youth requiring additional assistance. Local areas are required to develop policies that reflect the specific needs of their economy and youth, and document the policies within the local plans. Technical assistance has been provided to the locals explaining the calculation of the 5% limit for qualifying in-school youth under this criterion, and the need for the policy criteria to be both objective and quantifiable for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Technical assistance is shared with local areas, state agencies, and those Community Based Organizations serving youth to ensure that all WIOA required program elements are made available to in- and out-of-school youth across the State and that they are effectively implemented. Assistance includes webinars and bi-monthly Youth Issues calls to disseminate workforce information pertaining to youth. In addition, the NYSDOL Program Development Office will remain proactive and provide technical assistance to programs needing assistance with WIOA Youth primary indicators of performance to ensure youth receive the highest quality of service.

Local area data is monitored and customized technical assistance is offered as needed. New Youth Management Reports are being developed for local areas to access information more easily from OSOS; assist them in monitoring performance of local youth contractors; and help support programming to help youth succeed.

Bi-monthly youth calls and webinars are offered to the system and will continue to be offered to assist practitioners in the topic areas below:

- Supporting youth with multiple barriers to employment;
- NYS Youth data tools to manage WIOA program;
- Incorporating activities to build youth resiliency and self-efficacy;
- Critical elements and policies of a WIOA youth program;
- Business engagement for work experiences;
- Implementing new WIOA service elements;
- Learning about WIOA indicators of performance; and
- Understanding WIOA youth program eligibility criteria.

In addition to engaging partners in the 33 LWDAs, NYSDOL seeks to engage the NYS Job Corps centers in LWDB activities and coordinating career planning strategies for youth involved in Job Corps and WIOA programs. In the coming years, the NYSDOL Program Development Office will increase outreach to Job Corps staff and ensure that Job Corps information is shared in bi-monthly youth calls and technical assistance webinars. Job Corps staff will have the opportunity to join a LinkedIn youth practitioners group currently under development.

In order to prepare youth for the high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations of the 21st century, and to meet the demands of business, especially in high-growth industries of the knowledge economy, NYSDOL's Program Development Office will continue to update and develop the following tools and resources:

- CareerZone (www.careerzone.ny.gov), NYSDOL's online career exploration and planning tool for youth. CareerZone is made freely available to the local areas to help youth assess their interests, work values, and skills, and match these to potential careers. Training and college information is linked to each career area and tools such as a state career plan model, resume builder, and budgeting tool help youth make informed career decisions.
- CareerZone/JobZone (www.careerzone.ny.gov, www.jobzone.ny.gov) NYSDOL's online career planning tool for adults, and the self-service customer interface for OSOS. Coordinated by the Program Development Office, WIOA youth programs across New York State started to integrate CareerZone into their program design and required the use of CareerZone in their grant contract RFPs. Similarly, JobZone was adopted in the Career Centers to reduce the OSOS data entry demands on staff and facilitate the staff-assisted assignment of online resources to customers. Enhancements to CareerZone and JobZone will continue into 2017-18.
- The Program Development Office will continue work with NYSED to support the implementation of the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Learning Standards; support the provision of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming; and to increase awareness of the CDOS Commencement Credential and the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential. Additionally, training will be developed for the NYSED Transition Coordinators to provide technical assistance on CareerZone to educators across the State.

  This includes continued work and updating of resources to support the CareerZone User's Guide for Educators, supporting the use of CareerZone and JobZone in the NYSED Literacy Zone program, and the incorporation of CareerZone into the local school districts.

- Provide technical assistance to local areas, state agencies, and those community based organizations serving youth through continual communication and bi-monthly Youth Issues calls to disseminate workforce information pertaining to youth. This will help to reinforce the effective youth program implementation, including all 14 required program elements. In addition, the Program Development Office will remain proactive and provide technical assistance webinars to programs needing assistance with WIOA Youth primary indicators of performance to ensure youth receive the highest quality of service.
- NYSDOL's Youth Portal (www.labor.ny.gov/youth), built around the theme of "Dream It, Plan it, Make it Happen." Resources were identified for youth ages 14-17 and 18-24, as well as for parents. Additional pages for educators, workforce professionals, and business are under development.

Professionals working with youth will use these tools to support the implementation of WIOA youth programs that meet the needs of individual and cultural differences, support the development of youth-centered plans, and embody a youth development approach. To support this goal, the following materials are under continual development by NYSDOL's Program Development Office:

- CareerZone User's Guide, updated in 2016, to highlight the recent updates and changes to this NYSDOL career exploration and planning system; and
- OSOS Youth Guides, developed and updated with resources for new and experienced staff to better understand the basic elements of WIOA youth programming and how to keep track of data and use it to enhance programs.

Attending and Not Attending School

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) defines school as one of the following:

- A secondary school, registered by NYSED, including but not limited to, public, private, charter and religious schools;
- A home-schooled youth who is registered with the local school district;
- High school equivalency and dropout re-engagement programs funded by the public K-12 school system; and
- Post-secondary institutions where the youth is enrolled in credit bearing courses. Youth who are enrolled in vocational or occupational programs through post-secondary institutions are considered undergraduates and as attending school.

Youth attending Adult Education Programs under WIOA Title II, YouthBuild Programs, Job Corps Programs, and high school equivalency programs and dropout re-engagement programs not funded by the public K-12 school are considered not attending school under WIOA.

The assessment of ISY for WIOA is based on the definition of "attending school" in State Law. NYSED defines P-12 education attendance as:

- In each school district of the State, each minor from six to sixteen years of age shall attend upon full time instruction. Some school districts mandate the compulsory age of school attendance through age 17.
- Each minor from six to sixteen years of age on an Indian reservation shall attend upon full time day instruction.
- A minor who becomes six years of age on or before the first of December in any school year shall be required to attend upon full time instruction from the first day that the appropriate public schools are in

session in September of such school year, and a minor who becomes six years of age after the first of December in any school year shall be required to attend upon full time instruction from the first day of session in the following September; and, except as otherwise provided, shall be required to remain in attendance until the last day of session in the school year in which the minor becomes sixteen years of age.

- Enrolled or attending school full or part-time, or the student is between school terms and enrolled to return to school.

A youth is considered not attending school if he or she has not attended for at least the most recent school year calendar quarter, which is 45 days.

Basic Skills Deficiency

NYSDOL accepts the definition of "basic skills deficient" provided in WIOA referring to an individual:

- Who is a youth, that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- Who is a youth or an adult, who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

The local areas will develop a policy on the second part of the basic skills deficiency definition, in the local plans. They will note what valid, and appropriate formal or less-formal assessment(s) will be administered to show that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in the society.

ADULT EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

At the September 2012 ACCES Committee meeting, the NYS Board of Regents adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) issued by OCTAE as the state academic standards for adult education in NYS. As part of this process, the Committee asked ACCES-AEPP to issue an RFP for a new HSE test that would be aligned over three years to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and CCRS identified by OCTAE; provide multiple pathways to a HSE Diploma; and transition the adult education system to Common Core and Career/College Readiness by 2017.

In September 2012, NYSED issued the first RFP in the country to procure a new HSE test. The Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill (now Data Recognition Corporation) was selected as the HSE test for NYS. The TASC increased in rigor each year over three years with more in-depth testing of CCSS and strong alignment with CCRS. It is now fully aligned with NYS academic standards. TASC was again selected as NYS's HSE test through a second RFP issued in 2016.

Digital literacy skills are critical to CCRS and a strong WIOA priority. Online computer-based testing for TASC is the first online education testing from NYSED. Online testing began in 2014 with a pilot of 13 sites. An additional 19 sites were added late in 2014 and more sites were considered for 2015. An RFP issued in 2015 expanded CBT testing even further.

The activities conducted since 2014 provide a foundation for aligning adult education content with rigorous academic standards under the Combined State Plan include:

- In early 2014, NYSED's ACCES Division requested a proposal to provide statewide training in response to the realities of the newly adopted, Common Core-based TASC exam to certify High School Equivalency (HSE). The ultimate goal of this training was to help the State's 5,500 HSE and Pre-HSE teachers meet the challenge

of delivering high quality instruction to enable their adult learners to achieve success on the TASC and prepare for transition to college and careers. To reach that goal, the ACCES leadership determined that a smaller cadre of statewide HSE teachers already recognized as being highly effective would be convened to further develop their teaching skills. Simultaneously, the teachers would learn training skills that would enable them to serve as turnkey trainers to the larger group of teachers in their RAENs.

- The Office of Academic Affairs at CUNY, a longtime provider of professional development and curriculum development for HSE and college and career transition programming, suggested the provision of videotaped statewide Institutes with online preparation and follow up support in the provision of turnkey training along with the creation of a body of instructional materials. Following an initial and subsequent ongoing planning process with ACCES leadership, a series of training Institutes were held in Albany over the course of March 2014-November 2016. These Institutes were taught by members of a CUNY central team of content and training experts in mathematics, English language arts/social studies, and science. With the logistical assistance of the RAEN Director from Cayuga Community College, a total of 13 Institutes of two to four days in length (and additional training seminars and mini-institutes) were taught to groups, each comprising 30-35 teacher leaders and an additional 15 other personnel from every region in NYS. The majority of the teacher leaders participated in more than one Institute, deepening and broadening their skills in multiple topics with each successive course. The outcome of the multi-year ongoing program of training is that the State now can rely on a cadre of teacher leaders, with expertise in math, science, and/or English Literacy Acquisition (ELA), available in each of the seven NYS RAEN regions to provide Common Core-based TASC training. A total of 408 educators have participated in one or more components of the training, emerging as highly trained instructional leaders available for teacher training throughout the state. NYSED Teacher Leaders have been instrumental in rolling out the CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework across the state in support of enhanced achievement on the TASC test. In addition, 124 teachers in New York City who work at night and on the weekends attended Teacher Leader training seminars in October 2015; and in January 2016, five mini-institutes on TASC topics, ESL and College and Career Readiness were held in New York City with 142 participants in attendance. CUNY also developed and delivered two webinars, one in TASC Science and one in TASC math with the participation of NYSED and TASC assessment experts from Data Recognition Corp (DRC).
- In addition to the courses developed and offered through the Institutes on a range of TASC topics in math, science, civics, history, writing, reading, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL), a complementary Career Pathway project was also undertaken, starting in 2016. At the request of NYSED's ACCES Division, the CUNY team embarked on the development of a ten-industry sector, 11-module CareerKit instructional resource. Based on current labor market data, the CareerKits introduce students to the sectors of Healthcare, Technology, Retail, Construction, Community & Social Services, Education & Childcare, Manufacturing, Food Production, Transportation & Warehousing, and Hospitality, Recreation & the Arts. In addition, the Career Fundamentals CareerKit introduces students to career exploration in general across all sectors. With the ten CareerKits comprising more than 400 pages each, the project is a comprehensive effort and will be accompanied by a significant training program to help teachers utilize the materials (adapted for use at all achievement levels and instructional settings) to provide Career Pathway instruction to the State's population of adult learners.
- Beyond the training Institutes and CareerKit Project, a website, www.CollectEdNY.org, was developed and launched. CollectEdNY.org is a curated and reviewed selection of recommended teaching resources that support the instructional areas and approaches presented in the Institutes. The website has been expanded in scope to include ESL, Civics, pre-HSE, and Career Pathways resources. Since its inception, more than 105,000 visits have been made to the site.

Proposed Training Activities for 2017-2018

New activities being implemented in 2017-18 fall into seven areas described below. These include:

- The expansion of the range of training Institutes for teachers statewide;
- Initiation of training in New York City for the large number of metropolitan area teachers emphasizing implementation of the CareerKits; and New York City training targeting improved math pass rates on the TASC;
- Support for the completion and launch of the CareerKit project statewide, including the determination of courses of study and viable certificates at CUNY (to be adapted to SUNY) with labor market value that adult learners at the HSE level (as well as immigrant English language learners) might pursue. Labor market study activities, contextualized lesson sets, and recommended resources in ten industry sectors, with assistance in adapting them in the seven RAENs, will be completed for statewide implementation;
- Continued development and expansion of the www.CollectEdNY.org website, connecting quality teaching resources to content assessed on both the TASC and TABE and getting them into the classrooms of adult educators across the state;
- Continued development and expansion of www.TeachingtotheCore.org;
- Continued expansion of RAEN turnkey training to 5,500 educators across the state including Literacy New York (LNY) volunteers; and
- Under the Teacher Support System (TSS) initiative, building a strong connection between NYS's student reporting system (ASISTS) and HSE test scores; diagnostic HSE information; and teaching resources related to CCSS and CCRS.

Statewide Institutes held in Albany and Statewide Webinars

Five Institutes for up to 170 teaching/counseling practitioners statewide will be provided, serving representatives from all NYS RAENs. The Institutes will each provide two-three days of training, with day and evening sessions, pre-Institute preparatory online work with all participants and post-Institute follow up. Participants will receive a stipend, and the costs for travel and lodging are included. The Institutes will include the integration of technology, both for teacher training purposes and student instructional purposes, and will relate the topic area of the Institute to corresponding career pathways, as well as providing a direct focus on college and career pathway instruction. The five Institutes are:

- An Institute to provide introductory training in three topics: math, ESL and ELA to a new cohort of Master Teacher Leaders from parts of the state underrepresented during the previous training;
- An Institute to provide new training in Career Pathways foundations via the use of the NYSED/CUNY CareerKits, designed to strengthen HSE transition to college and careers for a group of statewide advisor/counselors (Institute will be videotaped);
- An Institute to deepen and broaden the knowledge and skills of Math Teacher Leaders, involving them in the creation of problem-sets and lessons to be shared statewide. Mini-grants will be offered to selected Teacher Leaders to develop lesson sets/instructional products via a proposal process;
- An Institute to deepen and broaden the knowledge and skills of ELA Teacher Leaders, involving them in the creation of lessons to be shared statewide. Mini-grants will be offered to selected Teacher Leaders to develop lesson sets/instructional products via a proposal process;

- An Institute to provide new training in ESL aligned to the new federal standards for existing and new Teacher Leaders in ESL (Institute will be videotaped); and
- Four webinars will be developed and offered to teachers statewide to support the work of the Institutes and to expand it to others throughout the State.

New York City-Based Seminar Trainings in College and Career Pathways and Mathematics

A one-day, 6-hour Seminar on College and Career Pathways will be offered to up to 40 New York City teachers to build site-based teacher leadership in WIOA-funded programs. A separate one-day seminar will be offered to up to 40 New York City teachers to improve performance in math on the TASC.

Continued Development and Expansion of the www.CollectEdNY.org website

CUNY will continue to expand the CollectEdNY teacher peer review of instructional resources, both technologically and also in terms of the quantity and range of materials reviewed. Resources in ESL, Civics, Pre-HSE and Integrated Education and Training, Integrated English Language and Civics Education, and Career Pathways will be included in the expansion of topic areas. In 2016, CollectEdNY added a section called Math Memos, with the goal of promoting the development of problem-solving strategies and perseverance in adult numeracy classrooms. In 2017, CollectEdNY expanded its offerings further with Framework Posts. This section of the website includes additional teaching materials of high emphasis TASC content, organized by domain and sub-domain. In 2018, CollectEdNY will add the Career Posts section, which will contain selected activities from the CUNY CareerKits, provide supplementary materials for use with CareerKit activities and lend support to the field as we implement career pathways into adult basic education, HSE preparation and ESOL instruction.

In its first year (2015), there were over 18,000 views of the resources in CollectEdNY. In 2016 the number of views increased to over 30,000. In 2017, CollectEdNY continued to expand its role as a trusted resource for the NYS adult education community, with over 54,000 views. Overall, there have been more than 100,000 visits to CollectEdNY since its inception.

Continued Development and Expansion of www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org

www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org was launched in April 2015 as a comprehensive single resource to support teaching to higher CCSS and federal CCRS for adults. Resources include a statewide training calendar for CUNY Teacher Leader training in each RAEN region, training modules videotaped from CUNY Teacher Leader Training Institutes, and instructional videos filmed by Teacher Leaders and RAENs (each RAEN must develop five instructional videos linked to CCSS/CCRS each year for the site and each of the Teacher Leaders must develop at least one). There are important links to www.EngageNY.org, the CCSS professional development website for P-12, and resources for teaching parents to support their children's learning of rigorous academic standards.

Continued Expansion of RAEN Turnkey Training to 5,500 Educators across the State including LNY Literacy Volunteers

Each RAEN Center develops a turnkey training plan after every Teacher Leader Institute conducted by CUNY for Teacher Leaders in the region. To date, over 408 adult education teachers received at least one Institute of training and ongoing support to effectively teach to rigorous CCSS/CCRS, including the use of the two new websites,www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org and www.CollectEdNY.org. This will intensify under the 2017-18 Combined State Plan and will be supported through the creation of twenty training modules designed to ensure uniformity of emphases in the training provided by the NYS Teacher Leaders.

Roll-out of the Teaching Support System (TSS)

In December 2014, ACCES-adult education and the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) partnered on a new project, the Teacher Support System (TSS). This is the first major initiative by a state to enable adult education teachers to use data collected for accountability purposes to improve their teaching practices.

The TSS will create a teacher portal to ASISTS, the data management system used by all NYSED funded adult education providers to track information on students, ranging from demographic data to student outcomes. Currently, this data is used by program managers to manage their programs and by NYSED to evaluate providers and submit data to the Federal Department of Education.

Key features of the TSS will include:

- An innovative design that teachers will be able to access on a computer, tablet, or smartphone;
- A dashboard displaying statistics on students, their activities in class, and their achievements, and which will display charts and tables to be printed and reviewed on a daily basis;
- Quick links to commonly used reports and data entry/review screens;
- A diagnostic profile for each student based on their standardized assessment performance. The assessments in question could include the TABE online, the BEST Plus, the upcoming TASC Readiness Test, the TABE adaptive test, and any other standardized assessment that NYSED deems appropriate for use by adult education providers in the state (the TASC test also has detailed diagnostics to include for those students who have taken the test); and
- Targeted links to the appropriate resources on an online repository of Common Core aligned resources (lesson plans, curricula, instructional materials, etc.) based on the needs of students served by a teacher.

Teachers will be able to log into TSS, pull up a roster of students, and access a dashboard that shows the skills their students acquired and the deficiencies to be addressed. Links to specific resources addressing the deficiencies described will be located next to the dashboard. This convenience will allow teachers to build on the professional development offered by NYSED to support the adoption of Common Core Standards/College and Career Readiness Standards.

Progress in 2016-17

In the summer of 2016, TSS was released for use by NYS adult education providers. Since then, more and more providers, including the largest ones, have been using TSS to give teachers access to student data. The LAC also worked with NYSED to design and implement a system for teachers to record attendance directly into TSS while still in the classroom.

Plans for 2017-18

NYSED will continue to support, (though not mandate) the use of TSS for providers as part of the overall strategy of supporting teachers as they continue to teach their students and help them achieve the outcomes listed in WIOA.

Implementation of the Case Manager Portal (CMP)

To support coordination of adult education with its WIOA partners, NYSED has authorized the creation of a dedicated Case Manager Portal (CMP) to support the work of case managers as they provide a coordinated and

streamlined system of services for NYS residents. The CMP will enhance the case management functionality in ASISTS to support referrals to and from WIOA partners as well as track the success of these referral efforts. Case managers will be able to use the CMP to manage their work with clients, manage referrals, record case notes, and conduct follow-up while using data to guide their everyday work. NYSED is currently working with the American Institutes of Research (AIR), Cayuga Community College, and the LAC on a federally funded research project that will study how case managers use data to improve their work. The findings of this project will inform the design of CMP.

This interface will feature the following:

- The ability to make referrals to and accept referrals from outside partners
- Tools to manage the work with participants, including reminders for follow-ups, task lists, etc.
- Follow-up survey screens that will allow case managers to take notes and enter outcomes when talking to participants
- Editable text section for case notes on students that can subsequently
- Dashboards showing participant demographics, activity and outcome status
- A wide range of reports, from case management activity reports to NRS tables

Plans for 2017-18

NYSED will work with the LAC and selected programs to finalize the design for CMP by conducting focus groups, testing a beta during the summer of 2018 and releasing the portal to users by the end of December 2018.

Local Education Activity Funding

NYSED requested and received from the U.S. Education Department a one-year waiver to extend the competitive bidding of WIOA Title II funds to July 1, 2018. NYSED used 2016-17 to plan and prepare for the competitive bidding of all local WIOA funding, using an approach and format for multi-year funding. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on December 27, 2017 and posted to the ACCES procurement webpage. Applications are due to NYSED April 4, 2018 and final awards made July 1, 2018. The direct link to the RFP is:
http://www.acces.nysed.gov/aepp/rfp-gc18-016-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-title-ii-and-welfare-education-program.

Significant highlights of the RFP:

- All instruction must be aligned with federal College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education.
- All instruction must include workforce preparation activities.
- All funded programs must meet federal and state workforce development branding requirements.
- All applicants must demonstrate the effectiveness of their past performance in literacy education.
- Case management requirements are included for all instruction. Case manager responsibilities include enrolling students in NYSDOL's JOBZONE.
- Every program must identify one or more contacts for workforce development system referrals.

- All participants, with the exception of individuals enrolled in corrections education, will be tracked for employment and wage information in the second quarter after exit and employment in the fourth quarter after exit. Social Security Numbers (SSNs) collected from participants will be used to track these measures through NYS Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance Data base. Those without SSNs will be manually tracked by programs.
- The RFP makes a major commitment to integrated education and training and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programming as part of career pathways. NYSED has made the policy decision that WIOA Title II funding will not support the training component of these new instructional approaches. It identifies significant funding opportunities for training funds including WIOA Title 1, Employment Preparation Education State aid, SUNY and CUNY Full-time Equivalent Aid, tuition, foundation funding, local funding.
- The RFP supports the transition of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) from TABE 9/10, which will end June 30, 2019 to TABE 11/12 which will be the NYS approved assessment for literacy beginning July 1, 2019. The time leading up to TABE 11/12 statewide adoption will be used for experts from CUNY to train Master Teachers on high emphasis areas tested by TABE 11/12 and then turn-keyed to adult education teachers through seven Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) centers.
- All applicants will be required to identify "next step" opportunities as part of a career pathway.
- All applicants must attest that they are providing equal opportunity for participants with barriers to participate in programs and services, using Attachment 7 GEPA Attestation Form.
- NYSED agrees that in expanding funds made available under Title II of WIOA, NYSED will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303.

Data Assessment

Adult Education Performance Assessment

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
Total Number Students Served	122,833	115,699	115,032	106,616	102,784	103,883	105,410
English Language Learners	67,171	63,750	62,299	59,064	59,155	62,604	66,845
Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education (ASE)	55,662	51,949	52,733	47,552	43,6329	41,279	38,565
Educational Gain	54%	56%	58%	58%	61%	64%	64%
Post Test Rate	74%	77%	79%	80%	83%	84%	82%
Average Contact Hours per Student	114	122	117	115	113	111	107
Students on Public Assistance	37%	39%	39%	42%	44%	44%	N/A
# of Students Employed at Intake	42%	42%	42%	44%	45%	46%	45%
# of Students Receiving HSE Diploma	6,305	5,492	6,115	2,430	4,009	3,495	3,826
# of Students Entering Postsecondary Education or Training	8,853	8,396	11,537	10,632	10,673	9,735	N/A

Data Assessment

Demographic data collected on our students indicates that roughly 46% are receiving some form of public assistance and 45% are employed at intake. These two factors play heavily on the persistence and completion trends of our students. Students are often derailed from their education goals as they tend to life challenges facing either themselves or their families. NYS Education Department noted this trend and implemented requirements for programs to provide case management services to adult literacy students. The support and positive directions students received enabled more students to persist longer (a 7% increase) and experienced increased educational gain (3% increase). NYS Adult Education program performance has remained in the top quartile consistently for the past four consecutive years. NYS also implemented an additional ESL assessment (BEST Literacy) aimed at assessing the writing skills of ESL students who had already achieved the maximum score on the existing ESL assessment (BEST Plus) which focuses only on the students' verbal skills. Of the 3% increase in educational gain over the past three years, two of that 3% was associated with our ESL learners.

Another major change that is evidenced in our State performance data is the shift in our HSE programming where students must now take the new TASC test as opposed to the GED that was the HSE test for more than 40 years. December 2013 marked the sunset of the GED test and 2014 was the first year with students striving to success on the TASC test, based on common core standards. The test is provided in both paper and computer formats. Trepidation over the content in the new TASC test was felt throughout Adult Education programs from staff to students. Students feared the new format and were discouraged from attempting the new test. To support programs in this transition to the new common core standard content, NYS enlisted the quality professional development talent in CUNY and provided opportunity for every RAEN region in the State to identify and develop the skills of master teachers who would turnkey all they learned to their own regional programs. These 987 well trained master teachers attended a series of common core institutes where they were provided tool kits in the areas of math, science, reading, writing, social studies, and ESL content, as well as Career Pathway training. Master teachers then coordinate their efforts through the State's RAEN network to move their turnkey training to reach over 5,500 teachers Statewide. In addition, NYS included digital literacy in all procurement contracts as deliverables aimed at students being better able to take the TASC test online. This effort was marked by major increases in the number of students taking the TASC test and achieving their HSE. Final data in this area will be available for review after June 30, 2018.

Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

WAGNER-PEYSER

The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices known as the Employment Service. The Act was amended by WIA to make the Employment Service part of the One-Stop services delivery system and under WIOA to eliminate stand-alone Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Offices.

Within the context of NYS's functional alignment, and in recognition that UI claimants comprise over 65% of the shared job seeker customer pool of the NYS one-stop system (Wagner-Peyser, Vets, WIOA, and TAA combined customer base), NYS implemented a statewide strategy to coordinate services to UI claimants that ensures claimants are afforded common service expectations and are held to common program requirements.

Through functional alignment, NYS workforce professionals are trained to provide seamless services to unemployed customers, from providing meaningful assistance with customers interested in filing for unemployment insurance benefits to providing job leads and training referrals.

Staff capacity building is a state priority. NYSDOL provides high quality continuous development to workforce professionals to ensure excellent customer service to both job seekers and businesses.

Professional development activities are provided weekly through Workforce Career Center Operator conference calls, monthly statewide management informational systems (MIS) webinars, UI training webinars, video conferencing, and train-the-trainer workshops. Professional development activities are posted on a WebEx platform for easy system access and training events are viewable on a shared calendar at http://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/training-events.shtm.

In addition to live training provided by UI experts, staff resource guides are available on the NYSDOL internet and intranet site. Training and guides are updated regularly to provide current UI Reform laws and changes in regulations and implementation procedures. Trainings include such topics as *Assisting UI Customers in the Career Center* and *Identifying and Reporting UI Issues*.

NYS Career Centers aid customers wishing to file a UI claim in several ways:

- Via *How to* File *for Unemployment Insurance* brochures, available in multiple languages;
- Resource room computers and internet access for easy online UI claims filing and weekly certification (Resource Rooms are staffed with workforce professionals to assist as needed); and
- Access to telephones to file telephone claims and speak to UI Claims Representatives directly.

NYS has established minimal statewide program requirements designed to provide a statewide reemployment service strategy for UI claimants that:

- Emphasizes early intervention;
- Provides statewide service standards, yet encourages regional/local service delivery designs to tailor services to individual customer needs; and
- Speeds the referral of claimants who need additional help to other support services available within the public workforce system, including but not limited to training/retraining.

Key Reemployment Services requirements include:

- UI claimants are co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Adult and/or Dislocated Worker programs and must receive a minimum of two staff assisted services. Co-enrollment of UI claimants makes the widest possible array of services available without duplication of resources and creates an automatic link between the UI and workforce system. Claimants are scheduled for an initial staff assisted enrolling service as early as possible in the claims cycle; at maximum within two weeks from the date the claimant information is available for scheduling in our Reemployment Operating System (REOS). Scheduling, delivery method, and

format may be regionally determined, but the statewide framework encourages conducting one-on-one interviews to provide the highest level of customer service, if possible.

- UI claimants on Temporary Layoff (TLO) and/or union workers with exclusive union hiring arrangements must be individually assessed to verify status before any work search exemption is allowed. If excused from work search, all claimants must be provided with information regarding the full range of services available in the workforce system. UI claimants identified as work search exempt based on a temporary and/or seasonal loss of employment are to be scheduled for a staff assisted service, if still certifying for benefits beyond the anticipated return to work date.
- The service design for UI claimants subject to work search requirements must minimally include:
    - A description of the full range of services available through the one-stop system and how services can be accessed;
    - An initial assessment including a basic review of the individual's work history, skills, training, education, career objective, and any self-identified service needs (the initial assessment should be used to inform decisions on next steps such as scheduling additional services and/or targeting for follow-up services);
    - Information notifying claimants of their work search related responsibilities including advisement that failure to report for scheduled reemployment services may impact their continuing eligibility for benefits;
    - A complete, up-to-date, OSOS case management record that will support program enrollments, effective job matching, and referrals; and
    - A Comprehensive Assessment, when it is determined that the customer needs individualized career services. Such services may be needed to address barriers to employment; establish an employment/occupational goal that is relevant to the local labor market; and/or identify deficiencies in occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be rectified through skills development and training. This leads to the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP).
- UI customer caseload management strategies are in place to ensure that UI Reemployment Services customers receive ongoing services following the initial service. If the UI claimant continues to certify for benefits, each claimant must receive additional staff assisted services within 90-day intervals of the initial enrolling service.
- Potential UI issues are tracked and reported to the NYSDOL Unemployment Insurance Division (NYSDOL/UID) in a timely manner.
- In accordance with NYS's functional alignment policy, REOS is accessible by both ES and WIOA partner staff based on functional assignment. Any/all staff providing reemployment services to UI customers have access to the comprehensive case management data available for all UI customers via REOS, as needed, to eliminate duplication of effort and facilitate effective, streamlined service to the customer.
- Customers whose initial assessment determines a need for additional services are referred quickly to training or system partners for supportive services to address barriers to reemployment.

AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN

NYSDOL's Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) details the activities planned for providing services and outreach to both Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs), H-2A foreign guest workers and Agricultural businesses for the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019, and is prepared in accordance with WIOA proposed Section 167 and Unified Planning Guidance.

Submission Requirements

The goal of the AOP is to describe the strategies the Agriculture Labor Program (AgLP) will use in the coming program year to provide services to MSFWs through the American Job Center network, or NYS Career Center System, which are quantitatively proportional and qualitatively equivalent to those provided to non-MSFWs, and to detail how services will be delivered to Agricultural businesses in an effort to ensure the jobs they provide are filled with the available, domestic labor supply. In addition, the AgLP is committed to ensuring that H-2A foreign guest workers and domestic farmworkers understand their rights and how the labor law in NYS protects them.

NYSDOL's plan includes the following:

(1) *Assessment of Need* - Information on PY17 agricultural and MSFW activity, projected levels of agricultural activity in PY18, and projected numbers of MSFWs in NYS in PY18;

(2) *Outreach Activities* - A description of how MSFWs across the state will receive services in PY18, as well as an assessment on staff and the resources available for outreach;

(3) *NYS' strategy for*:

- (A) Coordinating outreach efforts with WIOA Title I section 167 grantees as well as public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups;
- (B) Explaining to farmworkers the services available at the local Career Centers;
- (C) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups;
- (D) Providing farmworkers with a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment; and
- (E) Urging those farmworkers reached through outreach efforts to go to the local Career Center to obtain the full range of employment and training services;

(4) *Services Provided to MSFWs through the American Job Center Network and Services to Agricultural Businesses through the American Job Center Network* - Review of the ways NYS's AgLP staff will ensure MSFWs receive the same services as non-MSFWs and information on utilizing OSOS/NYS Job Bank, as well as job bulletins, to ensure that Agricultural businesses receive the workforce required to maintain a vital industry in NYS; and

(5) *Other Requirements* - Opportunity for the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) to review and approve the AOP, and review and public comment by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee PathStone Corporation, other agricultural organizations, and the public.

Assessment of Need

(i) NYS Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Characteristics and MSFW Needs

Typical Characteristics of MSFWs in NYS:

- Predominantly Spanish Speaking and/or English Language Learner (ELL).
- Countries of origin include Mexico, Guatemala, Jamaica, Burma, Haiti, Korea, and U.S. born workers from Puerto Rico.
- Common languages include Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Korean.
- Farmworkers are MSFW, seasonal, and year-round workers depending on the crop and method of farming.

Farmworkers, including MSFWs, have similar needs to other immigrant, refugee, and low wage worker populations, including:

- Flexible hours for accessible services as agricultural work hours do not always coincide with typical business hours;
- Assistance with language barriers; and
- Assistance with finding work in agriculture by word-of-mouth and friends/neighbors.

In NYS, farmworkers tend to be seasonal workers that work at area farms seasonally. In the off season, workers may find other temporary jobs or will wait to be called back by their previous agricultural employer.

(ii) A review of the previous year's agricultural activity in the state:

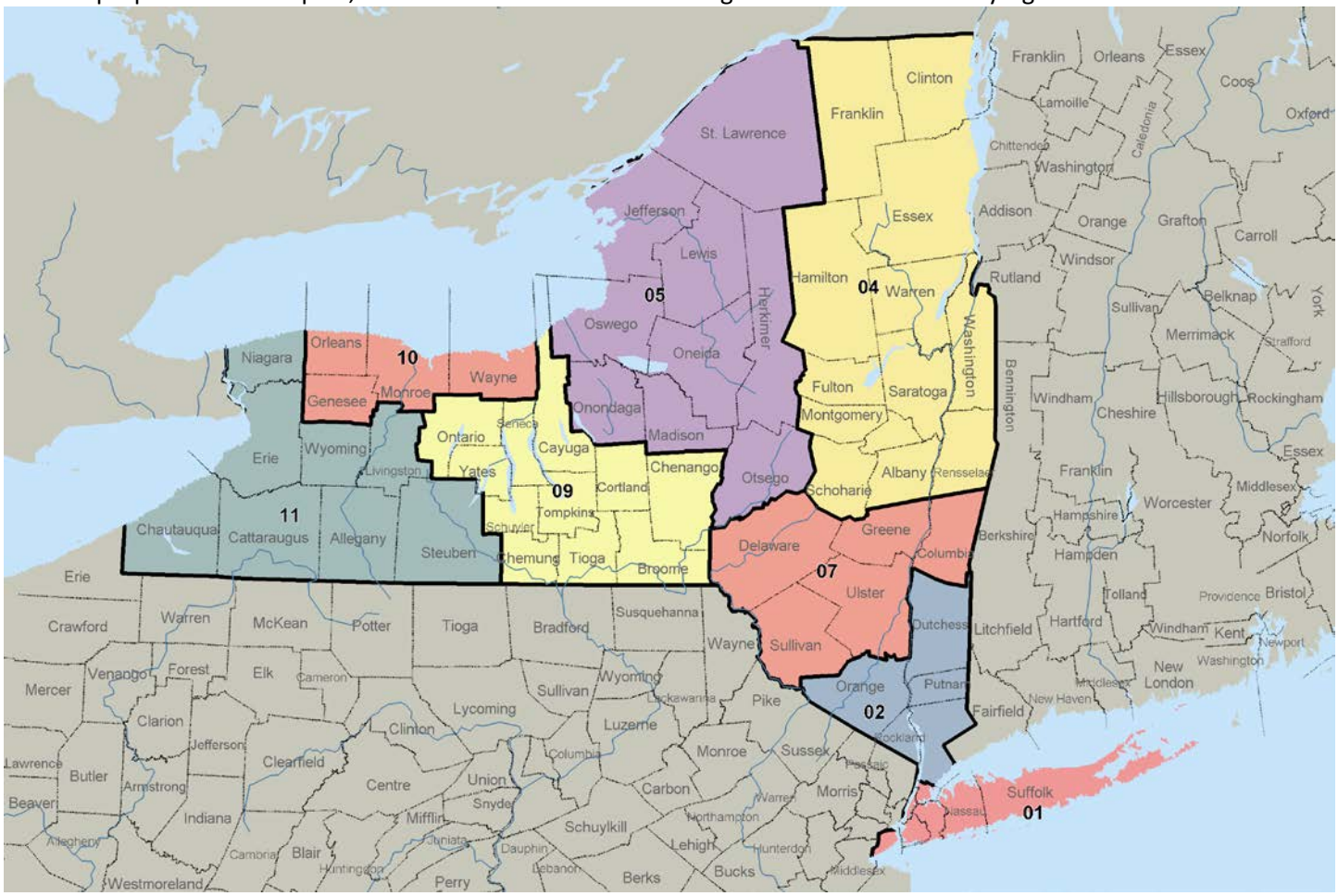
Agriculture is one of the most important industries in NYS, providing food for the state's consumers and employment for many of its residents. Crops grown across the state are very diverse and include a variety of fruits, root vegetables, and plant/nursery stock. Throughout PY17, the AgLP recorded information on the specific crops grown on farms staff visited and provided vital data demonstrating the best time of year to visit certain farms based on the crops grown at that location.

Regional crop activity in PY16 was as follows[1]:

1. Region 1 consists of Suffolk, Nassau counties and the 5 boroughs of New York City. Major agricultural industries include greenhouses/nurseries operations, fruit and vegetable crop farms and horse farms.
2. Region 2 consists of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties. Major agricultural industries include apple and other stone fruits, vineyards and ground crops.
3. Region 7 consists of Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster counties. Major agricultural industry is apples. Other predominant commodities in the region include stone fruits, ground vegetables, hay, corn, grapes, berries, nurseries, dairies and livestock.
4. Region 4 consists of Albany, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington counties. Major agricultural industries include apples orchards, vegetable farms, nurseries/greenhouses, and dairy farms.
5. Region 5 consists of Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, and St. Lawrence counties. The major agricultural industries are apples orchards and onion farms followed by other vegetable and berry crops, and nursery operations. The dairy industry is also a major contributor to the agriculture economy in the area.
6. Region 9 consists of Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins, and Yates counties. The major agricultural industries in the area are vineyards, followed by fruit and vegetable farms and dairies.
7. Region 10 consists of Genesee, Monroe, Orleans and Wayne counties. The major agricultural industry is apple orchards, but various vegetables such as cabbage, onions, potatoes, squash, and corn are also produced regionally.

8. Region 11 consists of Alleghany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Livingston, Niagara, Steuben, and Wyoming counties. The major agricultural industries include apple orchards, vineyards, mixed ground crops including onions, cabbage and potatoes, berry patches and dairy operations.

For the purposes of this report, NYS has been divided into the regions that are covered by AgLP staff:



(iii) A review of the previous year's MSFW activity in the state:

For PY16, the estimated number of MSFWs in NYS totaled approximately 17,131[2]. The estimated numbers of MSFWs per geographic region[3] is:

1. *Region 1: 1,544*
2. *Region 2: 948*
3. *Region 7: 2,188*
4. *Region 4: 1,131*
5. *Region 5: 631*
6. *Region 9: 1,920*

[2] This number also includes H-2A foreign guest workers and Seasonal Farmworker. Guest workers add 6,459 to the total estimate.

7. *Region 10: 6,771*
8. *Region 11: 1,988*

This number is partially based on information obtained in the federally required 5148 report, which estimated 6,670 MSFWs in NYS using the numbers reported on the Grower/Processor Certificates issued by NYSDOL's Division of Labor Standards. However, these certificates only apply to farms with five or more migrant farmworkers. To capture seasonal workers and farmworkers on the smaller farms, the AgLP used data from the program's Farm Lists, which is collected for each region by AgLP staff.

In PY16, AgLP staff visited small, medium, and large farming operations, including seasonal and year-round workforces. The goal was to reach as many of the seasonal Farmworkers and H-2A foreign guest workers in the state as possible. AgLP staff performed outreach education to a total of 4,286 MSFWs; 1,587 H-2A foreign guest workers and 1,370 Year-Round farmworkers in PY16. The number of farmworkers served in each for geographic region includes:

1. *Region 1: 1,923*
2. *Region 2: 582*
3. *Region 7: 589*
4. *Region 4: 269*
5. *Region 5: 333*
6. *Region 9: 717*
7. *Region 10: 1,788*
8. *Region 11: 1,042*

PathStone, the current WIOA Title I section 167 grantee, reported serving 2,021 MSFWs, resulting in a combined total of 9,264 individuals receiving employment services in PY16.

Assessment of AgLP Progress and Assessment of Equity Ratio Indicators:

NYSDOL/DIPA reviewed the field staff Regional Outreach Plans (ROPs) for 2016 and the following detailed assessment of each Agriculture Labor Specialist's (AgLS) ROP[4] indicates progress in services being provided to all farmworkers in NYS.

- Region 1-The AgLS in this region intended to conduct activity at 206 farms, and exceeded his goal by reaching 219 farms. He also continued to contact farmworkers in Riverhead, NY at the Spanish Apostolate. In total, the AgLS made 2,724 contacts for calendar year 2016, which includes activity related to MSFWs, H-2A workers, year-round workers, and agricultural employers.
- Region 2-The AgLS in this region estimated field activity goal at 106 businesses. The AgLS reached his goal. Activity was conducted both in the field and at the region's Farmworker Community Center, or "The Alamo", in Pine Island, NY. The Region 2 AgLS made 869 contacts during the PY16 season.
- Region 7- The AgLS in this region planned field activity goal at 100 farms. Areas of the Hudson Valley were affected by weather which caused a reduction in workforce. Approximately 95% of the migrant seasonal farms were reached during the season. Activity was conducted both in the field and at the region's Farmworker Community Center, or "The Alamo", in Pine Island, NY. The AgLS reached 913 contacts.

[4] Numbers are greater than MSFWs served. AgLSs serve all farm workers in the field: seasonal, migrant and year-round.

- Region 4- The AgLS in this region planned field activity at 70 area farms. The AgLS conducted field work at 74 area farms. In PY15, the AgLS had 93 contacts with migrant seasonal Farmworkers. In PY16, the AgLS had 101 contacts with migrant seasonal Farmworkers. The AgLS had a successful season, conducting 688 contacts.
- Region 5- This region faced challenges in PY16. Weather played a role in less migrant workers in the area. Additionally, several farms decided to use the H-2A foreign guest worker program as their sole workforce. The AgLS planned to conduct field work at 55 farms and reached 53 farms. The AgLS had 581 contacts for the PY16 season.
- Region 9- This region also faced weather challenges that reduced the number of workers in the area. There are many farm labor contractors in this area that serve many of the local vineyards and the AgLS was successful in meeting with them and their crews. In total, the AgLS had 847 contacts in the region during the PY16 season.
- Region 10- The farmers in this region had a 30% reduction in workforce due to weather. The AgLS was visited 140 farms and had 2413 contacts for the season.
- Region 11- Weather was also a factor in this region, but the AgLS conducted outreach and provided services to 100 farms in the region. The AgLS added 9 farms to the Farm List and had 1312 contacts for the season.

Data based on the Equity Ratio Indicators for program years 2015-2017 indicate that NYS typically meets three of the five indicators (referred to jobs, referred to supportive services, and job development contacts). However, the Equity Ratio Indicators for services in the last four years are difficult to fully review because the data is not cumulative over the four quarters. It is therefore difficult to determine, if over the course of the program year, the service Equity Ratio Indicators are being met. Additionally, the formulas used to track the Equity Ratio Indicators will need to be reviewed for accuracy.

(iv) NYSDOL/DIPA training:

NYSDOL/DIPA provided training in 2017 regarding better documentation of support services provided to farmworkers. We will also continue to review the quarterly 5148 data to determine if the training has helped with reporting requirements. NYSDOL/DIPA will also discuss further training for outreach staff by other NYSDOL staff to ensure proper documentation of services provided.

(v) A projected level of agricultural activity in the state for the coming year:

The AgLP has seen a steady increase in the number of agricultural job orders, both for domestic labor and H-2A workers, submitted each program year, since PY12[5]. Based upon this consistent and steady increase, it is believed that the level of agricultural activity in PY17 will be equal to, or greater than, the level of agricultural activity in PY16.

Based upon the total number of Grower/Processor Registrations submitted to Labor Standards, combined with the AgLP's known number of MSFWs not captured by the registrations and the number of H-2A guestworkers, the estimated number of MSFWs in NYS for PY17 totals 17,131 individuals.

In PY17 and PY18, an increased focus will be placed on assisting Agricultural businesses in submitting job orders for domestic labor. As the AgLP was brand new in PY12, the focus was largely on meeting the Agricultural Businesses across the state and notifying them of the services the Agriculture Labor Specialists (AgLS) could provide to them and their workers on the farm. Now that the businesses are aware of the AgLS in their area, more focus can be placed on providing them with the labor supply

[5] The AgLP was launched in PY12.

required to ensure their farms thrive. An increased labor supply will ultimately correlate to a high activity level in the industry overall.

(vi) A projected number of MSFWs in the state for the coming year:

Based on last year's numbers, and the data provided by Labor Standards in the Farm Labor Contractor Registrations and Grower/Processor Registrations for each quarter's 5148 report and that provided by PathStone Corporation, it is the AgLP's estimate that approximately 17,131 or more farmworkers will be in NYS during PY18.

Outreach Activities

Numerical goals for the number of MSFWs to be contacted during PY18:

The eight bilingual AgLS are stationed in NYS Career Centers[6] close to high populations of agricultural workers. For those staff members who are not located in offices deemed significant by USDOL ETA, the AgLP worked with NYSDOL's Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (NYSDOL/DEWS) to ensure the AgLS can work in a "significant office" at least one day per week. This will ensure MSFWs can reach an AgLS from almost anywhere in the state on any given day. Because the staff is strategically located close to MSFW populations, the goal is to reach as many of the estimated 17,131 farmworkers in PY18 as possible. Likewise, an objective of the AgLP is to visit farms with an MSFW workforce twice during the season to provide outreach services to MSFWs working on the farm during the harvest season that may not have been there earlier in the year, during the planting season.

Outreach will also continue to be provided to dairy workers, who may be year-round workers as time permits. This will lead to an overall increase in the number of farmworkers reached by AgLP staff, and may also lead to the discovery of seasonal workers who may work at these dairies and can receive outreach services.

Assessment of available resources:

For PY18 there are currently eight AgLS (field staff) and three Supervisors who conduct full-time outreach to MSFWs. The AgLP also has two Labor Liaisons. In addition to conducting outreach as needed, the Labor Liaison will also assist the AgLP in connecting local domestic labor with available jobs in NYS. The Division Director also maintains direct contact with farmworkers and conducts outreach to Farmworkers with a hands-on approach to ensure NYSDOL's Division of Immigrant Policies and Affairs (NYSDOL/DIPA) provides information and services relevant to the distinct needs of agricultural workers.

In addition to the 11 full-time AgLP staff, the Labor Liaisons, and the Director, the NY SMA will conduct outreach throughout PY18.

In February and March 2017, Agriculture Labor Program staff received training on the following:

- Field Visit Outreach including new reporting form (Jeanette Lazelle);
- Guidance on Regional Outreach Plan Development (Geovanny Trivino);
- Updates on AgLog Database (Geovanny Trivino);
- Employment Services Referrals (Stacey Rice);
- FLCU: The role of the Labor Liaison in H-2A (Caylin Gwise);

[6] One AgLS is located in NYSDOL's Central Office located in Albany, NY but spends time at two local Career Centers (Amsterdam and Hudson) during the harvest season. All other staff works out of Career Centers.

- FLCU: Conducting Field Checks and Housing Inspections (Melissa Buckley and Ruth Gonzalez-Cruz);
- FLCU: New Materials for the H-2A Worker (Melissa Buckley and Ruth Gonzalez-Cruz);
- Human Trafficking training for NYSDOL/DIPA Front Line Staff (Estelle Davis, Esq.); and
- General Outreach to Immigrant Workers and Outreach Log Database entries (Carmen Calderon).

Additionally, Jeanette Lazelle provided a special field outreach project titled "Outreach to Female Farmworkers" in 2017. Under this project, outreach and education on the issue of sexual harassment and workplace violence was provided to businesses and female farmworkers on seasonal farms. In 2018, this special project will be expanded to include all farmworkers on seasonal farm operations. The outreach education includes identification of sexual harassment and workplace violence and the services that can be accessed through NYSDOL. A fact sheet on these topics is found at https://labor.ny.gov/formsdocs/factsheets/pdfs/P742.pdf.

Technical Advisories are shared with all NYSDOL staff as appropriate. NYSDOL/DIPA will also request training on employment services as needed for outreach staff. Additionally, NYSDOL/DIPA is working on further developing its internal protocols and providing technical training as needed. At minimum, NYSDOL/DIPA will train staff on all program areas on a yearly basis.

Staff capacity building is a NYS priority. Professional development activities are provided through conference calls, UI training webinars, video conferencing and train the trainer workshops. In addition to live training provided by UI experts, staff resource guides are available on our NYSDOL internet and intranet site. Training and guides are updated regularly to provide current UI Reform laws and changes in regulations and implementation procedures. Training has included such topics as *Assisting UI Customers in the Career Center* and *Identifying and Reporting UI Issues*.

1. In PY18, AgLP staff will continue to work closely with PathStone Corporation. Staff will continue to participate in PathStone's Program Area Advisory Committee Meetings throughout the season. Additionally, the local AgLS will work at PathStone's Williamson office to provide outreach, information, and employment services to farmworkers who visit and are referred to the AgLP by PathStone. Additionally, NYSDOL and PathStone will work together to execute an MOU by the end of PY17.

2. The AgLP also continues to develop the services and information available to farmworkers through the Farmworkers Community Center in Pine Island, also known as the Alamo. During PY16, the AgLP staff provided services and information from the Alamo three days per week. This will continue as we further develop the services that farmworkers can access at this location.

   Furthermore, in PY18, Long Island's Riverhead Spanish Apostolate will continue to host the local AgLS at their offices. For both locations, our staff presence provides much needed outreach and assistance to workers who would not typically visit the nearest NYS Career Center.

<u>Tools used to conduct outreach:</u>

To reach an estimated 17,131 MSFWs, as well as year-round agricultural workers in PY18, AgLP staff will use several tools:

- The primary delivery method is personal contact. Staff travel to farms several days each week to meet with MSFWs in person and provide them with packets of information relevant to their rights; supportive

services available to them in the community; and employment related services available at the Career Centers across the state.

- Each AgLS is equipped with a mobile technology, making the AgLS accessible to MSFWs even when they are not at the Career Center.
- Prior to visiting farms, staff assemble a packet of materials including fact sheets from NYSDOL, information on other agencies serving MSFWs in the community (Community Resource Guides), and contact information for the AgLP staff. The following documents are included in the basic outreach packet for MSFWs (non-foreign guest workers):
    - NYSDOL/DIPA services (in English and Spanish);
    - NYSDOL/DIPA AgLP Contact List;
    - NYSDOL General Services (in English and Spanish);
    - NYSDOL's NYS Career Center Locations (contains address and phone number);
    - NYSDOL Protection for Farmworkers (in English and Spanish);
    - Farmworker Fact Sheet (in English and Spanish); and
    - Community Resource Guide.

In addition, the staff tailors these worker packets by adding specific information regarding workshop and training opportunities available at their local Career Centers.

When applicable, staff also provides outreach services at various events across the state. Several times per year, there are events held in the agricultural community where outreach can take place and staff can have direct access to farmworkers. These events include:

- Empire Farm Days;
- Mexican Consulate events throughout the year; and
- Guatemalan Consulate events throughout the year.

Services Provided to MSFWs through the American Job Center Network

The goal of outreach is to contact MSFWs who are not reached by the normal intake activities of the NYS Career Center. The AgLS provide outreach services to farmworkers at their living and gathering locations outside of the physical Career Center, which may include farm sites, labor camps, grocery stores, and churches. The AgLS explain the services that can be accessed at the local Career Center and educates the farmworkers on their rights and responsibilities under NYS labor law. Regarding employment services, the AgLP staff encourage farmworkers to visit the nearest NYS Career Center to explore the career services available to them.

AgLS provide the following services through outreach:

- Information on services available through PathStone Corporation, NYS's current WIA 167 grantee;
- Information on training services such as GED, ESL, and basic education available through the Career Center or other services provided in the community;
- Details on applying for UI, if applicable;
- Health care, transportation, and child care services available in the local area;

- Information about NYS state and federal labor laws and their enforcement;
- Appropriate channels for filing complaints through the Employment Services Complaint System; and
- Resolution of "apparent violations" observed or uncovered by the AgLS during their outreach visit.

To ensure that MSFWs receive quality services when they visit any of the local Career Centers in NYS, the AgLP created and presented a specialized training webinar for Labor Services Representatives (LSRs) in NYSDOL/DEWS who regularly serve customers seeking employment. The goal of the training is to guarantee that farmworkers are served by all LSRs in the Career Centers, rather than rely exclusively on the AgLP Staff. The content of the training details the distinct nature of agriculture and the nuanced employment needs of both agricultural businesses and farmworkers. It also provides step-by-step instructions for creating comprehensive employment profiles for farmworkers; performing skills and job matching; and knowing where to find agricultural job openings in active recruitment in OSOS. The webinar is updated and recorded annually and is available online to allow newly hired LSRs to receive the training at any time and at their own pace. There is also a Quick Tips Guide that LSRs can reference quickly in order to make the resources readily available.

Providing these services to farmworkers, and ensuring they utilize them, increases the likelihood of farmworkers becoming more competitive in the local, regional, and national economy, and enables them to use acquired skills to transition to employment in the non-agricultural sector if they so choose.

Services Provided to Agricultural Businesses through the American Job Center Network

Providing services to Agricultural Businesses in NYS is extremely important because they require a reliable workforce to ensure the products they grow can be harvested in a time and manner that guarantees the highest quality product reaches consumers. The AgLS provide many services to employers, including updating them on compliance with state and federal labor laws and ensuring they have the most current posters, forms, and guides. AgLP staff also provides the following business services to Agricultural Employers:

- Assistance in recruiting domestic labor;
- Matching workers' skills and experience to business needs and available positions;
- Answering questions about recruiting and registering workers;
- Referrals for labor laws and compliance issues; and
- Labor market data.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NYSDOL and the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) was established in August 2015 to ensure that the goals of each agency are met while providing streamlined services to the agricultural businesses and farmworkers affected. More specifically, the agreement eliminates duplicative migrant labor camp pre-occupancy and occupancy inspections, which would otherwise be required by both agencies.

In PY18, the AgLP will continue to focus on providing Agricultural Businesses the domestic labor they need to succeed in this important industry. The AgLP will continue the "Labor Needs" project that began in PY13 to determine exactly what the businesses in the state are looking for in their workforce and the time of year they will most likely need workers. The Labor Needs Form provides an opportunity for the Agricultural Business to place a local job order with the AgLS. The AgLS then enters the information into OSOS, and the job order becomes active on the NYS Job Bank, becoming visible to potential workers on the Internet.

For those workers without computer access, these jobs are also posted in the NYS Career Centers, as well as the Farm Jobs Bulletin the AgLP implemented in April 2013. This bulletin is sent out to staff approximately every two weeks and can be posted at grocery stores, churches, and other MSFW gathering locations so they may become aware of available positions across the state. We expect these initiatives will help workers obtain jobs and businesses receive the labor supply required at farms across the state.

While conducting field visits and outreach to MSFWs, the AgLP staff also speak with Agricultural Businesses and provide information on services available to them. Just as the workers have a packet, the staff also prepares a business packet prior to visiting the farm that includes the following:

- NYSDOL Services for Business Flyer;
- NYSDOL/DIPA Services Flyer;
- NYSDOL/DIPA AgLP Contact List;
- NYS Agricultural Minimum Wage Poster;
- NYS Federal Bonding Program;
- Farm Labor Commissary Registration Form;
- NYSDOL Application for Grower/Processor of Migrant Registration;
- Pay Notice Agreement for Workers (in English and Spanish);
- Blank Wage Statement (For non-H-2A employers);
- Blank Wage Statement (For H-2A employers);
- Unemployment Insurance Employer Registration Information;
- Workers' Compensation Advocate for Business Booklet;
- What Business Owners Must Know About Workers' Compensation Flyer;
- USDOL H-2A Employer Handbook; and
- List of region-specific service providers by county for the AgLS's territory.

Furthermore, AgLP staff develops and implements various trainings for farm labor contractors and agricultural employers. The goal of the written materials and information sessions is to promote an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of employers, as well as the rights and services available to farmworkers. Through online webinars, recorded training sessions, in-person workshops, and the distribution of written information along with employer-specific packets, AgLP staff has provided education such as:

- Know Your Rights presentations at Mexican Mobile Consulate events around NY State;
- Presentations at Ag & Markets Listening Tour for New and Beginning Farmers around NY State;
- Know Your Rights Presentations at Department of State's Office of New Americans Centers around NY State;
- AgLP/PathStone and NYSDOL/DEWS Joint Training in Rochester and Middletown NY;
- Outreach at Empire Farms Days;
- Compliance Education at Jumpstarting the Next Generation hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension; and
- Compliance Education at New York Wine & Grape Foundation in conjunction with the USDOL.

In March 2017, the ES Complaint system was updated and training was provided to all Career Center and partner staff. The ES Complaint system is discussed with workers when they reach out to AgLP staff to discuss possible violations of labor law. Workers seeking to file formal complaints are assisted with completing the complaint form and the AgLP staff forward the form to the appropriate enforcement office. Where workers do not want to file formal complaints, the AgLP staff work with businesses to discuss potential violations and resolve them with business cooperation.

In the off season, the AgLP staff craft their regional outreach plans and begin contact with businesses to discuss their anticipated labor needs for the following season. The AgLP staff discusses the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) as a possible way to obtain the necessary labor for their business. The AgLP continue to contact businesses throughout the season and will continue to offer ARS as a possible option for their labor needs. The overall trend the past few seasons has shifted interest away from local job orders to the H-2A guest worker program to meet the businesses' labor needs. The AgLP staff continue to discuss local job orders as a possible solution to short term labor needs and businesses will occasionally submit smaller local job orders for early season or end of season labor needs.

Other Requirements

(i) State Monitor Advocate (SMA): Belen Ledezma is the NYS Monitor Advocate. She has been given an opportunity to review and comment on this AOP.

(ii) Review and Public Comment: The draft of this AOP will be made available to the groups listed below on November 1, 2017 and they will be given a 30-day window to provide feedback and comments. The following groups and organizations will be invited to share their input and comments:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension;
- New York Farm Bureau;
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets;
- PathStone Corporation;
- Worker Justice Center of New York;
- The International Institute of Buffalo; and
- Cornell Farmworker Program

MSFW Career Centers

NYSDOL is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.11. The list of the 10 Significant MSFW centers and agricultural plan is located on our NYSDOL website at https://labor.ny.gov/immigrants/agricultural-outreach-plan.shtm.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

The primary goal of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is to assist trade-affected workers in locating and preparing for suitable re-employment as rapidly and effectively as possible. In NYS, this is accomplished through:

- Timely provision of Rapid Response services;

- Effective case management through the provision of various basic and individualized career services in the Career Center as a co-enrolled participant under the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program; and
- Focus on re-training workers determined to need further skills to obtain employment in emerging and in-demand occupations.

TAA coordination with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser

It is the goal of NYS to ensure that dislocated workers, including Trade-certified workers, receive services available through the Career Center service delivery system to ensure rapid reattachment to the workforce through attainment of suitable employment. Further, NYS determined that individuals eligible for services under TAA programs are best served through Career Center offices operating in LWDAs. NYS previously adopted policy (Technical Advisory #04-6.5 and subsequent amendments) to ensure all TAA customers are co-enrolled as dislocated workers and are provided the same set of basic and individualized career services available to all customers in the system. This co-enrollment allows trade affected customers to take advantage of the same reemployment, assessment, labor market information, career advisement, case management, and follow-up services available through the local Career Center system. In NYS, WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded staff and services are functionally aligned within each of our local Career Center offices. This allows services to be provided to TAA customers in a seamless and efficient manner. Trade funded services can be layered on top of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded services already provided through the Career Center. NYSDOL allocated sufficient resources to each LWDA to support outreach (including Rapid Response services), orientation, case management, job development, and follow-up services for dislocated workers eligible for TAA benefits.

TAA and Rapid Response

The NYSDOL/DEWS Rapid Response Program involves planning and delivery of reemployment services for affected workers prior to a mass layoff or business closure. Rapid Response services are initiated when separations meet the NYS WARN Act thresholds, and/or when a Trade petition has been submitted to the USDOL.

In NYS, ten regional Rapid Response Teams, attached to Business Engagement, impact the TAA program. When a WARN notice is filed, the RRRC contacts the business within one day of receipt of the WARN. If the business is not TAA certified, the RRRC will assist the business with filing the TAA petition, or will file directly on behalf of the affected workers. For businesses that are already TAA certified, the Rapid Response team provides workers with an introduction to the benefits and services available under TAA and guides them to the local career planner for help with accessing benefits. Also, when NYS receives notice from the USDOL that a new Trade Act petition is filed, the Statewide Trade Act Coordinator alerts the Career Center system, activating Rapid Response services.

The Rapid Response Team conducts onsite and offsite customized service orientations for workers, covering reemployment services, state public healthcare enrollment options, credit counseling resources, and if applicable, an overview of TAA benefits and the TAA individual eligibility process. All attendees of the Rapid Response orientation are registered in OSOS immediately following the orientation session. Both the business and attached affected workers are coded with a Rapid Response Event Number for intensive reemployment services and service tracking purposes.

The RRRC keeps the Statewide Trade Act Coordinator, along with the WARN Unit and key local NYSDOL and workforce development system partners, apprised of the status of layoffs. Working with the business, the Rapid Response team develops a service plan.

When the specific trade affected workers are known, the RRRC advises the business to email the following information directly to the NYSDOL/UID Benefits Section, to begin the process of determining individual worker eligibility:

- Name of trade affected worker;
- Social Security Number;
- Worker's Address;
- Division of the company where the worker was assigned;
- Employment start date;
- Separation date; and
- Reason for separation.

Coordination – Rapid Response, Unemployment Insurance Division, Career Center Network

NYSDOL/UID mails each worker, after layoff, an application for TAA. Applications are evaluated by the NYSDOL/UID and result in an individual determination of eligibility. The NYSDOL/UID uses worker contact information collected by Rapid Response Teams and from the trade affected company to mail TAA applications to affected workers. The NYSDOL/UID advises the Statewide Trade Act Coordinator on a weekly basis of any applications that were mailed.

The Statewide Trade Act Coordinator in turn advises key local NYSDOL and workforce development system partners, including 33 local TAA Coordinators. The local TAA Coordinators reach out to the workers to promote the program and urge workers to return their individual eligibility applications to the NYSDOL/UID for review, and to visit the Career Center for case management services.

Case Management

Case management begins with a preliminary assessment of knowledge, skills, interests, and abilities. This initial assessment helps identify dislocated workers (including Trade-certified workers) who possess marketable skills needed by local employers. It may also identify dislocated workers (including Trade-certified workers) who need additional services at a more intensive service level. An on-going comprehensive assessment, based on the current labor market, includes:

- Testing of skill levels such as math, reading, and writing to determine grade-level equivalencies;
- Evaluating aptitudes, abilities, and work values;
- Identifying transferable skills such as computer, problem solving, time management, and organization;
- Assessing English language proficiency (command of the English language);
- Identifying knowledge of foreign languages that may help an employer;
- Assessing supportive service needs such as child care or transportation; and
- Evaluating the need for referral to community resources.

Assessment results help determine if the affected worker can return to suitable employment or if training is the appropriate path to reemployment. Career planners, in conjunction with the affected worker, determine one of the following steps:

- Active job search to return to the labor market, or
- Referral to training; either classroom, OJT, or a combination of the two.

Training

Career planners, working with the trade affected worker, determine when training is appropriate for the worker given his/her capabilities, background, experience, and conditions within the current labor market. In considering training options, the guiding principle is to return the trade affected worker to suitable employment as quickly and as economically as possible. Before submitting a request for training approval to the NYSDOL/DEWS State level TAA Program Unit, local career planners ensure that the required six criteria for approval of training are met. These criteria are:

- No suitable employment is available to the worker;
- The worker will benefit from the training;
- There is reasonable expectation of reemployment following the completion of training;
- The worker is qualified to undertake and complete the training;
- Training is reasonably available; and
- Training is appropriate and available at a reasonable cost.

Career planners call upon NYSDOL's network of local labor market analysts; access employment projections on the NYSDOL website; and utilize their own knowledge of the local labor market to assist workers in developing occupational goals. A training program may be approved for an eligible trade affected worker at any time regardless of their eligibility for UI/TRA (Trade Adjustment Allowances). In the event the trade affected worker exhausts UI and is not eligible for TRA, careful consideration is paid to the person's ability, based on financial resources, to complete the training program.

Training may not be approved when, all costs being considered, training substantially similar in quality, content, and results can be obtained from another provider at a lower cost within a similar timeframe. The total cost of a training program, in determining reasonableness, includes tuition and related expenses (books, tools, and academic fees), travel or transportation expenses, and subsistence. Training at facilities outside the trade-affected worker's commuting area that involves transportation or subsistence costs that add substantially to the total costs, are not approved if similar training is available locally. Training cannot be approved when the cost is unreasonably high compared to the cost of training workers in similar occupations.

Career planners assist workers in finding training programs of a suitable duration to achieve the desired skill level in the shortest possible time. NYSDOL/DEWS informs the NYSDOL/UID of approved training plans through the use of a shared database which tracks dates of training and the associated TRA payments.

Program Process Responsibilities

The Trade Act program in NYS is co-managed by two NYSDOL Divisions: the NYSDOL/UID Benefits Section, which is responsible for interfacing with the trade certified businesses and determining individual eligibility, and the NYSDOL/DEWS TAA Program Unit, which provides program oversight to the Career Centers. NYSDOL/UID mails TAA application packets to laid off workers and Threatened Status letters to those identified pre-layoff who are named as trade affected by the businesses. NYSDOL/UID communicates the list of laid off and threatened workers to NYSDOL/DEWS, which in turn communicates with LWDAs. Local areas provide outreach to facilitate

the application and entitlement processes. Career Centers begin case management while workers await their determination of eligibility.

The following details program responsibility by NYSDOL division:

- Receive petition to trigger rapid response – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Provide a legal notice of certification through publication in a local newspaper (outreach) –NYSDOL/UID and NYSDOL Communications Office;
- Provide notification to local boards of filed Trade petitions – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Notify trade affected workers of approved Trade certifications, Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Health Coverage Tax Credit eligibility – NYSDOL/UID;
- Determine individual eligibility to TAA– NYSDOL/UID;
- Pay weekly TRA benefits – NYSDOL/UID;
- Provide orientation to TAA benefits/services – NYSDOL/DEWS via Career Centers;
- Approve/deny and revoke waivers from training – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Approve/deny requests for training – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Approve/deny requests for job search and relocation allowances – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Provide regular updates to local boards on federal Trade funds, WIOA NEG funds, and additional assistance funds that may be available to support training for trade affected workers –NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Process hearings and appeals related to determinations and decisions concerning Trade Act funded benefits and other services, including the following: TRA; job relocation allowances; job search allowances; subsistence allowances while in training, including certain costs associated with an approved training plan at a provider outside the commuting area, as defined by applicable unemployment insurance law or regulation; and training programs as approved courses of study –NYSDOL/UID;
- Approve the use of a reimbursement method to ensure the adequate oversight and integrity of federal funds made available for Trade-approved training – NYSDOL/DEWS;
- Provide required reports to USDOL and others as required by law or regulation – NYSDOL/UID, NYSDOL/DEWS, NYSDOL's Division of Research and Statistics (R&S), and NYSDOL/UID; and
- Ensure the integrity of data for reports provided to federal agencies as required by law or regulation; NYSDOL/UID, NYSDOL/DEWS, and NYSDOL's Division of Research and Statistics.

Role of Local Boards

Local Workforce Development Boards ensure that their strategic planning process includes an analysis of the local labor market to:

- Determine business needs;
- Determine emerging, targeted, and demand occupations;
- Identify employment opportunities, which include those with a potential for career advancement; and
- Identify employer-based training opportunities.

Boards set local policies for a Trade Act service strategy that coordinate various service delivery approaches to:

- Assist dislocated workers eligible for Trade benefits in obtaining suitable employment as an alternative to referral to training;
- Promote the use of WIOA basic and individualized services to support the rapid reattachment to the workforce;
- Refer individuals to prevocational and vocational training in demand and targeted occupations; and
- Assist in job retention and career advancement.

Local boards ensure that dislocated workers eligible for Trade benefits, who are unable to find suitable employment through WIOA Title I core services, are co-enrolled in WIOA Title I dislocated worker services for referral to WIOA-funded career and Trade-funded training services.

Managed Resources

TAA resources are utilized to help support common systems utilized by NYSDOL and the Career Center system to provide integrated intake, case management, and reporting for our co-enrolled Trade-impacted customers. This includes OSOS, a tab-and-button driven case management system, used to record data related to Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange or LEX), WIOA, and TAA programs. For the immediate future, OSOS will continue to be used to record services provided to our TAA customers.

PeopleSoft is fiscal accounting software that allows NYSDOL/DEWS to track allocations and spending of all programs managed by NYSDOL/DEWS, including TAA and WIOA programs. It also allows NYSDOL to generate timely and accurate reports of fiscal activity at both the state and local levels.

The NYSDOL Website (www.labor.ny.gov) features a Workforce Professionals section serving as a repository for program information used by Career Center professionals. The TAA section of this site houses all TAA program administration forms used by Career Center professionals, in addition to resources such as the TAA Desk Guide, TAA OSOS Desk Guide, TAA FAQ, and other staff capacity building material. Additionally, career planners access employment projections in the Research & Statistics section. In addition, the TAA program maintains a customer-facing presence on the website with TAA FAQ, Fact Sheets, and contact information to assist customers with contacting local TAA coordinators and career planners.

Additional Information

Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TAARA) went into effect on June 29, 2015. This Act restores the group eligibility requirements and benefits available under the 2011 Amendments, re-opening eligibility to service sector workers and worker groups whose jobs are adversely affected by trade with countries that are not parties to Free Trade Agreements with the United States, including China and India. The changes continue a seamless system of services for WIOA dislocated and trade affected workers that further enhance the positive outcomes anticipated by the amendments. NYSDOL is currently in the process of communicating the provisions of the TAARA to the Career Center system in accordance with the Operating Instructions provided by USDOL in Training and Guidance Letter No. 7-13.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Awards

Entities in NYS were awarded $17.63 million in Round II of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program (TAACCCT); $7,034,061 in Round III; and $2,499,477 in Round IV. The

NYSDOL collaborates with our awardees focusing on high-quality, high-wage jobs within the advanced manufacturing industry, and the healthcare and food service sectors. These efforts are in addition to the work already begun by a previous (Round I) award of $19.86 million to provide academic and English language skills instruction "contextualized" to five industry sectors with the goal of engaging adult learners and helping them bypass traditional developmental education.

In Round II, NYSDOL/DEWS worked hand in hand with SUNY in 2015 to educate career planners on opportunities for TAA-eligible Career Center customers within the advanced manufacturing sector as part of an awareness campaign regarding the Training and Education in Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Educational Pathways Project. SUNY TEAM will enable members of the SUNY Statewide Community College Collaborative to provide NYS's TAA-eligible workers and unemployed Veterans with the training and education required to find high quality, high-wage jobs within the advanced manufacturing industry sector. With access to educational pathways aligned with advanced manufacturing industrial career pathways and third-party certifications, the TEAM Educational Pathways Project supports credential and degree attainment for participants in two years or less.

During Round III, NYSDOL/DEWS assisted award grantee and Northeast Resiliency Consortium member Kingsborough Community College (KCC) to further the work of the consortium by strengthening the college's outreach efforts to TAA-eligible and unemployed residents of greater New York City. NYSDOL/DEWS assisted KCC with targeted outreach and promoting occupational training in food service and Community Health Worker programs, bringing awareness to individuals who may benefit from the supportive services KCC provides and the continuing education courses in EMT, Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Medical Assistant, and Credential Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor programs.

Going Forward

Program Staff Capacity Building

NYS continues to develop an initiative to provide Trade Act specific training to workforce professionals via videos designed for independent viewing by Career Center personnel.

The cutting-edge training program uses the Adobe Captivate software to deliver engaging interactive presentations on all aspects of the Trade Act program, including the petition and entitlement processes; criteria for approval of benefits and the associated request processes and deadlines; and case management data entry instruction and detail regarding the agent/liable state relationship.

Training will address varying knowledge gaps associated with the on again/off again activity level of the Trade Act program by allowing staff to review the program details on demand at their workstations.

Participant Data Analysis

Joining forces with our Business Engagement units, Career Center staff in NYS continues to examine opportunities to re-engage our Trade Act customers who have not shown an interest in training in the past and explore ways to augment training already underway. Key emphases include promoting OJT; offering customized job placement; testing new methods of outreach to inform customers of un-accessed benefits; and streamlining the assessment–to-approval process.

NEW YORK OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND (OCFS/NYSCB)

DESCRIPTION a: INPUT OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

OCFS/NYSCB held in-person public forums and statewide teleconferences in 2016 to gather input into the development of both the NYS Combined State Plan and the VR Portion of the Combined State Plan. Notification of the in-person public forums and statewide teleconferences was distributed to all active consumers, in their preferred format. Other individuals and entities receiving the notice included: private agencies for individuals who are blind; Independent Living Centers; members of the OCFS/NYSCB State Rehabilitation Council (SRC); and consumer advocacy group representatives.

The proposed VR Portion of the Combined State Plan and the notification announcement of the in-person public forums and statewide teleconferences were posted on OCFS/NYSCB's web page. These documents were also made available in alternative formats including: audio; Braille; electronic; and large print, upon request. Public forums were held in two locations in NYS in conjunction with the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), NYS Chapter conventions. The forums and teleconferences provided opportunities for statewide public participation. After the public comment period, the proposed plan and comments received at the forums and teleconferences were reviewed by the SRC. The SRC also provided input into the goals and strategies set by the State Plan during one of their quarterly meetings.

For the 2018 modification of the State Plan, OCFS/NYSCB will hold a statewide teleconference for input and comments from consumers and stakeholders. The SRC met on November 9, 2017 to review and provide input into the 2018 modification of the OCFS/NYSCB State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment Services. Members of the SRC received copies of the proposed State Plan prior to and during that meeting. OCFS/NYSCB received two written comments from the SRC; in addition to these, comments reflected below are OCFS/NYSCB's summary of concerns that SRC members orally expressed at the November 9th meeting.

State Rehabilitation Council Goals and Objectives

The SRC and OCFS/NYSCB comprise a collaborative partnership. SRC members include current and former participants in the OCFS/NYSCB vocational rehabilitation program; representation from SUNY/CUNY, Native American VR Programs, the National Federation of the Blind, American Council for the Blind, Statewide Workforce Investment Board, Client Assistance Program, Independent Living Centers, NYS Education Department, parents of children with disabilities; and representatives from business, industry and labor. The SRC assists OCFS/NYSCB in developing and reviewing the State Plan, including OCFS/NYSCB's goals and strategies. The SRC provides policy advice and reviews consumer needs and satisfaction with services.

Comment 1: In Description o: State's Strategies, the SRC would like to see Strategy 1 moved to Goal 4, Increase staff capacity to deliver quality services to consumers.

Response: OCFS/NYSCB agrees and has moved the strategy under Goal 4 in Description o: State's Strategies.

Comment 2: In Description o: State's Strategies, the SRC would suggested that the words "and expanded" be added to Strategy 3, to read:

Continue to foster and expand current working relationships with the Office of Mental Health and the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities on both the local and state level.

Response: OCFS/NYSCB agrees and has added the language in Strategy 3 under Goal 1, in Description o: State's Strategies.

Comment 3: In Description o: State's Strategies, the SRC commented that the four core partner's agency names should be identified in Goal 2, Strategy 3.

Response: OCFS/NYSCB agrees and has added the titles of the additional core partners to Strategy 3 under Goal 2.

Comment 4: In response to Goal 3, Strategy 2, of Description o: State's Strategies, the SRC commented that they would like to see the development of a listserv of current consumers to allow for awareness of the events discussed in this strategy to be quickly disseminated.

Response: NSYCB has not added this recommended strategy to this goal. The purpose of this goal is to promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services to potential participants not known to OCFS/NYSCB.

Comment 5: In Description o: State's Strategies, the SRC noted a concern about Strategy 2, under Goal 4 that the term "blindness" should be added so that the strategy reads:

Continue employee orientation programming in all regional offices to include training on visual impairments, blindness and low vision.

Response: OCFS/NYSCB has added the term blindness in Strategy 2 under Goal 4 in Description o: State's Strategies.

Comment 6: The SRC commented on Strategy 3 under Goal 4, and suggested some revision to reduce specificity and read as such:

Increase the regional workforce development conducted at a regional, district office level, including promoting OCFS/NYSCB with community businesses and working with providers of employment services.

Response: OCFS/NYSCB accepted this comment and updated Strategy 3 under Goal 4 to reflect the revision.

Comment 7: The SRC would like to see the addition of a goal added to Description o: State's Strategies detailing the creation and implementation of a unified agency wide policy that ensures that consumers are given access to their entire Electronic Case File (ECF) in their preferred format.

Comment 8: The SRC would like to see a goal added to Description o: State's Strategies pertaining to the creation of an agency wide, universal policy ensuring that consumers are given access, or made aware of the availability of, their entire case record in their preferred format.

To enhance informed choice and to increase consumer awareness of how OCFS/NSYCB services work, develop a statewide process by which consumers are made aware of their right to all assessments, training reports and case documents; and are provided with those documents in their preferred formats.

Comment 9: The SRC would like to see a goal added to Description o: State's Strategies pertaining to accessibility:

Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB programs and services by adopting a uniform, agency wide strategy for providing all OCFS/NYSCB documents to consumers in their preferred accessible format; and by training staff in the use of this process.

Response for Comments 7, 8 & 9: After careful review and discussion, at this time, OCFS/NYSCB will not adopt the recommendations of the SRC related to creating and implementing a policy providing consumer access to their entire ECF in their preferred format. OCFS/NYSCB continues to support active consumer involvement and participation in the Vocational Rehabilitation process and has implemented guidelines for Comprehensive Services Contractors to encourage active consumer involvement in the development of training plans and the provision of services throughout their program. Consumers can request documents from their ECF in their preferred format as needed and in accordance with OCFS/NYSCB confidentiality requirements. As per the SRC's recommendations, OCFS/NYSCB will actively work to increase the availability of guidance to consumers on how to request documents and contents of their own case record, and work to make sure counselors are aware of the need to provide information in the consumer's preferred formats.

OCFS/NYSCB intends to assess compliance through revision of the agency's quality assurance program and will work to have the OCFS/NYSCB intake information available statewide through the NYS Library for the Blind National Library Service (NLS) cartridges.

DESCRIPTION b: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

OCFS/NSYCB has not requested a Waiver of Statewideness.

DESCRIPTION c: COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

CSAVR's National Employment Team (NET) provides a coordinated approach to serving business customers through business development, business consulting and corporate relations. By establishing partnerships with businesses, OCFS/NYSCB can better match business staffing needs with the skills and interests of consumers seeking employment, as well as help business to retain employees who experience disability. The NET provides:

- Businesses with direct access to qualified applicants and support services from the public VR system;
- VR consumers with access to national employment opportunities and career development resources; and
- VR agencies with a national system for sharing employment resources, best practices and business connections.

A designated point of contact serves as the primary contact for businesses seeking to partner with OCFS/NYSCB. In the past year, through the NET partnership, OCFS/NYSCB has shared information and job postings from federal and corporate partners with OCFS/NYSCB staff and placement partners. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB has distributed NET-shared information on a number of internship and skill camp opportunities for high school and college students.

An exciting development with the NET is the development of a Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) through which businesses can identify qualified job candidates with disabilities. The portal that went live in August 2014 has provided consumers and counselors the opportunity to create individualized job searches, post resumes, and communicate with businesses through the system. Counselors are able to track individual job seeker's efforts and success, and VR managers are also to see how the system is assisting with job placements. Businesses with national footprints including Key Bank, Walgreens, Pfizer, BJC Healthcare, ch2m, Raytheon, Quest Diagnostics and Wells Fargo, have begun to sign on and use the TAP system to allocate employees for various positions. Priority is given to increasing the number of nationwide businesses participating in the use of the TAP to develop their workforce.

Working with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)

OCFS/NYSCB works closely with its community rehabilitation partners to create opportunities for successful careers for its consumers who are legally blind. This partnership is most visible in the annual Vision Rehabilitation Institute, which is planned jointly by OCFS/NYSCB and CRP staff together for training and networking on issues related to workforce development.

OCFS/NYSCB implemented a new five-year vocational evaluation and placement contract which began January 1, 2015. Thirty-Four awardees were selected around the state. The awardees include agencies for individuals who are blind, agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities, independent living centers, and individually owned businesses, affording consumers greater choice in selecting an appropriate provider. New guidelines for these services were developed and distributed and joint training sessions for OCFS/NYSCB staff and providers were held in Spring 2015.

Current Assistive Technology Services contract are in the first year, and OCFS/NYSCB will review its assessment and training protocols with providers so that the training provided is in line with current practice and continuing advances in assistive technology. OCFS/NYSCB continues to provide assistive technology services and devices to individuals through seven Assistive Technology Center (ATC) contracts, covering seven areas. Consumers who are deaf-blind can receive assessment and training at the adaptive technology center located at Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point. Consumers who are unable to access technology services at an ATC may receive services through private vendors located throughout the state. All approved assistive technology contractors and vendors, and the services they offer, are listed on the OCFS/NYSCB website, visionloss.ny.gov.

Adaptive technology centers are required to have an array of equipment available for the consumer to review during the assessment process. Training is then customized to the consumer's need both in terms of hardware and software.

Two OCFS/NYSCB loan closets also provide statewide access to loaner equipment while a consumer is awaiting delivery of equipment purchased for them for school or employment.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to encourage development of vocational training programs that meet the requirements of business and will work with providers to create and approve curricula, especially in fields with jobs in demand where vocational training has not previously been available. OCFS/NYSCB continues to support community rehabilitation providers in the development of pre-vocational programs beginning with youth at age ten and continuing through the transition years. These programs will provide both variety and increasing complexity so that youth are well prepared for post-secondary education and training.

Partnership Plus

In Spring 2014, OCFS/NYSCB entered into a Partnership Plus agreement with the Research Foundation for Mental Health. Partnership Plus assures that consumers with a Social Security Ticket to Work are able to obtain the services they need from OCFS/NYSCB. As they complete their services with OCFS/NYSCB, consumers are given access to broad network of community providers from whom they can select to coordinate issues related to Social Security payments and other benefits and services.

NYS PROMISE Initiative

OCFS/NYSCB is on the steering committee for NYS PROMISE (Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income), a research project developed to improve outcomes for eligible youth who are transitioning to adulthood and who receive supplemental security income (SSI). This five-year initiative strives

to increase access to services for eligible youth and their families to improve academic and employment outcomes, increase financial stability, and reduce reliance on SSI. The priority for the steering committee is to engage local and state partners in defining a broad strategic approach that starts to describe a system of person and family centered intervention. OCFS/NYSCB actively participates in the steering committee to assess services that are provided to legally blind students through other NYS organizations.

Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

OCFS/NYSCB staff participates in educational webinars and networking events presented by the New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative (NYDBC), which serves as a resource to deaf-blind youth, families and professionals, providing technical assistance (program development and support) to improve services for children and youth who are deaf-blind (ages 0-21).

OCFS/NYSCB remains a member of the Interagency Council for Services to Persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing formed to coordinate the collection of information on population needs, engage in comprehensive strategic planning and prepare legislative and policy recommendations to the Governor and the State Legislature.

Cooperation with National Industries for the Blind

OCFS/NYSCB has designated the New York State Preferred Source Program for People who are Blind, a subsidiary of the National Industries for the Blind (NIB), as its designee for New York State Preferred-Source products. The creation of service sector jobs is highlighted as a priority in the Letter of Designation (LOD).

NYSCB encourages NIB associated agencies to provide needed work experience and skill training to enable individuals to seek competitive employment in an integrated setting.

Cooperative Agreement with Recipients of Grants for Services to American Indians

OCFS/NYSCB continues to act as a partner with the Seneca Nation of Indians Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (SNI TVR) Program. The partnership represents both parties' commitment to mutual cooperation, coordination and collaboration to increase vocational opportunities for members of the Seneca Nation of Indians who are legally blind. It establishes shared values, outlines how services will be coordinated and how members of both organizations will participate in cross-training activities. The collaborative relationship between the OCFS/NYSCB Buffalo District Office and the SNI TVR Program has increased awareness, acceptance, and utilization of OCFS/NYSCB services. OCFS/NYSCB maintains a relationship in which referrals are handled in a timely and culturally sensitive manner. OCFS/NYSCB staff conducts in-service training with agencies on the Cattaraugus Reservation, and works closely with staff of the Salamanca satellite of the Section 121 program and with the Area Office for the Aging on the reservation. OCFS/NYSCB staff serves on the Section 121 Project Advisory Board, which meets monthly. OCFS/NYSCB further supports the activities of the Section 121 Tribal VR Program through the delivery of state-funded services to children and elderly individuals, allowing them to better focus resources on tribal members seeking employment.

State Programs Carried Out Under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998

OCFS/NYSCB equipment loan closets are a collaborative effort with the TRAID program managed by the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. The loan closets provide short and long-term equipment loans to OCFS/NYSCB consumers who need equipment quickly while waiting to receive their purchased equipment or who need equipment for a specific time limited period. The Director of the NYS TRAID

program is a member of the OCFS/NYSCB State Rehabilitation Council and provides a valuable link between the TRAID programs and OCFS/NYSCB.

Programs Carried Out by the Undersecretary for Rural Development of the USDA

OCFS/NYSCB has not had an active working relationship with programs carried out by the assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and will look into opportunities for future collaboration to determine whether opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind are available.

Noneducational Agencies Serving Out-of-School Youth

Placement services continue to be a priority for OCFS/NYSCB. A workgroup consisting of both OCFS/NYSCB and provider staff developed new expectations and requirements for delivery of placement assistance which will enhance delivery of job seeking, job development, and other employment services. OCFS/NYSCB and a workgroup representing its major community rehabilitation partners continue to meet periodically throughout the year to discuss how to deliver quality programming to consumers. OCFS/NYSCB and community provider staff continues to meet annually at the Vision Rehabilitation Institute to learn and discuss issues related to blindness and employment. OCFS/NYSCB works closely with the Chapter 515 programs to provide supported employment services to consumers including out-of-school youth. OCFS/NYSCB district office staff has relationships with local social service agencies that provide essential services to out-of-school youth. These relationships provide an opportunity for referrals of individuals who are legally blind to OCFS/NYSCB for vocational services and a reciprocal referral opportunity when out-of-school youth involved with OCFS/NYSCB need the services provided through the state social service network. OCFS/NYSCB will continue to work to develop relationships with other non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth so that youth who are legally blind who are eligible for VR services can receive those services.

State Use Contracting Programs

OCFS/NYSCB accesses goods and services through the NYS Preferred Source Program (NYSPSP) for People Who Are Blind. NYSPSP for People who are Blind is a state-mandated initiative to create and sustain employment opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind or visually impaired. State and local agencies are required to purchase products and services that appear on the Preferred Source List through NYSPSP. These commodities are produced by affiliated nonprofit agencies in NYS that employ people who are blind or visually impaired. Agencies are required to purchase from the preferred source program. The products and services meet their needs and are comparatively priced.

DESCRIPTION d: COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

The OCFS/NYSCB transition policy states that as a participant in the school's transition planning process, OCFS/NYSCB staff should contribute knowledge of rehabilitation services and outcomes, and identify the need for involvement of other state agencies, adult service programs, independent living centers, and community based services whose resources can assist students who are legally blind, their families, and education personnel during the transition process. It also states that OCFS/NYSCB is responsible only for services written into the IEP by the Committee on Special Education with the direct knowledge and agreement of the OCFS/NYSCB counselor. Financial responsibility for services, other than those which are mandated for school districts by federal or state statute or regulation, may be shared by other agencies, including OCFS/NYSCB.

Cooperative efforts between the schools and OCFS/NYSCB take place on a daily basis at the district office level. OCFS/NYSCB Children's Consultants provide schools with technical support, help parents learn to advocate effectively for their children, and purchase services to supplement those that school districts are required to

provide. As the student nears transition age, the OCFS/NYSCB Children's Consultants' familiarity with particular students allows for a more effective transition to the vocational rehabilitation program. In cooperation with the school and community agencies, OCFS/NYSCB vocational rehabilitation counselors encourage and help individuals to live more independently and develop meaningful employment plans. During school years, OCFS/NYSCB counselors can provide vocational guidance and counseling, resource information, and the preparation of post high school service plans. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB counselors may provide job related occupational tools, purchase low vision aids, assist in obtaining employment and facilitate summer employment.

OCFS/NYSCB employs eight vocational rehabilitation counselors who work exclusively with transition age youth. The transition counselors provide educational guidance to OCFS/NYSCB vocational rehabilitation counselors and encourage student and parent involvement in the transition process. Brochures describing OCFS/NYSCB services have been widely distributed. The brochures are available in regular print, large print and Braille (upon request) and electronically. A publication called "Transition: A Guide for Parents and Students" has been developed and distributed to families and school personnel. OCFS/NYSCB staff frequently visit transition career fairs and attend high school open houses and present information about OCFS/NYSCB at college programs held on college campuses. In addition, staff participate in transition conferences and works closely with many staff from local school districts to reinforce the mission of VR, explain the role VR plays in the transition process, and discuss VR policies and procedures.

The OCFS/NYSCB Transition Policy requires that the student's IPE be developed within 90 days of eligibility determination. Information on the IPE should be consistent with the content of the IEP, including vocational goals, educational and rehabilitation objectives, projected dates and responsibilities for participation in the transition process. OCFS/NYSCB transition counselors have received training on this policy requirement and on the requirements of coordinating the IPE with the IEP. All OCFS/NYSCB transition counselors have been actively developing employment plans for youth.

OCFS/NYSCB Transition Counselors also work closely with NYSED Transition Specialists who work at one of ten Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC) throughout the state. The RSE-TASC was established to act as a coordinated statewide network of special education technical assistance centers. RSE-TASCs provides training targeted for parents, school districts and other agency providers on topics such as transition and the IEP, measurable post-secondary goals and work-based learning.

The New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative (NYDBC)

The New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative (NYDBC) is a five-year (October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2018) federally funded project which provides technical assistance to improve services for children and youth who are deaf-blind (ages 0-21). The NYDBC is housed at Queens College in Flushing, New York and is funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OCFS/NYSCB has agreed to collaborate on specific initiatives with NYDBC. Specifically, OCFS/NYSCB assisted NYDBC in disseminating a state-wide needs assessment to increase the early identification of children who are deaf-blind in NYS. OCFS/NYSCB staff also receive considerable technical assistance and training from NYDBC that will increase knowledge and skills in addressing the developmental and educational needs of children who are deaf-blind. OCFS/NYSCB will also be involved in collaborative relationships with local, regional and statewide teams (as necessary) to support and improve systems to better serve children and youth.

Consultation and Technical Assistance

OCFS/NYSCB staff is required to consult with school personnel to assist in recommending assessment practices and interpreting results in relation to employment. OCFS/NYSCB counselors assist the school by identifying resources in the community that are familiar with blindness and that offer comprehensive assessments.

As a participant in the school's transition process, OCFS/NYSCB staff is encouraged to contribute knowledge of rehabilitation services and outcomes, and to discuss post-school plans with the youth, family and school personnel.

Transition Planning

OCFS/NYSCB works with students, families and school districts to facilitate the coordination of transition services for students who are legally blind and transitioning from school to the world of adult responsibilities and work. OCFS/NYSCB recognizes that these efforts are critical to enable students to achieve maximum success in employment, post-secondary education, independent living, and community participation, and is committed to being an active partner in the transition process. Making the transition from school to the adult world requires careful planning and a cooperative effort among families, school staff and community service providers. Planning helps students, their families and school districts design services to maximize the student's years in school to prepare for full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

The OCFS/NYSCB vocational rehabilitation (VR) program serves eligible transition aged students ages ten years and older by providing an array of services that give students the tools necessary to enable them to make informed decisions about their future goals. The youth and his or her parents work with the OCFS/NYSCB counselor to set academic and career goals and put a plan in motion to meet those goals. This often includes gaining work experience before graduating from high school, as well as learning self-advocacy and independent living skills that help lead to future success.

The Transition Policy was recently revised. The policy provides information about the requirements, roles and responsibilities of VR in preparing students with disabilities for eventual employment. It includes updated information regarding pre-employment transition services and outlines the role of the vocational rehabilitation counselor as an active participant in the transition planning process. OCFS/NYSCB's responsibilities lie primarily in providing technical consultation to schools and preparing students for permanent employment. OCFS/NYSCB staff use their knowledge and experience to influence schools to provide services needed to prepare students to participate in postsecondary, employment and community living outcomes.

Some of the ways OCFS/NYSCB works with school personnel in the transition process include:

1. Sharing knowledge of rehabilitation services and outcomes;
2. Identifying the need for involvement by other state agencies, adult service programs, independent living centers, and community based services whose resources can assist students who are legally blind, their families, and education personnel during the transition planning and service delivery process;
3. Providing information to assist in the selection of vocational goals that are consistent with labor market needs and integrated community living opportunities, including information about:
    a. Work site accommodations;
    b. Business expectations;
    c. Labor trends and occupational outlooks;

d. Job entry qualifications;

e. Job placement analysis;

f. Work opportunities;

g. And other vocationally-related issues.

OCFS/NYSCB supports the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) from the National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments which includes skills that are not part of the core curriculum of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The ECC is the body of knowledge and skills needed by students with vision loss in order to be successful in schools and in post-graduate pursuits as a result of unique, disability-related needs.

OCFS/NYSCB Children's Consultants and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will continue to emphasize to school district personnel, the importance of integrating the ECC into standard academic instruction and routine daily tasks, and encourage school staff to work closely with itinerant vision teachers and staff from local private agencies for individuals who are blind to provide the comprehensive services needed by students.

Formal Interagency Agreement with the State Educational Agency

OCFS/NYSCB will revise the State Education Agency (SEA) Agreement. The Joint Agreement between the P-12 Office of Special Education and OCFS/NYSCB will provide an overview of the purpose, objectives and joint responsibilities of each party in the provision of transition services for students who are legally blind.

Specifically, the new agreement will do the following:

- Include information regarding pre-employment transition services;
- Delineate that the responsibilities of OCFS/NYSCB include providing consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of youth from school to post-school activities;
- Delineate the responsibilities of each party with respect to transition planning in order to facilitate the development of the IEP for each student;
- Articulate the financial responsibilities of each agency involved in the transition process;
- List the procedures for outreach to, and identification of, students with disabilities in need of transition services;
- Document requirements with regard to students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and
- Provide an assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The joint agreement clarifies that school districts have the primary planning and programmatic responsibilities for the provision of transition services for their students in school. School districts are financially responsible for transition services mandated for school districts by federal or state statutes and regulations. OCFS/NYSCB personnel consult with schools to see that adult services are part of the planning and decision-making process for students with disabilities in transition. OCFS/NYSCB is responsible only for services written into the IEP by the Committee on Special Education with the direct knowledge and agreement of the OCFS/NYSCB counselor. Transition services for youth are to be aligned with labor market needs, integrated community living

opportunities, and coordinated with the adult world to facilitate employment, post-secondary education, and community living outcomes. OCFS/NYSCB may be consulted for vocational evaluation interpretation, occupational opportunities, decision making with the Committee on Special Education, coordination with adult services, peer counseling, role modeling and job placement analysis. OCFS/NYSCB will provide pre-employment transition services if they are beyond the scope of the special education program and within the scope of VR services. Assessments for in-school youth may be purchased by OCFS/NYSCB when existing assessments fail to provide adequate information for the counselor to determine OCFS/NYSCB eligibility or to develop plans for OCFS/NYSCB services. If the student needs specific vocational services to prepare for employment upon exiting school, OCFS/NYSCB will fund these services.

Procedures for Outreach

A standardized process has been implemented for school district referrals. OCFS/NYSCB collaborates with school districts and other state agencies to facilitate a coordinated approach for the provision of transition services and to eliminate the duplication of assessment, services and reporting. The agreement specifically states that schools are responsible for the coordination of educational programs, including transition planning, programs and services that prepare students who are legally blind for adult living, learning and earning. OCFS/NYSCB can provide transition services that involve preparing for the students' future employment.

DESCRIPTION e: COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

OCFS/NYSCB establishes cooperative agreements primarily with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers for assessment and training services through three types of outcomes-based contracts: comprehensive services, assistive technology services, and vocational evaluation/placement services. Contractors provide agreed upon assessment and training services within a specific geographic area. Where an individual's needs call for specialized services outside the scope of these contracts, or where there is no service available in a particular geographic area, OCFS/NYSCB district offices seek out additional providers and develop local agreements to obtain the services.

Comprehensive contract services are designed to assist consumers with a goal of employment to develop or improve the basic skills they need to successfully seek and maintain employment. For some, this may begin with a referral for low vision services. Providers assess each consumer to determine their unique needs. The assessment is followed by services which may include comprehensive and integrated training in basic life skills for preparation for competitive or supported employment, along with pre-vocational (for transition age youth) and vocational training services to prepare consumers to seek employment and enter the workforce.

OCFS/NYSCB initiated new five-year contracts for comprehensive services for individuals who are blind on January 1, 2014. Changes recommended by the workgroup were incorporated into new contract guidelines and were released to contractors and made available on OCFS/NYSCB's website. Training on the new guidelines was held in each OCFS/NYSCB region. Updated guidelines were posted to the OCFS/NYSCB website, www.visionloss.ny.gov, and are revised as needed.

New vocational evaluation/job placement contracts were implemented January 1, 2015. Thirty-four providers were approved statewide.

Assistive technology contract services provide consumers with computer and/or computer-related technical training leading to employment. In January 2018, ATC contracts were awarded, through a RFP process, in seven areas of the state: Buffalo, Rochester, Central New York, Capital District, Hudson Valley, New York City, and

Hempstead, Long Island for the period January 2018-December 2022. Consumers referred for computer technology services participate in assessment and training to prepare them for post-secondary education, vocational training, and employment. Consumers had the opportunity to view a wide selection of appropriate hardware and adaptive software, and to have input into the development of an equipment recommendation to meet their individual needs.

OCFS/NYSCB and Helen Keller National Center have entered into discussions designed to enhance their current outcome-based contract and improve services to individuals who are deaf-blind in the areas of basic skills, technology, and vocational services.

In 2012 OCFS/NYSCB began entering into agreements with nonprofit organizations for the provision of benefits advisement services. Fifteen vendors have been approved for the provision of benefits advisement services throughout NYS. Providers of these services include agencies chartered primarily for provision of services to individuals who are blind, independent living centers, and other agencies that have engaged staff who are trained and certified by the Social Security Administration, by the Cornell Institute of Labor Relations, or by Virginia Commonwealth University. Many of these providers offer advisement not only on Social Security benefits, but also on a host of other benefits which may be affected by entering employment.

DESCRIPTION f: ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The purpose of the OCFS/NYSCB's supported employment program is to enable individuals with the most significant disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment in their communities. OCFS/NYSCB continues to serve all eligible individuals who need supported employment services, with a goal of placing as many individuals as possible in employment. In Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, 27 individuals received supported employment services. A total of eight consumers were successfully placed in supported competitive employment and transitioned to extended supported employment services (an increase of four from FY 2015). The average hourly wage slightly increased from $8.87/hr. to $9.72/hr., and the average number of hours worked per week increased from 18 to 21.6. Referrals decreased from 24 to 12.

OCFS/NYSCB has four primary goals for FY2018: the first is to increase the number of individuals placed in supported employment to at least the level of 2012 (20); the second is to maintain hourly wages to at least $8.95/hr.; the third is to maintain the average number of hours worked at a minimum of 23 hrs./week; and the fourth is to increase referrals. In NYS, the administrative responsibility for supported employment programs is consolidated in the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (NYSED/ACCES-VR), as established in accordance with Section 3, Chapter 515 of the Laws of New York of 1992. NYSED/ACCES-VR incorporated supported employment into its new Core Rehabilitation Services Contract effective January 1, 2014. Supported Employment is now an outcome based-funded model. OCFS/NYSCB works cooperatively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to provide opportunities for supported employment across the state. OCFS/NYSCB and NYSED/ACCES-VR will be having quarterly meetings to review the new model. OCFS/NYSCB staff have been trained on the new outcome contracts, and additional training will be implemented as needed.

Because blindness is a low incidence disability, OCFS/NYSCB continues to be challenged in anticipating service needs and distributing the limited funds available. The lack of extended services funds further limits the number of individuals who can enter intensive supported employment services. OCFS/NYSCB plans to work more closely with NYSED/ACCES-VR in the future to determine the distribution of funds available for intensive and extended services, while providing information and training to enable staff to better access extended services through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) or Office of Mental Health (OMH), as appropriate.

OCFS/NYSCB does not provide extended supported employment services. If extended services are provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in the future, they would be provided for a period not to exceed four years. OCFS/NYSCB currently works directly with OPWDD and OMH to transition to extended supported employment services prior to the 24-month limitation of supported employment intensive services.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to maintain case management, program monitoring and oversight responsibilities for the supported employment services provided to OCFS/NYSCB consumers. Service providers regularly provide OCFS/NYSCB with individual consumer reports, and OCFS/NYSCB staff meets regularly with providers and consumers.

OCFS/NYSCB will continue to work with NYSED/ACCES-VR to assess performance on an ongoing basis, participate in on-site reviews, and provide technical assistance or recommend adjustments to contracts as needed.

OCFS/NYSCB, with NYSED/ACCES-VR, continues to take a close look at supported employment caseloads to utilize Title VI-B funds in the most effective manner to assist individuals with most significant disabilities in obtaining competitive employment.

Counselors have been instructed to:

- Conduct comprehensive assessments, including situational assessments, prior to referral for supported employment services in order to increase the likelihood that individuals referred for supported employment will benefit from it. This also allows intensive service dollars to be focused more on job development, placement and training and should allow individuals to complete the intensive phase more quickly.
- Consider the use of natural supports following employment and start to establish eligibility for extended services at the beginning of the planning process. This will maximize the use of limited NYSED/ACCES-VR funding for extended services.

Provider agencies have been instructed to regularly review cases to determine which consumers no longer require extended services due to their increased experience and confidence, and the availability of natural supports.

During the past year, OCFS/NYSCB has worked with other members of the Chapter 515 Implementation Team to improve the delivery of supported employment services. Specifically, the team has:

- Shared information about program revisions within each agency's service delivery system; and
- Reviewed data to monitor the effectiveness of supported employment services.

DESCRIPTION g: COORDINATION WITH BUSINESSES

OCFS/NYSCB will work to increase outreach to businesses and develop relationships that lead to increased opportunities for individuals who are legally blind. OCFS/NYSCB is a member of the National Employment Team (NET) through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). CSAVR's NET provides a coordinated approach to serving business customers through business development, business consulting and corporate relations. By establishing partnerships with businesses, OCFS/NYSCB will better match business staffing needs with the skills and interests of consumers seeking employment, as well as help business to retain employees who are legally blind. OCFS/NYSCB will continue to develop the connections between both CSAVR as well as businesses.

OCFS/NYSCB also connects with businesses on a regional level through direct outreach by district managers and district office staff. Regional and small businesses are best accessed through a regional approach and local OCFS/NYSCB staff that live and work in the community are often the best resource. District offices will continue to develop relationships with businesses through internships, Work Experience Training opportunities and Work Try-Outs. OCFS/NYSCB will also continue to collaborate with NYSED/ACCES-VR Regional Workforce Coordinators to connect with businesses that have interest in working with VR program individuals. OCFS/NYSCB has held collaborative meetings with local businesses' human resources hiring managers, and will continue to foster these relationships through ongoing meetings on a regional basis. OCFS/NYSCB will use these connections to make matches between consumer's skills and local job openings.

OCFS/NYSCB has established mechanisms to enable transition age youth to access paid work experiences during their teenage years. OCFS/NYSCB Transition Counselors will continue to work closely with students and businesses to develop appropriate integrated work experiences in local communities. Counselors will also work closely with school staff to coordinate work experiences for students. Job coaching services will be provided when the vocational rehabilitation counselor has determined that the services are necessary for the individual to benefit from the work experience. Many private agencies for individuals who are blind in NYS have developed pre-vocational programs that assist youth in vocational clarification, job seeking skills, the development of appropriate on-the-job behavior, interviewing preparation and resume writing. Most summer work experiences that have been developed through partnerships with OCFS/NYSCB staff, local businesses, and staff of private agencies for individuals who are blind consist of four days of work, followed by a day of role playing and discussion about various work situations. Through work experiences it is expected that transition age youth will be able to experience work life, explore careers and fields of interest, and access spending money.

DESCRIPTION h: INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

OCFS/NYSCB collaborates with the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and Office of Mental Health (OMH) in the provision of employment and supported employment services. OCFS/NYSCB plans to work to increase collaboration and communications with partner state agencies and will focus on sharing specific knowledge and expertise in the area of vision loss. The encouragement of a multi-disciplinary approach will be promoted at both a regional and state level.

OCFS/NYSCB will encourage staff to provide in-service presentations for OPWDD and OMH staff regarding blindness, vision rehabilitation therapy, orientation and mobility, as well as job site accommodations. OCFS/NYSCB recognizes that collaboration with these partner state agencies is integral to the employment success of individuals served by multiple agencies. These partners are currently collaborating on Governor Cuomo's Employment First initiative and have already begun to address barriers that currently exist in the provision of services between agencies. OCFS/NYSCB will continue to participate in these initiatives advocating for individuals who are legally blind receiving OCFS/NYSCB services and will continue to work to provide seamless services to consumers in conjunction with our partner state agencies.

DESCRIPTION i: COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT: DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

This plan outlines strategies to update staff credentials so that all staff meets the highest academic standards for their profession.

Number of Personnel Employed

As of October 2017, OCFS/NYSCB employees totaled 128 individuals, with 125 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in seven district offices and the home office. The fill level of OCFS/NYSCB is 127 FTE staff. Therefore, the identified vacant positions below that are identified as OCFS/NYSCB having the capacity to fill only two positions currently, any additional staff above two FTE must be meet with a corresponding decrease in another area or office. The total number of field staff was 71, with 7 positions vacant. Approximately 3,000 legally blind individuals are active in the Vocational Rehabilitation program at any given time. The average caseload is 67 consumers per VRC.

Of the 63 Senior VRC and VRCs in positions, 52 are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) or CRC eligible. Two VRCs have reached retirement age, and have elected not to upgrade their credentials. They will receive Senior VRC sign-off prior to establishing eligibility, signing the IPE (including any amendments and the annual IPE review) and closing cases.

OCFS/NYSCB's current staffing allows OCFS/NYSCB to effectively provide services to all individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services. OCFS/NYSCB is aware that many professional staff intend to retire within the next five years. The result of personnel transactions for calendar year 2017 as they affected each district office is as follows:

- Buffalo – No vacancies;
- Syracuse – No vacancies;
- Albany – One Vision Rehabilitation Therapist position is vacant;
- White Plains – No vacancies;
- Manhattan – No vacancies;
- Hempstead – One Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position is vacant; and
- Harlem – No vacancies.

As required, OCFS/NYSCB will request approval to fill any vacancies. OCFS/NYSCB must seek NYS Division of the Budget approval for a waiver from the ongoing state hiring freeze in order to hire any personnel.

Staff Five Year Projections

OCFS/NYSCB estimates that by the year 2022, 14 current VRCs and Senior VRCs will be age 55 or older and eligible to retire. Many of those within retirement age, however, will not have enough time in service to retire at age 55 and will retire at a later time. In using age 55 as a likely retirement age, along with 30 years of state service, it is estimated that 17 VRCs, Senior VRCs, Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Instructors and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists will retire from OCFS/NYSCB in the next five years, as shown in the table below. All VRCs and Senior VRCs expected to remain will be CRC or CRC eligible.

Using the same formula, it is estimated that four of the eight O&M instructors and Rehabilitation Therapists (RT) will retire or leave for other reasons. All vacancies in the O&M and RT disciplines are expected to be replaced.

Row	Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years
1	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	60	6	10
2	Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	12	3	4

3	O&M Instructor	7	2	2
4	Vision Rehabilitation Therapist	5	3	1

OCFS/NYSCB maintains contact with the three colleges and universities in the state that prepare VRCs as a source for staff positions. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB continues to work closely with the colleges to develop a process for the recruitment of students from diverse populations, and to establish a curriculum based on best practices, research, and development trends.

For the calendar year beginning January 1, 2016 and ending December 31, 2016, the colleges reported the enrollment outlined in the table below.

Row	Institutions	Students Enrolled	Employees Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the Previous Year
1	Hofstra University	26	0	0	3
2	Hunter College, CUNY	142	0	0	20
3	State University of New York at Buffalo	99	0	0	26
4	Hunter College, CUNY O&M/RT*	24	0	0	6
5	Eligible for Academy Certification of Vision	0	0	0	0

**Row 4: Hunter College of CUNY is the only university preparation program in NYS graduating O&M instructors and VRTs. Graduates from this program are eligible for certification by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP).

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

The following steps describe the ongoing activities to enable OCFS/NYSCB to continue the long-term Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) plan and develop resources needed to recruit, prepare and retain qualified personnel in NYS:

1. Continue to track the number of students who graduate from pre-service programs statewide and the percentage of diverse populations (i.e., severely disabled, and/or Latino) within those programs.
2. Continue to develop relationships with distance learning programs to locate curricula that meet the learning styles and needs of OCFS/NYSCB staff. These include video conferencing, videotapes, and/or computer technology.
3. Increase opportunities for staff in-service training.
4. The in-service training coordinator of OCFS/NYSCB manages and evaluates all training programs attended by staff. All in-service training records are maintained electronically. A personnel file is maintained for each staff member containing: name, title, phone number, date hired, district office, college major, highest degree earned,
5. Continue to recruit qualified VRCs, O&Ms, and RTs including those from diverse backgrounds or who have foreign language skills.
6. Continue to partner with Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (NYSED/ACCES-VR), ACESS-Adult Education, NYS Department of Labor, and the NYS Office of Temporary

Disability Assistance, and other agencies participating in the WIOA Interagency workgroup as applicable, with regard to the CSPD and the long-term training of workforce employees.

7. Provide financial stipends to master's level students who complete an internship program at OCFS/NYSCB as part of their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor program.
8. Provide financial reimbursement to VRC's maintaining their CRC Certification upon renewal every five years, and for eligible OCFS/NYSCB staff opting to sit for the CRCC examination to obtain certification upon verification of required recertification or initial certification documents.
9. Collaborate with colleges and universities to train O&M Specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists. Graduates will qualify for national certification through the ACVREP or the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB). OCFS/NYSCB and stakeholders continue to meet with officials from the University at Buffalo to establish a certificate training program in O&M. The certificate program would be the first of its kind and graduates would be eligible for certification by the ACVREP.

Personnel Standards

Highest Standard for VRCs

OCFS/NYSCB hires only individuals who meet the NYS Department of Civil Service's personnel standard for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The standard is:

- A current Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC certificate); OR
- A Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, including a supervised internship, from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited program; OR
- A Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or Counseling and notice of academic eligibility for the CRCC certificate examination.

Plans to Retrain Staff Who Do Not Meet the Highest Requirements

Staff who does not meet the highest academic standards will either have a training plan in place or they will require supervisory approval prior to establishing eligibility, signing the IPE or determining case closure. The NYS Department of Civil Service does not permit OCFS/NYSCB to hire new staff in VR Counselor positions who do not meet the personnel standard.

Staff Development

OCFS/NYSCB understands the importance of maintaining a well-trained and current workforce. OCFS/NYSCB continues to work to increase training opportunities for counseling staff in identified areas of need as well as integrating a multi-disciplinary approach. Obtaining consumer perspective, by participating in events and public forums offered by blindness support agencies, is encouraged when workload and fiscal considerations allow.

NYSCB staff attend workshops, conferences and agency developed training sessions. Training has been offered in counseling, rehabilitation, medical aspects of disability, job placement, rehabilitation technology, cultural diversity, informed choice, the American's with Disabilities Act, and other topics related to vocational rehabilitation. NYSCB contracts with Adaptive Technology Centers throughout the state. Upon request, the centers provide training to NYSCB staff on new access technology for individuals with disabilities.

Information gained by staff attending conferences or training is shared at staff meetings with local staff. District managers share the information with senior staff at bi-weekly conference calls and quarterly meetings of district managers and information is disseminated to all staff as appropriate.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

OCFS/NYSCB continues to obtain the services of individuals able to communicate in the native language of individuals who have limited English speaking ability or require American Sign Language. Qualified interpreters are hired for services for individuals who are deaf-blind or who require in-person language interpretation. OCFS/NYSCB staff with the required qualifications may be used for this purpose, or sub-contractors with specialty skills may be used.

OCFS/NYSCB also uses the LanguageLine Solutions® telephone interpretation services program that offers interpretation services in over 250 languages.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

OCFS/NYSCB coordinates policy and services relating to transition services for students who are legally blind from school to adult services and begins planning VR services for individuals with disabilities prior to their exiting high school. The coordination of meaningful transition services for students with disabilities from school-age to postsecondary settings is a priority for OCFS/NYSCB and may begin as early as age 10.

OCFS/NYSCB designates VR liaisons to school districts to inform educators on OCFS/NYSCB services and application processes; participates in regional trainings, annual kick-off meetings and/or teacher in-service trainings with school districts; provides informational pamphlets on OCFS/NYSCB services; and participates in local job fairs where youth with disabilities are seeking employment opportunities.

OCFS/NYSCB and the NYS Education Department collaborate on a regular basis to provide guidance to educational agencies and vocational rehabilitation personnel responsible for facilitating transition services, and to provide information about consultation and technical assistance resources to assist schools and related community support entities in planning for transition of students who are legally blind. At the state level, both agencies have designated personnel that provide oversight and leadership for the development of policies, procedures, interagency training and other state-level partnership activities for transition services. At the local level, VR counselors work closely with school district staff and local school districts have transition to work specialists that collaborate together. OCFS/NYSCB will continue to work closely with schools to enable the smooth transition of students who are legally blind from school to work.

DESCRIPTION j: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

New York State Commission for the Blind

The mission of the OCFS/NYSCB is to enhance employability, to maximize independence and to assist in the development of the capacities and strengths of people who are legally blind. OCFS/NYSCB provides vocational rehabilitation and other direct services to legally blind NYS residents, including children, adults, and elderly persons. One of OCFS/NYSCB's primary objectives is to assist consumers in achieving economic self-sufficiency and full integration into society. OCFS/NYSCB offers these services from seven district offices across the state.

OCFS/NYSCB offers an array of programs to help individuals who are legally blind achieve economic self-sufficiency and full integration into society. OCFS/NYSCB works closely with not-for-profit agencies for the blind throughout NYS to provide technical, educational and resource assistance to our consumers.

Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regulations require that a comprehensive statewide needs assessment be conducted every three (3) years. The results and recommendations from this assessment are incorporated into the annual plan submitted by OCFS/NYSCB to the RSA.

In January of 2017 OCFS/NYSCB contracted with J.A. Strategies, LLC to conduct a needs assessment that involved the analysis of program service data collected by OCFS/NYSCB vocational counselors, as well as a survey of OCFS/NYSCB vocational counselors and supervisors.

The results of the Needs Assessment data analysis and survey were reviewed by the team from the OCFS/NYSCB.

Needs Assessment Goals and Strategies

The needs assessment focused in the following areas:

- Understanding the indicators for successful case closure of all OCFS/NYSCB consumers;
- Understanding the indicators for successful case closure of OCFS/NYSCB transition aged youth;
- Understanding the barriers to successful case closure;
- Assessing whether current vocational rehabilitation services are available and adequate;
- Identifying any underserved communities or populations; and
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the Consumer Information System.

J.A. Strategies completed this needs assessment by conducting two research studies:

- A secondary analysis of OCFS/NYSCB case management system dataset; and
- A survey of all OCFS/NYSCB vocational rehabilitation counselors and supervisors.

J.A. Strategies also used data from the American Consumer Survey (ACS), and results from a recent New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Survey of Transition Counselors, to use as comparison to the results of the OCFS/NYSCB data analysis and the survey.

Secondary Data Analysis

The goal of the secondary data analysis was to examine the factors related to successful case closures for OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

Data

The data received from the initial request included tables containing information on education, authorized services, planned services, health indicators, job placement, closure status, Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), and demographics. The initial sample contained 5451 unique individuals with information in at least one table. OCFS/NYSCB provided data for cases closed before May 2017, although some cases did not include a closure date and OCFS/NYSCB indicated that this meant that those cases may have been reopened. Unfortunately, certain data was not available for analysis, which was especially predominant with data on youth

and student population. Due to the fact that the unavailable data was severe, it would be against best practices to use data imputation methods (e.g. Multiple Imputation by Chained Equations). As a result, predictive variables when using inferential methods were limited to variables with sufficient coverage and sub-sample analysis could not be conducted for either youth or student populations.

Population Demographics

Of the records for which this data was complete, 52% of the consumers were male and 48% female. The vast majority of consumers are English-speaking, with only 9% of the population non-English speaking. Likewise, the vast majority of OCFS/NYSCB consumers have blindness listed as their primary impairment, with only 2.8% of the population categorized as deaf-blind and 0.4% with other visual impairments. 44% of the population was born blind.

Of the total population of cases reviewed, 1096 (roughly 20%) were listed as students. Students were defined as consumers ages 14-21 who are receiving pre-employment training services (Pre-ETS) and enrolled in an education program. Of those students, 93% were receiving services under an IEP or had a 504 Accommodation plan that provides supports and accommodations for a student with disability (87% and 6%, respectively). Only 7% of the student population had neither an IEP or 504 plan.

Participants' educational achievement varied:

- 28% had not finished high school (data indicated that the consumer either had no formal schooling, or attended elementary or secondary school but had no diploma);
- 3% had participated in special education programming (either received a special education certificate of completion or was currently in attendance);
- 24% had finished high school (diploma or GED);
- 22% had vocational or some college education (this includes those with an associate degree and/or a vocational/technical certificate or license);
- 13% had completed college (bachelor's degree); and
- 9% had education beyond college.

Only 22% of the population listed personal income as their primary form of financial support. Almost half (48%) had public support as their primary form of financing, followed by family and friends at 26%, and other at 4%. 37% of the population was not able to travel alone.

OCFS/NYSCB Consumer Race/Ethnicity Data was measured against the 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates for people with disabilities in NYS. ACS data includes six types of disabilities in this category – hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty and independent living difficulty. Vision difficulty is defined as someone "blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses (DEYE)"[7]. ACS estimates that 2,238,013 people in NYS have a disability, and of those 422,738 (roughly 19%) have vision difficulties. While racial breakdowns were available for the full disability population estimates, they were not publicly available for people with vision difficulties. Therefore, we have used the full disability numbers for comparison.

[7] https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-acs.html

	OCFS/NYSCB Consumers[8]	2016 ACS Disability Rate
White only	44%	68%
Black	34%	17%
Asian	5%	5%
Hawaiian	1%	0%
American Indian	2%	1%
Latino	19%	23%

OCFS/NYSCB serves far more black consumers than occurring in the general disability populations (34% versus 17%) and fewer who identified as only white (44% versus 68%), but otherwise OCFS/NYSCB racial breakdowns are consistent with state race statistics for people with disabilities.

Research Methodology

Two substantive research questions guided the analysis:

1. What was the service utilization profile of all consumers, youth consumers, and student consumers?
2. How did service utilization influence the likelihood of successful case closure?

To answer these questions, analysts worked with OCFS/NYSCB staff to classify services, successful case closure, and youth and student sub-groups. To answer the second research question, we employed a logit (logistic regression) model to estimate the probability of successful case closure based on a set of demographic and service utilization characteristics. The impact of each predictor included in the model is considered, with the goal of isolating the added benefit of specific service categories beyond other consumer traits.

Case Closure:

Successfully closed cases were those cases whose closure status was a '26-Closed/Employed Successfully-Ultimate Goal' or the closure reason was given as 'Achieved Employment Outcome'. There were 4081 cases that were successfully closed (70%), and 30% that did not have one of the closure statuses listed above.

Authorized Services:

Authorized Services were classified into seven unique categories based on the assessment of OCFS/NYSCB. These categories are as follows:

- Two existing categories ***Occupational/Vocational Training*** and ***Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments*** were kept as defined by OCFS/NYSCB.
- ***Academic Services*** included 'Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy Training', 'Four-Year College or University Training', 'Graduate College or University Training', 'College/Univ. Training', 'Maintenance', and 'Junior or Community College Training.'
- ***Job Placement Services*** included 'Job Readiness Training', 'Job Placement Assistance', 'Job Search Assistance', 'On-The-Job Training', 'On-the-job Supports – Supported Employment', and 'On-the-Job Supports', 'On-the-Job Supports – Short Term.'

[8] Totals do not equal 100% because of consumers for whom data was unavailable, or those who identified in more than one category, and because ACS categories include race and ethnicity categories not listed above.

- ***Disability-Related Skill Training*** included 'Disability-Related Skills Training' and 'Disability-Related Augmentative Skills Training.'
- ***Rehabilitation Technology Services*** included 'Rehabilitation Technology' and 'Technical Assistance Services. '
- ***Other Services*** included 'Other Services', 'Transportation', 'Reader Services', 'Assessment', 'Personal Attendant Services', 'Information & Referral Services', 'Interpreter Services', 'Benefits Counseling', and 'Miscellaneous Training.'

Sub-group Definition -- Students and Youth:

The analysis of authorized service utilization included a focus on two sub-populations of consumers. **Students with a disability** are defined as those students ages 14-21 who are receiving pre-employment training services (Pre-ETS) and enrolled in an education program. **Youth with a disability** are those consumers ages 14-24 who received transition services.

Variables:

Data availability issues curtailed the inclusion of all desired covariates (or controls). As a result, inferential analyses were limited to a subset of variables for which more complete information was available. These included race, education, age, sex, language, disability status, travels alone, co-occurring impairments, congenital blindness, type of residence, type of financial support, and criminal history. Analysis models could not account for potential impacts of consumer characteristics that had to be excluded due to limited availability of data, most significantly secondary health issues.

Authorized Service Utilization:

Utilization rates were tabulated for all consumers, students with a disability, and youth with a disability (see Appendix A for the full-service utilization table). For all populations, *Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments* and *Disability-Related Skill Training* were the most utilized services. Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments was utilized by 94% of the full sample, 79% of students and 96% of youth. Disability-Related Skill Training was used by 93% of the full sample, 78% of students and 95% of youth. *Occupational/Vocational Training* services were the least utilized service, with only 23% of the full sample receiving these services, 28% of students and 31% of youth. In comparison to the full sample of consumers, students and youth used fewer services in all categories except *Occupational/Vocational Training*. Youth with a disability had higher levels of service utilization in all categories compared to students with a disability.

Results

The results show that ***Academic Services, Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments, Disability-Related Skill Training, Occupational/Vocational Training, Rehabilitation Technology Services*** and ***Other Services*** were all shown to be statistically significant predictors of case closure. Only ***Job Placement Services*** failed to be a significant predictor of successful case closure. The full results are available in table format in Appendix B. In our logit model the defined significance level, or α, was set to .05. The statistical significance level can be defined as the probability of our analysis falsely rejecting the null hypothesis given that it was true. In more general terms, there is a very high probability that the findings are not the result of random variation, but of real differences in successful case closures between those receiving certain interventions and those not receiving them.

Interpreting the results, we can determine that:

- **Rehabilitation Technology Services** was the greatest predictor of success. Consumers receiving these services were 56.8% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive them,

controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.

- Consumers receiving **Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments** were 50.9% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive diagnosis services, controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.
- Consumers receiving **Disability-Related Skill Training** were 47.5% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive disability services, controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.
- Consumers receiving **Academic Services** were 32.7% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive academic services, controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.
- Consumers receiving **Occupational/Vocational Training** were 29.3% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive occupational services, controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.
- Consumers receiving **Other Services** were 31.9% more likely to have their case closed successfully than those who did not receive other services, controlling for other service utilization and relevant controls.

Conclusions

- Overall, youth tended to show moderately higher levels of service utilization compared to adults. Though group differences were not dramatic, youth were particularly more likely to be engaged in academic and job or occupational services. All but one service category (job placement services) demonstrated significant positive impacts on case closure. Categories showing the strongest relationship to successful closure were Rehabilitation Technology Services, Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments, and Disability-Related Skill Training.
- More robust and nuanced analyses would be possible if data were available in finer detail and with greater consistency. For example, the Commission expressed some interest in understanding whether traditionally under-served communities were being adequately accessed, or if a substantial divide existed in services available to rural versus urban communities. The addition of client ZIP Code or neighborhood information would allow the exploration of those research questions.
- Finally, a number of theoretically important consumer and service factors, such as secondary health information, could not be accounted for due to unavailable data. More robust and nuanced analyses would also be possible if more data were available.

Vocational Rehabilitation Survey

The purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Survey was to understand perceived barriers in providing services and collaborating with other providers of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in NYS. The survey also explored satisfaction with the Consumer Information System and the need for improving case management systems for adopting decision-driven decision-making.

One additional original goal of the Counselor Vocational Rehabilitation Survey was to have included questions that would help understand staff perspective on some of the observed trends in consumer outcomes from the secondary data analysis that needed additional explanations. Unfortunately, it was necessary to complete the survey concurrently with doing the data analysis. Therefore, the survey included questions designed to understand some of the issues, including multiple disabilities and geographic disparities, for which data was not available.

Methodology

Surveys were sent to all Rehabilitation Counselors (n=51) and Supervisors (n=15) who work for OCFS/NYSCB in seven regional offices. The survey was developed in conjunction with OCFS/NYSCB leadership.

The survey consisted of 29 questions on the following topics:

- General Demographic Information;
- Working with Consumers who are Children and Youth (only asked of the 13 counselors and supervisors working with those populations);
- Barriers to Providing Services and Collaborating with Other Providers; and
- Working with the Consumer Information System (CIS).

Surveys were emailed using the online survey tool, *SurveyMonkey.* Participants were given three weeks to complete the survey and were sent weekly reminders until a completed survey was submitted. Completed survey were received from 47 of the Counselors (92%) and 100% of the supervisor: overall, 62 out of 66, or 94%, were completed.

Results

General Demographic Information

Of the surveys that were received, 24% were from Supervisors (15) and 76% were from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. More than half of the counselors had been in their job more than 10 years (55%), and 21% had been in their positions for fewer than 5 years. Four of the supervisors (27%) had been in their current position more than 10 years, and ten (67%) for fewer than 5 years.[9]

Fifty-three percent (53%) of those responding reported serving a majority of consumers who lived in an urban setting (defined as a large or small city with high population density). Over a third (35%) served Suburban (predominantly residential) consumers, and only 10% said they served predominantly rural populations.

[9] For the remainder of the report, discussions of the percent of counselors or supervisors who responded in a particular way is the percent of *those who responded*, not the percent of the total number of counselors/supervisors working for the Commission for the Blind.

79% of the respondents primarily served adults (this included all of the supervisors), with the remaining respondents nearly evenly split between children (11%) and transition-age youth (10%).

Working with Children and Youth

There were three questions that were asked only of the 13 respondents who indicated that they served children or transition-age youth. 39% of those indicated that they "always" or "usually" obtain a copy of their consumers' IEP or 504, with another 54% responding that they sometimes did. Only one person rarely received the IEP or 504. Similarly, 100% of those responding indicated that they usually or sometimes attend IEP or 504 meetings.

The survey also asked about respondents' satisfaction with the pre/employment transition services available/offered to children and youth in transition. 70% responded that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied."

Barriers to Providing Services and Service Availability

All 62 respondents were given the opportunity to answer the remaining parts of the survey.

- Barriers:
    - **Barriers to providing effective direct service:**

      "Time spent on paperwork" was cited as a significant barrier by 66% of those responding; the largest number by far. This included both supervisors (47% of supervisors) and counselors (72% of counselors). More than a third of counselors (35%) cited the "case load being too large" as something that limited their effectiveness.

      There was some variation based on where the majority of a counselor's consumers lived: rural, urban or suburban settings. Rural counselors cited "Case load too large" nearly twice as often as suburban and urban counselors and supervisors, and identified "too much time spent traveling to consumers' homes" four times as often as urban respondents and twice as often as suburban respondents. In addition, 71% rural counselors cited "consumer availability to meet with you" as a barrier, while only 29% cited this as a barrier overall.

      There was also wide variation between those who serve children, transition age youth and adults. While only 26% of the overall respondents felt that the "case load was too large", 86% of those serving children felt this way (33% of transition age counselors and 17% of adult counselors and supervisors). Over half of counselors serving children and transition-aged youth also found "consumer availability to meet" was an issue for them, compared with only 28% overall (57% children's counselors, 50% transition age and 21% adult and supervisors).

      The most frequently cited concerns in accompanying comments were related to paperwork and office procedure, and the lack of available services (each reflected in 26% of the 31 comments).

      Respondents were asked for areas in which they would like additional training. Only 5 respondents felt that no training was necessary. "Mental illness/multiple disabilities" was cited most frequently (48%), followed by "Career counseling" and "conflict resolution", each cited by 35% of respondents.

    - **Barriers to consumers' ability to secure employment:**

      When asked what most limits consumers ability to secure employment, the most frequently cited limitations were lack of: "Transportation" (40%), "Job readiness skills" (39%), "Soft skills and vocations skills" (each at 37%), and "Stable support system" (35%). There was significant variation in

three of the items among counselors who predominantly serve urban, suburban or rural consumers. Note that respondents were limited to three choices, so counselors in each group may feel there are additional significant barriers but were limited to their top three.

Limitations:	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Overall
Lack of vocational skills	14%	42%	36%	37%
Lack of transportation	71%	24%	55%	40%
Lack of consumer motivation	0%	30%	9%	19%

- **Health Impairments Presenting Additional Barriers for Success:**

Respondents were asked which additional health impairments or issues present the greatest barrier for providing successful vocational rehabilitation services, and what (if any) additional resources/services would help them better serve consumers with those impairments. Overall, "psychosocial" and "cognitive impairments" were cited most frequently 74% and 66% respectively. In comparing responses of different groups:

"Deaf-Blindness" was cited by rural counselors as their greatest barrier at 71% (compared to 45% overall).

- "Deaf-Blindness" was cited by rural counselors as their greatest barrier at 71% (compared to 45% overall).
- Rural counselors cited "cognitive" and "psychosocial impairments" less frequently than urban and suburban counselors:

	Cognitive	Psychosocial
Rural:	43%	57%
Urban:	67%	76%
Suburban:	66%	77%

- Supervisors rated "neurologic impairments" much lower than counselors (7% vs 38%), and "cognitive" and "psychosocial" somewhat higher than counselors:

	Neurologic	Cognitive	Psychosocial
Supervisor:	7%	87%	87%
Counselor:	38%	60%	70%

The vast majority of respondents (77%) indicated that they felt they needed additional resources to better serve these consumers. Nearly half the comments focused on the need for additional services for people with multiple impairments, especially employment related services. One counselor commented "There is a need for more community based vocational rehabilitation services for multiply (*sic)* disabled consumers including those who are deaf-blind and visually impaired…" Another commented that "more and better staffed providers, especially for job development and placement" would help that counselor better serve consumers. Other comments focused on the need for more training/information for NYSCB Counselors and for staff from other agencies.

- **Providing Services in a Rural Setting**

When asked which setting provided the greatest challenge to successfully providing vocational rehabilitation services, nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated they felt that serving consumers

in a rural setting was most challenging. Two-thirds of those respondents felt that it was "significantly more difficult." Transportation was almost always (98%) cited as one of the most challenging aspects of serving this rural population, followed by the availability of employment (55%) and availability of needed services (35%).

- **Service Availability and Quality**

Five questions contained statements that were to be rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to identify whether specific resources were available in sufficient quantity to enable counselors to do their jobs.

There were five resources questioned:

- The range of services offered by providers meets the needs of the consumers with whom I work.
- There are enough providers with sufficient availability to meet the service needs of the consumers with whom I work.
- The quality of services and reporting offered by providers meets the needs of the consumers with whom I work.
- There is an effective feedback loop/service update established for when I encounter a problem with a provider.
- I have enough time to develop and maintain good working relationships with providers.

The resource that was rated lowest and the only one rated below "neutral" ("neither agree nor disagree"), was:

- "There are enough providers with sufficient availability to meet the service needs of the consumers with whom I work."

However, it was not rated very low, just slightly below "neither agree nor disagree." However, almost a quarter (22.6%) of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

The other four items were rated overall as "slightly agree." These were:

- The range of services offered by providers meets the needs of the consumers with whom I work.
- The quality of services and reporting offered by providers meets the needs of the consumers with whom I work.
- There is an effective feedback loop/service update established for when I encounter a problem with a provider.
- I have enough time to develop and maintain good working relationships with providers.

There were no significant differences between the responses of supervisors and counselors, or among counselors with different lengths of service. There were some variations between those serving rural, urban or suburban consumers. These are noted in the Appendix below the tally for each question.

Counselors and supervisors collaborated with a large variety of agencies on a regular basis. "Private Agencies/Community Rehabilitation Providers" were by far the most frequently cited (89%),

followed by "Colleges/Universities" (65%), and "Independent Living Centers" and "Medical Professionals" (each at 53%).

- **Underserved Communities**

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate, in an open-ended question, what communities they felt were unserved or underserved in their region, and what the challenges were in reaching or serving them. Only eight respondents (all from urban or suburban communities) indicated that no one was underserved. The largest subset of the remaining 54 comments (31%) identified rural consumers as most underserved. This group was cited by counselors in all three groups.

- "Rural areas have a lack of providers for early intervention…[I] have often had to try to find providers willing to travel to these areas to provide some services and this is not always possible depending on provider availability."
- "Those who live rurally are underserved as employment options are very limited, transportation is a concern and so are services and resources."

Other large groups identified as unserved/underserved were those who did not speak English and minority groups (each at 17%). These two communities were cited by counselors serving all three settings: rural, urban and suburban. Specific minority groups mentioned in comments were Latino and Native American populations.

Working with the Consumer Information System

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the OCFS/NYSCB's current data collection system – the Consumer Information System (CIS). Overall, half of all respondents found it "very useful" and 84% found it "very" or "somewhat useful", a very strong response. Supervisors rated it much less useful than did counselors. All of those rating it as "not useful" were supervisors (27% of supervisors gave it this rating, no counselors did). Another 13% of supervisors found it "minimally useful."

Because counselors use the system both in their offices and with their laptops in the field, they were asked if the CIS was more efficient than taking notes on paper. The CIS was rated somewhat lower in this question regarding note taking, with only 13% citing it as "very helpful and efficient", and just over half, 58%, citing it as "very" or "somewhat helpful and efficient."

Almost all respondents (94%) used the CIS frequently to review reports, and 88% used it frequently (73%) or sometimes (15%) to help make case management decisions.

Comments addressing the strength and values of the CIS focused on:

- How easy the system was to access (38, or 68%);
- How it reduced paper and paperwork and made reporting easier (11);
- How helpful it was to their work with consumers (7); and
- How easy it was to authorize and track services (6).

One respondent said the "strengths of the CIS System is that there is direct access to consumers' files, documentation and demographics. It stores consumer information clear and concise."

Weaknesses or suggestions for CIS improvement focused primarily on the functional limitations of the system (39 or 68%). Comments also clustered around:

- The system's speed and reliability (17); and
- Difficulty with adaptive software (6).

When given the opportunity to offer changes they would like to see in the CIS system to help make better decisions, responses were varied (and are included in the Appendix). Many focused primarily increasing functionality (29 responses -- 57% of valid responses). Counselors were looking for better accessibility and forms, and a faster, more user-friendly system.

Conclusions

In general, vocational rehabilitation counselors and supervisors are satisfied with the service providers in their communities and with the Consumer Information System's functionality.

One positive factor was related to counselors working with students and youth in transition. 100% of the counselors responded in our survey that they attend IEP and 504 meetings "sometimes" or "usually." In the SRC survey referenced above, these types of meetings were perceived as one of the strengths of successful transition planning.

However, need for better transportation options was a recurring theme in many of the survey sections. It was the most often listed barrier (40% of all respondents listed it as a top 3) to consumers' ability to secure employment, and it was considered especially important for those trying to provide services to rural consumers. Some counselors commented simply that more transportation services were needed. Others were more specific:

- "The ability to provide transportation to consumers without drastically impacting office budget."
- "Transportation assistance, that is less costly than cabs or for Medicaid to cover it."
- "I have had to spend too much time locating vendors to provide services such as transportation."

Concerns around transportation was an issue for youth in transition as well, as "Lack of transportation" was listed as one of the top three barriers for serving youth. This is consistent with the SRC survey results in which counselors mentioned transportation as one of the challenges to successful transition planning.

In addition, counselors and supervisors also indicated a need for additional services for their consumers, especially those with multiple disabilities. Survey results indicated that, overall, counselors slightly disagreed that there were enough providers with sufficient availability to meet the service needs of OCFS/NYSCB consumers, and with a large percentage of the respondents who strongly disagreed that there were enough providers. When asked about consumers with additional health impairments and serving rural consumers, service availability was often mentioned as a barrier to serving these two groups.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The secondary data analysis confirmed past studies that vocational rehabilitation services provided by OCFS/NYSCB continue to be important in predicting successful employment outcomes for OCFS/NYSCB consumers. On the whole, vocational counselors and supervisors are satisfied with the services that are available in their communities and are generally happy with the functionality of the Consumer Information System (CIS).

Vocational and job skills training is an area where there was some slight discrepancy between the data analysis and the survey responses. "Lack of vocational skills" was seen as one the second most important barriers to consumers' ability to secure employment in the survey of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Supervisors. However, providing Job Placement Services (including Job Readiness Training and On the Job Training) was the only area in the secondary data analysis which was **not** a significant predictor of successful case closure. On the other hand, "Occupational/Vocational Training" did provide consumers with a 29.3% more likely chance of a successful case closure. Counselors might want to take this into consideration when choosing between one type of training or the other to build vocational skills for OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

Consumers receiving "Other Services" (including Transportation, Benefits Counseling, and Reader Services) were also 32% more likely to have a successful case closure than those who did not receive such services. The lack of adequate services and transportation were among the primary concerns of the counselors and supervisors surveyed. Therefore, additional state and federal resources directed towards these areas might help improve outcomes for OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

DESCRIPTION k: ANNUAL ESTIMATES

There are numerous factors that impact an individual's choice to seek vocational rehabilitation services to obtain employment. There is currently no method to accurately assess how many of the legally blind individuals in NYS would apply for OCFS/NYSCB services and be found eligible for services. According to the American Community Survey, there are 19,342,600 individuals in NYS. The prevalence rate of visual impairment is 1.8% which results in an estimated 356,700 individuals reporting a visual disability. For individuals between the ages of 16 and 64, there is an estimated 176,000 individuals reporting a visual disability. Because the data includes individuals who are visually impaired and not only individuals who are legally blind, it can provide some useful information to estimate the number of individuals who would be eligible for services from OCFS/NYSCB; however, it cannot be used as a benchmark since OCFS/NYSCB only serves individuals who are legally blind. Therefore, the best estimate of the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for VR services is based on historical data as noted below.

OCFS/NYSCB provides a full range of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals. OCFS/NYSCB has evaluated data on the number of individuals who applied for services, the number of people found eligible for VR services and the number of individuals served in the past three years. Based on this evaluation, OCFS/NYSCB estimates that 1,400 individuals will be found eligible during both Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 and 2019. OCFS/NYSCB anticipates serving 5,000 individuals in each of these federal fiscal years. Of the 5,000 individuals expected to receive services, OCFS/NYSCB expects that 4,080 individuals will be served using Title I Vocational Rehabilitation funds at a total estimated cost of $30,084,766 and an average cost of services of $7,370. OCFS/NYSCB expects that the remaining 20 individuals in each FFY will be served using Title VI, Part B Supported Employment funds at a total estimated cost of $165,234 and an average cost of comprehensive services of $8,000.

OCFS/NYSCB is not implementing an Order of Selection.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to Be Served	Average Cost of Services
Vocational Rehabilitation	Title I	$30,250,000	5,000	$6,050
Supported Employment	Title VI	$ 0	0	0
Totals		$30,250,000	5,000	$6,050

DESCRIPTION l: STATE GOAL & PRIORITIES

From approved Fiscal year 2015 State Plan:

These goals and priorities have been developed using feedback from OCFS/NYSCB workgroups, the Executive Board, the State Rehabilitation Council, participant input from OCFS/NYSCB open forums, the results of the Statewide Needs Assessment and NYSC administrative priorities.

DESCRIPTION m: ORDER OF SELECTION

OCFS/NYSCB is not implementing an Order of Selection.

DESCRIPTION n: GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. The purpose of the OCFS/NYSCB supported employment program is to enable individuals with the most significant disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment in their communities. OCFS/NYSCB continues to serve all eligible individuals who need supported employment services, with a goal of placing as many individuals as possible in employment. In FFY 2017, 27 individuals received supported employment services. A total of eight consumers were successfully placed in supported competitive employment and transitioned to extended supported employment services (an increase of four from FFY 2015). The average hourly wage increased from $8.87/hr. to $9.72/hr., and the average number of hours worked per week slightly increased from 18 to 21.6. Referrals decreased from 24 to 12.

   OCFS/NYSCB has four primary goals for FFY 2018: the first is to increase the number of individuals placed in supported employment to at least the level of 2012 (20); the second is to maintain hourly wages to at least $8.95/hr.; the third is to maintain the average number of hours worked at a minimum of 23 hrs./week; and the fourth is to increase referrals. In NYS, the administrative responsibility for supported employment programs is consolidated in the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (NYSED/ACCES-VR), as established in accordance with Section 3, Chapter 515 of the Laws of New York of 1992. NYSED/ACCES-VR incorporated supported employment into its new Core Rehabilitation Services Contract effective January 1, 2014. Supported Employment is now an outcome based-funded model. OCFS/NYSCB works cooperatively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to provide opportunities for supported employment across the state. OCFS/NYSCB and NYSED/ACCES-VR will be having quarterly meetings to review the new model. OCFS/NYSCB staff have been trained on the new outcome contracts, and additional training will be implemented as needed.

2. OCFS/NYSCB does not currently provide extended supported employment services. If extended services are provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in the future, they would be provided for a period not to exceed four years. OCFS/NYSCB currently works directly with OPWDD and OMH to transition to extended supported employment services prior to the 24-month limitation of supported employment intensive services.

   OCFS/NYSCB continues to maintain case management, program monitoring and oversight responsibilities for the supported employment services provided to OCFS/NYSCB consumers. Service providers regularly provide OCFS/NYSCB with individual consumer reports, and OCFS/NYSCB staff meets regularly with providers and consumers.

OCFS/NYSCB will continue to work with NYSED/ACCES-VR to assess performance on an ongoing basis, participate in on-site reviews, and provide technical assistance or recommend adjustments to contracts as needed.

OCFS/NYSCB, with NYSED/ACCES-VR, continues to take a close look at supported employment caseloads to utilize Title VI-B funds in the most effective manner to assist individuals with most significant disabilities in obtaining competitive employment.

Counselors have been instructed to:

- Conduct comprehensive assessments, including situational assessments, prior to referral for supported employment services in order to increase the likelihood that individuals referred for supported employment will benefit from it. This also allows intensive service dollars to be focused more on job development, placement and training and should allow individuals to complete the intensive phase more quickly.
- Consider the use of natural supports following employment and start to establish eligibility for extended services at the beginning of the planning process. This will maximize the use of limited NYSED/ACCES-VR funding for extended services.

Provider agencies have been instructed to regularly review cases to determine which consumers no longer require extended services due to their increased experience and confidence, and the availability of natural supports.

During the past year, OCFS/NYSCB has worked with other members of the Chapter 515 Implementation Team to improve the delivery of supported employment services. Specifically, the team has:

- Shared information about program revisions within each agency's service delivery system; and
- Reviewed data to monitor the effectiveness of supported employment services.

Because blindness is a low incidence disability, OCFS/NYSCB continues to be challenged in anticipating service needs and distributing the limited funds available. The lack of extended services funds further limits the number of individuals who can enter intensive supported employment services. OCFS/NYSCB plans to work more closely with ACCES-VR in the future to determine the distribution of funds available for intensive and extended services, while providing information and training to enable staff to better access extended services through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) or Office of Mental Health (OMH), as appropriate.

DESCRIPTION O: STATE'S STRATEGIES

These goals and priorities for Federal Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019 have been developed using feedback from OCFS/NYSCB workgroups, the Executive Board, the State Rehabilitation Council, participant input from OCFS/NYSCB open forums, the results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the Executive Board and OCFS/NYSCB administrative priorities.

Goal 1: Improve and expand consumer services.

Strategies

1. Develop additional vocational training programs that meet the needs of consumers and businesses.

2. Continue to foster and expand the current working relationships with Office of Mental Health and the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities on both the local and state level.
3. Improve consumer access to ESL training programs, literacy and the High School Equivalency (HSE) test prep programs and educational services.

Goal 2: Increase the number of competitive employment outcomes using Fiscal Year 2014 data on the number of competitive employment outcomes as a baseline.

Strategies

1. Increase collaborative efforts with community rehabilitation providers in regards to business development efforts, increase partnerships, face-to-face contacts and regional relationships with businesses to increase their awareness of the skills and abilities of individuals who are blind and the services provided by OCFS/NYSCB.
2. Continue to work with the National Employment Team (NET) of the CSAVR and other employment networks to improve employment options for OCFS/NYSCB consumers.
3. Expand partnerships with America's Job Centers in addition to the other core partners, NYS Department of Labor, Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Adult Education and Adult Career and Continuing Education-Vocational Rehabilitation, to increase access to services needed by OCFS/NYSCB consumers.
4. Support and promote the Business Enterprise Program in order to increase employment opportunities and successful outcomes.
5. Work with National Industries for the Blind to develop competitive integrated employment opportunities in the Service sector; and assist NIB in developing a business leadership program for consumers seeking to advance in their employment.

Goal 3: Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services for individuals who are blind throughout NYS.

Strategies

1. Continue to promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services to the populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.
2. Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services through participation in a variety of community events including job fairs and culturally specific outreach activities; through social media exposure; through direct outreach to eye care providers and through distribution of marketing materials in multiple language and formats to a wide variety of entities.

Goal 4: Increase staff capacity to deliver quality services to consumers.

Strategies

1. Encourage staff to attend supervision and management training in connection with succession planning.
2. Continue employee orientation programming in all regional offices to include training on visual impairment, blindness and low vision.

3. Increase the regional workforce development conducted at a regional, district office level, including promoting OCFS/NYSCB with community businesses and working with providers of employment services.
4. Expand services and increase awareness of services available to individuals who are deaf-blind by encouraging staff to participate in training, events and programs offered by the New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative.

Provision of Assistive Technology Services and Devices

OCFS/NYSCB provides assistive technology services and devices to individuals during each stage of the rehabilitation process through Assistive Technology Center (ATC) contracts and through private vendors. The outcome-based services of ATC Readiness Evaluation, ATC Assessment and ATC Training provide a comprehensive and rigorous array of assessments and training with the goal of preparing consumers for success in educational or training settings and employment. AT centers as well as a network of more than 30 private assistive technology trainers provide onsite needs evaluation and training for individuals who are unable to travel to a center or whose needs require intervention at their education or employment site.

OCFS/NYSCB has begun to survey documentation submitted at the end of the Readiness Assessment and the AT Assessment and Training to determine whether AT centers are conducting assessments and services in accordance with the *Assistive Technology Center Standards Manual*.

A list of approved private vendors is posted on the OCFS/NYSCB website.

Two OCFS/NYSCB loan closets also provide statewide access to loaner equipment while a consumer is awaiting delivery of equipment purchased for them for educational or training purposes or employment.

In addition, OCFS/NYSCB provides assistive technology devices and training to current managers and manager trainees in the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program to enable them to manage their newsstands and food service operations in accordance with industry standard.

Outreach Services

OCFS/NYSCB has developed contract guidelines for a new Outreach/Case Finding component that establishes a reimbursable outcome for outreach to underserved communities. The new contract component was implemented in June 2015 and continues. Specific criteria were developed that needed to be met in order for the agency to receive funding and referring an individual for OCFS/NYSCB services. The goal of this new service is to promote the availability of VR services to New Yorkers who are legally blind who are not yet known to OCFS/NYSCB. One hundred and twenty-two individuals met the criteria for case finding during FY 2016 and FY 2017. These individuals were not previously known to OCFS/NYSCB and after submitting an application, were found eligible for VR services.

Working with Community Rehabilitation Programs

OCFS/NYSCB continues to work closely with community rehabilitation providers to create new pre-vocational, pre-employment transition services and vocational training programs for both adults and transition-age youth. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB district offices engage new providers when specialized training is required for a consumer to reach his/her vocational goal. OCFS/NYSCB also conducts both quality assurance and curriculum reviews so that existing programs continue to provide quality programming that prepares consumers to enter the workforce.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to encourage development of vocational training programs that meet the requirements of business and will work with providers to create and approve curricula, especially in fields with jobs in demand where vocational training has not previously been available.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to support community rehabilitation providers in the development of pre-vocational programs for youth ages ten to thirteen. OCFS/NYSCB is also focused on increasing pre-employment transition services for youth ages 14-21. These programs will provide both variety and complexity so that youth are well prepared for post-secondary education and training.

New placement contracts reflecting the expectations and requirements for service delivery were implemented on January 1, 2015 for a five-year period.

OCFS/NYSCB conducts meetings with directors of rehabilitation and agency administrators throughout its service regions to discuss quality of service delivery and new programming needs on a regular basis.

OCFS/NYSCB and community provider staff continues to meet annually at the Vision Rehabilitation Institute to learn and discuss issues related to blindness and employment.

Working with the Statewide Workforce Investment System to Assist Individuals with Disabilities

1. Efforts to connect with Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) in America's Job Centers and to participate in Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) serve multiple purposes: connecting OCFS/NYSCB to businesses, promoting knowledge about OCFS/NYSCB and its services, and connecting job seekers to services at the job centers which may lead to more competitive outcomes. OCFS/NYSCB will work with the core State Plan partners to implement the WIOA related strategies outlined in the Combined State Plan.

2. Participation by OCFS/NYSCB staff in Chapter 515 meetings allows discussions among OCFS/NYSCB, NYSED/ACCES-VR, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH) about the challenges facing mutual consumers including minorities and individuals who are deaf-blind and those in more isolated communities. The group works to achieve more effective transition from pre-employment programs to employment, identify barriers to participation in employment and distribute services to achieve equitable access. In planning and coordinating activities, including training, the group will help staff to increase skills needed to help consumers achieve integrated employment while increasing knowledge and access to each other's services.

3. By supporting increased use of benefits planning through Independent Living Centers, DRCs and other qualified resources, OCFS/NYSCB anticipates that more consumers will choose careers, and work hours, which will allow them to go off SSA benefits and achieve economic self-sufficiency. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB has signed a Partnership Plus agreement with the OMH Administrative Employment Network (AEN). This will increase opportunities for consumers to obtain continued support to maintain their jobs after case closure. OCFS/NYSCB works with NYSED/ACCES-VR to allocate contract capacity for Supported Employment services to try to assure the services are available to individuals with most significant disabilities seeking those services.

Achieving Goals and Priorities Consistent with the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

OCFS/NYSCB developed strategies and goals based on recommendations and findings from the recently conducted Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). OCFS/NYSCB will continue to engage with Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) in America's Job Centers, especially in rural areas. Rural participants may need to overcome transportation and location issues and when possible, using these sites for meetings and job leads, a local perspective can be provided and additional support generated for a participant to achieve an employment outcome.

The CSNA also identified an underserved participant group as those with English as a Second Language (ESL). A goal of OCFS/NYSCB has been identified as increasing and improving consumer access to ESL training programs. Marketing will continue to include the provision of marketing materials in multiple languages as well as be distributed through a variety of community events including culturally specific events.

As identified in the CSNA, OCFS/NYSCB has included goals and strategies to increase vocational and job skills training, also taking into account labor market trends and growing fields with higher rates of employment needs.

Overcoming Barriers to Equitable Access and Participation in Vocational Rehabilitation

Several of the strategies identified in the State Plan are geared toward overcoming barriers to equitable access to and participation in VR and supported employment services including strategies to develop additional training programs, improve access to English as a Second Language training programs, the expansion of pre—vocational services for youth and to increase the awareness of services among minority populations by providing information in different languages.

Performance Accountability Measures

Many of the strategies identified in this State Plan align with the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. In particular, the strategies associated with improving employment outcomes, preparing youth for employment, and engaging the business community will support improving performance on the performance accountability measures.

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds in FY 2018

OCFS/NYSCB will use Innovation and Expansion funds during FY 2018 to enable consumers to participate in two newly developed pre-employment transition skills programs in a residential setting in NYS. The programs are being run by a community rehabilitation program. Participants will either participate in a four-week summer program or a semester long program, both programs are geared for in-school youth. The four-week workplace readiness training program will provide students with an opportunity to start identifying occupational interests and developing an action plan to help them reach their career goals. The semester-long program workplace readiness training program will partner with a local community college where participants will register for a specific vocational training program leading to a recognized certification.

DESCRIPTION p: EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

OCFS/NYSCB evaluates progress toward the achievement of goals and priorities on an ongoing basis. OCFS/NYSCB is reporting on the goals and objectives identified in the 2016 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Plan. OCFS/NYSCB placed 418 individuals in competitive integrated employment. This was a decrease of 54 individuals from FY 2015 when data was last reported. The decrease can be attributed to a more intensive focus on job stabilization before exiting the program and with new quarterly reporting, less focus on closing consumer cases by the end of the federal fiscal year. In addition, counselors spent time during the past several months on learning the new Federal reporting requirements and updating records to include the new data elements. The average hourly wage increased to $20.34 in FY 2017 from FY 2015 when the average hourly wage was $19.71.

Goal 1: Improve and expand consumer services

1. Expand services and increase awareness of services available to individuals who are deaf-blind by encouraging staff to participate in training, events and programs offered by the New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative.

   The New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative continues to include OCFS/NYSCB in training opportunities on services for the deaf-blind population. Training was shared to all staff based on content and population served.

2. Support teaching Braille to adults for daily living and employment activities by encouraging counselors to discuss the value and benefit of learning functional Braille.

   OCFS/NYSCB staff continue to refer consumers for Braille instruction as well as counsel consumers on the importance of learning functional Braille. Braille instruction is also discussed during Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Assessments and if appropriate, training can also be provided as part of VRT services.

3. Identify ways to improve services for the populations identified in the current Comprehensive Needs Assessment Report.

   The Statewide Needs Assessment has been completed and OCFS/NYSCB is evaluating the information to address this goal.

4. Develop additional vocational training programs that meet the needs of consumers and businesses. OCFS/NYSCB developed additional vocational training programs within the Comprehensive Services Contract (CSC). With assistance from OCFS/NYSCB, many not-for-profit partners have created a Computer Software /Office Skills Training program. Two not-for-profit partners have created a Braille Business Skills program. Both programs are supported under the “vocational skills training” service of the CSC. OCFS/NYSCB also worked with one not-for-profit partner to create an intensive residential vocational skills training program under RSA’s Pre-ETS youth services initiative. In this program, partnerships have been developed with BOCES adult education programs and a community college. Upon completion of the residential training, both BOCES and the community college offer OCFS/NYSCB consumers certificates in various career fields.

5. Continue to foster the current working relationships with the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the NYS Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) on both the local and state level.

OCFS/NYSCB continued to partner with OMH and the OPWDD on many initiatives such as Employment First, as well as the continued development of the Supported Employment program. Through the Governor's direction on Employment First, with OPWDD taking the lead, participating agencies created an "Employability Handbook" that was full of disability employment related information for businesses. At a local level the community providers of OMH and OPWDD work with our district offices on supported employment delivery.

6. Improve consumer access to English as a Second Language (ESL) training programs, literacy and the High School Equivalency (HSE) test prep programs and educational services.

   With significant leadership and guidance provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, OCFS/NYSCB worked closely with the NYSED to identify and address all barriers to full accessibility among visually-impaired and blind test takers. As the agency responsible for procuring these testing services, NYSED had planning discussions with OCFS/NYSCB and our stakeholders, and we continue to work with their chosen vendor to meet our shared objective of full accessibility for visually-impaired test takers by early in 2018. OCFS/NYSCB continues to expand the availability of Academic Training for consumers, including ESL training, both through contracts, and with private vendors, and by improving accessibility to existing community programs.

7. Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities in technical trades and middle skills jobs for transition-age consumers who will not be participating in post-secondary education.

   OCFS/NYSCB, along with a contractor agency, developed a residential program partnering with a local college to offer various technical and certificate programs for program participants. Students are offered an array of supports through the contract agency to assist them to successfully complete one of these certificate programs. This program specifically targets students who would otherwise not participate in post-secondary education due to the lack of supports available through education services alone.

8. Continue to hold summer pre-college programs on college campuses to prepare high school students who are legally blind for college life.

   Two Pre-College programs were held in 2017. Thirty-eight students from across NYS attended the programs. All students receive assistive technology to access the program requirements and obtain training on the required technology prior to the program. The program continues to improve the college readiness of students and prepares them for the next step in their transition process.

9. Continue to support work experience opportunities that meet individual needs and allow students who are legally blind to participate in paid work experiences in integrated community settings.

   OCFS/NYSCB transition counselors continued to work closely with youth and school staff to develop appropriate pre-employment transition opportunities. Youth develop work readiness skills through integrated work experiences in their local community.

10. Continue to expand pre-vocational services for youth ages 10-13 years.

    OCFS/NYSCB is committed to continuing to support youth ages 10-13 with the development of their pre-vocational skills. Programs combine social skills and career exploration activities.

Goal 2: Increase the number of competitive employment outcomes using Fiscal Year 2013 data on the number of competitive employment outcomes as a baseline.

1. Increase collaborative efforts with community rehabilitation providers in regards to business development efforts, increase partnerships and regional relationships with businesses to increase their awareness of the skills and abilities of individuals who are blind.

   OCFS/NYSCB focused attention to the needs of business in the VR process. OCFS/NYSCB made great strides in connecting with business by working with both NYSDOL and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). OCFS/NYSCB continues to strive to have an agency representative on each of the 10 regional "business engagement" teams through the NSYDOL, which will lead to direct contact with business on a local and regional level. OCFS/NYSCB, at both the state and local level, share information, contacts, and leads with community partners to further the employment opportunities of those we serve. OCFS/NYSCB along with community partners have also increased OCFS/NYSCB presence and relationship in the 96 NYSDOL Career Centers across NYS in an effort to build better business connections.

2. Enhance information and resources for businesses on the OCFS/NYSCB website.

   OCFS/NYSCB has a designated staff member who is responsible for community outreach and marketing. This staff member works with OCFS staff in the OCFS Public Information Office (PIO) to keep the OCFS/NYSCB website up to date and presents PIO with information about OCFS/NYSCB's business and community interactions for posting on the OCFS/NYSCB webpage.

3. Promote business awareness of OCFS/NYSCB workforce programs and business services through print, broadcast and electronic media to include social media, and continue to promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB through personal face-to-face contacts with businesses.

   During the past two years, OCFS/NYSCB worked closely with NYSDOL on hosting career fairs and has worked with business leaders to educate them about blindness and accessibility. OCFS/NYSCB has also partnered with other state agencies to produce an Employability Handbook for employers that provides information about the WIOA partner programs and on employing people with disabilities.

4. Continue to work with the National Employment Team (NET) of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and other employment networks to improve employment options for OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

   OCFS/NYSCB worked with both CSAVR and the NET to further business contacts and employment opportunities. The OCFS/NYSCB representative is also the Region 2 representative and has taken a lead role in working with neighboring states on business engagement as well as any phone calls, webinars, and meetings with state and national business representatives.

5. Expand partnerships with America's Job Centers as well as the four core partners, to increase access to services needed by OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

   During the last two years, OCFS/NYSCB has worked to strengthen the relationship between OCFS/NYSCB and the Career Center network in NYS. Representatives from the Career Center shared information about their services at OCFS/NYSCB sponsored conferences both upstate and downstate. OCFS/NYSCB participated in planning customer focus groups for blind VR program participants to learn about their knowledge of, and experiences with, the Career Center system. This information will be used to develop training programs and materials for Career Center staff to educate them about blindness and services provided by OCFS/NYSCB. OCFS/NYSCB took a lead

role in developing uniform accessibility for 96 Career Centers that should be in place during the next year.

6. Expand working relationships with agencies that typically serve individuals with disabilities other than blindness and offer vocational training and placement services.

   OCFS/NYSCB staff participated in Chapter 515 meetings and discussions. These meetings included NYSED/ACCES-VR, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH), and focused on the challenges facing mutual consumers and agencies serving these consumers including individuals of minority backgrounds, individuals who are deaf-blind and those in more isolated communities. OCFS/NYSCB also continued to partner with OMH and OPWDD on the Governor's Employment First initiative, as well as the continued development of the Supported Employment program.

7. Support and promote the Business Enterprise Program in order to increase employment opportunities and successful outcomes.

   OCFS/NYSCB worked closely with the State Committee of Blind Vendors (SCBV) to increase capacity in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). OCFS/NYSCB nominated a BEP licensed manager to serve on the SRC to reinforce the ongoing efforts of the SRC in promoting and marketing the program. As FFY 2017 ended, OCFS/NYSCB continued work on developing a model to enhance communications and collaboration among VR and BEP field offices to identify potential licensed managers and provide other types of general support for the program.

8. Increase provision of work incentives advisement to consumers by training counselors on the impact of work on SSI and SSDI and the importance of benefits advisement and financial literacy; and requiring documentation of the provision of work incentives advisement in consumers' case records.

   OCFS/NYSCB continued to access benefits counseling services for consumers by purchasing this service through the VR program. Benefits advisors must meet the certification requirements to provide this service as well as work with consumers on understanding their financial status in regards to benefits and employment. OCFS/NYSCB continues to offer training and will continue to collaborate with the NYSDOL on offering and accessing work incentives for employers hiring OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

9. Work with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) to develop competitive integrated employment opportunities in the Service sector; and assist NIB in developing a business leadership program for consumers seeking to advance in their employment.

   OCFS/NYSCB maintained a strong relationship with NIB. OCFS/NYSCB assisted in strengthening NIB's Preferred Source Program (PSP) in NYS by increasing purchasing of NIB's products through NYS procurement contracts. This created more jobs for blind and visually impaired New Yorkers. OCFS/NYSCB also assisted in creating customer services jobs through the same PSP contacts. OCFS/NYSCB also began to work with Alphapointe, an NIB subsidiary, to increase their integrated employment opportunities.

10. Promote opportunities for individuals who are blind to become self-employed.

    Through effective use of the self-employment policy and the self-employment review team, OCFS/NYSCB has provided support to counselors to enable them to work effectively with consumers who are interested in self-employment. The policy was reviewed at a counselor

meeting in 2016 to promote a better understanding of self-employment and encourage counselors to view this as an option for consumers who express an interest in self-employment.

Goal 3: Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services for individuals who are blind throughout NYS

1. Continue to promote OCFS/NYSCB services to the populations identified in the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) as underserved. Expand outreach efforts to specific underserved populations identified by each OCFS/NYSCB district.

   OCFS/NYSCB utilized an outreach packet that provides a comprehensive overview of services including information for potential consumers of all ages and includes an application for service, frequently asked questions and additional resource materials. These packets have been distributed to multiple health care providers. Follow up presentations to case managers were held to answer more specific questions on services. Outreach packets have also been distributed to various rural areas as well as blindness agencies.

2. Increase the awareness of services among minority populations by providing access to information in different languages.

   OCFS/NYSCB continued to offer vital documents in the six most common non-English languages (Spanish, traditional Chinese, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Korean and Italian) identified by the Governor's Executive Order 26. These documents were also provided to the requestor in their preferred written or electronic format. LanguageLine Solutions® is used by counselors for oral communications with Limited English Proficient (LEP) applicants and participants.

3. Continue to develop working relationships with culturally specific community-based organizations such as literacy programs, faith based organizations, service groups and community action programs.

   OCFS/NYSCB developed a video presentation used to educate the OCFS/NYSCB, OCFS staff and the public on issues related to blindness and vision loss. OCFS/NYSCB also developed a training curriculum, which includes this video and participation in a Hadley School for the Blind online class which is given to new OCFS/NYSCB employees.

4. Create public awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services by participating in job fairs, health fairs, street fairs, consumer based organizations conventions, conferences and other community events.

   OCFS/NYSCB staff regularly conducted outreach with the goal of increasing public awareness at job fairs, health fairs, street fairs, medical provider events, consumer based organization conventions, conferences and other community events.

5. Target distribution of marketing materials to libraries, Independent Living Centers (ILCs), health care providers, pre-service secondary education providers, parent centers and hospitals with follow up efforts by each OCFS/NYSCB district.

   OCFS/NYSCB outreach packets and material were distributed to Independent Living Centers, various medical providers such as the VA, hospitals and endocrinologists. OCFS/NYSCB Home Office facilitated further outreach efforts through the District Offices by providing outreach packets and strategies to each office.

6. Enhance OCFS/NYSCB exposure through development and distribution of print, social media including Facebook and YouTube, audio and video materials.

OCFS/NYSCB regularly posts stories and photos on Twitter and Facebook via OCFS's Public Information Office.

7. Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services through personal outreach to eye care providers and at their respective statewide and regional conferences.

   OCFS/NYSCB conducted targeted outreach to eye care providers and has added statewide organizations and conferences to that effort in the last year. Outreach packets were distributed to Ophthalmologists, Optometrists and Endocrinologists.

8. Compile success stories from current and past consumers and post on the OCFS/NYSCB website, and include in dissemination and marketing materials.

   OCFS/NYSCB continued to work on this goal and presented success stories at the annual Counselor Meeting. Success stories will continue to be highlighted annually and work will continue to include success stories in new marketing materials and on the OCFS/NYSCB website.

Goal 4: Increase staff capacity to deliver quality service to consumers

1. Continue efforts to diversify OCFS/NYSCB staff and provide cultural competency to new staff.

   Cultural competency remains a guiding principle for OCFS/NYSCB and our parent agency, OCFS. All new OCFS/NYSCB staff received information and training opportunities as part of the agency's "Onboarding" program and OCFS/NYSCB was and continues to be involved in developing plans for diversification of staff as part of an agency-wide effort.

2. Encourage staff to attend supervision and management training in connection with succession planning.

   OCFS/NYSCB continued to encourage all new management staff to participate in supervisory training programs that are available to them. The Supervisory Institute is a comprehensive 8-month long program and approximately 50 % of OCFS/NYSCB management staff have completed this program. Additionally, there is an abbreviated program, Foundations in Supervision that staff are invited to attend while waiting for the longer program to be available. Having middle managers attend these programs allows for them to be better prepared and able to step into the higher, senior management positions as they are vacated.

3. Continue new employee orientation programming in all regional offices to include training on visual impairment and low vision.

   OCFS/NYSCB developed a video presentation used to educate the OCFS/NYSCB, other OCFS staff, and the public on issues related to blindness and vision loss. OCFS/NYSCB has also developed a training curriculum, which includes this video and participation in a Hadley School for the Blind online class which is given to new OCFS/NYSCB employees.

4. Provide ongoing and continued training for ATC providers and consider having a baseline competency certification for approved providers.

   OCFS/NYSCB developed new contact guidelines that increase the credentialing and continuing education requirements for the ATC trainers who are employed by not-for-profit partners. At least one member of the contractor's instructional staff must possess a certification or a degree in Assistive Technology training. The certification/degree must be from a nationally recognized

organization, and include training/testing in all of the following areas: the evaluation, acquisition, and selection of AT devices.

5. Continue to work with providers of employment services in understanding and utilizing employment tax credits, federal and local hiring authorities and the ticket to work system.

   OCFS/NYSCB continued to partner with community providers and shared information on tax credits, federal and state hiring authorities, as well as ticket to work. OCFS/NYSCB increased collaboration with NYSDOL and disseminated an information sheet on tax opportunities for businesses in NYS. OCFS/NYSCB district office staff and community providers also worked closely with OCFS/NYSCB home office staff on up to date information on state and federal hiring practices and opportunities. OCFS/NYSCB continues to promote the Ticket to Work program through work with both employment service providers and state agency partners.

6. Increase the regional workforce development conducted at a regional, district office level, including promoting OCFS/NYSCB with community businesses.

   OCFS/NYSCB increased its presence in the statewide and local workforce development systems throughout the past year by partnering with NYSDOL and the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP). Through the work under WIOA, OCFS/NYSCB has entered into an MOU with each of the 33 local workforce development areas. Through this increased presence OCFS/NYSCB increases its direct contact with business and local leaders in the workforce system.

NYSCB was mostly successful in achieving goal and priorities set in the State Plan. One area that needs continual development is Language Access. An increased demand for VR services by non-English speakers has increased awareness of the need to develop vendors and resources outside of Language Line Solutions (R). This was also indicated as an underserved population in the recently conducted CSNA, and efforts will continue to provide better access to services by this and other identified underserved populations.

OCFS/NYSCB has not identified any impediments to the achievement of these goals and priorities.

Provision of Assistive Technology Services and Devices

OCFS/NYSCB provides assistive technology services and devices to individuals during each stage of the rehabilitation process through ATC contracts and through private vendors. The outcome-based services of ATC Readiness Evaluation, ATC Assessment and ATC Training provide a comprehensive and rigorous array of assessments and training with the goal of preparing students for success in school and employment. AT centers as well as a network of more than 30 private assistive technology trainers provide onsite needs evaluation and training for individuals who are unable to travel to a center or whose needs require intervention at their education or employment site.

A list of approved private vendors is posted on the NYSCB website.

Two OCFS/NYSCB loan closets also provide statewide access to loaner equipment while a consumer is awaiting delivery of equipment purchased for them for school or employment.

In addition, OCFS/NYSCB provides assistive technology devices and training to current managers and manager trainees in the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program to enable them to manage their newsstands and food service operations in accordance with industry standard.

Outreach Services

OCFS/NYSCB has developed contract guidelines for a new Outreach/Case Finding component that establishes a reimbursable outcome for outreach to underserved communities. The new contract component was implemented in June 2015.

Working with Community Rehabilitation Programs

OCFS/NYSCB continues to work closely with community rehabilitation providers to create new pre-vocational and vocational training programs for both adults and transition-age youth. OCFS/NYSCB district offices engage new providers when specialized training is required for a consumer to reach his/her vocational goal. OCFS/NYSCB also conducts both quality assurance and curriculum reviews so that existing programs continue to provide quality programming that prepares consumers to enter the workforce.

OCFS/NYSCB has begun to survey documentation submitted at the end of the Readiness Assessment and the AT Assessment and Training to verify that AT centers are conducting assessments and services in accordance with the *Assistive Technology Center Standards Manual*.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to encourage development of vocational training programs that meet the requirements of business and will work with providers to create and approve curricula, especially in fields with jobs in demand where vocational training has not previously been available.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to support community rehabilitation providers in the development of pre-vocational programs beginning with youth at age 10 and continuing through the transition years. These programs will provide both variety and increasing complexity so that youth are well prepared for post-secondary education and training.

New placement contracts reflecting the expectations and requirements for service delivery were implemented on January 1, 2015 for a five-year period.

OCFS/NYSCB conducts meetings with directors of rehabilitation and agency administrators throughout its service regions to discuss quality of service delivery and new programming needs on a regular basis.

OCFS/NYSCB and community provider staff continues to meet annually at the Vision Rehabilitation Institute to learn and discuss issues related to blindness and employment, describing strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.

Working with the Statewide Workforce Investment System to Assist Individuals with Disabilities

1. Efforts to connect with Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) in America's Job Centers and to participate in Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) serve multiple purposes: connecting OCFS/NYSCB to businesses, promoting knowledge about OCFS/NYSCB and its services, and connecting job seekers to services at the job centers which may lead to more competitive outcomes. OCFS/NYSCB will work with the core State Plan partners to implement the WIOA related strategies outlined in the Combined State Plan.

2. Participation by OCFS/NYSCB staff in Chapter 515 meetings allows discussions among OCFS/NYSCB, NYSED/ACCES-VR, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH) about the challenges facing mutual consumers including minorities and

individuals who are deaf-blind and those in more isolated communities. The group works to achieve more effective transition from pre-employment programs to employment, identify barriers to participation in employment and distribute services to achieve equitable access. In planning and coordinating activities, including training, the group will help staff to increase skills needed to help consumers achieve integrated employment while increasing knowledge and access to each other's services.

3. By supporting increased use of benefits planning through Independent Living Centers, DRCs and other qualified resources, OCFS/NYSCB anticipates that more consumers will choose careers, and work hours, which will allow them to go off SSA benefits and achieve economic self-sufficiency. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB has signed a Partnership Plus agreement with the OMH Administrative Employment Network (AEN). This will increase opportunities for consumers to obtain continued support to maintain their jobs after case closure. OCFS/NYSCB works with NYSED/ACCES-VR to allocate contract capacity for Supported Employment services to try to assure the services are available to individuals with most significant disabilities seeking those services.

VR Program's Performance on the Performance Accountability Measures

OCFS/NYSCB did not collect data for the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA in FY 2017 and will report this performance in the next State Plan.

OCFS/NYSCB passed all indicators in Standard 1 and passed Standard 2 in FY 2014. As an agency serving individuals who are blind, OCFS/NYSCB's performance on Standard 1, indicators 1.2—1.6 and Indicator 2 is measured using two years of data.

1. Indicator 1.1 measures the increase or decrease in the number of successfully closed consumers from the prior year. In FY 2014, there was an increase of 13 successfully employed consumers from FY 2013.

2. Indicator 1.2 measures the number of individuals who exit the VR program as successfully employed compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program without employment after having developed an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). In FY 2014, 71.9 percent of VR program participants were closed as successfully employed. The passing level for this indicator is 68.9 percent.

3. Indicator 1.3 measures the number of individuals who leave the VR program competitively employed as a percentage of all employment outcomes. In FY 2014, 83.2 percent of individuals closed successfully were competitively employed. The passing level for this indicator is 35.4 percent.

4. Indicator 1.4 measures the number of individuals successfully closed who have a significant disability. In FY 2014, 91.9 percent of these individuals were determined to have a significant disability. The passing level for this indicator is 89 percent.

5. Indicator 1.5 measures the hourly earnings of individuals who achieved employment against the average hourly earnings of all New Yorkers. The passing level for this indicator is 59 percent; OCFS/NYSCB achieved 67.2 percent for this indicator.

6. Indicator 1.6 examines the percentage of clients that report their earnings as their primary source of support at case closure compared to those who report their earnings as their primary source of support at application. In FY 2014, achieved 36.2 percent for this indicator that has a 30.4 percent passing level.

7. Standard 2 evaluates the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non—minority individuals with disabilities. In FY 2014 OCFS/NYSCB's service rate was 82.5 percent. The passing level for this Standard is 8.0.

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds in FY 16

OCFS/NYSCB used Innovation and Expansion funds for the following projects in FY 2016 and 2017.

1. Outreach/Case Finding- Innovation and expansion funds were used for a contract service component for successful outreach/case finding to individuals of working age (generally 18-55) who are legally blind and may be unaware of the vocational rehabilitation services available to them through OCFS/NYSCB. Specific criteria were developed that needed to be met in order for the agency to receive payment for finding and referring an individual for OCFS/NYSCB services. The goal of this new service is to promote the availability of VR services to New Yorkers who are legally blind who are not yet known to OCFS/NYSCB. One hundred and twenty-two individuals met the criteria for case finding during FY 16 and FY 17. These individuals were not previously known to OCFS/NYSCB and after submitting an application, were found eligible for VR services.

2. Pre-College Programs – OCFS/NYSCB used innovation and expansion funds to support the two pre-college programs that began in the summer of 2013. OCFS/NYSCB contracted with two private agencies for individuals who are blind to provide pre-college programs for OCFS/NYSCB consumers entering their senior year of high school. The goal of the program is to provide these students the opportunity to refine their academic, social and independent living skills before beginning college. The four week programs began in the summer of 2013 and will continue through the summer of 2018. The students are housed on a college campus and participate in two non-credit courses: an "Introduction to College" course which focuses on adaptive academic and college "survival" skills such as acquiring books in alternative formats, requesting accommodations and identifying important resources on a college campus; and a "Developmental Writing/Technology Seminar" where students receive individual and group writing instruction using an online webinar format and are introduced to web conferencing and discussion forums. Thirty-eight students attended the program in 2017. Overall the program was a success and students evaluated the programs highly.

3. OCFS/NYSCB will also use innovation and expansion funds to develop vocational training programs for adults and pre-vocational programs specifically for youth ages 10-14. Newly developed training programs for adults will be targeted to careers with strong business growth potential. The programs for youth 10-14 will focus on job exploration and job shadowing.
   OCFS/NYSCB did not create new programs during the reporting period but did review and adjust the curriculum of several existing programs to increase their focus on vocational exploration and employment.

DESCRIPTION q: QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

1. The quality, scope and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities:

   From approved Fiscal Year 2015 State Plan:

   The Vocational Rehabilitation division of the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES–VR) continues to have primary responsibility for supported employment programs

and other integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in NYS. A memorandum of understanding is in place covering the respective roles and responsibilities of OCFS/NYSCB, ACCES–VR, the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH) in supported employment for consumers who are blind.

Since 1989, the number of community agencies utilizing Supported Employment Grant Funds under Title VI–B of the Rehabilitation Act to provide supported employment services to individuals who are blind has expanded from 8 to 59. The grant awards stipulate adherence to all requirements set forth in Title VI–B of the Rehabilitation Act. Targeted populations include individuals with multiple disabilities who are aging out of educational programs, individuals in day treatment and long term extended employment and those who have been unable to maintain employment in integrated community settings. The "individual placement" is the prevailing model; however, this does not preclude consideration of alternatives including the "enclave" and "affirmative business." The 59 agencies are located in major cities and in suburban and rural areas across the State.

When an individual's work performance is actualized, natural supports maximized, and the services (job coaching, adjustment counseling and advocacy) reach the lowest level necessary for the individual to maintain employment, the individual's supported employment case is closed. Extended services provide ongoing support and can be provided by a state agency, private organization, business, co–workers and family members, or any other source available to assist the individual to maintain employment. Under the Memorandum of Interagency Understanding Regarding Supported Employment, OMH and OPWDD provide follow–along services for individuals who meet their respective eligibility criteria. Individuals who do not meet OMH or OPWDD criteria may receive extended services through designated ACCES–VR funds or through natural supports in the work place. Individuals in extended services may request Post Employment Services or, if necessary, ask to have their cases reopened.

Traditional vocational rehabilitation services continue to be available to supported employment candidates using Vocational Rehabilitation funds in the development as well as the execution of Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). In this regard, there is no distinction from other vocational rehabilitation consumers. Quality assurance is a matter of ongoing concern. Providers receive Guidelines for Supported Employment which are updated as needed and convey the expectations for quality services. ACCES–VR quality assurance staff, with input from OCFS/NYSCB and other partners, established new case review form protocols to gather information that can be used to monitor and improve services. OCFS/NYSCB district office staff is invited to participate in reviews of agencies in their catchment area; however, they typically participate only in reviews of agencies that are serving consumers who are blind.

The OCFS/NYSCB Supported Employment Coordinator and staff regularly monitor reports and contract implementation. The coordinator regularly talks with OCFS/NYSCB district office staff, contractors and state monitors to address progress and opportunities for program improvement, providing technical assistance and training as needed.

2. The timing of transition to extended services

Supported employment services are delivered through the ACCES–VR contracting system, as agreed under Section 3, Chapter 515 of the Laws of New York of 1992. OCFS/NYSCB transfers its supported employment funds to ACCES–VR, but retains case management responsibility for individuals in the intensive service phase. In January 2014, a new Supported Employment contract methodology was implemented which resulted in:

- Increased time for counselors and providers to plan together and review consumer progress;
- More efficient authorization and reporting processes;
- More timely movement from referral to job placement and stabilization; and
- Increased earnings and work hours for successful supported employment consumers.

NEW YORK OFFICE OF ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is mandated under the Rehabilitation Act to work in partnership with the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (NYSED/ACCES-VR). Together, the SRC and NYSED/ACCES-VR partner to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive timely and effective vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. The SRC represents a diverse cross-section of NYSED/ACCES-VR participants, agencies and organizational stakeholders committed to improving employment and quality of life outcomes for all people with disabilities. The SRC relies on the following committees to carry out its responsibilities: Executive Committee; Membership Committee; Policy and Planning Committee; Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee; Workforce Development Committee; and; Transition Committee. The SRC Chairperson, Vice Chairpersons, Committee Chairpersons and the NYSED/ACCES-VR SRC liaisons constitute the Executive Committee that coordinates the work of the full Council.

NYSED/ACCES-VR and the SRC work cooperatively in setting strategic priorities and in developing agency policy for the delivery of VR services to eligible New Yorkers with disabilities. When NYSED/ACCES-VR undertakes substantive policy changes, the agency convenes an ad hoc policy development committee that is chaired by an NYSED/ACCES-VR Resource Development Unit policy staff person. These policy development committees also include representation from NYSED/ACCES-VR management, vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) and key stakeholders, including an SRC representative. The SRC has served as an integral partner in the development of all substantive NYSED/ACCES-VR policy reforms and the Combined State Plan.

The following is a summary of recommendations made by the SRC to NYSED/ACCES-VR within FYs 2015, 2016, and 2017 and the corresponding responses from NYSED/ACCES-VR to the recommendations:

- NYSED/ACCES-VR should include both a State Rehabilitation Council representative and a representative from the NYSED/ACCES-VR Quality Assurance/Monitoring Unit on its anticipated committee to oversee development of a new case management system.

  Response: NYSED/ACCES-VR's Quality Assurance staff contributed to the case management Request for Proposal and are included on the design team. The SRC provided input into the new case management system via participation in the Strategic Plan development committee.

- NYSED/ACCES-VR should include in all future provider contracts a requirement to make participation in NYSED/ACCES-VR evaluations (survey, information collection) process mandatory.

  Response: Core Rehabilitation Service providers are strong partners with NYSED/ACCES-VR. They will be encouraged to provide requested information.

- All NYSED/ACCES-VR public events and meetings such as SRC meetings, town hall meetings, and public hearings should be accessible to all people with disabilities. To assist with achievement of this, SRC recommends that NYSED/ACCES-VR adopt and implement the nationally recognized accessibility guidelines for announcements, presentations, and materials.

  Response: NYSED/ACCES-VR staff will be aware of the need to fully meet accessibility standards. Individuals responsible for development of materials will receive training as needed. NYSED/ACCES-

VR will meet the standard set by the State Education Department and will put guidelines in place to improve accessibility.

- NYSED/ACCES-VR should establish a goal to increase the 2014 employment outcome rate of 58.6 by 5% over the course of four years (1.25% / year). Target for 2016-60, 2017-60.8, and 2018-61.6. And, NYSED/ACCES-VR should establish a goal to increase the 2014 average wage of $10.92 per hour by 3% per year over the next 4 years. Target for 2016-$11.59, 2017-$11.94, and 2018-$12.30.

  Response: NYSED/ACCES-VR will wait for the performance measure baseline and outcome expectations as identified through WIOA before committing to these specific targets. NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to measure participant satisfaction.

- NYSED/ACCES-VR should evaluate upstate and downstate wages, as defined by NYSED/ACCES-VR, separately while working to improve earnings of individuals who exit the VR program with an employment outcome, and report separately in the annual report.

  Response: NYSED/ACCES-VR will work with the Council to address the differences in wage data between upstate and downstate.

- NYSED/ACCES-VR should build into future satisfaction surveys specific questions inquiring about participant satisfaction with provider services.

  Response: The 2017 Participant Satisfaction Survey contained 6 questions specifically related to satisfaction with Core Rehabilitation Service vendor services.

Council Reports

The SRC Workforce Development Committee prepared two white papers and is working on a third:

1. "NYSED/ACCES-VR, Transition, and Middle Skills Employment: Creating Strategic Alignment to Satisfy Labor Demand." The paper highlights burgeoning "middle skills" employment opportunities in areas such as health care, specialty manufacturing and a range of other technology-based and high paying employment opportunities throughout NYS. The report suggests that these fields represent viable career tracks for youth with disabilities, if tailored pathways to these careers are developed. The report was shared with NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) that then earmarked funds for a statewide RFP to support the development of three middle skills work based learning program models for youth and/or adults with disabilities.
2. "NYS Alternatives to Individualized Education Plan Diplomas: Implications for NYSED/ACCES-VR." This paper addresses how NYSED/ACCES-VR can assist in the implementation of the state Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential.
3. The committee is currently working on the White Paper, "Adult Middle Skills." This paper intends to identify additional employment opportunities and the adult and associated training pathways that build the requisite skills necessary for New Yorkers with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency in today's workplace. The National Skills Coalition Bureau of Statistics has indicated nearly 50% of all jobs in NYS are in the middle skill area. Data further indicates that 39% of new jobs being created will require middle skill competencies.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness. The services provided under the State Plan are available statewide.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to coordinate and work cooperatively with agencies that are not in the Statewide Workforce Development System to improve access to appropriate vocational training and employment opportunities, particularly for individuals with significant disabilities who often have multiple needs requiring the intervention of more than one State agency. Other State, federal and local agencies are a significant referral source for the individuals referred to NYSED/ACCES-VR for services. Coordinating the support needs of people with disabilities (such as transportation, medical care, housing, case management, family supports and work incentives) is essential for many individuals to be able to obtain and maintain their competitive integrated employment. Interagency cooperation and coordination in service delivery is a driving force within Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and Chapter 515 of the Laws of 1992 (NYS Integrated Employment legislation). This interagency collaboration occurs at both the State and local levels through coordinated planning and service delivery initiatives, as well as through the implementation of formal Memoranda of Agreement. Throughout the year, NYSED/ACCES-VR participates and convenes meetings, workshops, and other opportunities for communication and collaboration.

Memoranda of Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding

NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with a variety of entities to enhance VR services and placement opportunities for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants. Many of these efforts are described in Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Although some partner agreements have not been recently updated, they demonstrate NYSED/ACCES-VR's overall values and commitments. More importantly, those agreements and understandings established a foundation for relationships that have continued to evolve and grow to meet changing needs. Because formalized structures can sometimes limit innovation, our approach is to keep the system flexible and fluid by a focus on collaboration.

Several of the key agreements include:

- Memorandum of Interagency Understanding regarding Supported Employment, between NYSED/ACCES-VR, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)-NYS Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), January 2001;
- Joint Agreement between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of P-12 Education – Office of Special Education, regarding the Provision of Transition Services, January 2018;
- MOA for the Workforce Investment Act: Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy between the NYSED and Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), June 30, 2000;
- MOA to Provide Services to Individuals who are Deaf/Blind, November 1999 between NYSED/ACCES-VR and NYSCB;
- MOU between the NYSED/ACCES-VR and OMH, October 1999;
- MOU between the NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), July 2010;
- MOA to promote and expand vocational rehabilitation services between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, September 2010;

- Statement of Collaboration between the NYSED/ACCES-VR and New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association (NYSFAAA), March 1, 1998;
- Joint Agreement between the NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of Higher and Professional Education (OHPE), August 4, 1994; and
- Joint Agreement between the NYSED/ACCES-VR and Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), (SUNY and CUNY) August, 2007.

COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

NYSED/ACCES-VR considers the coordination of services to youth with disabilities as one of its main priorities. NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office of Special Education to ensure that students with disabilities are prepared for employment, postsecondary education, and community living when they leave school. NYSED/ACCES-VR, through its vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) and 15 district offices, also works closely with the local education agencies to provide transition services. NYSED/ACCES-VR policy seeks school referrals within two years prior to high school exit to coordinate vocational rehabilitation (VR) services with school transition planning.

Youth, as defined by NYSED/ACCES-VR, are individuals with disabilities who are less than 25 years of age at application to the VR program. In Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, NYSED/ACCES-VR served 30,052 youth, a slight numerical increase from the previous year. Caseload statistics for youth are monitored to determine the progress of NYSED/ACCES-VR in serving and placing youth.

NYSED/ACCES-VR Transition and Youth Services (TAYS) Team was launched in April 2014, currently staffed with a Manager and Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Central Administration and a dedicated Senior Vocational Rehabilitation (SVRC) assigned in each district office. The goals of the team are to:

1. Engage youth, parents, high schools, and other transition specialists in exploring and planning career choices that connect to a full range of post-secondary options for training, career development, and employment;
2. Improve the number, quality, and rate of employment outcomes for youth participating in VR services;
3. Collaborate with multiple stakeholders, including other state agencies, Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) and Regional Special Education – Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC) Transition Specialists; and
4. Substantiate the policies and practices that lead to increased outcomes through gathering and tracking data and using it to guide the implementation and continuous improvement efforts at building knowledge and skill of VR staff and our partners.

TAYS began planning early in 2015 to build upon WIOA's focus to increase the potential of people with disabilities who enter the VR system to meet with employment success, and the requirement to spend 15% of federal VR dollars on the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students.

VR Student and Youth Transition Policy

NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborated with the Office of Special Education and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in 2017 to revise the Student and Youth Transition Services Policy to ensure a common

understanding of Pre-ETS and transition requirements and responsibilities and to assist with building a collaborative partnership between transition specialists, school districts and NYSED/ACCES-VR district offices throughout the state. The policy provides information about the requirements, roles and responsibilities of VR in preparing students with disabilities for successful employment.

This policy establishes an affirmative role for VRCs working with students in transition from school to post-school activities including work, a critical time for young adults with disabilities. The policy outlines the role of the VRC as an active participant in the pre-employment transition planning, and transition planning, processes. The policy provides information regarding the documentation that may, with parental or student consent as appropriate, be available from school districts to assist the VRC in determining the students' eligibility for VR services and to expedite post-school services. The NYSED/ACCES-VR counselor works with the school districts to identify students with disabilities who are likely to be eligible for VR services. The VRC can assist students with disabilities to prepare for and obtain employment consistent with their employment factors.

While local school districts are responsible for providing education and transition services to students with disabilities who are still in high school, the NYSED/ACCES-VR counselor will ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services for students and can provide employment-related transition services that involve preparing for the students' future.

VR and State Education Agency Agreement

The New York State Education Agency Agreement (SEA) between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of Special Education was signed by the two offices and is in effect from January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2017. An updated agreement is in the final approval stage. The SEA agreement outlines the collaborative and coordinated responsibilities of each office to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities to post-school employment. The SEA, called the Joint Agreement on the Provision of Transition Services between the New York State Education Department's (NYSED'S) Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of P-12 Education - Office of Special Education replaces the 1992 Joint Agreement.

The Agreement on the Provision of Transition Services reflects VR federal requirements and provides an overview of the purposes, objectives and responsibilities of each office in the transition process.

The purposes of agreement are to:

1. Strengthen shared efforts to prepare students with disabilities for successful careers, community jobs and independent living;
2. Outline a collaborative framework for coordinating state and local services and resources; and
3. Provide guidance for coordinating plans, policies and procedures developed to facilitate the provision of pre-employment transition services and transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities - including the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment.

The SEA agreement and the Draft Student and Youth Transition Services Policy are posted on the NYSED/ACCES-VR policy website at http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr.

State Level Coordination and Collaboration

A consistent transition and student referral system has been initiated across the state, both within NYSED/ACCES-VR and with collaborating agencies. The application process has been streamlined to reduce barriers for students to access post-secondary services necessary to obtain and maintain quality employment outcomes. Statewide consistent orientation presentations have been designed for use with in-school students and for out-of-school youth under 25 years of age. All staff will continue to use the information content in their interactions with students in school, and out-pf-school youth.

All direct service staff have received comprehensive information on the WIOA definition of and focus on pre-employment transition services for students. In 2016, specific training was provided to district office vocational rehabilitation counselor assistants, counselors, senior counselors, and integrated employment specialists on the following:

- Job exploration counseling, as it relates to students specifically;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Self-advocacy, including peer mentoring, from the perspective of a student;
- Work-based learning; and
- Workplace readiness training for development of social skills and independent living.

The training provided an opportunity for staff to enhance understanding and to share best practices.

The TAYS unit staff received training on all pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. They are responsible for leading efforts by disseminating information, developing new opportunities, and educating others on the services. To do this competently, they require a comprehensive understanding of each service, school partner obligations, and tools for fully accessing community opportunities presented through these services with business.

Many district offices throughout the state have built on an initial project piloted in New York City during the summer of 2015. Student participants are selected through a joint process between NYSED/ACCES-VR and high school personnel to receive work readiness classes during the spring months, offered outside traditional school hours by participating community services providers. The student participants can then receive work experience development and a paid internship. Results have been very positive with overall growth in the number of participants and providers, and reported satisfaction with the experiences.

In July 2015 NYSED/ACCES-VR launched a Regional Vocational Rehabilitation (RVR) project across ten Regional Special Education – Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), hiring a total of 32 RVR-Community Employment Specialists (CES) to provide technical assistance to school districts about VR services, referral process and timelines, as well as information about other post-secondary options leading to quality employment outcomes. Cornell University will assist in this by providing professional development to the CES through a joint MOU for the length of the project through June 30, 2019. Halfway through the project contract, evaluation of project deliverables indicates significant positive changes, and highlights potential modifications which could make the project stronger in the future. TAYS senior counselors, with guidance from Cornell University, will work together to develop the components of a new procurement to build upon the successes of the CES projects and meet the future needs of the youth population.

Internal staff training on Counseling and Guidance with the youth population was developed in 2016 to enhance the VRC's skill set and to provide tools to improve the VRC's ability to work effectively with youth. This training was delivered to all counseling staff and other interested staff in every district office in spring 2016. Topic areas covered included counseling youth, transitioning from an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), career maturity, the teen world, teens as involuntary participants, and maximizing use of assistive technology most specifically for job exploration, transition or postsecondary education programs, work-based learning, and workplace readiness training. There is intent to update the material and deliver again to all counseling staff with a focus to ensure all new hires are in the training.

Data from the Office of Special Education is being reviewed to identify potential numbers of applicants for VR services. Outreach to both in-school and out-of-school disengaged youth is being increased through the use of flyers and posters, and presentations at professional conferences. NYSED/ACCES-VR will work within its Case Management System to track the specific high school referral source of in-school youth and set improvement targets for high schools in need of attention. Identification of referral sources of out-of-school youth under 25 years of age will help assess the effectiveness of outreach efforts to that age group.

Each district office has an annual Youth Action Plan. The Youth Action Plan is developed by the TAYS senior counselor, in collaboration with district office and regional management. The Plan was first established for WIOA program year 2015 (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) and has been updated each year. Each plan currently has four goals as established by ACCES management:

1. Demonstrate growth of "informed early" applications (two years prior to expected high school exit);
2. Increase work experience opportunities for students during high school and during college and/or vocational training;
3. Develop core short- and mid-term success measures to track effectiveness of efforts in working with younger youth; and,
4. Establish, maintain, and grow working relationships with schools, youth organizations, parent groups, Independent Living Centers, and American Job Centers to effectively serve and increase quality employment outcomes for youth.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

NYSED/ACCES-VR works cooperatively, collaboratively and collectively with primarily non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers to increase access to competitive, integrated employment opportunities. The district offices work with vocational rehabilitation service providers to allocate resources that meet participant and business needs for employment outcomes. These programs, such as situational assessment, community-based training, supported employment, job coaching and direct placement services, assist participants in achieving community-based outcomes.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has approximately 340 Core Rehabilitation Service contracts with providers to conduct many of these services. The five-year contracts that were implemented January 1, 2014, were to expand NYSED/ACCES-VR's capacity, improve the quality of service delivery and increase competitive integrated employment outcomes. The contracts include specific vocational rehabilitation service deliverables, criteria for monitoring contract compliance and criteria to monitor the quality of services. Payment rates were modified and new services were added.

Due to new service requirements in WIOA, NYSED/ACCES-VR is planning to implement a new CRS contract in July 2018. Current contracts were reviewed to assess the number of participants employed, receiving job development and supported employment that obtained employment, the length of time it takes a participant to become successfully employed, the number of hours a participant is working per week, and hourly wages earned by the participant. The new contracts will expand and enhance many service areas including the use of summer youth employment and pre-employment transition services for students.

The new CRS RFP was issued in 2017 for organizations, and current providers to offer vocational rehabilitation entry, assessment, assistive technology, rehabilitation technology, work readiness, job placement, driver rehabilitation and related adjunct services for individuals with disabilities throughout NYS. Supported Employment intensive service plans will be offered up to 24 months long and extended services for youth will be made available (up to age 24 and/or up to 4 years). When service providers identify unmet business needs, they can develop customized employment opportunities to fill those needs that support the skills, talents and interests of the participant.

Due to the large supported employment program in the State, NYSED/ACCES-VR expects to meet the required 50 percent Title VI-B and Title I funds for funding youth in supported employment programs, including extended services.

ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

NYS, in response to recommendations made by other State agencies, service providers, advocacy organizations, parents and participants, has moved to improve the State's delivery system for supported employment by establishing clear roles and responsibilities for this vocational service outcome. In 2014, Supported Employment was integrated within the Core Rehabilitation Services contract. This streamlined contracting processing for providers and aligned service expectations for supported employment with direct placement. In NYS, NYSED/ACCES-VR has been designated as having the primary statewide responsibility for program development and administration of integrated employment, including intensive supported employment services. Relevant State agencies are responsible for the extended phases of supported employment and are working collaboratively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to ensure the provision of comprehensive supported employment services in NYS. In July 2015, the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) began offering intensive supported employment services for a select group of individuals as part of its menu of service options. Participants have choice. All individuals may apply for NYSED/ACCES-VR. However, some individuals choose to remain with OPWDD with whom they are familiar as they transition from sheltered workshop settings or high school. Through a Medicaid waiver, OMH is also beginning to offer intensive supported employment services to its participants.

The framework for implementing supported employment has been established by the interagency "Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Supported Employment", the "Principles and Operating Guidelines for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Employment" and the "Quality Indicators for Supported Employment". These documents constitute the policy and procedural base for the delivery of supported employment services in NYS.

NYSED/ACCES-VR will be working with Supported Employment partners to update and streamline procedures and to develop new strategies so as to be fully able to embrace the new opportunities within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Implementation Strategies Used to Increase Employment Outcomes

The competitive integrated employment outcomes that have been achieved occurred by implementing specific interagency strategies and action steps. The strategies and action steps were developed from implementation themes established through interagency consensus. The four major implementation themes driving these strategies include:

- Employment opportunities and business partnerships;
- Participant empowerment and informed choice;
- Coordination and delivery of supports; and
- Management and administration of the system.

These implementation strategies were agreed upon through interagency consensus and were revised as necessary to accommodate the employment needs of participants and the employment opportunities offered by business. The following summarizes the major implementation strategies and employment outcomes achieved as a result of these strategies:

- Increased the use of options that promote participant choice;
- Increased activity with regional business consortia and/or business advisory councils;
- Established local marketing efforts;
- Promoted the development of entrepreneurship;
- Facilitated school-to-work transition opportunities;
- Established formal methods of assessing participant satisfaction;
- Increased coordination between NYSED/ACCES-VR and mental health providers;
- Increased coordination to enhance support services;
- Restructured participant assessment methodology to a community-based approach;
- Coordinated job development and placement activities;
- Promoted cost effectiveness through innovative service delivery mechanisms; and,
- Coordinated program development, requests for proposal (RFP) and program evaluation activities.

NYSED/ACCES-VR engages the provider and business communities in identifying innovative approaches. Further dialogue will take place to identify strategies for:

- Increasing the use of assistive technology;
- Addressing concerns around liability as it relates to businesses being willing to serve as mentors or to provide short-term volunteer opportunities; and,
- Providing benefits advisement both early in the process and at the time of placement in a job.

Provider Guidelines for Supported Employment

NYSED/ACCES-VR revised the "Provider Guidelines for Supported Employment" in 2014 to reflect contract changes. The Guidelines assist in establishing a common base of accepted practices and procedures for supported employment. These guidelines, which are on the NYSED/ACCES-VR website, are intended to facilitate service delivery and cooperation between NYSED/ACCES-VR and employment

service providers. The guidelines will be revised to reflect the contract changes that are set to be implemented in July 2018.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has been assigned the responsibility for administering, establishing standards and monitoring the intensive service component of supported employment programs. NYSED/ACCES-VR also has responsibility for the provision of extended services to individuals who are not eligible for such services through other sources. NYSED/ACCES-VR's Quality Assurance Unit conducts reviews at provider agencies. Partner state agencies that provide extended services are invited to participate in those reviews.

COORDINATION WITH BUSINESS

NYSED/ACCES-VR has a Business Relations Unit. The Unit is led by the Resource Development Manager in Central Administration and consists of a Statewide Coordinator, also located in Central Administration, and placement and marketing representatives, known as Integrated Employment Specialists (IES) in the 15 District Offices. In addition, there is an IES 2 for each of the five regions of the state. A statewide plan for business coordination has been developed that links to the goals and strategies outlined in the Combined State Plan and links to WIOA partner efforts for business engagement. There will be five regional plans that connect to the statewide plan and to the work of the local district offices. The regional plans will reflect integration and coordination with the larger workforce development system in each respective area, including the workforce development boards and local American Career Centers.

In 2017, these plans were further examined and compared with our partners' business engagement strategies. Strategies for a collaborative approach to strengthen and streamline workforce system efforts in this area continue to be identified and implemented. (Additional detail can be found in the combined section of this plan.) The NYSED/ACCES-VR plans reflect a heightened focus on business needs and how NYSED/ACCES-VR, and its partners can work with system participants to meet those needs. The plan also continues to build on the following collaborations: statewide disability employment training initiative with Cornell University; local job placement and marketing initiatives with the Society for Human Resource Management; and The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) unions across the State. In addition, NYSED/ACCES-VR is a member of the New York State Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) New York State's workforce association. NYATEP serves a cross-section of the major titles of WIOA, including Workforce Boards, Career Centers, partner programs, and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR intends to work closely with NYATEP during the initial implementation of WIOA to increase communication and common understanding of the law across the four titles of WIOA. Specifically, working with NYATEP to ensure partners understand, value, and include robust rehabilitation programming locally. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR intends to work with NYATEP in future years to provide professional development and networking opportunities to rehabilitation staff.

Each year NYSED/ACCES-VR recognizes outstanding businesses during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This nationwide campaign raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities, past and present and the business that hire them.

In addition, given the expectation that business must be dually addressed as both a customer and partner of the State vocational rehabilitation program in building employment opportunities for people with disabilities (Section 109 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended), NYSED/ACCES-VR has explored options for expanding services to business. Many activities will flow from that strategic

exploration. One specific initiative is with the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) in collaboration with the Poses Family Foundation titled, NYC: AT WORK. This is a 3-year pilot project (hereafter, Project) being designed to focus on the following goals: 1) increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by educating businesses about disability awareness and employing people with disabilities; 2) enlist businesses that successfully employ people with disabilities to mentor and provide technical assistance to other businesses; 3) seek commitment of businesses to adopt policies and practices within their organizations around outreach to and the hiring and training of people with disabilities; and, 4) successfully place a minimum of 200 individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated employment each year. NYSED/ACCES-VR will direct the work of the Project that is funded with vocational rehabilitation dollars to ensure compliance with federal regulations, and will continuously monitor the deliverables and outcomes to ensure adherence to Project goals and timelines. It is expected that this Project will assist NYSED/ACCES-VR by obtaining direct input from business on developing strategies to better identify and train individuals to meet the skill sets required by the current and emerging labor markets. The Project is designed to meet the needs of businesses and individuals served by VR through local community and State partnerships. Currently, the MOPD partners with a 35-member Business Development Council, the city's one-stop career centers, colleges and universities, local education agencies, State agencies and VR service provider agencies. The initiative will enhance these partnerships through its focus on active business engagement. There are specific outcome expectations for the development of a Business-to-Business Mentoring Program and development of written polices for recruiting, hiring and employing people with disabilities. The Project outcomes will be evaluated to assist NYSED/ACCES-VR with expanding the successes statewide to further enhance the Workforce Development System as a whole. It is expected that the expansion efforts would be a combination of procuring contracts (e.g. RFP) and/or expanding NYSED/ACCES-VR staff roles. The Project took additional time to launch, but at this time staff are on board and are engaging in outreach and developing internships.

Discussion is underway with the State Rehabilitation Council about how they can further support NYSED/ACCES-VR IES's to establish new relationships with business, and a discussion of customized employment with those businesses where the Agency has more established relationships.

In October 2017, national consultant Greg Newton, Newton Associates, provided a day-long facilitated discussion on business engagement for the NYS WIOA partners, staff directly providing business services, center directors, and representative community rehabilitation providers of vocational rehabilitation services. Included topics: performance accountability, ensuring common understanding of terms, a joint understanding of how to approach business, and, much more.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has included in its new CRS contracts, expected to begin July 2018, opportunities and funding for providers to develop customized employment opportunities. Training will also be provided to providers regarding provision of this service.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

NYSED/ACCES-VR has longstanding working partnerships with the Office for People with Development Disabilities (OPWDD) and the Office of Mental Health (OMH). Collaborative projects and initiatives are ongoing.

In 2014, NYS established an Employment First policy. This policy outlines several strategies and demonstrates NYS's full commitment to inclusion for people with disabilities. To accomplish the vision and goals there are collaborative efforts that require participation for all State agencies. Many of these strategies build upon the existing linkages. Over the past several years OPWDD, OMH and

NYSED/ACCES-VR have been providing targeted training to employment staff on the delivery of high quality evidence-based employment services to individuals with disabilities to more fully support the goals of Employment First, expansion of this training is being planned.

Recently, NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborated with OMH to provide a workshop on how to coordinate services that might be provided from a variety of state agencies. The workshop was delivered at a conference whose audience was primarily mental health providers and participants. This workshop was a project that developed out of an ongoing Recovery-Oriented Vocational Rehabilitation Community of Practice that evolved from an initial training program on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model and recovery from mental illness that was jointly developed several years ago. Through quarterly training sessions and on-going sharing of resources through e-mail, formal presenters and colleagues share knowledge and practices related to working with individuals with mental health conditions all year long. These connections play out in a variety of collaborative projects.

NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue to work with OMH and OPWDD as well as NYS CB on supported employment guidelines to ensure the appropriate and smooth transitions for individuals with disabilities.

In NYS, the Department of Health is the single agency that administers Medicaid. The OPWDD and OMH work directly in partnership with DOH on administering Medicaid waiver services.

OPWDD provides person-centered services, supports and advocacy to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. OPWDD works with a network of nearly 800 not-for-profit providers to help people with developmental disabilities lead richer lives. Through its “Putting People First”, vision, OPWDD invests in enhancing its partnership with other state and local agencies. NYSED/ACCES-VR works in partnership with OPWDD to identify how the two systems need to mesh regarding employment. OPWDD makes some employment services available, with a high focus on preparing the individual to be ready to seek employment. Often volunteer activities in the community are used to help underscore the social values of inclusion and productivity. Supports to the individual may include vocational training, job coaching, travel training, technological aids, counseling, job placement and any other supports needed to meet the individual’s unique circumstances in preparing for competitive integrated employment.

OPWDD and NYSED/ACCES-VR have recently agreed that OPWDD eligible individuals participating in certain pre-employment programs, known as Pathway to Employment, Employment Training Program (ETP) or Prevocational Services can participate in these services with OPWDD without need for a formal denial of NYSED/ACCES-VR services. The justification for this process is an understanding that OPWDD individuals receiving Pathway to Employment, Employment Training Program or Prevocational Services will need extreme levels of support to engage in work activity. Additionally, most of the individuals participating in Pathway to Employment, Employment Training Program or Prevocational Services are OPWDD eligible individuals who because of very limited employment and vocational experiences need exposure to community social and volunteer experiences and work readiness classes. Traditionally, these individuals have been enrolled in other OPWDD programs such as day habilitation which have precluded individuals from participating in employment services. Most often these individuals have Medicaid Service Coordinators and are following a broader plan for inclusion in the community. This process allows the participant to choose which service best fits his/her need at a point in time. It is made clear that at any time, any person with a disability may apply for NYSED/ACCES-VR services.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Personnel Needs

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to establishing and maintaining an adequate supply of vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) and relies on two systems to assess its qualified personnel needs. These systems are the NYS Education Department (NYSED) Fiscal and Human Resources Information Management System and the VR Reporting System. NYSED/ACCES-VR collects data from these systems to track information about its VRCs who meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements and the number of participants served, and then uses the information to make trend data projections to assess staffing needs.

NYSED/ACCES-VR hires VRCs who meet CSPD requirements to provide vocational rehabilitation services. NYSED/ACCES-VR employs vocational rehabilitation counselor assistants (VRCAs) to perform a variety of paraprofessional tasks to support the VRCs in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain or retain employment. The VRCAs interact with participants and perform administrative tasks to facilitate service delivery. NYSED/ACCES-VR does not employ any other type of rehabilitation staff, such as mobility instructors or rehabilitation teachers.

There are 293 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) VRC positions filled. NYSED/ACCES-VR uses trend data projections to estimate the number of individuals that will be found eligible for NYSED/ACCES-VR services. Based on these projections, NYSED/ACCES-VR determined that 137 new VRCs will be needed to serve its participants over the next five years. The estimate is based on the anticipated number of individuals to be served, the number of VRCs and supervisory counseling staff age 55 or older with 25 years of service who will be eligible for retirement within the next five years and others who may leave the agency.

There are 97 FTE VRCA positions filled. NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates it will need 56 new VRCAs over the next five years. The estimate is calculated based on a projected need for a total of 97 VRCA positions (1 VRCA: 3 VRC ratio), the number of VRCAs age 55 or older with 25 years of service who will be eligible for retirement within the next five years and others who may leave the agency.

The number of participants served increased from 52,896 last year to 57,010 this year. Based on a ratio of 1:175 VRC to participant, the current level of counselors and counselor assistants allows us to adequately serve current numbers of eligible individuals.

<u>Projected Counseling Staff Needs</u>

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor - total of 293 positions with 12 current vacancies. The projected need over the next 5 years is 156.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Assistant- a total of 97 positions with 8 current vacancies. The projected need over the next 5 years is 56.

Personnel Development

The Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) are the agencies that provide accreditation to Master's

programs in Rehabilitation Counselor Education at institutions of higher education. CORE and CACREP have entered into an affiliation agreement as described in a Memorandum of Agreement effective July 1, 2017. The affiliation allows both organizations to maintain their independent corporate statuses, while they work toward unification of the accreditation activities as part of CACREP's next standard revision process. CACREP anticipates that its next standard review process will begin in 2019 and CACREP Standards will be published by 2022.

The CORE/CACREP accredited programs in NYS are: University at Buffalo – State University of New York (SUNY), Hofstra University, and Hunter College – City University of New York (CUNY).

Institutions of Higher Education (CORE) Student Total

Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or ED/OSERS/RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or ED/OSERS/RSA	Graduates from the previous year
University at Buffalo	99	2	0	26
Hofstra University	26	1	0	3
Hunter College - CUNY	142	1	0	20

Student enrollment at NYS CORE/CACREP accredited programs increased over the past few years. In 2016, there were 267 students enrolled in graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling. NYSED/ACCES-VR maintains a contact at each of these institutions of higher education and collects the following student data:

- SUNY Buffalo offers a graduate program in rehabilitation counseling to students both on-campus and online. In FY 2016, student enrollment decreased from FY enrollment of 107 students to 99 students.
- Hofstra University student enrollment in FY 2016 decreased from FY enrollment of 40 students to 26 students.
- CUNY Hunter College student enrollment in FY 2016 increased from FY enrollment of 94 students to 142 students.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

NYSED/ACCES-VR works with CORE/CACREP programs in New York and contiguous states to attract potential candidates from diverse backgrounds for employment at NYSED/ACCES-VR. To maximize outreach efforts, NYSED/ACCES-VR increased its use of technology to share information and maintain contact with schools. In 2016, recruitment visits focused on colleges and universities in and around NYS. The benefits of working in NYS were shared with Program Directors and students in graduate Rehabilitation Counseling programs. They were also advised of internship opportunities and the application process for taking the NYS Civil Service exam for VR counselors.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has an internship program to provide second-year graduate students with an opportunity to perform their internships in one of the NYSED/ACCES-VR field offices. This initiative allows students to complete their degree requirements while building valuable experience with the State VR program. The internship program is comprised of two components: a practicum and an internship. These are offered three times each year and recently graduated students can work in intern status while pursuing full time employment at NYSED/ACCES-VR. When resources allow, paid internships are made available to students.

More than 330 students have participated in the internship program since 2006 with 59 VRCs hired. In 2016, NYSED/ACCES-VR provided 12 practicum experiences and 22 internship opportunities.

Personnel Standards

Since NYS does not have State certification or licensure for VR counselors, NYSED/ACCES-VR elected to use the national standard established by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). The two counselors who do not meet this standard are engaged in a training program to meet the standard or plan to retire by May 30, 2018. The participation of VRCs in an educational program to meet the standard is regularly monitored to evaluate compliance with SED personnel standards (cited below).

NYSED/ACCES-VR employs VRCs who have, or are eligible to obtain, qualification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). All VRCs are required to have:

- A Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, including a supervised internship, from a CORE accredited program; or
- A Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or Counseling and notice of eligibility to participate in the CRCC certificate examination.

VRCs considered for appointment to a "Manual Communication" or "Spanish Language" position are required to demonstrate proficiency in the manual sign language or in the Spanish language. Proficiency must be at a level which will permit them to perform the duties of the position satisfactorily.

Civil Service Qualifications for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Assistant

NYSED/ACCES-VR employs VRCAs to assist VRCs in the administrative, paraprofessional and routine communication tasks that enhance the vocational rehabilitation process. The VRCAs do not determine eligibility, develop the vocational goal, write the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), or determine case closures. To be eligible for employment, VRCAs must meet the following qualifications:

- Bachelor degree in vocational rehabilitation, social work, counseling, or psychology; or
- Bachelor degree and one year of qualifying experience; or
- 60 semester college credit hours and two years of qualifying experience; or
- Four years of qualifying experience. For the experience to be considered qualifying, the primary responsibilities of a position must have involved professional or paraprofessional duties in one of the following areas:
    - Either providing direct services beyond routine personal care or supervision to physically, mentally or learning-disabled adults or adolescents in a rehabilitation program or facility; or
    - Providing vocational or educational services to adults or adolescents with disabilities in the areas of assessment, counseling, job coaching, guidance, placement or job development.

Staff Development

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to ensuring that personnel have current knowledge and continuous skill update which includes a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. Training is a critical component in the development and retention of qualified staff and for ensuring that participants receive quality services.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has several mechanisms to support the provision of training: in-house staff provide training; training is purchased per specific identified need; attendance at training conferences is sponsored; a contract for training is maintained; opportunities to attend partner trainings are made available; and, a Training Reimbursement program is offered.

Annual training needs assessments are conducted. This includes review of satisfaction with and effectiveness of trainings provided in the prior year. The results are used to develop an annual master training schedule. Managers and the State Rehabilitation Council provide input into the master training schedule that is developed.

Effective December 2014, NYSED/ACCES-VR signed a 5-year MOU with The University at Buffalo for the provision of training for staff. The training needs assessment and training delivery was modeled, to some extent, on the former Rehabilitation Services Administration Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) format. Through this MOU the University at Buffalo:

- Provides 80 full days of training per year.
- Develops and provides a supervision/management series of trainings that focus on the multiple roles of the supervisor.
- Provides workshops at NYSED/ACCES-VR's all staff training, supervisory institutes, and management institutes.
- Builds curriculum and provides training (community setting, evening option) for the business community/businesses. This training includes an overview of disability etiquette, reasonable accommodations, navigating financial incentives, and the value of people with disability as members of the workforce.

Between July 2015 and October 2017, 3317* training slots were made available to VR staff within 79 training opportunities. Of those in attendance, 885 slots were filled by staff with CRCs. Examples of the trainings made available include the following:

- Autism and Related Disabilities: Putting Research into Practice.
- Vocational rehabilitation counseling and professional conferences: including transition; customized training for transition team, engaging and preparing youth for employment; developing the IPE including counseling and guidance plans; motivational interviewing; ethical issues in rehabilitation; case management; managing challenging behaviors in employment; working with participants with: co-existing conditions; mental illness and substance abuse; autism, traumatic brain injury; multiple sclerosis; counseling; providing VR services to diverse and minority group of individuals with disabilities; post-secondary education plans; de-escalation and crisis management techniques; and working with sex offenders.
- Rehabilitation technology, including Microsoft applications (i.e., SharePoint PowerPoint, Access and Excel).
- Pre-employment transition services for students.
- Job placement and employment: including labor market information; labor trends; placement initiatives and self-employment; work incentives; VR partnerships in employment; transferable skills; training techniques in employment setting; integration of recovery; re-entry for ex-offenders with disabilities; returning to work with a traumatic brain injury; placing transgender into the workforce; independent living; improving employment outcomes; and Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Supported employment: including professional conferences. Training was provided for supported employment; counseling skills for direct service providers; documentation and record keeping; job retention and career development; and benefits advisement.

*Numbers referenced do not include all in-house trainings.

NYSED/ACCES-VR also offers a Training Reimbursement Program. Funds are provided to assist staff to pursue certificate, non-degree, undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate degree courses. Since 2016, 4 staff participated in the Training Reimbursement Program.

Procedures for Acquisition and Dissemination of Training

As noted above, NYSED/ACCES-VR provides multiple training paths for staff. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborates with other State agencies and disability organizations to jointly develop or provide disability and/or systems trainings for staff. These partnerships provide trainings for CRCs to earn continuing education credits and to meet the Ethics certification requirements.

Key partnerships exist with the: Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS); NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD); NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH); Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), NYS Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA), New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (NYAPRS), New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) and the NYS Independent Living Council (NYSILC). These relationships also include opportunities to share information and acquire training and knowledge.

Currently the WIOA Interagency Team has a workgroup charged to develop a Workforce System Training agenda. Along with WIOA partners, NYSED/ACCES-VR is engaged with this Training and Assistance Workgroup (see combined section of the plan for additional detail), which includes linkage to local American Job Centers. The Training and Assistance Workgroup is developing and will maintain a system inventory of training. Information will be shared and all staff within the system will be provided with access to ongoing, collaborative training opportunities.

Training is provided through a variety of modalities such as distance learning, video-conference, seminars, workshops, individual district office training, and attendance at local, regional and statewide training programs and conferences. NYSED/ACCES-VR utilizes video-conferencing training as much as possible to facilitate training opportunities and to minimize costs. Consideration is given to the diversity of staff, skill levels, and experiences and needs when developing training programs.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

NYSED/ACCES-VR ensures adequate services to applicants or eligible individuals with limited English proficiency or who use other modes of communication such as sign language, by hiring staff able to communicate in other native languages or via other modes of communication, such as sign language. When such staff is not available, NYSED/ACCES-VR obtains the services of other individuals able to communicate in appropriate modes with applicants or eligible individuals. NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with outside agencies and individuals for interpreter or communication services, and uses only certified or State-approved interpreters for the deaf when sign language interpreter services are required in the provision of VR services.

Coordination with Personnel Development and Training under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Through its administration of vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, NYSED/ACCES-VR coordinates policy and services relating to pre-employment transition services and transition services for students with disabilities from school to adult. The coordination of meaningful transition services for students with disabilities is a priority for NYSED/ACCES-VR. Within the State Education Department (SED), NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborates with the P-12: Office of Special Education. The program managers jointly review and share training information and, when relevant, coordinate efforts by inviting respective staff to receive training on transition, accommodations, assessment and knowledge of specific disabilities.

Training continues on the Career Development and Commencement Credential (CDOS), as it relates to NYSED/ACCES-VR's overall efforts in serving youth. The CDOS is a NYS educational credential that replaced the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Diploma for students with significant disabilities effective July 1, 2013. The CDOS requires students with disabilities to participate in a set of experiences related to preparing for employment. It is envisioned that this credential will provide more documentation about the accomplishments of students in the areas of academic instruction, career exploration and development, and provide potential businesses with documentation on which students are exiting school with demonstrated knowledge and experience for entry-level employment.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those (a) with the most significant disabilities, including the need for supported employment services, (b) who are minorities, (c) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program, (d) who have been served through other components of the Statewide workforce development system; and (e) who are Youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

Background for the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment

NYSED/ACCES-VR, as a core partner in the WIOA Combined State Plan, conducted this assessment with the support and collaboration of their WIOA program partners to assess the extent to which the needs of individuals with disabilities in NYS are being addressed and develop a series of action strategies to promote continuous quality improvement.

2017 Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

The changes ushered in by the passage of WIOA in 2014 required a recalibration of the NYS needs assessment to incorporate new priorities established under the law: a focus on transition-age youth with disabilities, including the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), other transition services, and expansion of supported employment; restrictions on subminimum wage employment; requirements for stronger coordination between the vocational rehabilitation (VR), developmental disabilities and mental health systems as well as WIOA core program partners; increase in engagement of employers in planning through a dual customer approach; and, expectation that the VR program will meet common performance measures. The new structure, values and goals of WIOA have realigned the plans and priorities of NYSED/ACCES-VR, placing added emphasis on working collaboratively with the

core partners to develop pathways to and support Competitive Integrated Employment outcomes. The CNA was conducted to understand:

- NYSED/ACCES-VR's current approach to providing Pre-ETS for students and analyzing outcomes for students and youth with various demographic backgrounds, including strategies for partnering with other state agencies in providing services for students and youth with disabilities, including out-of-school youth;
- Existing and potential strategies for partnering with WIOA core partners to improve access to VR services;
- The process of employment of individuals with disabilities in jobs that pay sub-minimum wage, identifying areas of improvement to align with the WIOA requirements;
- The cultural competence and readiness of VR counselors and community rehabilitation program (CRP) personnel to meet unique needs of minority and unserved/underserved populations;
- Existing and potential strategies for engaging businesses and employers in identifying Competitive Integrated Employment opportunities for people with disabilities; and,
- Utilization of the NYSED/ACCES-VR Case Management System (CaMS) as a framework for performance management under WIOA.

The CNA employed a multiple, parallel mixed methods design to provide unified recommendations for technical assistance and quality improvement of VR and workforce development practices and policies to support alignment of NYSED/ACCES-VR with WIOA expectations. The approaches employed also closely aligned with the newly issued *Technical Assistance Guide* from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration (ED/OSERS/RSA) for understanding implementation of WIOA in VR (http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/2016/technical-assistance-guide.pdf) and ED/OSERS/RSA's *VR Needs Assessment Guide* (https://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/resources/vr-needs-assessment-guide.pdf).

The CNA was conceptualized across three phases: (A) assessing the universe of needs; (B) quantifying specific needs; and (C) mapping context of the needs in implementing WIOA mandates. The intent of the CNA is to build a set of recommendations for future services, training, and technical assistance for developing and augmenting practices and policies to align with WIOA requirements, as well as supporting implementation of the Combined State Plan in NYS. To fulfill the priorities of this CNA the following seven needs assessment activities, evaluation questions and approaches were employed:

Phase A. Assessing Universe of Needs

Activity 1: Review of literature and high-level analysis of secondary data

This activity established the context of the needs assessment though examination of existing literature and secondary data. Specifically, high-level analyses were conducted of the American Community Survey (ACS) data, the Current Population Survey (CPS) data (disability supplement), the NYS Post-School Outcomes data (SUNY Potsdam survey), along with review of pertinent policy documents including the WIOA regulations and the NYS Combined State Plan

Phase B. Quantifying Specific Needs

Activity 2: Students and youth in NYSED/ACCES-VR study

The purpose of this activity was two-fold: (a) to understand outcomes for students and youth with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR; and (b) to understand the extent of coordination between NYSED/ACCES-VR and other agencies serving students and youth in NYS. The CaMS and RSA-911 data sets (see supporting information here: https://rsa.ed.gov/display.cfm?pageid=75) were analyzed from 2010 through 2016 to study the year-to-year and longitudinal transitions of young adult VR participants. In addition, three regional focus group discussions were held with VR counselors regarding their experiences serving youth. Finally, three NYSED/ACCES-VR leadership and State Rehabilitation Council members participated in in-depth interviews.

Activity 3: Cultural competency in serving unserved/underserved population

This activity assessed cultural awareness and competency among CRP personnel as well as NYSED/ACCES-VR professionals to support the increasing demand for serving minority and unserved/underserved populations of people with disabilities as required by WIOA. Two online surveys were fielded – one to all VR agency personnel and one to practitioners in community-based organizations providing vocational rehabilitation services. A set of questions was included in each survey to ascertain respondents' capacities, cultural awareness and competencies in serving this population. Existing effective practices for serving minority and unserved/underserved populations were also examined for system-wide scalability.

Activity 4: Sub-minimum Wage Study

This activity's goal was to describe existing practices around sub-minimum wage employment of individuals with disabilities in NYS, with a focus on VR participants and potential participants. It was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of NYSED/ACCES-VR's current approach to implementation of section 511 of WIOA. CaMS and RSA-911 data were first examined to understand the prevalence of subminimum, or more specifically less than minimum wage among current NYSED/ACCES-VR participants.

Two subminimum wage facilities were selected – one in upstate/central New York and one in the greater Manhattan area – to assess NYSED/ACCES-VR's current approach to implementation of section 511 of WIOA. Researchers observed as NYSED/ACCES-VR teams conducted the required 511 group orientation and individual counseling sessions with subminimum wage employees with disabilities. At a later date, focus groups were conducted with those workers to understand their experiences and needs and what they had taken away from the NYSED/ACCES-VR intervention. The employers at those sites also participated in in-depth interviews.

The online survey of community-based providers included questions directed at providers of sub-minimum wage work, to understand their current practices and experience with transitioning workers into Competitive Integrated Employment settings.

Phase C. Mapping the Context of Needs

Activity 5: Assessing VR practices responsiveness to labor market needs and employer engagement

This activity was designed to understand the extent to which VR policies and practices are aligned to be responsive to the needs of the local labor market to support employment of people with disabilities in high-growth sectors. It also highlighted practices that employers have found effective in engaging with the workforce development systems to align the VR systems with labor market needs. The online survey of VR and workforce development professionals included specific questions about their interactions with employers. In addition, focus groups were conducted in Manhattan and Western New York with employers to understand their current experiences.

Activity 6: Understand collaboration needs of the WIOA partners

This activity worked to surface the felt, expressed, and normative needs of the WIOA Combined State Plan partners, specifically those partner agencies representing employment and workforce development. Three online focus group discussions were held with WIOA state and regional partners to identify common themes across the felt and expressed needs of the group. Three in-depth interviews with state-level personnel helped surface normative needs and additionally explore topics identified during the review of WIOA and NYS Employment First policy framework.

Activity 7: Understand framework for information needs for continuous quality improvement

The purpose of this activity was to identify the information needs of NYSED/ACCES-VR professionals, strategic planning and policy-making groups to support their efforts on continuous quality improvement in planning and implementation of services. Specifically, this activity focused on identification of key data sources as well as frameworks for presenting information from CaMS, RSA-911, and other data to catalyze critical reflection in improving practices and policymaking for increasing employment of people with disabilities in NYS.

The online survey of VR professionals included key questions about data use and needs. Further, five in-depth interviews with key personnel in the NYSED/ACCES-VR system were conducted to clarify and develop a framework for the business intelligence system.

Source Reports and Data

The following source reports were utilized for the purposes of the CNA. While much of the data derived for the analysis was collected through primary data collection strategies using interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys as well as secondary data sets (CaMS & ED/OSERS/RSA-911). The source reports listed below provided foundational knowledge necessary for subsequent needs assessment activities.

1. Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2016). 2015 Disability Status Report: New York. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (YTI). This report provides summary data on prevalence, employment, and labor market participation of people with disabilities. This information provides a contextual grounding to assess the employment support needs for people with disabilities. For example, about 7.8% of working-age New Yorkers with disabilities reported to be not working but actively looking for work.
2. The 2015 Consumer Survey of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Report: SUNY Potsdam, NY. This report provided information on the extent of satisfaction with NYSED/ACCES-VR services as reported by VR participants who exited with successful employment outcomes. Overall, NYSED/ACCES-VR participants who were employed at the time of this survey reported an overall higher-level of satisfaction with NYSED/ACCES-VR services compared to their peers who were not working at the time of this survey. Additionally, among individuals with lower satisfaction a common reason indicated was that “after services, I didn’t get an appropriate job” and “staff weren’t sensitive to my needs.” These data points encourage CNA efforts to understand cultural sensitivity of VR staff and community-based rehabilitation providers (CRPs) with diverse VR participants.
3. Business 14(c) Certificate Holders List, U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (https://www.dol.gov/whd/specialemployment/BusinessCertList.htm). This report helped in identifying providers of this service and understand their active caseload of individuals with disabilities in sub-minimum wage settings. It is important to note that there is no currently existing data base of individuals with disabilities employed in sub-minimum wage settings that is available for analysis.

4. Developing a model comprehensive statewide needs assessment with corresponding training materials for State VR Agency staff and SRC Members (2009). InfoUse, Washington, DC. This report provided a structure and guidance with respect to overall CNA process in data collection, analysis, and presentation of the findings.
5. Announcement of Funding Opportunities: RFP#GC18-004 (2018-2023 Core Rehabilitation Services). This request for proposals provided service definitions for the new Pre-ETS services and other youth employment services being launched by NYSED/ACCES-VR in 2018.

Findings for the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Residing in New York State:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment services

An "individual with the most significant disability" is defined as an individual who meets the criteria for having a significant disability and in addition has serious limitations in two or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome, the amount of time needed for vocational rehabilitation services, and the number of vocational rehabilitation services needed.

Employees receiving sub-minimum wage under section 14c of the Fair Labor Standards Act

As of November 1, 2017, NYS had 112 employers operating under section 14(c) certificates under the Fair Labor Standards Act and approximately 9,200 individuals employed at subminimum wage. During 2016 and 2017, NYSED/ACCES-VR implemented a statewide intervention to fulfill shared responsibilities of NYSED/ACCES-VR and subminimum wage employers under section 511 of WIOA. The purpose of the intervention was to educate and support subminimum wage employees to understand employment options available to them and make informed choices regarding competitive integrated employment. This was accomplished through: 1) large group presentations presented at subminimum wage employment locations throughout the state on how NYSED/ACCES-VR can support competitive integrated employment; and 2) follow-up one-to-one counseling sessions with NYSED/ACCES-VR personnel to determine subminimum wage employee interest in pursuing competitive integrated employment, obtain appropriate signatures to verify participation in the intervention and provide NYSED/ACCES-VR applications to interested subminimum wage employees.

In order to explore the impact of these intervention activities, two follow-up focus groups with sub-minimum wage employees and one follow-up focus group with NYSED/ACCES-VR personnel who participated in the intervention were conducted, along with in-depth key informant interviews with subminimum wage employer staff. This study provided initial insights into the overall utility of the section 511 intervention for workers with disabilities in sub-minimum wage work that was conducted by NYSED/ACCES-VR in 2016 and 2017. It is important to note that this work is limited by its sample size and that observations were conducted only in two local subminimum wage employment settings. Further, there was a substantial recall bias involved in the design, especially given the functional limitations of the subminimum wage informants.

One thing that was apparent from the observations was that it is necessary to have multiple touch-points with employees over time to help them successfully apply for NYSED/ACCES-VR services and achieve their goals of working in competitive integrated employment, and that information be presented in a format targeted to the specific needs of those individuals with the most significant disabilities being counseled.

In light of the fact that some centers, including one of the settings in this study, are looking to NOT renew their 14(c) certificates, a more comprehensive approach to help these subminimum wage employees make informed decisions regarding competitive integrated employment will be more important, as it is unlikely that these agencies will have resources to support this population in transitioning to competitive integrated employment. Both subminimum wage employees and employer staff recognized and validated the importance of relationship in supporting making informed choices and the impact that third party influencers can have, both positive and negative, on making choices regarding work and earnings. Finally, key informants identified that often subminimum wage employees are on pathways to work under the sponsorship of other state disability agencies, and that a more comprehensive, cross-agency approach needs to be taken to support competitive integrated employment outcomes. Both staff of subminimum wage employers and NYSED/ACCES-VR personnel suggested that a different approach be considered, one that utilizes outside contractors to deliver the required services and supports under section 511.

Need for supported employment

About 6-10% of NYSED/ACCES-VR participants received supported employment (SE) services. In multivariate analysis controlling for all observable factors such as demographics, disability classification, educational attainment, and receipt of public benefits, receipt of SE services contributed to 34% higher probability of successful outcome. Further, the extent of SE services received also positively impacted the probability of competitive integrated employment outcomes. Cost of services and duration of services generally can be used as surrogate markers in understanding the extent of SE services. Based on multivariate analysis, it was evident that every increase of one hundred dollars in spending on SE among SE participants increased the probability of competitive employment outcomes by 24% percent, after controlling for all background characteristics of VR participants. However, the relationship between SE service expenditure and probability of competitive integrated employment outcome remains curvilinear, with maximum impact achieved at $4,250 for adults and $5,500 for youth with disabilities – an amount slightly higher than the average cost for SE services ($3,350). The service duration at which highest probability of outcomes were achieved with SE services ranged from 20 to 24 months. This data supports the value of SE services in contributing to successful employment outcomes. With the expansion of SE services to youth with the most significant disabilities and extension of time limits on intensive services under WIOA, further analysis is warranted to better understand the impact of SE services on youth and other underserved/unserved VR participants such as those with mental health disabilities; other vulnerable youth like those in foster care, juvenile justice involvement; immigrants; LGBTQ; and, racial/ethnic/linguistic minorities.

Recommendations and action strategies

Individuals with the most significant disabilities continue to experience challenges on their path to competitive integrated employment. The following series of action strategies are proposed to support the movement of these individuals out of subminimum wage employment and expansion of SE services.

- ***Supporting the transition of subminimum wage employees to competitive integrated employment in NYS.***
  NYSED/ACCES-VR should consider designing and employing an externally contracted approach to implement a statewide, high fidelity section 511 intervention. It is recommended that the external agency(ies) have experience working with individuals with the most significant disabilities, providing information and referral to other support programs, engaging in micro-counseling and motivational interviewing skills, and that the intervention provide multiple touch-points including both individual and small group sessions at various points during the year to help people with disabilities understand the NYSED/ACCES-VR process of application, service delivery, and how it can contribute

to attainment of competitive integrated employment. A logic model should guide the fidelity, implementation and evaluation of this priority.

- ***Expanding pathways to competitive integrated employment through supported employment.*** When working collaboratively with combined state plan partners and state agencies that work with people with developmental disabilities and mental health impairments, NYSED/ACCES-VR should consider development of a comprehensive plan to support increased access to supported employment across systems—including, as needed articulation agreements regarding how various pathways to employment can be achieved and work toward the common attainment of competitive integrated employment. This could include conducting a more robust cost/benefit assessment of expansion of seamless SE programming across state agencies offering these types of services.

B. Individuals who are minorities; and

C. Individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Definition of minority, unserved and underserved populations

Traditionally certain demographic groups have been underrepresented in the state VR program. This group includes individuals belonging to racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, those identifying as LGBTQ, individuals with mental health disabilities, other vulnerable youth such as the homeless, youth in foster care, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and those receiving public welfare such as SSI/SSDI, TANF, SNAP, and HUD assistance.

Outputs from CaMS analysis

Overall, 57% of NYSED/ACCES-VR participants were White, 25% were Black, 16% Hispanic, and about 3% were Asians and others. A higher proportion of youth were white compared to adults.

Racial and ethnic disparities were consistently evident for youth as well as adult VR participants with respect to competitive integrated employment outcomes. Compared to White participants, Black participants had 3 to 4% lower probability of competitive integrated outcomes, and Hispanic and Asian participants had 1 to 2% lower probability of competitive integrated outcomes, Further, minority populations were more likely to be working in less than minimum wage jobs. Receipt of public benefits reduces the probability of competitive integrated employment outcomes; every $1000 increase in total public welfare amount received reduced the probability of competitive integrated employment outcome by 17% to 22%. Similarly, every $1,000 increase in public welfare receipt increased the probability of working in less than minimum wage by 4% to 5%. NYSED/ACCES-VR participants with mental health disabilities had a consistently lower probability of competitive integrated employment and higher probability of working in less than minimum wage jobs. However, for youth who completed their education while engaged in NYSED/ACCES-VR, this difference in outcome was reduced substantially.

Cultural competence

A survey was administered to VR professionals and CRP personnel to understand their cultural awareness and existing practices for serving VR participants with diverse demographic backgrounds, specifically minority and unserved/underserved groups prioritized in WIOA. While this survey served multiple objectives of the CNA and collected data on other objectives (such as practices for employer engagement and using labor market data), this section describes survey findings related to the prevalence or lack of diversity and cultural awareness practices in serving the diverse VR participant groups.

Overall, VR professionals and CRP personnel reported high levels of confidence in providing services to participants belonging to racial/ethnic minority groups. The level of service confidence ranged from lowest to highest for the following groups: immigrants, other vulnerable youth, racial/ethnic/linguistic minorities, LGBTQ, in-school youth, out-of-school youth and welfare recipients.

The level of confidence in providing services to diverse VR participants varied significantly by the frequency of contact, diversity and cultural awareness practices in the VR district office (VR DO), open organizational climate of VR DO, and having received specific training in providing services to diverse VR participants. Longer tenure in VR predicted lower confidence, whereas a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling predicted higher confidence in serving diverse participants. This also varied substantially by the VR professional's use of CaMS for case management, delivery, and planning of services. In addition, compared to upper-level personnel, direct-line VR professionals and CRP personnel had lower levels of understanding of the specific components of WIOA and how it impacts their work, considering their self-rated confidence in providing services to minority and unserved/underserved populations.

Recommendations and action strategies

Individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups in the VR program continue to experience disparity in access to and employment outcomes. The following series of action strategies are proposed to support improved access and closing of disparity gaps for this population:

- ***Identification of promising practices and scale-up.*** Research showed that NYSED/ACCES-VR has pockets of innovation in working with traditionally marginalized populations. Central Office and regional leadership should engage in a convening to identify innovations and develop strategies for taking some promising practices to scale in working with minorities and unserved/underserved populations.
- ***Organization development seminars/webinars with emphasis on open organization culture and data-driven approaches to service planning and delivery.*** NYSED/ACCES-VR should integrate this knowledge into existing training and professional development events across all levels of the organization, including WIOA core partners.
- ***Targeted training and professional development*** to specific groups of professionals regarding WIOA implementation and minority and unserved/underserved populations. NYSED/ACCES-VR should integrate this knowledge into existing training and professional development events across all levels of the organization, including WIOA core partners.

D. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system

To understand barriers and challenges to implementation of WIOA and document progress to support the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities served by the statewide workforce investment system, a series of focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted during the fall of 2017. Three focus groups were conducted: one group of state-level partners and two groups of regional-level partners. Participants were asked about existing collaborations, perceived challenges in working with other state agencies, and their views on needs and strategies to enhance partnerships and service delivery collaboration. Further, they were asked to explain and examine the effectiveness of the Combined State Plan processes and the expected mutual agreements among agencies. Finally, the participants brainstormed strategies to address current implementation issues and partnership barriers.

Workforce development collaboration to support the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities

Core WIOA partners participating in the state-level focus group emphasized the need to translate policy information to local-level staff, while regional partners in the regional level focus groups focused their discussion more towards collaboration with local-level partners. Additionally, there were a number of shared themes among both state and regional partners. Concerning ***models of collaboration***, both state and regional partners shared that the process of collaboration is determined locally. There are two primary models: colocation and referral. Colocation is not always feasible, especially for rural areas. Regardless of location, all participants reported challenges with making referrals, as there is not a shared referral process across agencies. Concerning ***engagement***, location and pre-existing relationships between agencies influenced the frequency with which organizations interacted (e.g., agencies meet more often when all were located in a city). This suggests that rural areas may experience a unique challenge in collaborating and providing services because of geographical barriers. Moreover, even though new partnerships are being formed, previous partnerships have more engagement than the new partnerships required by WIOA, which might be due to multiple reasons, such as shared expertise. For example, title I and title III agencies continue to collaborate more frequently with each other than they do with title II and title IV agencies. This suggests the importance of targeted support for brokering new partnerships and collaborations to encourage innovation and synergy in the approach to service delivery across all four titles.

Participants reported a number of ***challenges to collaboration***. A reported challenge is the *lack of a shared language.* One participant explained, "Vernacular within an agency is often exclusive … and there may not be understanding from one agency to another." Lack of a shared language also created problems when compiling reports, as various funding sources use different terminology. Creating a shared language is vital to helping partnering agencies communicate and collaborate more effectively. Many participants reported issues with *data collection, referral, and reporting* related to their WIOA efforts. Specifically, not all the data currently being collected are consistent with WIOA's reporting requirements. This may add an additional burden when identifying and recording the required data points. It may also require an agency to modify services to their participants. Additionally, different reporting and data collection processes have resulted in problems when making referrals and measuring outcomes. Each agency has unique eligibility requirements, and an individual may be enrolled in different programs; in some cases, resources may not be utilized efficiently. Another challenge is *insufficient time* to complete all the required tasks, especially given the required multi-level agency collaborations. For example, a lot of time was spent on communication of different interpretations of WIOA requirements for Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), delaying the obtaining of needed signatures.

When asked to brainstorm ***strategies to improve collaboration***, a common theme was that there is a need for more training, technical assistance (TA), human capital, and funding. Participants felt that training and TA would help staff understand services provided by other agencies, as well as to understand the purpose of data collection and how they could use the information from data to inform practice. Participants suggested that funding for more human capital, specifically devoted to WIOA-related tasks, would be helpful as currently most are doing WIOA-related work in addition to many other responsibilities, and are not able to devote as much time to WIOA efforts as may be needed.

Data needs

The survey of VR professionals and CRP personnel captured respondent knowledge and use of various data sources in supporting employment goals for VR participants.

VR professionals who participated in the survey were more likely to use only CaMS data than other sources of labor market data in guiding their work to help participants develop career choices. Only 50% indicated using BLS or DOL data to monitor labor market trends in employment opportunities. While three-quarters of the VR survey respondents indicated they have utilized the O*Net data for planning and delivery of services, less than half have used the DOL data sources that are typically helpful in understanding emerging labor market trends and identifying high growth sectors to benefit VR participants.

The VR professional and CRP personnel survey was complemented with a series of in-depth, one-on-one interviews with key VR informants to further understand data use practices and needs for developing quality improvement efforts for engendering data-driven approaches to VR practices. The questions posed to key informants asked about: (a) the current data available to inform NYSED/ACCES-VR practices and policies, (b) alignment of data collection and use with NYSED/ACCES-VR culture and the NYS workforce development system, (c) types and formats of data needed to inform NYSED/ACCES-VR stakeholders for continuous quality improvement, (d) ways that the current system can be built out to support ongoing information needs, and (e) data needs and responsiveness to the Combined State Plan.

Interviewees emphasized internal (CaMS) and external data sources (special education, labor), data from service providers/vendors, and other miscellaneous sources (e.g., healthcare providers). The primary system discussed as it pertained to VR was CaMS, while federal RSA-911 data reporting was another major topic, and access to NYESS and OSOS were discussed by certain interviewees. Comfort with data was described as an important attribute across roles: *"The [CaMS] ORACLE database that all the counselors, counselor assistants, district office as well as central office folks use to track case information from application to closure… [CAMS data] really reflects on what is happening with our participants and that is helpful when you're working on policy and procedure."*

Confidence in supervisor and staff comfort levels varied, with interviewees indicating that although many staff are involved in the collection, entry, and use of data, the counselors tend to be focused more at the level of the individual and their caseload, while managers look at more high-level data. One interviewee rated staff as *"not very comfortable"* with data-especially with the new WIOA data collection. Others were more confident, but stated that staff need better guidance in terms of planning, procedures, and practices. Interviewees agreed that there is a mix of competencies, with some staff having a *"data orientation"* and others struggling with this component of the job.

Staff report using data to assess and reflect on performance to a high degree, both in measuring performance, staying on task, and determining how best to assess services/delivery. The data unit accesses the databases that exist (primarily CaMS), develops reports for performance indicators, perform statistical analyses for performance tracking, and try to summarize it in an actionable and user-friendly way. Interviewees referenced uses such as developing timelines, IPE development, lapses in client contact, evaluating staff performance, successes and challenges, counselor caseloads, status tracking, training needs, and more.

For identifying areas of need, respondents said that data is useful for identifying gaps in services, evaluating particular vendors, types of services, and replicating best practices across school districts. *"The district offices or the manager [can] work with the vendor, plan of improvement, provide technical assistance. Would use it to determine whether to renew contract, increase, decrease or not provided at all." "[T]he DOL statistics are very useful for assisting our participants, to have sense of what the market is like not only where they live but where they want to live."* For conducting strategic planning, *"one area we look at is service delivery and staffing…working to be able to accurately reflect number of contacts a counselor has had to meaningfully engage a participant."*

In terms of additional state-level administrative data that may be useful in informing NYSED/ACCES-VR policies and practices, interviewees mentioned more access to school records and other P-12 data, SSA unemployment insurance data, DOL employment records data, access to NYESS, and more. They noted that some of this will require data sharing agreements with the state. One interviewee noted that they need more data on out of school youth, whatever the source may be. *"Access [to] P12 data as far as services student receive for pre-employment transition…work readiness, work experience et cetera during high school."* Still, certain respondents felt that they did not need more data, but rather help with coordinating the reporting of data so that these tasks do not take away from the delivery of services, and learning how to analyze the high volume of data that already is accessible.

Recommendations and action strategies

Collaboration across core WIOA partners and other employment stakeholders is essential to the successful implementation of WIOA and accomplishing the specific objectives of the law. The following series of action strategies are proposed to support deepening of collaborative relationships across these critical partners in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities.

- ***Providing training and technical assistance across core WIOA partners.*** NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently mid-stream in development of an intensive technical assistance plan across the various national technical assistance centers sponsored by ED/OSERS/RSA, specifically the Workforce Innovations National Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) and the Youth Technical Assistance Center (YTAC). These efforts will be focused on training delivery and organizational development support for improved collaborative efforts and knowledge translation across core WIOA partners and these efforts and assessment of impact will be guided by a logic model.
- ***Providing training on existing data sources and ways to incorporate information for planning and delivery of VR services.*** It is imperative that VR professionals are able to use aggregate-level CaMS data to understand the distribution of services for their diverse caseloads and work towards equitable and appropriate distribution of different types of VR services. It is also important to build practitioner's capacity in utilizing labor market data and incorporate that information in planning and delivery of needed services for VR participants. NYSED/ACCES-VR will work with existing training contractors to integrate this knowledge into existing training events across all levels of the organization.

E. Youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services

Based on NYSED data, it is estimated that about 190,000 students between the ages of 13 – 21 years have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and about 33,000 students have a 504 plan. To determine the projected fiscal forecast for Pre-Employment Transition Services, NYSED/ACCES-VR reviewed the services currently available to students as documented on IEPs. The IEP is created through a team effort involving the student, parent, teacher and others as appropriate, and is reviewed periodically. Students with IEPs receive transition services applicable and appropriate for their unique needs. As transition services provided through school districts are similar to (and some qualify) as the required pre-employment transition services, it is determined that students' pre-employment transition services are being primarily met.

In NYS it is expected that the IEP which is legally required to address transition needs will be in place for all appropriate students. It is recognized that students with disabilities, like students without disabilities, have a wide range of educational and career development needs. The five required Pre-ETS services might be a fit for some but not all students with disabilities. Like their non-disabled peers, work

experiences and career development activities are not always the best or only path that will later impact a student's future work opportunities. It is estimated that there may be approximately 7-9% of students with IEP service gaps. Of those, it is estimated that 50% of the gap is related specifically to education needs and would not be relevant for calculation of pre-employment transition service need.

It is estimated that approximately 9,000 secondary students may have need for VR supported pre-employment transition services. NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently serving approximately 5,000 students (with contracted pre-employment transition services), therefore, there are an estimated 4,000 additional secondary students who may require NYSED/ACCES-VR funded pre-employment transition services.

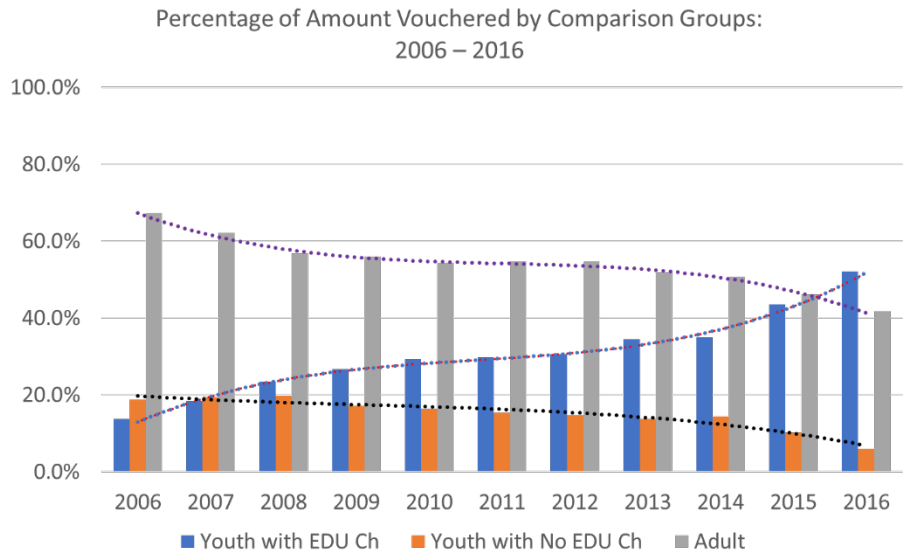
The number of individuals with disabilities in higher education is estimated at 40,000. The higher education data available does not show an age breakout. However, it is known that the data includes those returning to higher education later in life. Thus, the number of individuals enrolled is not equated to student as defined by WIOA. It is estimated that 50% might meet the age range. Of the estimated 50%/20,000, not all are currently in need of pre-employment transition services. It is estimated that 95% (19,000) of the those meeting the WIOA student definition do not need pre-employment transition services. Most postsecondary students were: provided with pre-employment transition services while in high school-through IEP transition services, or directly through NYSED/ACCES-VR (or have been assessed by NYSED/ACCES-VR as not needing pre-employment transition services), or have received similar services through the higher education institution, or have attained those pre-employment transition skills through life experience. NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently providing regular VR services for over 7,000 students in postsecondary training.

It is estimated that roughly 1,000 students in postsecondary education/training may have some gap in the attainment of the information and skills intended to be achieved through the provision of pre-employment transition services. In NYS, institutions of higher learning have disability service coordinators and/or mechanisms to identify needs for students with disabilities. It is expected that when need is identified the student is referred to NYSED/ACCES-VR. NYSED/ACCES-VR has staff going to colleges, universities and other training locations to provide information about the services we offer. There are efforts in place that have been expanded to include a focus on the availability of pre-employment transitions services to ensure that those individuals are identified. However, as it is mandated that students with disabilities have Education Programs during their secondary education that also includes an exit plan, NYSED/ACCES-VR believes that over the course of the individual's school program, transition services/pre-employment transition services, when the need was identified, were provided by the school and/or the VR agency, or that at the time of exit, referrals are appropriately made.

*Calculations of student numbers receiving pre-employment transition services through NYSED/ACCES-VR contracted services are not categorized into the type of education setting that defines them as student under WIOA.

NYSED/ACCES-VR expects to continue to expand both outreach and service. The projection for increase for 2017/2018 is to serve/determine service need for those 5,000 students that have been identified above <u>as potentially in need</u> of the pre-employment transition services. The number projected for 2017/2018 is 7,000. This reflects the 5,000 (4,000 secondary and 1,000 postsecondary) noted and permits additional pre-employment transition services to 2,000 of those students who are currently receiving one or more pre-employment transition services. NYSED/ACCES-VR expects the number projected to be served.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has observed a steady growth in youth population and expenditure for services for youth VR participants as illustrated in the following figure.



In addition to increasing needs for VR services for youth with disabilities, specific VR services have been shown to positively impact their employment outcomes. Based on analysis of CaMS data, SE services, personal assistance services, employment services, and assessment, predict higher probability of competitive integrated employment outcomes for youth (both in-school and out of school) compared with adult VR participants. Further, analysis of focus group discussions with VR counselors indicated that there are specific needs with respect to conducting outreach to in-school and youth VR participants, their family members, as well as develop deeper partnerships with schools to enhance the quality of services. Details of the findings from this part of the study are provided in section e(ii).

Expansion of Pre-ETS and other youth services as articulated in NYSED/ACCES-VR Core Rehabilitation Services contracts with community rehabilitation providers.

In 2017 NYSED/ACCES-VR released a competitive request for proposals. The purpose of the announcement of funding opportunities was the provision of specific rehabilitation services from CRPs and other service providers. These services included entry services, assessment, employment preparation, job placement, SE, assistive technology, Pre-ETS, driver rehabilitation services, and related adjunct services. The new service schema outlined in the RFP increased service rates, streamlined performance measures, simplified the method of aware, and outlined new services from WIOA, specifically Pre-ETS.

Pre-ETS for students with disabilities included seven primary services: postsecondary counseling; job exploration counseling; self-advocacy; work readiness; work-based learning development; work-based learning experience; and, work-based coaching supports. In addition, NYSED/ACCES-VR included five additional services including: career exploration assessment; self-advocacy for employment; employment customization milestone; extended supported employment for youth; and communication coaching supports for employment or postsecondary education.

In response to the WIOA requirements to provide Pre-ETS to students who are not currently VR applicants, NYSED/ACCES-VR is developing a competitive priority to establish Pre-ETS for students with disabilities who are currently non NYSED/ACCES-VR applicants. The Career Exploration with Students

Initiative (CEIS) is anticipated in 2018 and will be separate from the Core Rehabilitation Services contract.

2. Need to establish, develop, or improve CRPs within NYS

The term 'community rehabilitation program' (CRP) means a program that provides directly or facilitates the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, and that provides, singularly or in combination, for an individual with a disability to enable the individual to maximize opportunities for employment, including career advancement.

Utilization of CRP services and supports

Based on the analysis of CaMS data, the most frequently utilized CRP services include (from highest to lowest): assessment, employment services, training, post-secondary education services, SE, and personal assistance services. The costs of each of these services varied from an average of $4,816 for training services to $608 for assessment services. Further, the types of services, costs and service duration predicted the probability of competitive integrated employment outcomes for youth and adult VR participants. The service cost and duration overall had a curvilinear relationship to the probabilities of competitive employment outcomes after controlling for individual-level characteristics of the participants. This latter finding indicates a need to optimize services not only based on different types, but also based on its overall duration and cost for it to be most effective. For example, for the observed levels of competitive integrated employment outcomes, the most optimal results with SE services for youth were observed when the cost of service ranged from $4,500 to $5,500 and the duration ranged from 19 to 24 months. These findings point to the need to not only expand in types of available services, but also consider expanding the amounts allocated as well as its duration to suit the employment needs of VR participants.

CRP capacity to serve minority and unserved/underserved populations

As discussed earlier in this assessment, a survey of VR professional and CRP personnel was conducted to understand their cultural awareness and specific practices in assessing their needs for providing services under WIOA. Representative of 172 CRPs responded to the survey; most participating CRPs provide three or more employment-related services, and over 50% provide SE services. One-third of the responding agencies serve over 500 participants annually.

The survey documented that CRPs have lower levels of confidence in serving immigrants, other vulnerable youth, in-school youth, and those with mental health disorders, compared to VR participants who are welfare recipients. The frequency of contact with diverse VR participants, open organizational culture of agency offices, exposure to training for serving VR populations, and knowledge of WIOA significantly predicted CRP personnel's confidence in providing services. Diversity and cultural awareness practices varied significantly among CRP personnel and agency's structural support for advancing such practices including availability of resources such as access other organizations serving minority populations improved CRP's confidence in this area. Similarly, engaging with businesses had a positive impact on diversity and cultural awareness practices among CRPs.

3. Include Assessment of the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities for Transition Career Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the Extent to Which Such Services are Coordinated with Transition Services Provided Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Readiness of NYS employment service providers to support students and youth

To assess the readiness and capacity of NYS disability employment service providers to meet the needs of student and youth priorities under WIOA, the NYS PROMISE initiative conducted a mixed methods concept mapping study to identify the taxonomy of services and supports that providers thought were most important for students and youth with disabilities, including out-of-school youth. This work was prompted by the realization that some disability employment service providers under the NYS PROMISE intervention were having challenges meeting the needs of youth and some providers had actually terminated their contract under the demonstration. The study recruited 251 disability employment service providers for participation serving across the primary disability state agencies and workforce development system. They were asked to develop responses to the following focus prompt, *"To be effective in providing career development and employment services for students and youth with disabilities, as well as out-of-school youth, NYS employment services providers need to be aware of, know or be able to do…"* –generating 96 unique responses to the prompt. Respondents then sorted these unique items into a seven-item cluster map, representing their perceived taxonomy of critical services when working effectively with youth. This taxonomy included: positive relationships with business; schools and community collaboration; transition planning and services; assessment and work readiness; employment preparation; family supports; and, essential staff knowledge.

To gain a better understanding of the degree of importance of each cluster and their feasibility to deliver these, respondents were then asked to rate each of the 96 unique elements on an 'importance' scale and 'feasibility' scale. Regarding the clusters that respondents felt were most 'important' to supporting successful youth employment outcomes, respondents rated positive relationships with business, assessment and work readiness, employment preparation, transition planning and services, and family supports most high. Interestingly, respondents felt that schools and community collaboration and essential staff knowledge were least important, with the latter cluster representing areas like youth labor laws, how to structure and staff youth services, other structuring mechanisms, etc. Respondents consistently rated their feasibility to demonstrate capacity across the positive relationships with business, assessment and work readiness, employment preparation, and family supports clusters high. However, respondents rated schools and community collaboration, transition planning and services and essential staff knowledge low from a feasibility of capacity perspective.

Participants were also asked several questions to quantify their perceptions and knowledge in specific areas. Most interesting was that only slightly more than one-third of respondents rated their strength of knowledge in regard to youth labor laws and regulations as 'strong' or 'very strong', with the remainder rating themselves as 'no knowledge', 'weak' or 'moderate'. When asked to rate their perception of their organization's effectiveness in serving students and youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth, slightly under two-thirds of respondents rated their organizations as 'very strong' or 'strong, with the remaining rating their organizations as 'weak', 'moderate', or 'I do not know'. While the majority of respondents stated they have relationships with local business and industry to support work-based learning, when asked to rate the strength of their relationship in regard to placing and supporting this population only two-thirds of respondents felt the relationship was 'strong' or 'very strong'.

The importance and feasibility ratings, coupled with respondents' subjective perceptual responses to demographic questions, suggests an employment service provider network that recognizes the importance of having the capacity to build and maintain positive relationships with business, provide or access employment preparation services and supports, provide family supports, and deliver assessment and work readiness services. However, the respondent ratings of feasibility to demonstrate capacity seem to suggest that the network would benefit from capacity building focused on essential staff knowledge, school and community collaboration and transition planning and services.

Recommendation and action strategies

CRPs are a critical stakeholder in the workforce development system. State agencies and other community stakeholders rely on these service providers to deliver high quality services to support competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The following series of action strategies are proposed to support the deepening of the NYS employment provider network's capacity to innovate as they meet the employment support needs of individuals with disabilities.

Brokering and offering training to NYS CRPs on providing effective services to students and youth, including out-of-school youth with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR currently provides SE training and organizational development support under a MOU with an external entity to their vendored partners. NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently exploring making this training available to all employment service providers and will include strategies for working effectively with students and youth with disabilities, as well as out-of-school youth with disabilities.

- ***Acquiring technical assistance to expand innovations like customized employment.*** As referenced earlier, NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently mid-stream in development of an intensive technical assistance plan across the WINTAC and YTAC. These centers work collaboratively to provide training and technical assistance on innovations like customized employment and strategies for working effectively with youth.
- ***Training and technical assistance to CRP personnel on working with diverse VR participants***. Based on the responses from CRP survey, it is relevant to include capacity building for CRP agencies in providing services for diverse NYSED/ACCES-VR participants. NYSED/ACCES-VR will work with existing training contractors to integrate this knowledge into existing training events across all levels of the organization.

Coordination of services under IDEA

To ascertain the coordination of services under title IV of WIOA and IDEA, a series of focus groups was conducted. VR professionals participated in three focus groups held in the Capital Region, Western NY (representing the Buffalo and Rochester DO), and the New York City Region (all five boroughs). These focus groups provided key data on barriers and facilitators for providing Pre-ETS, and collaboration with schools.

Several major themes emerged from these focus groups. Participants felt strongly that youth cases take a longer time to process and that in many instances youth are not well prepared to take advantage of and participate in VR services. Two primary obstacles identified were the lack of parental involvement and transportation issues when serving youth. Participants reported that school-based transition programs varied from being well-developed and resourced to less developed and under-resourced, which poses a challenge in developing a unified approach to support schools across the state. Further, CRPs do not have adequate capacity and lack quality in their approach to serve youth, especially those who are in school. Building on that, participants reported communication challenges with contracted and non-contracted providers for serving youth, who generally required more frequent follow-ups and check-ins. Participants also noted that there are specific strategies to promote collaboration with schools that have proven effective, such as school visits, providing training and TA to school personnel on making quality VR referrals, developing a process of ensuring employment-related goals are clearly identified in student IEPs. NYSED/ACCES-VR's Community Employment Specialist demonstration has also proven a positive influence in brokering relationships and building more effective collaboration between schools, NYSED/ACCES-VR and CRPs.

VR professional and CRP personnel survey

Based on the VR professional and CRP personnel survey, the majority (90%) of CRP respondents reporting serving only 10 – 50 youth under the age of 18. Further, many CRP respondents reported being less confident in providing services to in-school and out of school youth. This indicates a substantial need to improve CRP ability in providing services for youth to fulfill the goals of Pre-ETS under WIOA. These findings are mirrored to some degree in the study conducted by NYS PROMISE gauging the importance and feasibility of the capacity of CRPs to provide effective services to students and youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth.

Recommendations and action strategies

Given the increased priority under WIOA to serve students and youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth, it is critical that a multi-faceted approach be in place to ensure the successful employment outcomes of youth served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), title I and title IV of WIOA. This includes better integration and synergy between IDEA, title I and title IV services and supports; established bridges between local schools, title I and title IV programs; articulation of roles and responsibilities between NYSED P-12, NYSED/ACCES-VR and the workforce development system; a well-equipped CRP network to serve as an effective catalyst for services and supports; and, data tracking to monitor progress and quality of outcomes. The following series of action strategies are proposed to support improved access and closing of disparity gaps for this population

- ***Development and updating of memorandums of understanding*** between NYSED P-12, NYSED/ACCES-VR and other core WIOA partners to ensure effective implementation. For additional information on this MOU, please refer to the description letter within this document.
- ***Continuation of NYSED/ACCES-VR's Community Employment Specialist (CES) model to broker relations between NYSED/ACCES-VR and local schools.*** Since the inception of the CES model in 2013, student participation in NYSED/ACCES-VR has increased over 15%. NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.
- ***Training and technical assistance to NYSED/ACCES-VR service providers*** to ensure the delivery of high quality services and supports to students and youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth. NYSED/ACCES-VR will work with their existing SE/CRP training contractor to include strategies for working effectively with students and youth with disabilities, as well as out-of-school youth with disabilities.
- ***Training and technical assistance to core WIOA partners*** to ensure successful integration and synergy across IDEA, and WIOA title I and title IV programs. NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently engaged in developing an intensive technical assistance plan with the WINTAC and YTAC to support development and provision of training in this area.

Synthesis of literature on evidence-based and promising practices

To support the design and implementation of the CNA, as well as identification of evidence-based and promising practices that might inform potential action strategies in response to the needs identified, a review of existing literature was conducted. The review of literature provides a descriptive understanding of the state of evidence, identifying relevant peer-reviewed literature and policy papers that address relevant and recent subject matter.

Summary

NYSED/ACCES-VR and the workforce development system must re-calibrate. WIOA has clearly realigned priorities to help job seekers access the educational, training and support services necessary to be successful in the 21st century labor market, while matching employers with skilled workers. The law enhances the focus of Competitive Integrated Employment; places emphasis on the alignment of VR programs and other core partners of the workforce development system; emphasizes providing services to students with disabilities, while in-school, in coordination with their schools and encourages providing services for eligible youth who are out-of-school; defined a new set of pre-employment transition services for students and youth; established expectations that designated state vocational rehabilitation units will provide advanced training opportunities for youth, work-based learning, supported and customized employment programs; and increased the emphasis on employer engagement and job matching.

NYS employment trends for people with disabilities show room for improvement. Literature showed that people with disabilities continue to struggle to find employment compared to peers without disabilities, both in NYS and nationally. While prevalence of disability increases based on age, data shows that major drop-offs in participation in work or school occur at young ages among transitioning youth (18-24 group). Most recent data show both adults and youth with disabilities in NYS apply for VR services at higher levels than nationally, however, the rates of service delivery and successful closure (based on RSA-911 categories) are consistent with national averages.

Research consistently demonstrates the importance of participation in employment-directed VR activities as a predictor of employment and pay outcomes.

NYSED/ACCES-VR demonstrating positive participation and experiences in VR. With the expanded WIOA scope for serving younger individuals with disabilities, NYSED/ACCES-VR provides pre-employment transition services for in-school students with disabilities between the ages of 14–21 years in coordination with the students' school-based transition programs. Research has shown that involvement of VR and community rehabilitation programs and other agencies in the post-school planning process can minimize service disruptions by initiating transition and employment-related services. Further, career development and pre-employment transition services built on strong interagency partnerships have demonstrated positive effects for transitioning youth with disabilities. Participation in work-based experiences prior to entering the competitive labor market is one of the strongest predictors of job success for youth with disabilities after graduation. Important elements in work preparation include career readiness skills, structured job matching opportunities, opportunities to establish work history and connections, career exploration, and on-the-job supports. Evidence also supports the efficacy of independent living, financial and benefits literacy, social skills, and self-determination related services in improving long-term outcomes. Further, that online capabilities broaden the possible means of approaching career exploration. Finally, research demonstrates that services and supports which broker the gap between VR and secondary schools are important for improving family and youth access to transition services, and improving the transition planning process at the school-level.

NYSED/ACCES-VR can deepen the efficacy of systems integration and interagency collaboration. NYSED/ACCES-VR can build on its existing agreements with core WIOA partners to further the objectives of service coordination and early intervention in post-school planning. Research has demonstrated that collaborations by VR, school personnel, and other partners in the workforce development system have significant benefits for transitioning youth. One of the most valuable partnerships is between VR counselors and local schools—research shows that counselors are often not invited to participate in transition and post-school planning, despite evidence showing that VR can play an important role in guiding school policy and that their early involvement is associated with positive youth employment outcomes. Integrating community transition partners in the school setting is also important—these uniquely situated agencies can help students and families secure resources in the community, obtain

work-based experiences and services, formulate transition plans, and improve the capacity of schools. Among VR counselors serving disadvantaged populations, cultural competency is a predictor of positive employment outcomes. Further, employer engagement skills by VR staff are an evidence-based practice associated with improved service outcomes.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES

NYSED/ACCES-VR expects that during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 and 2019, fiscal and personnel resources will be sufficient to serve all eligible persons who apply for services. This expectation is based on NYSED/ACCES-VR's projections of federal and State funding, staffing plans, referral levels, eligibility rates and service needs, including persons with significant disabilities. In meeting this expectation, NYSED/ACCES-VR affirms that it will:

- Continue to provide a full range of services to all persons currently receiving services;
- Provide assessment services to all persons expected to apply next fiscal year;
- Serve all persons expected to be determined eligible next year; and,
- Meet all statutory program requirements.

As required in 34 CFR 361.29(b)(1), NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates the number of individuals with disabilities that will be found eligible for VR services in FFY 2018 to be 31,121 and for FFY 2019 to be 31,846. Using a five-year trend formula, NYSED/ACCES-VR could potentially serve 100,277 individuals in FFY 2018 and 102,664 in FFY 2019. All individuals receiving supported employment services will be served using a combination of Title I, Title VI B, and State funds.

Number of Individuals who are Eligible for VR Services and the Number of Eligible Individuals who will Receive VR Services

As required in 34 CFR 361.29(b)(1), NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates the number of individuals with disabilities that will be found eligible for VR services 39,600. The estimate is based on the applicant numbers during FY 2015. Using a five-year trend formula, NYSED/ACCES-VR could potentially serve 90,600 individuals during FY 2017. This figure is based exclusively on trend data for the previous five years and does not include several new initiatives that should increase the number of applicants for VR services.

The previous State Plan estimated that 72,200 individuals would be served, but as of 7/1/2017, 88,656 individuals are being served. NYSED/ACCES-VR expects to serve at least the projected number of individuals 90,600 in FY 2017. This estimate is based on the anticipated increase in the number of individuals to be served due to outreach efforts to students with disabilities and an expected increase in referrals from Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) as it moves more individuals into employment. Based on the above, the total estimated cost for services is $217.5 million.

As required in 34 CFR 361.29(b)(2), NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates that under Title I and Title VI Part B, approximately 11,000 of the estimated 90,600 individuals served during FY 2017 will receive supported employment services. All individuals receiving supported employment services will be served using a combination of Title 1, Title VI Part B funds and state funds

The 2019 projected expenditures: $236 million of which Title VI Part B is $13.8 million.

STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

NYSED/ACCES-VR and the SRC jointly developed the goals and priorities. The SRC, through its standing committees, reviewed each WIOA focus area to identify how to link to services and goals and to establish mechanisms for tracking progress and outcomes. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment data, as well as statewide employment trends and data (reflected in the combined sections of this document), were carefully reviewed. In addition, information from a wide variety of venues has been considered. For example, NYSED/ACCES-VR staffs frequently provide workshops at provider and business conferences and at high school and postsecondary events. The feedback and recommendations are used to assess needs. These goals and priorities have been slightly modified for the July 2018 update to more closely align to the specific joint expectations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These goals and priorities more clearly reflect WIOA common performance measures and replace the prior standards and indicators.

Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR.

- Goal 1.1: Monitor employment rates at 2nd quarter to obtain baseline data for establishing an appropriate performance measure.
- Goal 1.2: Monitor employment rates at 4th quarter to obtain baseline data for establishing an appropriate performance measure.
- Goal 1.3: Monitor median earnings to obtain baseline data for establishing an appropriate performance measure.

Priority 2: Increase services to target populations: students with disabilities; and, unserved and underserved groups.

- Goal 2.1: The service rate for identified unserved and underserved populations will be commensurate with the NYS population rates for those populations based on race, ethnicity and disability.
- Goal 2.2: Students with disabilities will receive pre-employment transition services to establish a solid foundation upon which to build their career path.

Priority 3: Improve the quality of NYSED/ACCES-VR services.

- Goal 3.1: Increase to 90% the number of respondents expressing satisfaction on key questions contained in VR's participant satisfaction surveys.
- Goal 3.2: Through use of established contract performance measures for service providers, 80% of providers will meet or exceed the standard.

Priority 4: Increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

- Goal 4.1: Increase partnerships with postsecondary education institutions.
- Goal 4.2: Assess and track the percentage of individuals who obtain skills gain.
- Goal 4.3: Increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

Priority 5: Effectively serve businesses.

- Goal 5.1: Obtain baseline measure for business penetration.

- Goal 5.2: Obtain baseline measure for numbers of business customers with repeat service.

Innovation and Expansion Funds

NYSED/ACCES-VR uses innovation and expansion funds to support the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR is identifying opportunities and activities for use of this funding to support recommendations from the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

ORDER OF SELECTION

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection.

GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

Federal Title VI, Part B funds for supported employment services were initially used to develop model programs to determine the most effective structure for supported employment and to determine the types of services and supports that work best with different populations. In NYS these funds alone are not sufficient to meet the overall demand for supported employment services. NYSED/ACCES-VR total funding level for supported employment contracts for FY 2014 was $22 million. The Title VI, Part B funds to serve approximately 11,100 individuals accounted for $1.2 million. At present, Title VI, Part B funds represent less than five percent of the total funds NYSED/ACCES-VR uses for intensive supported employment services. NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue the operation of the supported employment services established under Title VI, Part B and use the funds to supplement, but not supplant, Title I funds.

NYSED/ACCES-VR combines Title VI, Part B and Section 110 funds to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Individuals served through supported employment services include individuals with all types of disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR maintains agreements (Memorandum of Understanding and Integrated Employment Implementation Plan, Chapter 515 of the NYS Laws of 1992) with the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the NYSCB, which define NYSED/ACCES-VR as the source for intensive funding. Under WIOA, OPWDD can also provide intensive funding for supported employment. Program evaluation includes a review of data from interagency quarterly reports and on-site reviews by NYSED/ACCES-VR Quality Assurance Unit. Successful and exemplary practices have been disseminated to the staff of the State agencies involved and to other project sites.

Supported Employment Programs

NYSED/ACCES-VR is responsible for administering, establishing standards for and monitoring the intensive services component of supported employment programs in NYS except those funded by OPWDD or OMH, and for the provision of extended services to individuals who are not eligible for such services through other sources. In October 2006, NYSED/ACCES-VR, with the cooperation of OMH, OPWDD and NYSCB, established the Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team for ongoing coordination of the implementation of supported employment intensive and extended services in NYS. The Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team consists of employment program managers from the respective State agencies. The Team meets regularly to discuss program, data and funding issues, facilitate cross-systems implementation and identify opportunities for program improvements.

Effective January 1, 2014 NYSED/ACCES-VR began a performance-based contracting system with payments being based on the attainment of specific milestones and outcomes for supported employment.

Supported Employment Goals and Priorities

NYSED/ACCES-VR's Title VI, Part B program goals are to:

- Provide services to individuals, including youth, with the most significant disabilities who might not be traditionally considered appropriate for competitive integrated employment;
- Develop techniques for unserved and underserved populations, such as persons with acquired brain injuries, deafness, multiple disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, significant learning disabilities and significant mental illness;
- Develop quality programs that could be used for replication purposes; and
- Establish successful supported employment programs that will provide technical assistance to other programs.

Discussions that occur with partner agencies help to refine the goals and priorities and led to actions that assist in achievement of the goals, as well as to meet the challenge to close the employment gap between individuals without disabling conditions and individuals with disabilities. Program performance and costs are reviewed at least annually. Service re-negotiations occur based on overall performance, including performance on projected outcomes agreed to by NYSED/ACCES-VR and the provider.

NYSED/ACCES-VR vocational rehabilitation counselors manage the IPE of each individual participating in intensive supported employment, as well as youth in extended services supported by VR program funds. Plan and service management includes monitoring progress toward goals or resetting goals as needed. The programs funded under Title VI, Part B represent previously underserved individuals. Every effort is made to improve the project's performance through continuing technical assistance and service delivery improvements. NYSED/ACCES-VR provides extended services to youth (up to age 24 or 4 years whichever comes first.)

STATE'S STRATEGIES

The strategies below detail how NYSED/ACCES-VR will achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities and overcome barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs. Many of the strategies will impact on more than one priority. To minimize repetition, the strategy is noted only once with alignment to those goals where the highest direct impact is expected. NYSED/ACCES-VR uses innovation and expansion funds to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council and to support the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council. The funding is consistent with the appropriate resource plan.

Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR.

Goals for this priority include: monitor employment rates at 2nd and 4th quarter, and median earnings to establish a baseline, and subsequently be prepared to meet established performance measures.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with WIOA core program partners and other State agencies that serve individuals with disabilities to provide a cooperative referral process which results in streamlined access to services across the programs and to better integration of VR services with the employment preparation resources within each respective system.
- Move job ready participants quickly into NYSED/ACCES-VR placement services or DOL's job placement services.
- Maintain a data bank of job ready participants and actively promote those candidates to business through local Chambers of Commerce, Society for Human Resource Managers events, and local workforce development activities.
- Promote and enhance OTJ and Work Try Out opportunities.
- Develop stronger local partnerships with school districts and postsecondary institutions.
- Provide experiential learning and work experiences through summer, part-time and temporary work experience.
- Explore use of customized employment techniques and other promising practices.
- Explore supports, including use of innovation and expansion funds, for a pilot project, to further enhance self-employment opportunities.
- Collaborate with the DDPC, OPWDD, and the Office of P-12 Education on implementing better methods for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities to obtain and maintain employment; continue collaborative planning with OPWDD on their Pathway to Employment 1915b/c waiver option.
- Provide benefits counseling at key points in the VR process.
- Train NYSED/ACCES-VR counselors who serve as liaisons to mental health programs on OMH Individual Placement with Supports (IPS) model, implementation and provide on-going technical assistance.
- Inform training program providers and the postsecondary education sector about incentives for hiring people with disabilities to encourage those entities to directly assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment.
- Establish regional goals for achieving higher wage outcomes.
- Focus on postsecondary education as a means to increasing skilled employment.
- Reopen cases of those that are underemployed to provide additional vocational instruction, resume restructuring, other services that might be appropriate; and/or, refer the individual to the American Job Center for internships or training, to support career advancement.
- Maintain email list serve of employed participants for sharing job notices. This allows the individual to pursue career advancement opportunities.
- Provide training to job placement providers on employment trends and business needs, including what constitutes a good resume for a particular field.
- Collaborate with the NYS Justice Center to develop innovative options around the purchase, use, and sharing of assistive technology to enable individuals to be successful in employment. The Justice Center for the Protection of People with special Needs administers the Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) program.

Priority 2: Increase services to target populations: students with disabilities; and unserved and underserved groups.

Goals for this priority include: the service rate for identified unserved and underserved populations will be commensurate with the NYS population rates for those populations based on race, ethnicity and disability; and, students with disabilities will receive pre-employment transition services to establish a solid foundation upon which to build their career path.

Strategies:

- Enhance marketing. In 2015, NYSED/ACCES-VR contracted to have advertising on buses, trains, subway stations, and bus shelters. The primary audience was unserved/underserved individuals with disabilities.
- Direct the work of the TAYS Unit to increase awareness in the postsecondary community of vocational rehabilitation services. Staff will offer on-site orientations at numerous college campuses throughout the state, meet with parent/student groups during the colleges' summer orientations, and, attend college career events.
- Add service options that will more specifically address the needs of those on the Autism spectrum.
- Engage the Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in a coordinated effort to include independent living services, such as peer mentoring and other offerings available at local ILCs that support a person to sustain their VR efforts as part of the VR process and IPE.
- Work directly with schools and other partners to ensure that pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities are available as needed and appropriate.
- Increase the coordination and participation of VR participants in adult education and Literacy Zone services, as well as increase the provision of services to English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Priority 3: Improve the quality of NYSED/ACCES-VR services.

Goals for this priority include: increase to 90% the number of respondents expressing satisfaction on key questions contained in VR's participant satisfaction surveys; and, through use of established contract performance measures for service providers, 80% of providers will meet or exceed the standard.

Strategies:

- Revitalize waiting areas. Individuals will have the opportunity to view a welcome video that provides a brief overview of services and success stories. Brochures, information packets, and job leads will be available.
- Conduct case record reviews both internally and externally to monitor service provision. The review results are assessed by Central Administration and District Offices. Training and technical assistance is then designed and provided to address any deficits noted.
- Act upon recommendations gathered through the Information Collection Project. NYSED/ACCES-VR recently entered into an MOU with SUNY Potsdam, Institute of Applied Research (PIAR) for an Information Collection Project. The contract was developed in response to SRC and NYSED/ACCES-VR determination that traditional paper participant satisfaction surveys were not providing the breadth of information needed for good assessment. The 5-year contract allows for a combination of in-person town forums, scripted telephone surveys, and paper surveys. The findings from these

activities will assist NYSED/ACCES-VR with assessing the needs of individuals with disabilities, providers and business in future years.

- Provide on-going training for supervisors. Supervisors are brought to a central location at least biannually for a three-day training. The trainings focus on the multiple roles of a supervisor and provide updates on policy, data collection and more to ensure good communication.
- Improve the quality of supported employment services by training NYSED/ACCES-VR and supported employment providers on updated supported employment policy, procedures and guidelines to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the supported employment program.
- Provide a Management Community of Practice. NYSED/ACCES-VR is collaborating with Cornell University, Employment Disability Institute for the provision of a community of practice training project for management level staff.
- Identify additional mechanisms that allow for continuous feedback from participants, business, and providers.

Priority 4: Increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

Goals for this priority include: increase partnerships with postsecondary education institutions; assess and track the percentage of individuals who obtain skills gain; and, increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

Strategies:

- Attend community events to share information. One example is attendance at a Guidance Expo. This event brings together hundreds of guidance counselors and is an opportunity for NYSED/ACCES-VR staff to directly communicate with individuals that are assisting students in making career decision and selecting post school options.
- Collaborate with postsecondary institutions to increase focus on assistive technology. Students are encouraged to participate in an evaluation of assistive technology needs to determine how/what assistive technology could be of value to them.
- Develop a plan of action to implement recommendations resulting from the NYS Board of Regents Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities.

Priority 5: Effectively serve businesses.

Goals for this priority include: establishing a baseline for business penetration and a baseline number for how many businesses are repeat customers of the State's Workforce System.

Strategies:

- Revise and enhance the statewide and regional business plans to reflect the NYS workforce vision and goals as outlined in the Combined State Plan.
- Provide training to business on topics as requested but specifically including accommodations and financial incentives.
- Partner with Statewide leaders from all communities: business, government, and, provider to acknowledge and expand the role of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The celebrations,

throughout October, to acknowledge National Disability Employment Awareness month are the culmination of year-long activities and projects.

- Target advertising to the business community to increase awareness of NYSED/ACCES-VR services and as a link to skilled workers.
- Participate in business-sponsored activities, including having memberships with the Chambers of Commerce throughout the state.
- Actively participate on the Workforce Development Board in each local region.

EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION

NYSED/ACCES-VR evaluates progress on a continuous basis throughout the year. Reported below are highlights of progress for 2016 and 2017. Specific baseline data for certain measures is in development.

Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR. Goals to support this priority include monitoring employment rates at 2nd and 4th quarter, and median earnings, to obtain baseline information on those factors. There is no baseline information to report for these WIOA performance goals on this update. However, the prior measure looked at employment outcomes. In FY 2016 there were 11,272 employment outcomes. In FY 2017 there were 10,438 employment outcomes. Although the total number of employment outcomes was slightly lower in 2017, NYSED/ACCES-VR was serving more students than prior years. Students receiving service are not necessarily seeking an immediate employment outcome.

Priority 2: Increase services to target populations: students with disabilities; and, unserved and underserved groups. Goals for this priority include: the service rate for identified unserved and underserved populations will be commensurate with the NYS population rates for those populations based on race, ethnicity and disability; and, students with disabilities will receive pre-employment transition services to establish a solid foundation upon which to build their career path. There was an (.89) ratio between the service rate for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants from minority backgrounds and the service rate for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants from non-minority backgrounds. This did meet the established minimum target of (.80). However, NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to take actions to address the disparities and to identify additional opportunities to close the gap further.

Priority 3: Improve the quality of NYSED/ACCES-VR services. Goals for this priority include achieving a 90% satisfaction rate from participants; and 80% of providers will meet or exceed the established contract standard.

The 2017 Participant Satisfaction Survey was sent by NYSED/ACCES-VR contractor, Potsdam Institute for Applied Research, to 10,000 participants. 79% of respondents indicated overall satisfaction with quality of service received. NYSED/ACCES-VR did not achieve its self-established goal of 90% and will continue to work toward that goal.

Priority 4: Increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential. NYSED/ACCES-VR is tracking information to obtain a baseline. In addition, assessment is occurring to analyze factors that tend to result in or impede success. Targeted actions will follow review of assessment results.

Priority 5: Effectively serve businesses. NYS has selected business penetration and repeat business customers as the factors to be used to measure NYS's effectiveness in serving business. Currently, baseline data is being collected. Though data is not available on these specific factors to document attainment of a specific standard, outreach to business and the strategies noted in sections above will impact business penetration and ensure that satisfied business customers return have occurred, so as to further build the foundation.

QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Individuals with most significant disabilities who participate in NYSED/ACCES-VR supported employment programs engage in assessment, job planning, counseling, job development, job placement, intensive job-site training and extended job retention services. Training is provided to direct service personnel, such as job coaches and job coaching supervisors. NYS's Chapter 515 of the Laws of 1992 on integrated employment, including supported employment, is implemented through a collaborative interagency process in NYS. NYSED/ACCES-VR is responsible for competitive integrated employment, including intensive supported employment services, except for those services provided directly by the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) or the Office of Mental Health (OMH). State agencies responsible for the extended phase of supported employment work collaboratively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to ensure the provision of comprehensive supported employment services in NYS.

NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with providers for the provision of supported employment services through Core Rehabilitation Services (CRS) contracts. Services include orientation, assessment, work readiness, job placement, services to youth, supported employment intensive and extended, assistive technology/rehabilitation technology, driver rehabilitation and adjunct services. The framework for supported employment is established in Chapter 515, CRS and the following policies and procedural documents:

- The October 1999 Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Supported Employment;
- CRS contract system, available at: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/core-rehabilitation-services
- The CRS 2013 Program Guide including definitions, deliverables, staffing, rates, and performance indicators, available at: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/common/acces/files/vr/crs_programguide.pdf, and
- Supported Employment Guidelines 2014, available at:
- http://www.acces.nysed.gov/common/acces/files/vr/seguidelines_14.pdf
- Guidance document with Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS).

Supported employment providers, in cooperation with the State agencies, have the following responsibilities:

- Actively involve participants and their families in assessment, planning and decision making throughout the service delivery process.
- Consider the individual's and business's needs with the nature and frequency of provider's services and with the job placement itself;
- Through a participant-centered decision-making process, pursue the goals detailed in the NYSED/ACCES-VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by using supported employment resources to the best advantage of the individual;

- Report as outlined in the supported employment guidelines on programmatic and fiscal details;
- Deliver supported employment services in accordance with federal and State standards and the contractual obligations for the service; and,
- Strive continuously to evaluate the effectiveness of the services and make improvements to the services and the results.

Eligibility for Supported Employment

Supported employment services may be provided to any individual, including youth, who is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and who meets the criteria stated below, as documented in the record of service:

1. Has a most significant disability, as defined in Section 205.00 of NYSED/ACCES-VR Policy on Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Section 1310.00 Supported Employment Policy and Procedure;
2. Has not traditionally participated in competitive integrated employment or whose employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a most significant disability;
3. Who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from support provided by NYSED/ACCES-VR; and
4. Has had a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career and job needs which identifies supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome and has:
   a) The ability to engage in a vocational program leading to supported employment;
   b) A need for ongoing support services in order to perform and sustain competitive integrated work;
   c) The ability to work in a supported employment setting; and
   d) Met the criteria for extended service funding.

An Individual with a Most Significant Disability:

a) Has one or more physical or mental disabilities, determined by an assessment of eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs which constitute or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and

b) Has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) impacting an employment outcome; and

c) Whose vocational rehabilitation will require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Supported Employment Program Standards

The current guidelines (available at: http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/core-rehabilitation-services) incorporate language changes consistent with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments and corresponding federal regulations. The contracts are performance based, and include the language about the provision and quality of services, and provider incentives for individuals achieving certain milestones. These

contracts will end in June 2018, and the new contracts will contain language that corresponds to federal regulations under WIOA.

Youth with significant disabilities will be given every opportunity to receive the services necessary to ensure the maximum potential to achieve competitive integrated employment. Supported employment outcomes will need to be in competitive integrated employment, or if the employment is in an integrated setting but not at a competitive wage, then the individual is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment.

As NYSED/ACCES-VR has a very large supported employment program, it expects to exceed the minimum 50 percent required allotment for the provision of supported employment, including the provision of extended services for a period of up to four years, to youth with the most significant disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR will also provide a non-Federal share of at least 10 percent of the funds reserved for the provision of supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported Employment Program Reporting

Provider reporting requirements, including outcomes, monthly progress reports, career development in extended services, participant satisfaction and quality outcome bonuses for providers due to increased wages and hours for participants are clearly outlined in:

http://www.acces.nysed.gov/common/acces/files/vr/seguidelines_14.pdf and in the program guide. The monthly reporting format requires the provider to assess the person's progress in relation to the IPE, indicating any assessment, job development/placement and intensive training services. In addition, NYSED/ACCES-VR conducts provider onsite reviews. The fiscal reporting requirements are consistent with New York's State Financial System (SFS).

Scope of Supported Employment Services

Supported Employment services are comprised of on-going services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment, that:

- Are provided singly or in combination to assist an eligible individual to achieve a competitive integrated employment;
- Are based on a determination of the needs of the individual and as specified in the IPE; and
- Are provided by NYSED/ACCES-VR for up to 24 months, unless an extension is necessary to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE.

Supported employment services provide all the services necessary to assist the person with:

- Learning specific work duties and performance standards;
- Learning formal and informal site-related expectations (i.e., time and attendance, dress, communication protocol);
- Acquiring site-appropriate work-related behaviors when dealing with supervisors and co-workers;
- Acquiring the sense of belonging to the workforce;

- Understanding and using the benefits of employment (i.e., spending pay, using leave, participating in employee programs, working under direction from the supervisor, socializing with co-workers); and
- Developing a community support system that accommodates and positively reinforces the employee's role as a worker.

The strategies are customized to the needs of the individual and business to assist the individual in meeting business expectations and improving interpersonal skills. Job coaches use any available community resources in meeting participant needs as a means of assisting the individual in maintaining employment.

Supported Employment Data

NYSED/ACCES-VR, the NYSCB, Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH) track participation of individuals in their respective supported employment programs. The agencies document and review:

- Pre-employment services, including screening and assessment, job development, job placement and advocacy;
- Extended services funding source;
- Average weekly work hours and wages paid; and
- Semi-annual review of individuals in extended employment for two years.

Data is used to assist in service decisions and enhanced coordination.

ASSURANCES

COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

Conflict of Interest Policy

NYS established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts:

http://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/SWIBAbout.shtm

State and Local Board Transparency

NYS established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/TA01191LocalGovernance.pdf

http://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/SWIBAbout.shtm

Involvement of Lead State Agencies

The lead State agencies with optimal policy making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs:

The draft plan was reviewed and approved by each of the lead state agencies with responsibility for administration of the core programs and other programs included within this Combined State Plan.

NYSED's involvement in the development of the Combined State Plan included:

- Part of interagency state plan writing workgroup under the Aligning Workforce Programs Subcommittee of the State Workforce Investment Board; and
- Part of interagency performance and accountability workgroup under the Aligning Workforce Programs Subcommittee of the State Workforce Investment Board.

The Regents reviewed portions of the Combined State Plan relating to core programs and partnerships under their purview: Adult Education and Family Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Career and Technical Education. This includes approval of infrastructure support for the one-stop system because New York is a state in which the State constitution or statute places policymaking authority that is independent of the authority of the Governor for these programs in the NYS Board of Regents.

Opportunity for Comments from the Public, Private Businesses and Organizations, and Other Government Agencies

NYS obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;

NYS provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board:

The process for development of the NYS Combined Plan was devised to be truly collaborative. From the very beginning of process planning, all WIOA core program partners have been fully engaged. NYSDOL, NYSCB, ACCES AEPP, and NYSED/ACCES-VR (and in conjunction with the SRCs), jointly developed the Combined State Plan, including the joint planning of the State Plan public meetings. This plan describes the agencies' priorities, goals, and strategies to support individuals and businesses in meeting their employment needs. Performance measures are described to assure that services meet the established standards and are accountable to the public we serve.

The process also made sure to allow for input from other workforce system stakeholders, initially through the SWIB. The SWIB's assistance in the development of the Combined Plan is required by Federal statute, and their board membership makes them an ideal partner with core program staff to lay out a cohesive and comprehensive vision and strategy for the future of workforce development. SWIB membership represents: businesses from significant state industries; local workforce development boards; local government; labor organizations; institutions of higher learning; business intermediaries; and key sectors of the workforce.

Aside from the involvement of the SWIB, the core partners sought input into the development of the Combined State Plan through other means to provide an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials; businesses; labor organizations; institutions of higher education; other primary stakeholders; the general public, including youth and individuals with disabilities; community rehabilitation providers; and adults with limited literacy. The announcement of the State Plan Public Meetings was posted on the partner agency websites. Core partners participated in multiple in-person meetings and a video conference to several locations across the State. Outreach was done to the public, employers, other state agencies, community rehabilitation providers, Independent Living Centers, and individuals with disabilities, to encourage their participation in the meetings. Families, their advocates, employers, and service providers were invited to attend the meetings. The public was also able to share written comments electronically and by mail. Every effort was made to include all WIOA core program partners at any public events held by agency partners.

NYS Plan Public Meetings included a brief presentation on the Plan and anticipated changes under WIOA. The meetings focused on how the partner agencies (NYSDOL, NYSCB, NYSED/ACCES-VR and Adult Education) could collaborate in providing employment opportunities, including supported employment services; improve employment outcomes for youth; and educate the business community about hiring individuals with disabilities. As required by WIOA, the full draft of the Combined Plan was afforded a public comment period prior to submission as well.

In June 2015, to help provide additional input in to the Combined State Plan and assess alignment strengths and weaknesses in each of 33 workforce development areas, ACCES-adult education conducted a comprehensive workforce development study of 199 funded programs. Preliminary results of the survey are as follows:

- Responses were recorded from 118 traditional literacy programs and 41 literacy zones. Of the 118 programs, 76 were funded under the last bid for WIA Title II funds.
- In total, 35 programs indicated they are currently co-located at their local Career Center office and have developed an overall good working relationship with their one-stop operators.

- A minority, 17 programs, who are co-located, indicate they currently share costs with their local One-Stop operator.
- While the majority is not co-located, the survey response indicates that 135 of our programs statewide are currently referring students to their local Career Center for employment services.
- A key finding is that our local literacy programs have joined effort with their school districts and BOCES to offer career and technical education next step programming options for their literacy students currently, and are able to provide data associated with these students. According to the survey results, 75 programs support this capacity. In addition, a total of 68 programs provide postsecondary transition services to their students.

NYSCB also holds public forums and statewide teleconferences in order to gather input into the development of both the Combined State Plan and the VR portion of the Combined State Plan. Notification of the in-person forums and statewide teleconferences is distributed to all active consumers, in their preferred format. Other individuals and entities receiving the notice include: private agencies for individuals who are blind, Independent Living Centers, members of the NYSCB SRC members, and consumer advocacy group representatives. The proposed VR section of the Combined State Plan and the notification of the forums and teleconferences is posted on NYSCB's web page. These documents are available in alternative formats including, audio, Braille, electronic, and large print upon request. Public forums are held in two locations in the State in conjunction with the ACB and the NFB, NYS chapter conventions. The forums and the teleconferences provide opportunities for public participation statewide. After the public comment period, the proposed plan and the comments received at the forums and teleconferences are reviewed by the SRC. The SRC also provides input into the goals and strategies set forth by the State Plan during one of their quarterly meetings.

Fiscal Controls and Fund Accounting Procedures

NYS established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/alloc/wia-adult-youth-dlw-formula.pdf

Uniform Guidance Compliance

NYS has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under section WIOA 184(a)(3):

Compliance with Non-Discrimination Requirements

NYS has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188 Nondiscrimination, as applicable:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/agencyinfo/moa/moa.shtm

Additionally, page 21 of NYSCB's Master Contract boiler plate language identifies Non-Discrimination Requirements and additionally references State and Federal Statutes, including Article 15 of the Executive Law (Human Rights Law) as well as specific sections of the Labor Law (220-e, 230, & 239). NYSCB's policy statement indicates compliance with non-discrimination as well as language on the NYSCB Application for Services. The Division's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Development (EODD) also oversees compliance regarding NYS's non-discrimination law.

Authorized Use of Federal Funds

The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program:

NYSDOL certifies that federal funds received for the core programs that it administers will only be expended for the activities authorized under that core program.

NYSED certifies that funds will only be appropriated to carry out activities consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) and will ensure that there is at least one eligible Title II provider serving each local area.

Page 19 of NYSCB's Master Contract boilerplate language identifies Cost Allocation requirements. For non-performance based contracts, the proper allocation of the Contractor's costs must be made according to a cost allocation plan that meets the requirements of OMB Circulars A-87, A-122 and/or A-21. Methods used to determine and assign costs shall conform to accepted accounting practices and shall be consistent with the method(s) used by the Contractor to determine costs for other operations or programs. Such accounting standards and practices shall be subject to the approval of the State.

NYSCB also has coding in place as part of the authorization payment process detailing which account or grant award the funds for the expenditure in specific is being paid from. There are also supervisory approval processes and protocol in place to ensure services authorized fall within the scope of services provided within a program.

Appropriate Share of Infrastructure Costs

NYS will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs:

One-Stop Certification Policy

NYS has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA):

http://www.labor.ny.gov/agencyinfo/moa/moa.shtm

Referral Policy for Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment

Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate:

https://www.labor.ny.gov/vets/pdfs/veteran-service-guide.pdf

Priority of Service for Veterans

Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

Priority of Service to Public Assistance Recipients, and/or Low Income or Basic Skills Deficient Individuals

NYS has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient.

Each LWDB establishes their own local policies and procedures to serve priority populations consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements. NYSDOL monitors each local area to ensure that local policies are in place and are implemented appropriately.

Referral Policy for Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to DVOPs

NYS has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist:

http://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/ta12-12-4-veterans-priority-of-service.pdf

Policy for Appointment to LWDBs by Chief Elected Officials

NYS established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/TA15-6-LWDB-Certification.pdf

Policy for LWDB Certification Every Two Years by Governor

NYS established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2):

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/TA15-6-LWDB-Certification.pdf

Policy for SWDB Allocation Distribution

NYS established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/alloc/wia-adult-youth-dlw-formula.pdf

Union Organizing Fund Use

NYS will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7):

NYS agrees not to allow funds received under Title I of WIOA to be used for this purpose.

State Distribution of Adult and Youth Funds Under WIOA

NYS distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan:

http://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/alloc/wia-adult-youth-dlw-formula.pdf

Coordination of Agencies Administering State Laws for Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and Wagner-Peyser Services, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, and Youth Programs under Title I

If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and Youth Programs under Title I:

Access-VR and NYSCB are responsible for administering State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and these entities continue to have a good working relationship and work closely and cooperate with NYSDOL on all workforce development related matters.

Priority of Service for Covered Persons

Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs:

NYS will monitor the local system to ensure that priority of service is being provided to covered persons for each of the Title I programs in accordance with WIOA requirements.

Impact and Outcomes of State Approved Waivers in WIOA Annual Report

NYS agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report:

NYS agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of any approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. NYS does not anticipate requesting any waivers at this time during the initial implementation phase of WIOA.

Uniform Guidance Compliance

NYS has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3):

http://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/TA09-18.pdf

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

Co-Location with Career Centers

Wagner-Peyser Employment Services is currently co-located within One Stop Career Centers.

MSFW Career Centers

NYSDOL is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.11. The list of the 10 Significant MSFW centers and agricultural plan is located on our NYSDOL website:

https://labor.ny.gov/immigrants/agricultural-outreach-plan.shtm

Coordination of Agencies Administering State Laws for Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and Wagner-Peyser Services, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, and Youth Programs under Title I

Access-VR and NYSCB are responsible for administering State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and these entities continue to have a good working relationship and work closely and cooperate with NYSDOL on all workforce development related matters.

Labor Exchange Activities

NYSDOL merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
Enacted August 7, 1998 as Title II of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220)
And Amended July 22, 2014, as Title II of the
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-128)

The NYS Education Department (State Agency) of the State of New York hereby submits its **State Plan** to be effective until June 30, 2019. The eligible agency also assures that this plan, which serves as an agreement between State and Federal Governments under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, will be administered in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances.

Certifications

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GENERAL
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
(34 CFR Part 76.104)

- The plan is submitted by the state agency that is eligible to submit the plan.
- The state agency has authority under state law to perform the functions of the state under the program.
- NYS may legally carry out each provision of the plan.
- All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.
- A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.
- The NYS officer who submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- The agency that submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.
- The methods included an opportunity for the entities responsible for planning or administering such programs and activities to review and comment on all portions of the unified/combined plan.

Assurances

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998
(Public Law 105-220)
Section 224 (b)(5), (6), and (8)
And
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014
(Public Law 113-128)
Section 102 (b)(E)(vi) and (vii)

- The eligible agency will award not less than one grant to an eligible provider who offers flexible schedules and necessary support services (such as child care and transportation) to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, or individuals with other special needs, to participate in adult education and literacy activities, which eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with support services that are not provided under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities provided under this subtitle for support services.
- Funds received under this subtitle will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities under this subtitle.
- The eligible agency will expend the funds under this subtitle in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements in Section 241.
- The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
- The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under Title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
- The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;
- The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and
- Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Section 241 Administrative Provisions

- Supplement Not Supplant.—Funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle shall supplement and not supplant other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities.
- Maintenance of Effort.—
    - In General.—
        - Determination.—An eligible agency may receive funds under this subtitle for any

fiscal year if the Secretary finds that the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the second preceding fiscal year, was not less than 90 percent of the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the third preceding fiscal year.

- Proportionate reduction.—Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), for any fiscal year with respect to which the Secretary determines under subparagraph (A) that the fiscal effort or the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency for the preceding program year were less than such effort or expenditures for the second preceding program year, the Secretary—
  - Shall determine the percentage decreases in such effort or in such expenditures; and
  - Shall decrease the payment made under this subtitle for such program year to the agency for adult education and literacy activities by the lesser of such percentages.

o Computation.—In computing the fiscal effort and aggregate expenditures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall exclude capital expenditures and special one-time project costs.

- Decrease in federal support.—If the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for a fiscal year is less than the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for the preceding fiscal year, then the fiscal effort per student and the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency required in order to avoid a reduction under paragraph (1)(B) shall be decreased by the same percentage as the percentage decrease in the amount so made available.
- Waiver.—The Secretary may waive the requirements of this subsection for 1 fiscal year only, if the Secretary determines that a waiver would be equitable due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster or an unforeseen and precipitous decline in the financial resources of the State or outlying area of the eligible agency. If the Secretary grants a waiver under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year, the level of effort required under paragraph (1) shall not be reduced in the subsequent fiscal year because of the waiver.

NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

By: _____
(Signature)
Chief Fiscal Officer

_____
(Date)

Assurances - Non-Construction Programs

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

Note: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in this application.

2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, and if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.

3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.

4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.

5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).

6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) 523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. 290 dd-3 and 290 ee 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.

7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.

8. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. 276c and 18 U.S.C.874) and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333),regarding labor standards for federally assisted construction subagreements.

10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is $10,000 or more.

11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clear Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clear Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, (P.L. 93-523); and (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (P.L. 93-205).

12 Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.

13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 469a-1 et seq.).

14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.

15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.

16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead- based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.

17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	TITLE Chief Fiscal Officer
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION NYS Education Department	DATE SUBMITTED

Standard Form 424B (Rev. 7-97) Back

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' in accordance with its instructions.
- The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION
NYS Education Department
* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
Prefix: Mr. * First Name: Donald Middle Name:
* Last Name: Juron Suffix:
* Title: Chief Financial Officer
* SIGNATURE: * DATE:

NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The Department of Family Assistance/Office of Children and Family Services is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act; **Yes**
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Department of Family Assistance/Office of Children and Family Services agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
5.	NYS may legally carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement**. Yes**
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. **Yes**
7.	The Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
8.	The Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; **Yes**
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

Public Law 113-128.

Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014. All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the ED/OSERS/RSA Commissioner that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	**Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	**Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement*:*** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	**Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*:*** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act... (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council **Option B selected**

	(c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance section 101(a)(3). (e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No** (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs **No** (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? **No** See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.	**Administration of the Provision of VR Services*:*** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will: (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act . (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act

	(d) determine whether comparable services and benefits, are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act, and, (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. (j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State, (A) has developed and will implement, (i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).
5.	**Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement*:*** (a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) The designated State unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.
6.	(a) **Financial Administration*:*** The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported

	employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	(a) **Provision of Supported Employment Services***:* The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that: i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and, ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The NYS Education Department (NYSED) Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act; **Yes**
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the NYSED Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and

	administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
5.	NYS may legally carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement**. Yes**
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. **Yes**
7.	The Deputy Commissioner Adult Career and Continuing Education Services has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**
8.	The Deputy Commissioner Adult Career and Continuing Education Services has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; **Yes**
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

Public Law 113-128.

Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014. All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the ED/OSERS/RSA Commissioner that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	**Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
2.	**Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement*:*** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140. **Yes**
3.	**Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*:*** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council **Option B selected** (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60. **Yes** (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance section 101(a)(3).(e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds. **No** (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs. **No** (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? **No** See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

	(i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. **Yes** (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
4.	**Administration of the Provision of VR Services*:*** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will: (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act . **Yes** (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? **Yes** (d) determine whether comparable services and benefits, are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act, and, **Yes** (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. **Yes** (j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State, (A) has developed and will implement,

	(i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).
5.	**Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement*:*** (d) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (e) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (f) The designated State unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act. **Yes**
6.	(c) **Financial Administration*:*** The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (d) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**
7.	(c) **Provision of Supported Employment Services*:*** The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes** (d) The designated State agency assures that: iii. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an

		appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and,
	iv.	an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act. **Yes**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below are the acronyms used throughout the State Combined Plan and the corresponding term for each acronym.

ABE: Adult Basic Education

ACB: American Council of the Blind

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

AgLP: Agriculture Labor Program

AgLS: Agriculture Labor Specialist

AOP: Agricultural Outreach Plan

ASE: Adult Secondary Education

ASISTS: Adult Student Information System and Technical Support

ATC: Assistive Technology Center

ATR: Apprentice Training Representative

BGFS: Burning Glass Focus Suite

BOCES: Board of Cooperative Educational Services

BWE: Blind Work Expenses

CAP: Corrective Action Plan

CBO: Community Based Organization

CCRS: College and Career Readiness Standards

CCSS: Common Core State Standards

CDS: Career Development Services

CEO: Chief Elected Official

CEP: Continuous Evaluation Process

CES: Current Employment Statistics

CES: Community Employment Specialists

CFA: Consolidated Funding Application

CNSE: College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering

CPS: Current Population Survey

CSAVR: Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSI: Customer Service Indicator

CSNA: Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

CUNY: City University of New York

DDPC: New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

DEC: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

DOS: New York State Department of State

DRC: Disability Resource Coordinator

DUA: Disaster Unemployment Assistance

DVOP: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist

ECC: Expanded Core Curriculum

ED/OSERS/RSA: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration

ELA: English Literacy Acquisition

ELL: English Language Learner

EN: Employment Network

EODD: New York State Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Development

ESD: Empire State Development Corporation

ESL: English as a Second Language

ETPL: Eligible Training Providers List

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

GE: General Electric

HOME2: Help Obtaining Meaningful Employment and Education

HRD: New York State Department of Labor, Human Resource Development Unit

HSE: High School Equivalency

IEP: Individual Employment Plan

IPE: Individualized Plan for Employment

ITA: Individual Training Account

ITAP: Individual Technical Assistance Program

JSRS: Job Search Ready Services

JTPA: Job Training Partnership Act

LAC: Literacy Assistance Center

LNY: Literacy New York

LSR: Labor Services Representative

LVER: Local Veterans Employment Representative

LWDA: Local Workforce Development Area

LWDB: Local Workforce Development Board

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MSFW: Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker

MSQ: Military Service Questionnaire

NASWA: National Association of State Workforce Agencies

NEG: National Emergency Grant

NET: National Employment Team

NFB: National Federation of the Blind

NFJP: National Farmworker Jobs Program

NRS: National Reporting System

NWRC: National Work Readiness Credential

NYATEP: New York State Association of Training and Employment Professionals

NYESS: New York Employment Services System

NYPA: New York Power Authority

NYS: New York State

NYSDOH: New York State Department of Health

NYSDOL: New York State Department of Labor

NYSDOL/AFB: New York State Department of Labor, Administrative Finance Bureau

NYSDOL/DEWS: New York State Department of Labor, Division of Employment & Workforce Solutions

NYSDOL/DIPA: New York State Department of Labor, Division of Immigrant Policies & Affairs

NYSDOL/TCC: New York State Department of Labor, Telephone Claims Center

NYSDOL/UID: New York State Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Division

NYSED: New York State Education Department

NYSED/ACCES-VR: New York State Education Department, Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation

NYSED/OSE: New York State Education Department, Office of Special Education

NYSERDA: New York State Energy Research & Development Authority

NYSPSP: New York State Preferred Source Program

NYYW: New York Youth Works

O&M: Orientation and Mobility

OASAS: New York State Office for Alcohol and Substance Abuse

OCFS: New York State Office of Children & Family Services

OCFS/NYSCB: New York State Office of Children & Family Services, Commission for the Blind

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), NYS Department of State (NYSDOS)

OJT: On-the-Job Training

OMH: New York State Office of Mental Health

OPWDD: New York State Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities

OSC: New York State Office of the State Comptroller

OSOS: One-Stop Operating System

OTDA: New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance

P-TECH: Pathways in Technology Early College High School

PROMISE: Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income Grant

QCEW: Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

R&S: New York State Department of Labor, Division of Research & Statistics

RAEN: Regional Adult Education Network

RBST: Regional Business Services Team

REDC: Regional Economic Development Council

REOS: Reemployment Operating System

RESEA: Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program

RFP: Request for Proposal

RRRC: Regional Rapid Response Coordinator

SCCC: Schenectady County Community College

SDA: Service Delivery Area

SEAP: Self-Employment Assistance Program

SFS: Statewide Financial System

SMA: State Monitor Advocate

SMART: Skills Matching and Referral Technology

SRC: State Rehabilitation Council

SSA: Social Security Administration

SSI: Supplemental Security Income

STAC: System to Track & Account for Children

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

SUNY: State University of New York

SWIB: State Workforce Investment Board

TA: Technical Advisory

TAA: Trade Adjustment Assistance

TAACCCT: Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program

TAARA: Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act

TABE: Test of Adult Basic Education

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

TAP: Talent Acquisition Portal

TASC: Test Assessing Secondary Completion

TEAM: Training and Education in Advanced Manufacturing

TLO: Temporary Layoff

TRA: Trade Readjustment Allowances

TRAID: Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

TSS: Teacher Support System

UYJP: Urban Youth Jobs Program

UCEDD: University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

UI: Unemployment Insurance

UI-ES: Unemployment Insurance-Employment Services Connectivity Grant

VRT: Vision Rehabilitation Therapy

WSP: Wage Subsidy Program

WARN: Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification

W-P: Wagner-Peyser Act

WIA: Workforce Investment Act

WIOA: Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

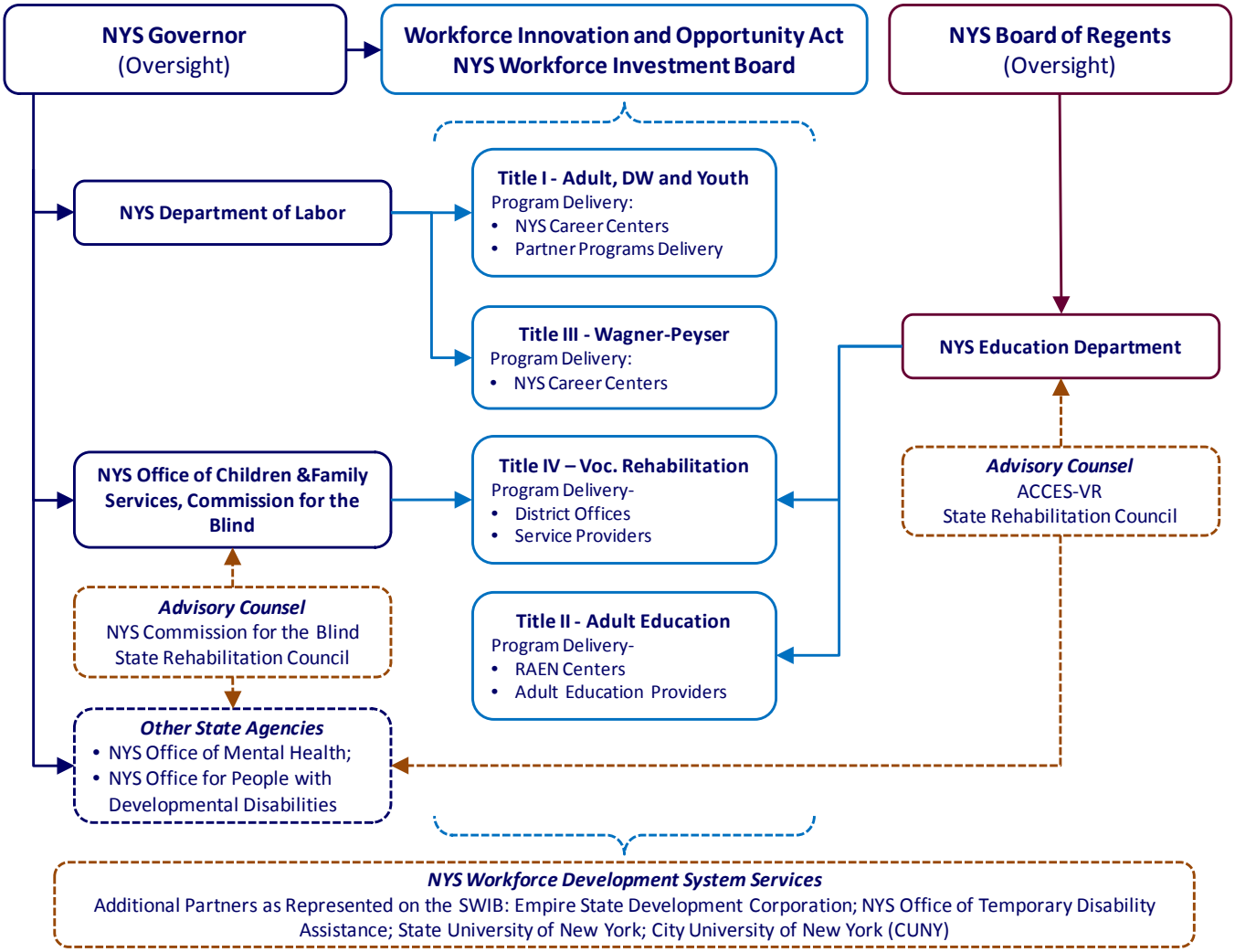
WIPP: Workforce Integrated Profile Page

WOTC: Work Opportunity Tax Credit

YES: Your Employability Score

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: WIOA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX 2: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Note for Draft Plan: The Core Programs are working closely together to identify and establish appropriate data sources and gaining the necessary administrative clearances to meet the WIOA requirements. Titles II and IV are in the process of gathering the necessary information to establish valid and reliable data for the required performance measures.

Table 1:

	Program Year 2018		Program Year 2019	
	Proposed/ Expected Level	Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	Proposed/ Expected Level	Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)				
Adults	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	69.0%
Dislocated Workers	66.0%	66.0%	66.0%	67.0%
Youth*	60.0%	72.0%	60.0%	73.0%
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	66.0%	67.0%	66.0%	68.0%
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)				
Adults	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%	68.0%
Dislocated Workers	66.0%	66.0%	66.0%	67.0%
Youth*	62.0%	62.0%	62.0%	63.0%
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	66.0%	66.0%	66.0%	67.0%
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings				

(Second Quarter after Exit				
Adults	$5,200	$5,200	$5,200	$5,300
Dislocated Workers	$6,400	$6,400	$6,400	$6,500
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	$5,300	$5,300	$5,300	$5,400
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate				
Adults	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%	46.0%
Dislocated Workers	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%	46.0%
Youth	62.0%	62.0%	62.0%	63.0%
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains				
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	64.0%	64.0%	64.0%	64.0%
Wagner-Peyser	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Effectiveness in Serving Employers				
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
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Table 2: FY17/18 Adult Education Targets

Instructional Type & Level	NYS 2017-2018 Targets
ABE – Beginning Literacy	68%
ABE – Beginning Basic Education	65%
ABE – Intermediate Low	59%
ABE – Intermediate High	52%
ASE – Low	60%
ESL – Beginning Literacy	62%
ESL – Beginning Low	76%
ESL – Beginning High	74%
ESL – Intermediate Low	69%
ESL – Intermediate High	63%
ESL – Advanced	60%