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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Four Year Combined State Plan
Program Years 2020 through 2023
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New York State (NYS) is submitting a Combined State Plan to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), United States Department of Education (USDOE), and the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Agriculture for the required four-year State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The NYS Program Year (PY) 2020-2023 Combined includes the strategic plan for the core WIOA partners including the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL), NYS Education Department (NYSED), and the Office of Children and Family Services/NYS Commission for the Blind (OCFS/NYSCB). These core partners oversee the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title I); Adult Education and Family Literacy (Title II); Wagner-Peyser (Title III); and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) programs. Other required WIOA partners included in the NYS PY 2020-2023 Combined Plan include Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). TANF, Perkins V, and CSBG each complete their own State plans, which are linked within this full Combined Plan.

Under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s leadership, NYS has developed and implemented massive reforms that have improved the lives of millions of New Yorkers and reshaped the workplace landscape; initiatives like the nation’s first statewide $15 minimum wage, the nation’s strongest and most comprehensive Paid Family Leave policy, new rights and protections for farmworkers, efforts to identify and halt egregious workplace practices, a commitment to protect and empower immigrants, initiatives to help close the gender wage gap, the nation’s most comprehensive workplace sexual harassment protections, unparalleled investments in training the future workforce, and more.

The NYS PY 2020-2023 Combined Plan outlines how NYS will implement its vision for the workforce development system (“System”), and the ways partner alignment and integration implement that vision. Highlights of the Combined Plan include the goals NYS has to support that vision; how the WIOA partners have and will continue to collaborate to implement the vision and goals; and the ways new partners to the Combined Plan are aligning their work with WIOA. Throughout the pages that follow, NYS will demonstrate the innovation taking place within NYS and the work partners are doing to provide both job seekers and businesses with seamless service across the System.

STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

Vision

The NYS System aims to ensure every business has access to a skilled labor force and that every New Yorker has access to job training opportunities that lead to high quality employment or career advancement.

To advance this Vision, NYS will adhere to the following guiding principles:

- The System has a dual-stakeholder focus on both businesses and job seekers;
- Services and programs within the System will continually evolve to become more nimble, flexible, coordinated, and easily accessible to all stakeholders;
• Equal access and opportunity are available for all, especially those individuals who face barriers to employment;
• Workforce programs and investment decisions will be result- and business-driven to ensure success and evaluated based on performance outcomes;
• Strategies will be regionally-focused and business-driven to ensure enhanced economic outcomes for job seekers and communities; and
• The NYS workforce and education systems are aligned around outcome-driven programs and models.

Goals

Goal 1: Prioritize business engagement to ensure training programs align to real-time employment needs.

Engaging businesses is critical to ensuring workforce development programs lead to strong employment outcomes. The most successful and innovative workforce programs lead with business demand, engagement in design, and direct system hiring. Governor Cuomo’s recent investments in the System, particularly the new Governor’s Office of Workforce Development and the Workforce Development Initiative (WDI), prioritize business engagement across every component of the NYS System, from P-12 education institutions and colleges and universities, to non-profits and organized labor. Business engagement will be a primary focus of the NYS State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB).

Goal 2: Provide customized workforce development opportunities to populations that face persistent barriers to employment.

NYS is committed to removing barriers to employment and career progression for individuals with disabilities; veterans; justice system-involved individuals; 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; Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning) and other (LGBTQ+) individuals; New Americans including immigrants and refugees; and other underserved or economically marginalized populations. This goal will best accomplished by engaging priority populations in program design and delivery, and by creating more seamless connections between the multiple systems that support underserved populations, including social service and public assistance agencies; schools; housing authorities; legal services agencies; health providers; and non-profit service agencies so that frontline staff can seamlessly move individuals to applicable services through an established referral, case management, and program application system.

Goal 3: Enhance performance through improved data integration, enhanced outcomes metrics, labor market data sharing agreements, and formal best practice sharing.

NYS will align its agencies and workforce development stakeholders toward utilizing an integrated set of performance standards for all state-funded workforce development programs. Meaningful labor market data and 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, and an assessment of relative strengths of each appropriate state agency and provider.

Goal 4: Promote non-traditional education models and life-long learning career pathways that lead to sustainable wage employment opportunities for all New Yorkers.
NYS will support career pathways that are nimble and responsive to the changing needs of both the current and future workforce. These pathways go beyond traditional, linear education models. They are progressive and adapt to shifting workforce needs on a regional basis. This includes the need for continuous up-skilling and re-skilling throughout each worker’s career. The ultimate aim of investing in, and removing regulatory barriers for, these models is to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their age or educational background, can progress in their careers to attain sustainable wage employment.

Goal 5: Align workforce development goals and strategies on a regional basis with stakeholders from the business, education, labor, and community development sectors.

Identifying and implementing regionally-specific strategies with an aligned set of community stakeholders is the key to success within NYS’s large and regionally complex economy. Governor Cuomo launched the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) initiative in 2011 to provide the formal structure for regionalizing NYS’s economic development policies. In 2019, the REDCs took on a larger role with regional workforce partners to ensure economic and workforce development become an integrated regional strategy. NYS will continue to enhance the REDC partnership with the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development, state agencies, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and all NYS WIOA-funded programs to ensure economic and workforce development activities work to further each other for greater impact.

Strategies

The following provides specific strategies for accomplishing each goal:

Goal 1: Prioritize business engagement to ensure training programs align to real-time employment needs.

Strategies

- Make business and industry engagement a central focus of the SWIB;
- Utilize the REDCs to enhance business partnerships with local workforce partners, including LWDBs, higher education, P-12 systems, and nonprofit training providers;
- Expand NYSDOL Regional Business Service Team (RBST) coordination with other state agencies, including Empire State Development (ESD); LWDBs; and other workforce development partners;
- Engage key regional businesses in program design, curriculum development, and work-based learning, for both adults and youth;
- Promote and incentivize the use of work-based learning models, such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Registered Apprenticeship, and work-based internship strategies to expand effective experiential learning opportunities;
- Create more self-service virtual tools for the business community;
- Promote and incentivize up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities in industries and job titles most at risk of negative impacts from automation, digitization, and artificial intelligence; and
- Identify and eliminate additional barriers to System engagement for businesses.

Goal 2: Provide customized workforce development opportunities to populations that face persistent barriers to employment.

Strategies
• Improve NYS’s coordination with LWDBs to enhance comprehensive referrals, program accessibility, and service connections in every Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) to promote measurable outcome improvements for New Yorkers facing barriers to employment, such as access to housing, child care or transportation, and poverty;

• 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;

• Connect to existing programs and collaborate with other state agencies that manage programs not funded by the WIOA system, such as ESD’s Entrepreneurial Assistance Centers (EACs), and business mentorship and technical assistance, building on successful efforts that exist in pockets across NYS;

• Expand understanding about the multi-generational workplace and effective interventions;

• Expand understanding about the various ways individuals learn and work in the workplace and effective interventions;

• Improve workforce partner outreach to businesses regarding hiring individuals with disabilities;

• Improve workforce partner outreach to businesses regarding hiring adults with alternative/specialized credentials, including New Americans and refugees;

• Improve collaboration with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) programs within the System, and explore the ability of the System to expand program support beyond mandated TANF and SNAP E&T career services;

• Develop and implement a robust audit and training program aimed at ensuring that all partners are complying with the WIOA Non Discrimination Plan (NDP) providing access to all New Yorkers, particularly those with barriers to employment.

• Incorporate lessons learned from global and national efforts to improve meaningful participation for women in underrepresented sectors and occupations;

• Expand the Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) role in NYS Career Centers to ensure individuals with special needs have access to workforce development services; and

• Update NYS’s CareerZone system to better engage secondary schools and higher education institutions in the System.

**Goal 3:** Enhance performance through improved data integration, enhanced outcomes metrics, labor market data sharing agreements, and formal best practice sharing.

**Strategies**

• Share labor market data across workforce partners to ensure the same data informs multiple partners on training decisions and encourage further dissemination of this information to uncover other areas where it might be useful;

• Better tie funding decisions to labor market data analysis and qualitative (workforce intelligence) feedback from system stakeholders;

• Align performance and financial reporting systems locally and statewide to better allocate funding, improve accountability, and address systemic issues;
• Enhance customer service by creating common standards and systems across all workforce entities and reducing regulatory barriers (i.e. uniform Career Center standards and job search platforms);
• Develop effective mechanisms to communicate and share performance information to System stakeholders to be used for continuous improvement;
• Create more interagency partnerships with NYS entities, including the higher education system, economic development agencies, and secondary schools to align workforce development activities and improve data sharing;
• Ensure all elements of the System have built-in feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and roundtables; and
• Monitor progress in, and partner with, other states to share resources in creating the most impactful programs.

Goal 4: Promote non-traditional education models and life-long learning career pathways that lead to sustainable wage employment opportunities for all New Yorkers.

Strategies
• Market and expand non-traditional education, credentialing, and up-skilling pathways through traditional providers such as community colleges, the P-12 education system, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECHs);
• Enhance focus and capacity locally and statewide to continuously engage a wide range of businesses and workers to better align training programs and partnerships on a regional basis;
• Promote and incentivize resource-sharing activities;
• Expand higher education’s recognition of life/work experience for college credit and degree or credential completion assistance;
• Enhance career exploration and education/training-gap analysis tools geared toward adults looking to change careers; and
• Work with businesses to promote best-practice candidate selection and job retention programs.

Goal 5: Align workforce development goals and strategies on a regional basis with stakeholders from the business, education, labor, and community development sectors.

Strategies
• Drive formal alignment with NYSDOL’s Business Services Representatives (BSRs) with ESD Regional Office staff and LWDBs;
• Revise NYS funding guidelines and internal processes to enhance the WDI and further empower REDCs to engage in workforce development planning and project attraction in the regions;
• Identify new funding opportunities to support workforce investments and review current NYS workforce development funding to ensure, when appropriate, a regionally focused process is used for selecting projects investments; and
• Continue to align REDCs, WIOA partners, and LWDB planning and performance review processes and calendars to improve data sharing and strategic alignment.
Performance

WIOA performance reporting seeks to improve accountability across all core programs by requiring reporting 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 updated their case management systems to collect the data elements required by WIOA and have updated data entry policy to include the new requirements. This data collection has facilitated the ability to set accurate performance goals for PY18 and PY19. 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 have established 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 take any punitive action for performance goals in PY18 and PY19. Both Title II and Title IV have UI wage data Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) in place and are pursuing agreements to have access to State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) data.

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 began developing intermediary performance indicators designed to support the primary indicators and System goals. The intermediary indicators are being designed to improve communication between System partners, leverage new technologies NYS developed, and influence the behavior of frontline staff in NYS Career Centers to improve services to participants as needed. NYS has had success with intermediary indicators in the past, such as the Customer Service Indicators (CSIs), which were designed to improve performance in the Common Measures under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). NYS will continue to conduct analysis and develop intermediary reports based on the primary indicators of performance.

With regard to Title II, 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 2018-2019. NYSED’s Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Adult Education Policies and Programs (NYSED/ACCES-AEPP) will continue to refine measurable skill gain targets for 2019-2020, 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.”

NYSED/ACCES-AEPP will continue to comply with WIOA requirements. This includes a data exchange with the UI database at 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 set the reporting deadline for NRS data to August 15, 2018. ACCES- 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, May 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>SOC Code</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>29-1141</td>
<td>12,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>15-1132</td>
<td>12,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>41-1011</td>
<td>9,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>41-2031</td>
<td>9,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Managers</td>
<td>11-2021</td>
<td>8,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Occupations, All Other</td>
<td>15-1199</td>
<td>6,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</td>
<td>13-1161</td>
<td>6,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>43-4051</td>
<td>5,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>13-2011</td>
<td>5,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Managers</td>
<td>11-3031</td>
<td>5,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 used to determine which occupations and industries are currently in demand.
- These top 10 occupations represent a broad range of industries including: financial services, health care, retail trade, and information technology.
- Ten occupations had more than 5,000 online jobs postings in NYS in May 2019.
- The occupations most in demand in NYS in May 2019, according to online advertised job openings, are: Registered Nurses (12,316); Software Developers, Applications (12,050); First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (9,151); Retail Salespersons (9,031); and Marketing Managers (8,095).

Industry Sectors with Largest Number of Online Ads, NYS, May 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>NAICS Code</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific and Technical Services</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>44-45</td>
<td>29,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Support Services</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>31-33</td>
<td>13,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7,496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The HWOL data series also provides information on the industry sectors that are posting help wanted ads. The industry sectors with the highest current demand for workers include: Health Care and Social Assistance (32,829); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (30,904); Retail Trade (29,302); Administrative and Support Services (28,672); and Finance and Insurance (17,648).

### Occupations with Largest Number of Online Ads, Upstate and Downstate New York, May 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SOC Code</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Number of Online Job Ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upstate New York</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29-1141</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>6,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41-1011</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>4,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41-2031</td>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>4,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>43-4051</td>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>2,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>43-5081</td>
<td>Stock Clerks and Order Fillers</td>
<td>2,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>53-3032</td>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21-1093</td>
<td>Social and Human Service Assistants</td>
<td>1,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>35-1012</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers</td>
<td>1,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>49-9071</td>
<td>Maintenance and Repair Workers, General</td>
<td>1,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>43-1011</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers</td>
<td>1,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ads (Top 10)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>30,127</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ads (Upstate Region)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>127,320</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Downstate New York</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15-1132</td>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>9,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11-2021</td>
<td>Marketing Managers</td>
<td>6,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29-1141</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>6,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13-1161</td>
<td>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</td>
<td>5,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15-1199</td>
<td>Computer Occupations, All Other</td>
<td>5,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11-3031</td>
<td>Financial Managers</td>
<td>4,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>41-2031</td>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>4,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>41-1011</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>3,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13-2011</td>
<td>Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>3,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13-1111</td>
<td>Management Analysts</td>
<td>3,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ads (Top 10)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>52,719</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ads (Downstate Region)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>195,578</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 three occupations are common to both top ten lists: Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons 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 (195,578) is greater than the number in the Upstate area (127,320).

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Selected Emerging Industries, NYS, 2018-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Code (NAICS)</th>
<th>Industry Title</th>
<th>2014 Jobs</th>
<th>2018 Jobs</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Projected % Growth ’18 - ’20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31212</td>
<td>Breweries*</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>3,727</td>
<td>+1,802</td>
<td>+93.6%</td>
<td>+8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51121</td>
<td>Software Publishers**</td>
<td>6,427</td>
<td>14,580</td>
<td>+8,153</td>
<td>+126.9%</td>
<td>+27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51913</td>
<td>Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals</td>
<td>22,299</td>
<td>39,420</td>
<td>+17,121</td>
<td>+76.8%</td>
<td>+22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54171</td>
<td>R&amp;D in the Physical, Engineering and Life Sciences**</td>
<td>37,576</td>
<td>38,099</td>
<td>+523</td>
<td>+1.4%</td>
<td>+2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5613</td>
<td>Employment Services*</td>
<td>145,288</td>
<td>188,759</td>
<td>+43,471</td>
<td>+29.9%</td>
<td>+6.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

* Short-term industry projections data are available at 3-digit parent NAICS code for these industries.

** Short-term industry projections data are available at 4-digit parent NAICS code for these industries.

Analysts from NYSDOL’s Division of Research and Statistics (R&S) identified five emerging industries in NYS, based on three principal factors:

1. Employment growth over the last four years;
2. Favorable short-term industry projections spanning the 2018-2020 period; and
3. Statewide market trends observations.

These industries span four broad industry sectors: Manufacturing; Information; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Administrative and Support Services.

The five emerging industries had total combined statewide employment of 284,585 in 2018. The two largest industries were Employment Services (188,759) and Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search.
Portals (39,420). Projected job growth for these five industries in 2018-2020 varies widely, from a low of 2.8% (R&D in the Physical, Engineering and Life Sciences) to a high of 27.5% (Software Publishers).

The following section includes a brief profile and the top five occupations (i.e., staffing patterns) for each emerging industry. In general, employment in these emerging industries is relatively concentrated, with the top five occupations accounting for anywhere from 27% to 56% of overall industry employment.

**Breweries (NAICS 31212)**

**Top 5 Occupations in the Breweries Industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code (SOC)</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Share of Industry Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51-9012</td>
<td>Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-3031</td>
<td>Waiters and Waitresses</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-3011</td>
<td>Bartenders</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-2031</td>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-9111</td>
<td>Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, Top 5 Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>55.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

One of NYS’s emerging industries is Breweries (NAICS 312). The economic contribution made by the entire beer industry, including brewers, beer wholesalers and retailers, is remarkable. Over the past decade, craft brewers’ share of the United States’ (U.S.) beer market more than tripled, growing from 4.0% in 2008 to 13.2% in 2018, per data from the Brewers Association. According to a study from the NYS Brewers Association, the craft brewing industry had a total statewide economic impact of more than $5.3 billion in 2018.

Expanding NYS’s craft beverage manufacturing industry has been a focal point of recent economic development efforts. Favorable regulatory changes, such as the NYS “Farm Brewery” license and the elimination of annual labeling fees for small breweries, have breathed new life into the brewing industry. NYS now has more than 430 breweries, a new record, and ranks #3 in the U.S. The growth in the number of breweries created jobs and helped to drive tourism across NYS. As a result of these economic development efforts and the surging popularity of craft beverages, industry employment is projected to grow by 8.1% from 2018 to 2020.

**Software Publishing (NAICS 51121)**

**Top 5 Occupations in the Software Publishing Industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code (SOC)</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Share of Industry Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-1132</td>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-4011</td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A second emerging industry in NYS is Software Publishing (NAICS 51121). In recent years, economic development initiatives, such as the START-UP NY program, have sought to create a favorable business climate for start-up companies. Additionally, businesses and consumers continue their investments in software, computers and mobile devices, which in turn contribute towards a flourishing software publishing industry.

A very important and growing area within computer systems is cybersecurity, which protects against unauthorized access to data centers and other computerized systems. It is an aggregation of products and services to protect computer networks from breaching data confidentiality and integrity. Even though the cybersecurity industry does not yet have its own designated NAICS code, many security intelligence companies, like LogRhythm and Tripwire, use the Software Publishing industry code when offering their services to procurement managers.

Looking ahead, the Software Publishing industry’s statewide employment count is projected to grow by 27.5% between the second quarter of 2018 and the second quarter of 2020.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code (SOC)</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Share of Industry Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-1132</td>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-3099</td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Services, All Other</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-3041</td>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-1161</td>
<td>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-3011</td>
<td>Advertising Sales Agents</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, Top 5 Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>40.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals industry (NAICS 51913) has grown dramatically in the last few years, with demand driven by consumers and business needs for information and on-demand entertainment. The Internet exploded over the past 25 years: in 1995, only 1% of the world’s population had an Internet connection; that figure increased from one billion in 2005, to two billion in 2013, and over 3.4 billion in 2016. As of May 2019, 56.8% of the world’s population was ‘online,’ mainly via mobile devices like smartphones, according to the Financial Times.

As more people access the web, there is a rapid increase in demand for skilled workers in this industry. Although the Internet is now just over 25 years old, the rapid proliferation of smartphones, especially since Apple introduced the first iPhone in 2007, contributes to ongoing demand for web services and skilled workers.
Internet penetration and smartphone ownership continue to grow, as well as advertisers shifting resources toward internet and mobile platforms, industry employment is expected to grow accordingly.

The biggest companies within this industry include online search engines and advertising technologies (Google); online social media and social networking service companies (Facebook); media-services providers (Spotify); business directory services and crowd-sourced review forums (Yelp); and business and employment-oriented services (LinkedIn). Between the second quarter of 2018 and the second quarter of 2020, industry employment in NYS is projected to increase by 22.7% in this industry.

R&D in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (NAICS 54171)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code (SOC)</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Share of Industry Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-1042</td>
<td>Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-4099</td>
<td>Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-4061</td>
<td>Social Science Research Assistants</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-6014</td>
<td>Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-4021</td>
<td>Biological Technicians</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, Top 5 Occupations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>30.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey

The Life Science sector covers the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, biomedical technologies and life systems technologies. It includes organizations and institutions that devote most of their efforts to the various stages of R&D, technology transfer, and commercialization. Companies in this sector are routinely developing new medical and pharmaceutical breakthroughs that have the potential to save lives.

Employment in the Life Sciences sector grew rapidly over the past decade. Significant initiatives and public investments were made to support this growing industry cluster. As a result, NYS has become a center for research and innovation with enactment of the $620 million Life Sciences Initiative in 2018, which aims to spur the growth of world-class R&D in NYS, as well as expand NYS’s ability to commercialize this R&D to continue growing the economy. Another example is the LifeSci NYC Initiative, a $500 million investment over 10 years with the goal of creating 16,000 jobs and up to 2.8 million square feet of space for new life sciences projects. In the Hudson Valley, the NY BioHud Valley Initiative aims to aggressively market and brand this fast-growing cluster and solidify the region as the East Silicon Valley for biotech companies.

Employment Services (NAICS 5613)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Code (SOC)</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>Share of Industry Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53-7062</td>
<td>Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The employment count in Employment Services grew over the last few years. This industry group consists of firms primarily engaged in listing employment vacancies; referring or placing applicants for employment; providing search, recruitment and placement services; supplying temporary work service; and providing human resources (HR) services to businesses and households. With a growing demand for consolidated shared services of such functions as HR, payroll, benefits and compliance, businesses outsource their back-office functions to companies, such as Justworks, in order to concentrate more time and energy on their core missions.

Industry employment increased from 145,288 in 2014 to 188,759 in 2018, or 29.9%. The component industry with the biggest employment surge was Professional Employer Organizations (NAICS 56133), which saw its workforce levels more than triple, from 17,995 in 2014 to 54,948 in 2018. Looking forward, Employment Services is projected to grow by 6.6% over the 2018-2020 timeframe.

**Businesses’ Employment Needs**

Identifying employment needs of businesses in NYS 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 NYS Job Bank, which averaged about 131,000 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 REDC strategic planning are used to target business outreach efforts.

The NYS One-Stop Career Center System served 31,732 businesses in Calendar Year 2018. Employment needs identified by these business customers include: HR 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 (482 in 2018); and career fairs (453 in 2018).

**Workforce Analysis**

**Employment and Unemployment**

From the beginning of Governor Cuomo’s administration through May 2019, NYS’s economy added more than 1.17 million private sector jobs, experienced employment growth in 86 of the past 101 months and added an average of 11,600 private sector jobs per month. During this timeframe NYS hit the lowest unemployment rate on record, as the unemployment rate fell from 8.3% to 4.0%.
**Labor Market Trends**

Three industry sectors, Educational and Health Services (+438,400); Leisure and Hospitality (+232,800); and Natural Resources, Mining and Construction (+99,600), are responsible for more than 88% of the private sector job growth in NYS since May 2010. The private sector industry that lost the most jobs between May 2010 and May 2019 was Manufacturing (-14,900).

Of NYS’s 10 labor market regions, New York City (+27.9%) is the only one that added jobs at a faster pace than the nation as a whole (+19.3%) since May 2010. Other regions that saw their private sector job counts grow by at least 6.0% since May 2010 include: Long Island (+13.4%), Hudson Valley (+13.3%), Capital (+12.4%), Finger Lakes (+8.6%), Western New York (+6.5%) and Central New York (+6.3%). Regions adding private sector jobs at the slowest pace between May 2010 and May 2019 include: Mohawk Valley (+2.2%), North Country (+2.3%) and Southern Tier (+3.0%).

In May 2019, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.3% in New York City and 3.7% in the balance of NYS. The unemployment rates in both New York City and the balance of NYS held steady for the last several months; the rates also remain below their pre-recession levels of 5.1% and 4.9%, respectively. Between May 2010 and May 2019, the rate in New York City dropped from 9.6% to 4.3%. This steep rate drop reflects, in part, the strong private sector job growth experienced in New York City over the past nine years. The rate decline in the balance of NYS’s unemployment rate was more gradual, falling from 7.9% to 3.7% over the same nine-year timeframe.

The table below shows the change in unemployment rates by labor market region between May 2010 and May 2019 (not seasonally adjusted). The rate in New York City dropped the most (-5.0 percentage points) over the past nine years, from 9.2% to 4.2%. All other regions in NYS experienced rate drops in the range of 3.7-4.5%.

**Unemployment Rates, NYS, by Region, May 2010 and May 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>May 2010</th>
<th>May 2019</th>
<th>Change (in percentage points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central New York</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Valley</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Tier</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western New York</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 NYS.
In addition, New York City and the balance of NYS experienced much different trends in their labor force participation rates since May 2010. In New York City, the participation rate increased slightly, from 60.5% to 60.8%. Outside of New York City, the participation rate decreased sharply, from 64.4% to 61.4%, over the same period. As a result, overall labor force levels in New York City are up by approximately 148,000 since May 2010, while they are down by roughly 188,000 in the balance of NYS.

Businesses in a variety of industries in NYS continue to report some level of difficulty in filling their job openings. Some of the most in-demand titles include Registered Nurses; Applications Software Developers; First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers; Retail Salespersons; and Marketing Managers.

**Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population Age 25+ (in 1000s)</th>
<th>Less than high school diploma</th>
<th>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</th>
<th>Some college or Associate degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s degree</th>
<th>Graduate or Professional degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>13,660.8</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>756.0</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central NY</td>
<td>530.1</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>834.9</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Valley</td>
<td>1,570.7</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>1,972.6</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>338.9</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>5,969.9</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>287.0</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Tier</td>
<td>433.7</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western NY</td>
<td>967.1</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table presents information on the educational attainment of NYS’s population age 25 and older. 59.8% of NYS’s population (age 25+) have at least some college or an Associate degree, including 19.9% who have a Bachelor’s degree and another 15.4% who hold a Graduate or Professional (i.e., medical or law) degree.

Looking at NYS’s labor market regions, populations in the Hudson Valley (39.7%) and Long Island (39.5%) have the highest share with at least a Bachelor’s degree. In contrast, the North Country (21.8%) and the Mohawk Valley (22.6%) have the smallest share.

Conversely, 18.9% of New York City’s population (age 25 and older) has less than a high school diploma. This reflects, in part, the large share of the New York City’s population that is foreign born. The Capital (8.4%) and Western (9.3%) 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 NYS are still having trouble finding workers with the skills they require. This suggests that LWDBs need to continue working closely with businesses to develop the 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 the applicant has 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 NYS. Therefore, it is critical for any workforce development plan to implement a strategy to increase the percentage of potential employees 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population Age 16-19</th>
<th>Enrolled in School</th>
<th>Not Enrolled in School</th>
<th>Not Enrolled in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>1,014.6</td>
<td>897.3</td>
<td>117.3</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central NY</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Valley</td>
<td>131.6</td>
<td>117.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>153.9</td>
<td>138.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>378.6</td>
<td>333.5</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Tier</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western NY</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Among the more than one million New York youth aged 16-19, about 37,300, or 3.7%, are not enrolled in high school and did not graduate from high school. Almost half of the youth (41.3%) in this category reside in New York City. As noted, in the discussion above, individuals 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 5.6% in Mohawk Valley to a low of 2.4% on Long Island.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total civilian population</th>
<th>With a disability</th>
<th>No disability</th>
<th>Percent with a disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>19,556.3</td>
<td>2,232.2</td>
<td>17,324.0</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1,067.8</td>
<td>135.4</td>
<td>932.4</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central NY</td>
<td>775.8</td>
<td>101.1</td>
<td>674.7</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>1,193.9</td>
<td>161.6</td>
<td>1,032.2</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Valley</td>
<td>2,290.6</td>
<td>247.2</td>
<td>2,043.4</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>2,836.7</td>
<td>255.8</td>
<td>2,580.9</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>480.5</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>407.9</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>8,497.2</td>
<td>916.3</td>
<td>7,581.0</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>401.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>340.2</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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, 11.4% 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.

Long Island (9.0%) is the only labor market region in which the disability rate is below 10%. In contrast, there are six regions in which the disability rate is at or exceeds 13%. The regions with the highest disability rates in NYS are: North Country (15.3%); Mohawk Valley (15.1%); Southern Tier (14.5%); Western NY (13.7%); the Finger Lakes (13.5%); and Central (13.0%).

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

About one in seven New Yorkers, or 15.1%, were living in poverty, per the ACS. This figure, however, was much higher (21.3%) 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 (6.5%) region lived in poverty, while almost 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 almost three times higher (24.8%) in the Mohawk Valley and almost three and a half times higher (27.8%) 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 (1.7%) of households receiving cash public assistance income, while New York City had the highest rate (4.3%). Similarly, Long Island had the lowest percentage share (5.7%) of households receiving SNAP benefits in the past 12 months, while New York City topped the list (20.2%).

NYS continues to develop and administer workforce programs and education initiatives aimed at reducing the population in poverty and moving individuals into jobs with livable wages to decrease the need for public assistance.

**Description of Apparent Skill Gaps**

From 2016-2026, NYS’s total employment is expected to increase by more than 1.2 million. Employment is expected to increase among low-, middle- and high-skilled occupations. “Middle-skill” occupations refer to those job titles that require education and/or training beyond high school, but not a four-year college degree. In NYS, average annual wages for middle-skill occupations range from $23,280 to $133,730, with an average of $55,251 per year across all occupations. It is these jobs that many businesses in NYS are struggling to fill.

Occupational projections from NYSDOL indicate there will be 12.8 million job vacancies in NYS between 2016 and 2026 as a result of new jobs (i.e., growth need) and openings from retirements and career changes (i.e., replacement need). Nearly 45% of these available vacancies will require some type of formal education or training beyond high school.

Failure to address this gap will erode NYS’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**

The NYS System is strong. Through the Interagency Team, the WIOA partners have developed a System dedicated to providing job seekers and businesses with the tools necessary to support a growing economy.

1. **NYS Core Partners**

Three NYS 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 Family Literacy program through ACCES-Adult Education Program and Policy (NYSED/ACCES-AEPP) 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;
- Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V);
- TANF;
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP);
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) E&T;
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) E&T; and

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

3. Interagency Team Partners and Description

Staff from the WIOA core programs developed the NYS WIOA Interagency Team in 2015. The Interagency Team was originally formed to work together on the 2016 NYS Combined Plan. Since the Plan was submitted, the Interagency Team has continued to meet monthly 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 staff from NYSED’s CTE/Perkins V program and the NYS Department of State (DOS) overseeing the CSBG program, joined the group in mid-2019. The Interagency Team has met approximately 100 times over the last five years. About 75 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, nine (9) workgroups were formed out of the Interagency Team. The following provides descriptions of these workgroups.

a. Accessibility Workgroup – Collaborated with the NYS Career Centers to make the centers and workforce development services accessible to all New Yorkers. The goals of the Accessibility Workgroup were to:
   - Create a base standard of equipment throughout the System that is 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
   - Create a channel to distribute up to date information on accessibility compliance and best practices.

The workgroup worked 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 felt they could use assistance with. The workgroup then worked to identify and blend funding sources for the purchase of adaptive equipment for the Career Centers. The initiative concluded in 2019 with the distribution of adaptive technology to all of NYS’s Career Centers.

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

This 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 (RBSTs) and activities related to business engagement. For example, the workgroup arranged for a two-day training for core partners at the local and state level to learn from each other’s business engagement techniques. Additionally, NYSDOL provided access to its One Stop Operating System (OSOS) to support the core partners’ tracking of business engagement activities.

c. Combined Plan Workgroup – Tasked with updating the 2018 WIOA Combined Plan Modification document with a focus on making the 2020 plan more cohesive between the four WIOA Titles and additional WIOA partners included in the plan.

This workgroup was initially established in late 2017 to focus on integrating the Workforce Development Activities section of the 2018 Modification, and to provide highlights of the work being done by the NYS Interagency Team.

The group was brought together again in March 2019 to begin planning for the 2020 Combined Plan. The group has met several times to update various sections of the plan and highlight collaborative activities of the Interagency Team partners.
d. Customer Outreach Workgroup – Collaborated to gather customer feedback on the use of the Career Centers and their services. The goals of the Customer Outreach Workgroup were 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 could improve to better meet customer expectations;
- Develop cross agency strategies/training to improve customer experience/service; and
- Identify strategies to better promote the Career Center to customers.

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, 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.

The workgroup continues to meet with a focus on developing a common statewide unique identifier and determining a method for sharing and combining agency data.

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

Following the direction provided by the USDOL 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. A joint TA (TA #18-3) was released on March 16, 2018, providing guidance to LWDBs on completing the MOU. The workgroup will reconvene to develop a similar TA and guidance document for the 2020 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 worked with the agency Counsels toward developing a cross-partner referral and release of information form that abides by each partner’s confidentiality rules. This release of information form, an attachment to a joint TA released on March 1, 2019 (TA # 19-1), is currently being used by the core partners in the Career Centers when providing services to participants.

h. Training and Assistance Workgroup (TAG) – Tasked with ensuring direct training and skill building that occurs in the System is consistent across all partner programs; the workgroup goals are to:

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

This workgroup began with the goal of developing a 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 between 2016 and 2017 that fell under one of these competency areas: customer service, interviewing skills, labor market information, communication, systems training, disabilities, career development, language access, or 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, developed in 2018 and sent to local partners in mid-2019, seeks to gather similar information from local partners as well as their on-going training needs from across NYS. The information will be added to the NYS partner training inventory to identify strengths and gaps in professional development. From there a NYS training plan will be developed to guide professional development in the coming years. The workgroup is also considering ways to share what was developed and 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.

i. Youth Collaborative – Tasked with working collectively to support the development of youth and young adults by:

• Exploring, applying, or developing funding opportunities for youth programs and services specifically needed by youth, such as work readiness, work-based learning, dropout prevention, adult mentoring, alternative schooling, work experiences, career pathways development, and more;
• Increasing the knowledge and skills of staff across agencies to provide youth friendly services, incorporate youth voice and culture in programming, and help apply a youth lens;
• Engaging communities, families, and organizations to support positive development of youth with barriers to employment; and
• Bringing focus to career pathway exploration and development for and with youth.

The workgroup began meeting in 2018 with an emphasis on learning about each agency’s youth focus. Since then, members have conducted joint webinars, assisted with grant opportunities, and engaged program staff to better understand the developmental needs of young adults. The group continues to meet monthly.
Additionally, a workgroup consisting of Counsel members from each partner agency works together periodically to review and approve WIOA implementation policies and guidance developed by the Interagency Team.

**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 youth and adults have been developed to ensure full participation of all youth and adults.

   The NYS One-Stop Career Center System serves as the center of the System by:

   - Linking directly to the education/training systems for specific purposes;
   - Connecting 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. OCFS/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. In 2019, ACCES-AEPP served 11,245 students between the ages of 16 and 24.

   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 experiences. Youth programs are engaged with RBSTs, 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 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 NYS VR programs are working closely with the secondary and postsecondary systems, and System
partners to develop additional opportunities for the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. Specifically, NYSED/ACCES-VR executed new contracted services for pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities eligible for NYSED/ACCES-VR services in 2019. NYSED/ACCES-VR will execute new contracted services for pre-employment transition services for potentially eligible students in 2020. These services were identified as critical for establishing a solid foundation for transition-age students with disabilities. All vendors either are, or will be expected to, establish 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.

OCFS/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. In 2017, NYSDOL received a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) systems-change grant targeting both in-school and out-of-school youth with disabilities between the ages of 14-24. This three-year grant seeks to increase capacity of existing career pathways programs to better serve individuals by blending and braiding WIOA and other partner funding. Intervention strategies and best practices learned through the DEI could potentially be implemented across NYS. To meet the needs of out-of-school youth, partner staff is building collaboration with core programs, Youth Bureaus, alternative schools, and not-for-profit organizations to make all 14 WIOA program elements available to youth.

OTDA’s 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. OTDA allocates SYEP funds to all Social Services Districts (SSDs), and many districts opted to transfer their allocations to their LWDBs for program operation in 2019.

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 Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential as a measure of work readiness for youth, and to provide clarity to youth program providers on appropriate pathways to HSE diplomas in NYS.

In 2019, NYSDOL Youth Team staff and OTDA staff conducted a webinar to prepare WIOA youth providers for summer youth employment. NYSDOL’s Youth Team staff plans to facilitate a webinar with OCFS to assist WIOA Youth Program Providers to build local partnerships to enroll homeless youth and youth who aged out of the foster care system. Collaboration between the NYS Partners

c. Partner Collaboration

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 renowned national consultant Greg Newton. He 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 documents for the One-Stop Operator and MOU processes, which were released to the One-Stop Career Center System. 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 MOU TA was 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.

Additionally, in a webinar targeted for VR field staff, Greg Newton focused his discussion on program performance, the role of the VR program as a partner of the System, and the expectations for the program 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), now known as the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation; the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP); and the NYS Association for Continuing and Community Education (NYACCE).

3. Local and Regional Collaboration

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 SSDs 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 since the implementation of WIOA.

4. Interagency Task Force (IATF) on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Employment Subcommittee
NYSDOL participates on the HIV/AIDS IATF Employment Subcommittee alongside NYS agency partners Department of Health (DOH) AIDS Institute, OTDA, NYSED/ACCES-VR, NYSOFA, OCFS, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), and the Division of Human Rights (NYSDHR). Together these partners work to support of the Governor’s three-point plan to end the epidemic by 2020 (https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/).

Economic stability is recognized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as a social determinant of health. Research suggests that employment contributes to overall health improvement, reduced risk of relapse, and longer retention in treatment. As such, one of the elements in the Governor’s Blueprint to end the epidemic is to advance employment opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS. The IATF Employment Subcommittee was created in 2019 to make recommendations to the IATF, informed by community recommendations included in the Expanding Employment Opportunities for People Living With (PLW) HIV/AIDS Steering Committee report released in 2018 (https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/docs/expanding_employment_opportunities_steering_committee_implementation_strategies.pdf). Final recommendations to the IATF are set to be released in late 2019, and it is expected that the following recommendations will be made:

- NYS agencies should educate businesses on the legal protections afforded under the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA);
- NYS agencies should educate businesses on the Fair Chance Act and Ban the Box; and
- Regional coalitions, such as those modeled under the NYSDOL DEI Round 6 Project, should be implemented across NYS. These coalitions should be comprised of Career Centers, HIV/AIDS providers, NYSED/ACCES-VR, and other stakeholders. In order to improve both employment and health-based outcomes for PLW HIV/AIDS, the coalitions would focus on increasing the capacity of stakeholders and maximizing coordination between stakeholders to provide a seamless transition of services for these individuals, as well as other individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

2. Challenges

a. Funding

Federal appropriations for WIOA are flat funded at best. At current levels, funding reaches only a fraction of the need and with little or no adjustment for inflation, this is essentially a cut to the program. When significant cuts are proposed by the President and Congress, it makes it impossible to meet the full potential of the statute.

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, including:

• 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 delivery in the following ways:

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

NYS has a robust Title I service program, serving over 318,000 individuals in Program Year (PY) 2018 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 One-Stop 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 in need of Job Search Ready Services (JSRS) 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 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 WDI), which utilizes approximately $25M in both Title I and state funds, awarded on an ongoing basis 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. ACCES-AEPP administered state and federal funds support approximately 173 adult literacy programs across the state in any given program year, serving more than 100,000 students. This includes school districts, BOCES, City University of New York
(CUNY) and State University of New York (SUNY) postsecondary institutions, community based organizations, unions, and three library systems.

In 2017-2018, ACCES-AEPP competitively bid over $40 million in WIOA Title II funding to create new capacities and instructional approaches, beginning July 1, 2018. The Request for Proposals (RFP) resulted in multi-year awards to 173 providers to provide the following:

- 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 DOCCS;
- Education programs that develop career pathway connections with $18 million in federal and state postsecondary resources through DOCCS;
- Single points of contact 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;
- 56 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. This will continue annually throughout the State Plan period.

Since 2014, NYSED has developed state of the art professional development through CUNY and seven 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. A two-year MOU with SUNY will continue to provide Master Teacher training through June 30, 2021.

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 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, disclosure of disability or justice system involvement, serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and providing labor market information and labor exchange services within the 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, when 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, beginning in 2020. Potentially eligible students 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 agencies 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 programs will continue to work closely with schools to enable the provision of transition services to students with disabilities.
NYSED/ACCESS-VR and OCFS/NYSCB have expanded supported employment services for individuals to 24 months. In addition, they provide extended services for youth (up to age 24 or for 4 years, whichever comes first).

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

5. TANF

SSDs 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 SSDs’ investments in skills development programs. In addition to the FFFS allocations provided to SSDs, NYS has invested TANF funds in a variety of employment, education, and training initiatives, including:

- The Career Pathways III Program, which provides funding to 10 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 23 who meet the TANF 200% of federal poverty level certification requirements 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 11 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 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 36 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.

6. Title V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP is a community service and work-based training program for older workers authorized in Title V of the Older Americans Act and is administered by USDOL/ETA. SCSEP is the only federally-sponsored employment and training program targeted specifically to low-income older individuals who are able to enter or reenter the workforce. The dual goals of the program are to promote useful opportunities in community service job training and to move SCSEP participants into unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP provides subsidized, part-time, community service training for unemployed, low-income persons aged 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Through this program, older workers have access to SCSEP services and employment training assistance through Career Center System. Program participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the highest of the federal, state, or local minimum wage.

Beginning July 1, 2018, NYSOFA transitioned from providing SCSEP services through 29 area agencies on aging (County AAAs), who either directly provided or contracted out the program, to regional providers operating 8 regions in NYS. The regional providers all directly provide SCSEP services and began operation as NYSOFA’s subgrantees on July 1, 2018.

SCSEP participants are placed in a wide variety of community service assignments at non-profit and public entities, allowing these agencies to enhance and provide needed services and older workers to gain job skills. These community service training assignments promote self-sufficiency; provide assistance to organizations that benefit from increased civic engagement; and support communities. These assignments are intended to serve as a bridge to unsubsidized employment. In turn, regional economies and businesses benefit from an expanded pool of experienced, dependable labor in the local workforce.

SCSEP participants also receive a variety of services including a comprehensive assessment, Individual Employment Plan (IEP) development, orientation, community service placement, training specific to an individual’s community service assignment, and other training as necessary. Supportive services, annual physicals, assistance in securing unsubsidized employment, and access to services at local Career Centers are also provided to participants.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

STATE BOARD

The SWIB is the governance body for state workforce programs in NYS. Appointed by Governor Cuomo and the NYS Legislature, 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 discussion of specific workforce challenges, the SWIB advises on
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 SWIB 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 System;
- Supporting industry partnerships and career pathways;
- Disseminating best practices to the System; and
- Supporting the One-Stop 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 NYS’s System and to strengthen the importance of workforce development initiatives across the state. As a partnership of business, labor, and System providers involved with workforce policy, the SWIB is well positioned to provide a strong advisory role to the REDC economic development strategy.

In 2010, NYSDOL, ESD, and NYSED regions were aligned for purposes of collaborating on sector initiatives. In 2011, the ten 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 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, a SWIB SharePoint site was developed for all Board members to have the opportunity to review and comment on Board activities, as well as policy guidance issued to NYS workforce development partners. Materials from past SWIB meetings are available at: [http://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibagenda.shtm](http://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibagenda.shtm).
IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

Core Program Activities

To implement NYS’s strategy, its core programs have and will continue to seek to achieve several goals for the One-Stop 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 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/NYSCB, to ensure customers are provided appropriate referrals for services they require, and 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-IV staff has discussed 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 MOU among all local partner agencies and providers participating in each LWDA. The local MOU was broken into two pieces in 2017, 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 (IF) MOU. This piece of the MOU addresses the allocation of costs and sharing of resources to support the system. The IF MOU was due on March 30, 2018. Both pieces will be integrated for one MOU in PY 2020.

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 PY 2016. Generally, a 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. The next round of procurements for One-stop operators will occur in 2021.

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 is tasked with examining ways to improve coordination of workforce programs to avoid unnecessary duplication and better align services. One-Stop Career Center 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 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. NYSOFA, NYSED (including NYSED/ACCES-VR), the NYS DOH, OCFS (including OCFS/NYSCB), the Office for Alcohol and Substance Abuse (OASAS), OTDA, SUNY, NYSFOL, 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 230,000 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), NYSOFA, 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 One-Stop Career Center System involves a variety of partner programs (previously listed) to support the core. This section discusses relevant details for four notable 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. The SWIB will reinforce the goal of continued cross-System integration at the governance level to continue solicitation of input beyond the core partner programs.

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 SSDs and the One-Stop partners will help assure that this critical population receives seamless workforce development services. Migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs) and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older workers, persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) 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 strengthen the existing relationship between Registered Apprenticeship and the One-Stop 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 System. Apprenticeship program sponsors connect to the 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.

ACCES-AEPP is responsible for approving related instruction for new trades, as well as providers of related instruction, for apprenticeship programs approved by NYSDOL. Since 2018, federal and state grants and tax credits have created an explosion of new apprenticeship programs beyond construction and building trades. This includes Information Technology, Healthcare, and Advanced Manufacturing. ACCES-AEPP, on average, approves one new trade per month. Beginning October 1, 2019, with new five (5) year WIOA Title II contracts to seven (7) RAEN centers, each RAEN center will create a regional apprenticeship network that more closely connects adult education programs with apprenticeship career pathways and opportunities.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

In NYS, the TANF program is state supervised and locally operated by 58 SSDs (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, SSD 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 SSDs 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 continue to build upon existing partnerships to improve service delivery for NYS residents. As mentioned earlier in the plan, the 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 ensure communication remains strong among NYS WIOA partners and that cross-training needs related to public assistance programs are identified and addressed with appropriate materials and training.

• Career Centers have the myBenefits (myBenefits.ny.gov) web site short cut icon on 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), 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 their 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 them an idea of what they 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 their earnings and potential supplemental earnings in chart format, giving the individual a clear picture of their financial situation and of the benefits gained by working.

• SSDs and Career Centers are 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 is 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 public assistance, NYS expects each LWDA 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 are also expected to establish streamlined procedures to enable districts to enroll public 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 places specific emphasis on the coordination of youth services to allow youth served through the SSDs to also have access to specialized youth services delivered through WIOA. This partnership is intended to 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 20 years, NYS will not impose unfunded mandates requiring SSDs 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 SSDs to establish a physical on-site presence at the Career Centers. Instead, NYS will allow flexibility for SSDs 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 the Integrated Eligibility System (IES), will provide increased access to on-line applications for non-crisis TANF funded and other assistance, as well as related functionality that will reduce the need for clients to make in-person appearances at local SSDs. In the interim period before IES is functional, WIOA-TANF partnership requirements may be met through a combination of the following types of services:
  o The prescreening functionality of the myBenefits and ACCESS New York City portals;
  o The provision of TANF applications and meaningful program-specific information; and/or
  o Direct connection to Social Service staff at the Career Centers.

**Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)**

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) office of NYSED (NYSED/CTE) is required to complete its own four-year plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, informally known as Perkins V. Perkins V took effect July 1, 2019, marking the beginning of a one-year Transition Year. Utilizing stakeholder input, the four-year plan will be developed during the Transition Year, covering the period of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024.

The purpose of the Perkins V Act is to more fully develop the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in CTE programs and programs of study by:

1. Building on the efforts of States and localities to develop challenging academic and technical standards and to assist students in meeting such standards, including preparation for high skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations in current or emerging professions;
2. Promoting the development of services and activities that integrate rigorous and challenging academic career and technical instruction, that link secondary education and postsecondary education for participating CTE students;
3. Increasing state and local flexibility in providing services and activities designed to develop, implement, and improve CTE;
4. Conducting and disseminating national research and disseminating information on best practices that improve CTE programs and programs of study, services, and activities;
5. Providing technical assistance that:
   a. Promotes leadership, initial preparation, and professional development at the state and local levels; and
   b. Improves the quality of CTE teachers, faculty, administrators, and counselors;
6. Supporting partnerships among secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, baccalaureate degree granting institutions, area CTE schools, LWDBs, business and industry, and intermediaries;

7. Providing individuals with opportunities throughout their lifetimes to develop, in conjunction with other education and training programs, the knowledge and skills needed to keep the US competitive; and

8. Increasing the employment opportunities for populations who are chronically unemployed or underemployed, including individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families; out-of-workforce individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and homeless individuals.

Perkins V identifies three postsecondary Indicators of Performance that align with WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance:

1. Postsecondary Retention and Placement (1P1) – The percentage of CTE concentrators who, during the second quarter after program completion, remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(a)), or are placed or retained in employment.

2. Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential (2P1)* – The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential during participation in or within one year of program completion.**

   *A recognized postsecondary credential is defined in WIOA as “A credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.”

   **Note: A student is counted under this indicator whether the student obtains the credential during participation or within one year of completion, meaning that the student would be counted if the student obtains the credential in the one year following that student’s completion of the program.

3. Non-traditional Program Enrollment (3P1) – The percentage of CTE concentrators in CTE programs and programs of study that lead to non-traditional fields. (Sec. 113 (2B)).

NYSED/CTE includes the WIOA definition of a recognized postsecondary credential for performance indicator 2P1. There is also alignment with WIOA in requirements for placement.

Perkins V emphasizes increased coordination between secondary education, postsecondary education, and industry. All Perkins postsecondary grantees shall use a portion of their allocated funds to support their local One-Stop Career Center System. Perkins grantees must also maintain information concerning the status of partnership with the LWBD to support the local System.

Under Perkins V, grantees are encouraged to coordinate with other education and workforce development programs and initiatives, including career pathways and sector partnerships developed under WIOA and other federal laws and initiatives, that provide students with transition-related services, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
The NYS DOS Division of Community Services participates on the WIOA Interagency Team to ensure maximum coordination of employment and training activities, and to foster collaboration and linkages among state agencies and providers of these activities. This includes the CSBG network, which is comprised of local Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that have MOUs with local workforce development councils, and collaborate with the REDCs.

**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, the Data Integration workgroup was established to explore potential options.

Development of the release of information form, as well as issuance of TA #19-1 and training on the use of the form provided across NYS, will better enable the partner programs to provide timely services to common participants of the System.

**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 JSRS or 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. 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. To best support youth applying for services, a group orientation specific to this population is available.

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 provides information, similar to that found on a résumé, being recorded in the customer’s case file and submitted into NYSDOL’s JobZone website. 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 IEP that helps guide the customer as they work toward their employment goals. Customers identified as having barriers to employment such as language proficiency, disability, skills gaps, and justice system involvement, 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 (DW) 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 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 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 OPWDD, OMH, OASAS, and NYSDOL. Across NYS, 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 participants to develop an IPE that identifies the services and strategies necessary for achieving the plan’s employment goal. The IPE is the foundation of service for the participant. The employment goal is established based upon participant choice and labor market information. Often, achievement of the goal requires services obtained from postsecondary educational institutions, vocational training, or contracted vendors.

In addition to contracts with service vendors, NYSED/ACCES-VR has several agreements in place with other entities, including sister state agencies, to guide cooperative work.

*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 Employment Networks (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 their 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.

Since 2010, NYS has been awarded four rounds of DEI competitive grants to place specialized staff in Career Centers around NYS. These specialized staff members, called DRCs are responsible for increasing the capacity of Career Center Career Pathways Programs to better serve people with disabilities. Additionally, DRCs are responsible for promoting the US Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work (SSA TTW) Program, and connecting customers to the NYESS Administrative Employment Network via their Career Center. On October 1, 2017, NYSDOL was awarded a Round 8 DEI grant for $2.25 million. This most recent Round of funding places a strong emphasis on improving employment and training outcomes for youth (ages 14-24) with disabilities. This three-year capacity building project is funded through September 30, 2020.
Continuous Engagement

NYS strives to keep job-seeking customers engaged with all partners in the One-Stop 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. NYSED/ACCES-VR has a cadre of trainings available that support Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) in their professional development. These trainings are made available through contracted vendors, conferences or through federal partners. Trainings that provide credential opportunities for VRCs are shared with OCFS/NYSCB as well as with the Interagency TAG workgroup on a monthly basis. Internal trainings on eligibility, IPE development, pre-employment transition services, and policy and procedure updates are regularly completed by NYSED/ACCES-VR staff.

The Interagency Team’s TAG Workgroup was tasked with ensuring direct training and skill building that occurs in the NYS One-Stop 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.

The TAG workgroup developed two training inventories. The purpose of these inventories is to assist workforce professionals across WIOA programs with planning and developing staff trainings. In 2016 TAG developed a training inventory consisting of training being offered to staff of the following agencies:

- NYSDOL (Titles I and III);
- NYSED/ACCES) (Titles II and IV);
- OCFS/NYSCB (Title IV);
- OTDA; and
- NYSOFA.
In total, there are 73 trainings offered by these agencies. The training inventory serves the purpose of allowing agencies to work together to develop a core set of skills that all workforce professionals across the WIOA Titles should have. The inventory also helps each agency see where there are gaps in training, and potential duplication of effort. There have been several agency cross-trainings held on topics ranging from trauma informed decision making to JobZone website training as a result of the inventory. The work from this inventory has been substantially beneficial to all partner agencies.

Building on the success of the partner agency training inventory, in early 2017 TAG developed a survey using Survey Monkey for a local area staff training inventory. The purpose of the survey was to take an inventory of trainings taking place on the local level across the WIOA agencies. The surveys were sent to local area leadership from each of the agency partners in February 2017. Approximately 95 responses were received. During the initial assessment of the survey results, TAG reviewed what training was offered that was common or different, and what trainings local areas would offer. The next step in the process is to make both inventories available to all WIOA local area partners. The information contained in the inventory would be available as a reference in guiding staff development efforts on the local and state-wide level moving forward.

A survey was developed to gather similar information from local partners as well as their training needs from across NYS in early 2018. The information was added to the NYS partner training inventory to identify strengths and gaps in professional development.

**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, centered around how we can help the business versus how the business can 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 tailored recruitment services, hiring and training incentives, talent pool alignment and/or other services in the Business Services toolkit.

For businesses classified as retention; those attempting to avoid layoffs during a business downturn, 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 intensive reemployment services for any workers impacted by layoffs and closures, making the connection to resources as quickly as possible. By developing a rapport with those affected, and connecting them to valuable resources such as resume development, InterviewStream, targeted job leads and more, the Rapid Response team works to provide early intervention for successful job placement assistance.
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 and targeting various business associations that provide 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 managers 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 step of developing business intelligence to determine specific workforce needs before contacting a business, which will evolve to meet additional business needs. Three elements central to building and forging these connections are daily staff outreach goals, the Priority Jobs Initiative, and regional performance measures.

NYSDOL’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 businesses 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 2017 staff engaged 13,802 businesses; and 16,207 in 2018.

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 advocates for customers and 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 managers focused on building relationships with businesses to provide more intensive services, capture placement data, and to follow-up at regular intervals to ensure customer satisfaction.

Regional Sector Based Approaches

All regions developed successful, long-standing, relationships between NYSDOL and LWDA Business Services staff. NYS sought to build on these partnerships by creating RBSTs to align services with regional strategies across all levels of the 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 the Southern Tier and Western regions. Additionally, regional strategies were 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 RBST:

- Helps align business services provided at the local level with regional sector initiatives/strategies and regional labor market information and does not make policy;
- Builds upon existing partnerships and business relationships that are working effectively and not supersede them;
- Allows LWDA to partner with entities in other regions to address specific workforce needs (i.e., Transformational Sector Strategy Projects under Grant 13N); and
- Identifies and disseminates information regarding services that will benefit businesses without providing direct services.

RBST membership is as follows:

1. Lead LWDB Director designated by the LWDBs in the region, acting as co-chair;
2. ESD Regional Representative or designee;
3. One representative from each LWDA in the Region designated by the area’s LWDB;
   - The LWDA representative can be an LWDB member or Career Center staff member and must have specific responsibility for providing services to businesses in the LWDA.
4. Representatives from the following NYS Partner Agencies;
   - NYSDOL;
     - The NYSDOL representative can be either an Associate Business Services Representative or Occupational Analyst and will act as the co-chair. The Commissioner’s Regional Representative may also be a member of the RBST.
   - NYSED;
     - The NYSED representative can be a representative from Adult Education or ACCES-VR.
   - OCFS/NYSCB;
   - OTDA and may also incorporate local DSS offices; and
   - NYSOFA.

Other One-Stop Career Center 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.

In addition to the RBSTs, 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 NYS. 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.

In 2019, the initiative expanded to Binghamton, Elmira and Syracuse to provide intensive placement services to these specific cities in Central NY and the Southern Tier.

**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 seven key Business Services 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
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. It 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 (HVCC) developed its TEC-SMART facility and corresponding curricula that seeks 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:
• Jet.com – New York City Region – 300+ Hired

Staff works closely with this ecommerce subsidiary of Walmart. Services include job order posting, match and referral of qualified candidates, and hiring events. Since 2018, staff helped the business hire more than 300 individuals.

• NYS OPWDD – North Country Region – 592 Hired

Supporting this state agency in finding qualified candidates for their difficult to fill direct care positions since 2015. Services include job order posting, match and referral of qualified candidates, and pre-employment testing, and hiring events. Staff helped the state agency hire 592 employees, 120 of those in 2018-2019.

• Dick’s Sporting Goods Distribution Center – Southern Tier Region – 250+ Hired

Working with the new Conklin, NY based distribution center to hire over 250 positions. Services include job order posting, match and referral of qualified candidates, and hiring events. Staff’s efforts helped the company hire more than 250, and will continue to support their hiring needs as they look to ramp up to more than 460 jobs at the facility in the next five years.

• Tractor Supply (TSC) Distribution Center – Mohawk Valley Region – 290 Hired

Worked closely with the business and regional partners to develop a customized recruitment plan including job order posting, match, skills assessment, referral of qualified candidates, and hiring events. These services helped the business hire 290 employees, and staff will continue to work closely with the business to help them meet future long term hiring targets of up to 350 full-time employees by 2024.

• Nassau Coliseum - Long Island Region - 1,100+ 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. Additional hiring events were held in 2019. More than 1,100 have been hired.

• Barclay’s Center – New York City Region – 1,400 Hired

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 2018 season. Approximately 1,000 candidates were assessed and multiple hiring events were staged and staffed. Additional hiring events were held in 2019 for guest services and security guard positions. All total, more than 1,400 were hired.

• Syracuse University – Central NY Region – 100 Hired

In 2019, worked closely with the University to help them staff-up their culinary/cafeteria departments at their local campuses. In addition to job posting, matching and referral of qualified candidates, staff developed an informational event at the Syracuse Career Center to prep/pre-assess applicants, and have
them complete the application on-site. This was followed by a dedicated interviewing event. Offers were extended to 100 individuals.

- **US Census – Statewide – Providing recruitment assistance for their thousands of openings across the state.**
  
  Working closely with the Census to help them ramp up for their 2020 decennial survey. In addition to job posting, services include matching and referring qualified candidates, hiring events, and providing space in Career Centers for new employee onboarding/training.

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 230,000 jobs from more than 6,650 businesses on the NYS Job Bank. There are approximately 50,000 visitors to the Job Bank each month.

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 140,000 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 Title I 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 System 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. OJT was utilized effectively at the local level, 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 proved successful in providing training to dislocated workers (DWs) and the long-term unemployed. The OJT-NEG produced a significant number of hires, all of whom are DWs who experienced prolonged unemployment. The DW Training NEG was available to businesses to provide occupational training to DWs, 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 (SP-NEG) was available to provide opportunities for sector approaches to reconnect DWs to the workforce through work-based training such as OJT, Apprenticeships, or unpaid occupational skill-based training.

While the SP-NEG ended in June 2019, it is succeeded by the CFA WDI, which will invest $175 million throughout NYS for innovative, creative, and regionally customized workforce development projects. NYSDOL’s WDI programs make up to $25 million available to award grants on an ongoing basis to provide occupational skills training to: existing employees; newly-hired employees; and/or underemployed or unemployed individuals (to qualify them for employment or a higher level of employment).

The Existing Employee Training (EET) Program has up to $10 million available to provide funding to train businesses’ existing employees who are currently employed in low or middle-skills occupations. The New Hire Training (NHT) Program has up to $6 million available for funding to train newly-hired employees, who require on-the-job training in specific occupational skills. The Unemployed/Underemployed Worker Training (UWT) Program will award up to a total of $9 million in funding for occupational skills training to unemployed/underemployed workers to qualify them for full-time employment (35-hours per week or more); part-time employment; and/or a higher level of employment.

The focus of the funding awarded under this new program is to support strategic regional efforts that meet businesses’ short-term workforce needs, address long-term industry needs, improve regional talent pipelines, enhance the flexibility and adaptability of local workforce entities, and expand workplace learning opportunities. Additionally, the funds awarded will also aim to support local, regional and statewide efforts to improve the economic security of women, young workers, and other populations that face significant barriers to career advancement.

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 New York Youth Jobs Program (NYYJP).

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 or more 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 NYYJP, formally Urban Youth Jobs Program and
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 NYS with an emphasis on 13 specific targeted areas in eight regions of NYS. Businesses utilizing this program can earn up to $7,500 in tax credits. The NYYJP has helped 2,537 NYS businesses place youth participants in 137,474 jobs.

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 hiring 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 NYS. 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.

This 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 OJT and work tryouts. 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 (NDEAM) 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. In addition to the business relations team, NYSED/ACCES-VR provides job coaches, who work with the business and the employee to understand the needs of both to support success.

**Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

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 System. This includes public-private partnerships with community colleges and universities, and creating career pathways.

In 2019, NYSDOL and SUNY Empire State College (SUNY Empire) signed an agreement to create the Empire State Career Connector, a program to connect individuals to growing jobs sectors and the education they will need to take advantage of emerging opportunities. The Empire State Career Connector program will work with individuals throughout the process to identify jobs, provide the training and education needed, and then help connect individuals to a job upon completion. The program will align training and education needs to job demand identified by LWDBs and REDCs, then connect people to these jobs by co-locating NYSDOL job counselors alongside SUNY Empire College staff to work directly with individuals to determine what additional education or training is needed to qualify for the job. The program will be statewide across SUNY Empire and NYSDOL locations, but will start as a pilot in Albany.

The 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 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 across the regions of NYS, 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.

Building upon the initiatives already in place to better align the System and educational entities, an increased emphasis will be placed on managing and enhancing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL was established in compliance with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and amended by WIOA to provide customer-focused employment training resources for adults and DWs. 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 NYS’s workforce.

In an effort to maximize the benefit of strong collaboration between the 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 WIOA core partners 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 NYS, such as the Career Pathways program operated by OTDA through 10 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 23 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 WIOA core partners will work with SUNY and NYSED, and other educational institutions to align education (including CTE/Perkins V 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 between 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.

**Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

NYS recognizes that the realities of today’s global economy make it imperative that the 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 leverage the hundreds of millions of dollars it receives annually from the federal government to support the 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 Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), the SWIB, LWDBs, and the Career Centers. By aligning resources at all levels, the 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 Career Center 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;

• Using team-based approaches to serve customers with multiple barriers to employment, such as the ‘Integrated Resource Team’ demonstrated under multiple rounds of DEI and Disability Program Navigator projects. This approach brings together public and private sector representatives at the local Career Center community level to improve communication and collaboration that results in enhanced coordination of services, supports, and funding to increase employment outcomes;

• 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. NYS 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.

Priority for ITA funds for youth and adults is provided to training that results in an industry-recognized credential. 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 WDI applicants; and will be written into future training solicitations. NYS’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.

NYS’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 OJT 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 DWs 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, sponsors that elect to conduct area-wide recruitments are required to submit their recruitment information to NYSDOL. A press release is developed for each area-wide recruitment and is distributed to local media. Additionally, it is posted on NYSDOL’s website and the positions are listed 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. Recently, more Registered Apprenticeship sponsors are aligning the educational component of their programs with curricula at educational institutions. This builds on the current required related classroom instruction and gives apprentices an opportunity to earn an educational degree along with the portable credential. 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 NYSDOL and an Associate’s degree from a community college.

ATRs located throughout NYS work closely with Career Centers, as well as NYSDOL/DEWS’ 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 avail themselves to industries and associations, such as advanced manufacturing and healthcare, to present at meetings and roundtable events. They follow the local business climate and provide outreach to new and expanding businesses to market and promote the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship.

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. In recent years, 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 NYS’s education, workforce, and economic development systems. The State Accelerator Grant concluded in May 2018 and was a stepping stone toward the goal of apprenticeship expansion. Additionally, on October 21, 2016, NYSDOL was awarded $1.5 million from USDOL to fund NYS’s apprenticeship expansion through the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) Grant. In June 2018, NYSDOL was awarded an additional $1.8 million from USDOL under the SAE Grant Continuation Funding. These funds extend the grant funds through October 31, 2020.

To further facilitate the expansion of apprenticeship, NYSDOL is making up to $3.7 million in funding available under the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (AEG)-2 Request for Applications (RFA). The purpose of this RFA is to expand Registered Apprenticeship training by increasing employment opportunities for approximately 800 apprentices with a focus on underrepresented populations. These apprentices will enter trades in high-demand occupations, with a focus on the emerging fields of Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality, Information Technology (IT), and 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.
Most recently, NYSDOL was awarded an additional $4.4 million in funding released by USDOL for State Apprenticeship Expansion which will continue until June 2022. This funding, along with the grants, will allow NYSDOL to sustain the goal of apprenticeship expansion within NYS.

Governor Cuomo is committed to the expansion of apprenticeship and has taken steps to do so in NYS. In April 2017, the NYS budget was passed for fiscal year 2018. The budget included the Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit Program. Forty million dollars was allocated under this tax program, which continues until 2022 (up to $10M annually is available for expenditure). Businesses were eligible to apply for the tax credit beginning in 2018 and can receive tax credits for apprentices under certain criteria.

Over the past few years, SUNY was allocated $3 million dollars in funding to partner with NYSDOL in the creation of new pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship positions in Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare. For SUNY’s first year of funding, SCCC is the lead campus for Healthcare with $1 million targeting apprenticeship. Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) is the lead campus for Advanced Manufacturing with $2 million targeting apprenticeship. Other campuses can apply to become the lead colleges for funding to help with apprenticeship issues, such as developing new curriculum, competency and hybrid testing, marketing, train-the-trainers in adult learning styles, etc. For the second year of SUNY’s funding, $3 million will be used to add additional lead campuses and additional sectors for apprenticeship, possibly IT, hospitality, and transportation and logistics.

Additionally, CUNY was allocated $2 million to partner with NYSDOL in the creation of apprenticeship opportunities in the New York City region. CUNY is supporting and expanding apprenticeships in various healthcare occupations.

The Governor’s 2019 Justice Agenda included a proposal to advance a comprehensive plan to expand Registered Apprenticeship. This includes the following goals: double the number of apprenticeships in high-demand fields such as IT, health care, and advanced manufacturing by 2025; double the number of women in all apprenticeships by 2025; and simplify and streamline the program registration process. The Justice Agenda also called for plans to further integrate Registered Apprenticeship into NYS workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs, and to promote Registered Apprenticeship as a viable career pathway. With the growing skills gap, NYS is seeking ways to fill these positions with a highly trained workforce.

The additional goals for Registered Apprenticeship that Governor Cuomo established in his 2019 Justice Agenda further align Registered Apprenticeship with these programs. These goals include prioritizing the expansion of apprenticeship through NYS’s new Office of Workforce Development and enhance collaboration between NYS agencies, SUNY, CUNY, workforce training providers, and the private sector; creating a marketing campaign to make parents and guidance counselors of middle and high school students aware of the benefits of apprenticeships and work-based learning; expanding the Council to include more growth sectors; developing better linkages to educational institutions; and advising the Office of Workforce Development on ways to better connect with regional workforce intermediaries.

As part of the effort to focus on the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship in new and emerging industries, during the past year, NYSDOL approved 18 new trades. These trades include: Hospital (Medical) Coder, Data Analyst, Electro-Mechanical Technician, Industrial Manufacturing Technician, Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic, Software Developer, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Tool and Cutter Grinder, Outsourcing (Compounding) Pharmacy Technician, Electrical Utility Operator, Project Manager, Security Analyst, Network Administrator, Systems Engineer, Network Engineer, Cook, Manufacturing Engineering Technician, Truck Driver
(Heavy), and Precision Tungsten Inert Gas (TIG) Welder. Also, during this past year, the trade of Automotive Service Technician was reactivated due to renewed interest in the occupation.

In 2019, four new trades were developed: Water Systems Operation Specialist, Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist, Housekeeper (Commercial, Residential, Industrial), and Marine Services Technician. In addition to these trades, there is one new trade under review for approval: Narrow Web Flexographic Press Operator. The approval of new programs in these emerging and demand industries will help build and diversify NYS Registered Apprenticeship.

Each trade has unique tasks, skills, and follows an approved Training Outline. Network Administrators support, configure, maintain, and upgrade corporate customer’s networks and in-house servers. They also install and integrate new server hardware and applications and maintain updates. Hospital (Medical) Coders are responsible for correctly coding healthcare claims in order to obtain reimbursement from insurance companies and government healthcare programs. Precision TIG Welders assemble and weld metal parts, usually for manufacturing or construction projects, using tungsten inert gas. Truck Drivers (Heavy) are responsible for transporting goods locally, regionally, or as long-haul drivers, using heavy or tractor-trailer trucks with a capacity of at least 26,001 pounds per gross vehicle weight. Industrial Manufacturing Technicians set up, operate, monitor, and control production equipment. They efficiently manage raw materials/consumables and improve manufacturing processes and schedules to meet the needs of the customer.

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 OJT hours for each skill prior to testing. NYSDOL is seeing an increase in the amount of trades approved to use hybrid and competency-based training approaches. In the past, NYSDOL approved hybrid training outlines for the trades of Carpenter; Linoleum, Resilient Tile & Carpet Layer; and Community Health Worker. NYSDOL also previously approved competency-based training approaches for the trades of Direct Support Professional and Computer Support Technician. NYSDOL recently approved nine trades with a competency-based training outline. These trades include: Hospital (Medical) Coder, Software Developer, Data Analyst, Cook, Project Manager, Network Administrator, Security Analyst, Network Engineer, Systems Engineer. In addition, the trade of Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic was approved to utilize a hybrid training approach. 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 REDCs 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 NYS’s regions. Another priority 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 OJT;
- 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, 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.

**Regional Economic Development Strategic Plans**

In 2011, each REDC was required to develop a strategic plan to compete for regional economic development resources. Over the past eight years, as part of a process that has awarded over $5.4 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 ninth year.

The success of the REDCs’ work led to additional initiatives, including the Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI), Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), and the Workforce Development Initiative (WDI). The URI was implemented to strategically focus on the economic development of Upstate NYS, as part of long-term, regionally-based plans for economic growth through the REDCs. The DRI looks to transform downtown neighborhoods such as Central Islip and Oswego, into vibrant, highly developed communities. The WDI supports strategic regional efforts that meet businesses’ short-term workforce needs and long-term industry needs, improve regional talent pipelines, enhance the flexibility and adaptability of local workforce entities, and expand workplace learning opportunities. The WDI focuses on regionally significant industries in emerging fields with growing demands for jobs, including those in clean energy, life sciences, computer science, and advanced technologies.

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 REDC and promoting the CFA to businesses. The CFA streamlines the way businesses apply for economic development funds by bringing together resources from various state agencies and authorities. 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 the REDCs in four main ways:

- Identifying existing funding and resources to support the implementation of the strategic plans;
- Conducting due diligence reviews of the CFA submissions for relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns;
- Working with REDCs to address obstacles to long-term economic growth statewide; and
- Revising 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, NYS’s economic development agency, serves as the lead agency managing the REDCs. ESD Regional Directors act as the Executive Directors of each REDC, and regional ESD offices provide administrative and research support. NYS agencies, authorities and departments are active participants working with the REDCs and provide necessary resources. In addition, academic institutions, think tanks and other independent organizations are invited by the REDCs, as appropriate, to contribute to the development of the strategic plans.

**Regional Workforce Planning**

NYSDOL has long encouraged Regional Planning as a way to further inform and enhance the strategic plans developed by the REDCs. Regional Planning is 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 strategic plan.

**STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES**

**State Program and State Board Overview**

**State Agency Organization**

Within the NYS 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- AEPP. NYSED, OCFS, and NYSDOL are linked through the SWIB, with each agency being an ex-officio member of the board, and the WIOA Interagency
Both NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/NYSCB include a SRC, 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 Family Literacy and Title IV-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Under program delivery, ACCES-AEPP oversees seven (7) RAEN centers and 173 adult education providers, while NYSED/ACCES-VR utilizes its District Offices to provide services to participants. OCFS/NYSCB also oversees Title IV-VR, and like NYSED/ACCES-VR, utilizes its District Offices for program delivery to participants. NYSDOL oversees Title I-Adult, DW, and Youth programs and Title III-Wagner-Peyser, and utilizes NYS’s 90+ 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 System includes additional partners who are also represented on the SWIB and Interagency Team. These partners include ESD, OTDA, NYSOFA, DOS, 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. The membership roster and each member’s affiliation for the SWIB are presented in the following table.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gov. Andrew Cuomo</td>
<td>Chamber</td>
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<td>Business</td>
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<td>Empire State Development Corporation (ESD)</td>
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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 full WIOA implementation and there were no subsequent membership changes prior to Combined State Plan submission.

**State Policies**

NYS directs the One-Stop Career Center System through ongoing technical assistance on policy and the release of workforce development system Technical Advisories (WDS-TAs). 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, CEOs, and local one-stop partners are engaged as necessary to reinforce a working knowledge of established and newly-developed NYS workforce policies. In addition, most policies will require a more formal release to serve as a point of reference for the System. These releases are developed in collaboration with the Interagency Team, core program partners, and local System stakeholders. The list of topics covered by these written TAs is significant, so they cannot all be commented on in the Plan, but some key WIOA implementation topics include:

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

A comprehensive list of current NYSDOL TAs and their text may be found at: https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/tas.shtm.
Regarding Career Center partner program contributions to the Centers as required by WIOA, the NYS partners developed a TA and guidance document to assist LWDBs with completion of the WIOA MOU. The core program partners also worked to improve the state approval process for Service Delivery and IF MOUs.

NYSDOL previously issued general assistance on establishment of cost allocation methodologies in the form of a webpage: https://www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/bull1-99cap.shtm. The webpage contains information about General Cost Allocation principles set forth by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 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

Customer Service Indicators (CSIs) were designed to assist LWDA in meeting their WIOA Common Measure goals and to move the One-Stop Career Center System in NYS toward specific goals that NYSDOL deemed important for the good of the state. First instituted during PY07 under WIA, NYSDOL used many different CSIs that evolved over time. They included measures to reinforce data entry policy for staff, categorize participants based on their job readiness and prescribed additional services, leverage new technology, and effectively serve business customers. Over the past year, NYSDOL focused its efforts on ensuring compliance with the mandated WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance reporting requirements. Moving forward and in effort to assist local areas with achieving these performance goals, NYSDOL now expects to return to developing additional reports similar to the CSIs.

As discussed previously, NYSDOL, in partnership with 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; VR agencies; DOH; SSA; and others are pulled together in a data warehouse. NYSDOL, in collaboration with NYESS, continues to improve this partnership and employment related data collection through continuous communication and system enhancements.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Program’s 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 PY 2007-2008. 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 2016-2017, 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 2019-2023. 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 MSG, 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 MSG;
- 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 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 2019-2023. 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 2019-2023, 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 MSG, 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 2019 or 2020, they must meet their annual benchmarks by June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021, 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; Date of Birth (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 (SSNs) 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 OCTAE to demonstrate learning gains. ASISTS calculates the MSG 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.
• MSG - NRS guidelines define a student as demonstrating MSG when their 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:
  o Employment;
  o Median wage earning;
  o Attaining the NYS HSE diploma;
  o Attaining an industry-recognized credential; and
  o 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, DW, and Youth 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 DW 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.

NYS’s use of state-level WIOA funds for workforce activities is in compliance with the laws required and allowable activities for these funds. The Governor’s ten REDCs help guide the use of these funds by establishing priority projects, including sector-based workforce strategies in each region. The LWDBs are also consulted for feedback on the use 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 DWs, especially for the long-term unemployed. The restoration of the 15% Statewide Activities funding in 2015 provided an opportunity for state-level programs to expand services to disadvantaged adults, incumbent workers, and youth, as well as continue to serve DWs. Current and upcoming programs include incumbent worker skills upgrading training, unemployed worker training, OTJ, customized training, middle-skills training, occupational training for justice system-involved individuals, 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 distributed according to:

- Number of unemployed persons in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or more;
- Number of unemployed in excess of 4.5% 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 DW 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% or more;
- Number of unemployed under the Mass Layoff Statistics program;
- Change in employment in industries with job losses in the 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 is available at:

Title II

WIOA Adult Education and Family 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 Title II funds to support a comprehensive and coordinated literacy system that increased the skills of approximately 89,822 out-of-school youth and adults in adult basic education, adult secondary education and ESL.

- Approximately 15% were between the ages of 16 and 24 in FY18;
- 43% of adult students enter literacy programs employed;
- 51,199 were unemployed upon entry in FY18;
- In terms of the numbers and demographic profile of students served:
  - 173 programs provided literacy education;
  - 63% of students are ESL learners.
  - 37% of students are preparing for the HSE.
- More than 8 million hours of instruction are recorded; and
- 62% of learners moved one or more EFL.

NYSED rebid, through an RFP process, $38,299,003 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 included carry-over WIOA Title II funding to support multi-year awards. Successful awardees are funded for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021 with the possibility of two (2) one-year extensions. All awardees must meet WIOA eligibility requirements, with the exception of NYS Welfare Education Program (WEP) funds, which are only open to schools and BOCES.

There were 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; and
- $ 4,077,702 for at least 50 Literacy Zones.

Program Area 1. Funding for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services was allocated to 33 LWDA 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 was for funding within each LWDA, based upon the funds allocated to that area.

The allocation and competitive process for this funding, fully described in Attachment 1 of the RFP Awards, was made to the highest-ranked proposals in each LWDA until the funds allocated were insufficient to 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 LWDA was offered partial funding within the same LWDA. If funds remained after all
eligible proposals were awarded within any given LWDA, the remaining funds were added to the amount available for distribution under the Literacy Zone competition.

Funded activities included literacy activities as defined in section 203 (9) and English Language Acquisition as defined in section 203 (6). Integrated Education and Training was 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 was distributed through a separate statewide Competition. Individual awards were 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 was distributed through a separate statewide competition. There was 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 were 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.

WIOA Program Areas 1, 2, and 3 include a program of instruction that:

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

Program Area 4. Funding for Literacy Zones was 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 provided by workforce development system partners and in Career Centers.

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 were reviewed. Awards were made to the highest-ranking applications in rank order until funds remaining were insufficient to fund the next ranked proposal in full. The next ranked applicant was given the opportunity to operate a reduced program using the remaining funds in this pool.

In 2018-2021, NYSED will continue to support major state leadership investments and adapt them to WIOA requirements.

1. Seven 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 LWDB, and other funded programs in the LWDA 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 CCRS/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.

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 (NEDP): The fourth leadership project is funding the 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 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 job seekers and business customers in the One-Stop Career Center System. The System physically embodies the required coordination of core and local partner program services, as all programs are present at these locations across NYS, and is operated under the concept of universal accessibility. Title III funds support NYS staff, facilities, and information technology needed for partner program delivery at Career Centers and for improving the overall capacity of the 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. PY2019 funding for NYS is $37,872,846, representing a $200,511 reduction from PY2018.
Title IV

NYS has two VR agencies, 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 state 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, including youth, who are not eligible for such services through other sources. NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with vendors 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 vendor.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

Federal 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 the 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 LWDB to support outreach (including Rapid Response services), orientation, case management, job development, and follow-up services for DWs 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 WIOA Intergency Team. The
The workgroup meets regularly and has identified the primary steps to achieve alignment and integration. The Title I, Title III, TAA, and UI program data is already integrated in OSOS; therefore, NYS will continue to 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 continue to update requirements and release additional policy.

The workgroup 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.

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 will continue to discuss potential methods for achieving this goal as well as researching the solutions other states have implemented. The NYS partners believe 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 TAA programs under WIA, and continue to do so under WIOA. NYS developed and executed UI wage data sharing agreements with the Title II and Title IV programs to align with federal requirements. NYS follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended; WIOA; NYS Labor Law §537; 20 CFR Part 603; and applicable Departmental regulations.

The Data Integration workgroup recognizes that in order to fully integrate reporting, there is a need to develop a unique identifier across all Titles’ reporting systems. This will not only ensure accurate and integrated reporting across Titles but will increase the case management services provided to customers and alleviate duplication of services statewide.

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 agencies.

**Priority of Service for Veterans**

NYSDOL 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 jobs or training for which they are eligible and qualified 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 individualized career 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 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 is at the discretion of the individual 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 LWDBs 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 LWDBs 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 individualized career services to mitigate their barriers to employment. Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE), Vietnam-era veterans and veterans between 18-24 years of age remain the highest priority. The following populations of veterans are considered to have a SBE and must be targeted for service:

- Special disabled or disabled veterans;
- Homeless veterans;
- A recently-separated service member who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks;
- A justice system-involved individual who is currently incarcerated or who was released from incarceration;
- Veterans lacking a high school diploma or high school equivalent certificate; and
- Low-income veterans.
NYSDOL will provide immediate services to veterans and any other priority groups who attest to belonging to one or more of the six criteria listed above.

Career Center staff complete the Military Service Questionnaire (MSQ) with every customer who identifies as a veteran or eligible spouse, regardless of the service delivery program under which the veteran customer is served. 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 notified 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.

WDS-TA #08-4.2, Effective Use of Initial Assessment in the Career Center System, requires that all Career Center customers, including veterans with SBE, be provided an Initial Assessment. The Initial Assessment process first identifies any individual barriers to employment. If barriers exist, the customer is determined to need 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.

If deemed appropriate for a veteran, the Comprehensive Assessment can include an in-depth, formal, structured interview. 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 is 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 goal(s). 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 NYSDOL services to veterans, view the NYS Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) State Plan, available at [https://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibplan.shtm.pdf](https://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibplan.shtm.pdf)

**Special Populations and Accessibility**

**Employment First**

Established by [Executive Order](#) on September 17, 2014, the Employment First Commission seeks to establish an Employment First policy for New York, building 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.

Membership on the Employment First Commission (Note: per the Executive Order, the Employment First Commission works in consultation with the commissioner of NYSED) includes: Deputy Secretary for Health; Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights; Deputy Secretary for Human Services; Chief Diversity Officer; Counsel to the Governor; Director of Budget; OPWDD; NYSDOH; OMH; OASAS; OCFS; NYSDOL; ESD; NYS Department of Transportation; OTDA; Office of Veteran’s Affairs; NYSOFA; and the Justice Center for People with Special Needs.

The Employment First policy commission 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 CBOs 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. **NYESS:** The NYESS system has already distinguished NYS as the leader in moving individuals with disabilities into the world of employment as the largest SSA TTW network in the nation. Ensuring the full adoption of the system across community providers and NYS 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 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 NYSED/ACCES-VR’s 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 OCFS/NYSCB, 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, justice system-involved individuals, 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 increase capacity of Career Center staff to do the same; and Reentry Employment Specialists (RES) are trained to assist justice system-involved individuals. In addition, central office staff provides periodic webinars and 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 NYSOFA.

NYS continues to be at the forefront in providing services to individuals with disabilities with the implementation of NYESS and the opportunities it allows. For example, in February 2012, the federal SSA 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 TTW 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 TTW program. As a statewide AEN, NYESS creates a network of EN providers working with multiple NYS 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 System. NYS assures that all partners described in this Plan recognize the importance of the physical, programmatic, and communication accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities and English language learners in the Career Centers.

The required NYS NDP is currently being revised to reflect WIOA Section 188 regulations.

**TA #16-4**, Universal Accessibility of the Workforce Development System to Individuals with Disabilities, including those who are Blind or Visually Impaired was updated as of April 2019. This TA includes updated information referencing “Promising Practices in Achieving Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide.” USDOL developed this guide to provide the System with promising practices that correlate with specific nondiscrimination requirements in Section 188.

In 2011, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 26, requiring all NYS agencies to provide language assistance services to LEP individuals, 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.

**TA #17-2**, Language Interpretation Services Available at Career Centers, requires certain actions to ensure LEP individuals receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to all programs, services, and information within the One-Stop 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 Bengali. 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:
NYS WIOA 2020 Combined Plan

In April 2015, TA #15-5, Initial Designation of Local Areas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), was released to notify LWDBs that WIOA requires LWDA to be designated by the Governor in order to receive federal funding allotments. On behalf of the Governor, NYSDOL accepted requests from current LWDB Directors for LWDA initial designation for local areas that met three criteria: Successful Performance; Sustained Fiscal Integrity; and a local CEO Agreement executed for WIOA. CEOs were contacted, and a standardized agreement called the “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...
Local designation requests were received from each of the existing 33 LWDAs. The requests were reviewed, verified, and organized by NYSDOL staff and approved on behalf of the Governor. NYS received no appeals to the original local area designations and has not received any requests for re-designation.

**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 REDC process, for which funds have been set aside over the past nine years to support work-based training proposals recommended by the REDCs. 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; NYS public healthcare enrollment options; and when appropriate, an overview of TAA benefits that includes the 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 RRC, Statewide TAA 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 (i.e., vacant positions by industry and companies with the most job openings);
- Initial assessment;
- Development of a skills-based resume (template for consistency) and customization for specific job openings;
• Sending interim job leads (template for consistency) that includes discussion with Business Services for maximum efficacy;

• Employment referrals;

• Contact with a business where a customer applied for employment and advocate on their behalf to encourage strong hiring consideration;

• Customized career fairs (including introducing qualified customers to specific recruiters that would be a good match for employment);

• Local training funds and TAA information when a petition is certified for classroom training or OJT; 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 Closures.

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, the TAA section later in this document provides additional information on the coordination between the two programs.

Natural Disaster Preparedness

NYSDOL can deliver the following to assist with Natural Disaster Preparedness:

• Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG);

• Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); and

• Mobile Disaster Worker Response Team.

1. Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG):

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

• The Federal Emergency Management Agency (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 a 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 NYS agency or outlying area designated by the Governor to receive WIOA DW formula funds or by an organization eligible for funding through the INAP Program (WIOA Section 166(c)).
Participants must be determined eligible as defined in WIOA Sec. 170(d)(2). 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 NYS; 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.

2. **Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA):**

- 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 they may assist customers calling the center who have questions related to filing for benefits.
- Given the seven day waiting period for original claim filing, the availability of DUA aligns with claims currently filed as a result of the disaster.

3. **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 DWG;
  - 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**

DWs 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 NYSDOL’s webpage, and listed in the NYS Job Bank.
Training Provider Eligibility

Potential training providers access an online application via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) website (https://applications.labor.ny.gov/ETPL/), and 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 must upload a copy of its license. For each training course, the provider must 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, 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). All of this information is captured on the ETPL during the application process. Note that while NYS 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, LWDBs are asked to review the new data and reapprove. If nothing is submitted, the providers are automatically removed from the list.

Additional information on ETPL eligibility is found in TA #18-2.2, Eligible Training Provider 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 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, and provided in TA #17-6, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity 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 PY 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 DW 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; and
   - When transferring funds from administration back to the originating program funds, no more than the original 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 Notice of Obligation Authority (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**

**National Dislocated Worker Grant – Hurricane Maria (NDWG-HM)**

On February 12, 2018 NYS was awarded up to $10 million in NDWG funds to provide services to eligible participants impacted by hurricanes Irma and Maria. USDOL made the award available in installments, with an initial increment of $1 million dollars available for immediate use. Additional increments will be made available as NYS meets expenditure targets. As these funds were made available after the hurricanes, the performance period was retroactive for services delivered beginning September 1, 2017.

NYSDOL released the initial increment as an RFA to identify community partners capable of providing outreach, enrollment, and assessment services to eligible participants. NYSDOL made six awards under the RFA and services to participants is ongoing. NYSDOL sought and was granted a no cost extension from USDOL, allowing existing awardees to continue providing services, and for NYSDOL to solicit additional contractors. The extension provides for an amended period of performance from September 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. NYSDOL will continue funding services using the initial increment and request additional increments as appropriate.

**Trade and Economic Transition – National Dislocated Worker Grant (TET-NDWG)**

On September 16, 2018 NYS was awarded an $8 million Trade and Economic Transition (TET-NDWG) grant by USDOL. These funds were made available to address the economic and workforce challenges NYS faces due to globalization and advances in technology. NYSDOL partnered with 31 LWDBs to develop the application for funds.

Upon receipt of the award, NYSDOL distributed the funds to the LWDBs to coordinate the provision of career, training, and supportive services to eligible DWs in their local areas. The funds will be administered by the LWDBs with monitoring and reporting oversight provided by NYSDOL during a period of performance from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2020.

**National Health Emergency Phase Two: Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants to Address the Opioid Crisis (Opioid NDWG)**

On January 16, 2019 NYS was awarded up to $5,591,446 in Opioid NDWG funds, with an initial increment of $1,863,815 available for immediate use. USDOL made these funds available to address the economic and workforce challenges of NYS residents and communities impacted by the opioid crisis. NYSDOL partnered with 12 LWDBs to document the impact and need for NDWG funding. Upon receipt of the award NYSDOL distributed the funds to the LWDBs to coordinate the provision of services to eligible participants within their local areas. Allowable services include career, training, and supportive services. Additionally, funds may be used to provide subsidized disaster relief employment to participants. Although Opioid-NDWG services are available to all DWs within the local area, additional training opportunities are available to those that voluntarily disclose qualifying opioid impacts.

The LWDBs will be responsible for the administration of program funds, with NYSDOL providing oversight and reporting. Additional funding increments will be made available as NYS meets expenditure targets. These funds will be released to the LWDBs as available and needed to support program activities throughout the December 1, 2018 – December 31, 2020 performance period.
Program Initiatives

$15 Minimum Wage

In 2016, NYS instituted the nation’s first statewide $15 minimum wage plan. An estimated 2.3 million people will have their wages raised directly by the $15 minimum wage. This builds upon Governor Cuomo’s prior increases in NYS’s minimum wage from $7.25 to $8.00/hour in 2013, $8.75/hour in 2014, and $9.00/hour in 2015. Beginning on Dec. 31, 2019, every person working in New York City must make at least $15/hour. This represents a more than $6.5 billion annual infusion compared to 2016 levels, before the rise in minimum wage took effect.

Paid Family Leave

Since 2018, Paid Family Leave has provided job-protected, paid time off to employees who need time away from their jobs to bond with a child, care for a close relative with a serious health condition, or help relieve family pressures when a family member is called to active military service abroad. Paid Family Leave was available for up to eight (8) weeks during the first year and it will increase to 12 weeks by 2021. When fully implemented, NYS will have the strongest and most comprehensive Paid Family Leave program in the nation.

Equal Pay for Women

In 2015, NYS eliminated a loophole that allowed businesses to prohibit employees from discussing their salaries. In 2017, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 161, which prohibits state entities from evaluating prospective candidates based on prior wage history and Executive Order 162, which requires state contractors to disclose gender, race, ethnicity, and salary of all employees to drive transparency and progress toward wage equity. At the Governor’s direction, NYSDOL undertook and issued a gender wage gap study, following hearings and stakeholder discussions with academic experts, workers, business owners, and the public across NYS. In 2019, Governor Cuomo signed into law legislation that expands equal pay laws to prohibit unequal pay on the basis of a protected class for all substantially similar work, and forbids businesses from asking prospective employees about their salary history. In 2020, a complementary law went into effect forbidding all businesses in NYS from asking prospective employees about their salary history and compensation.

Child Care Availability Task Force

NYSDOL Commissioner Roberta Reardon co-chairs Governor Cuomo’s Child Care Availability Task Force, a group of experts first assembled in 2018, focused on developing innovative solutions that will improve access to quality, affordable child care in NYS. The task force is specifically examining access to affordable child care, the availability of child care for parents with non-traditional work hours, statutory and regulatory changes that could promote or enhance access to child care, business incentives to increase child care access, and the impact on tax credits and deductions relating to child care.

Farmworkers Bill of Rights

In 2019, Governor Cuomo signed the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act to protect farmworker rights and ensure equitable housing and working conditions. The bill grants farmworkers overtime pay, a day of rest each week, disability and Paid Family Leave coverage, unemployment benefits, and other labor protections.

Offshore Wind Training Institute
NYS will invest a total of $20 million to establish the Offshore Wind Training Institute, which will generate the institutional infrastructure to educate and train over 2,500 New Yorkers to design, manufacture, and operate cutting-edge offshore wind technology, applying consistent training and safety standards to maximize workforce safety and quality.

**Wage Enforcement and Recovery**

NYS is the national leader in returning money to workers who are not paid the proper minimum wage, overtime pay, or fringe benefits. Under Governor Cuomo, NYS has seen a dramatic increase in the amount of money returned to workers who were cheated by their businesses. In 2018, NYSDOL collected nearly $35 million and returned that money to approximately 35,000 workers victimized by wage theft and public work violations. Since 2011, NYSDOL has recovered $300 million in stolen wages and returned it to more than 280,000 workers who were cheated by their businesses.

**Combating Worker Exploitation**

NYS stands by its workers, especially hard-working immigrants, the lowest paid, and the most vulnerable. Governor Cuomo launched the Nail Salon Enforcement Task Force in 2015 to strengthen laws and regulations, and provide education and outreach to salon owners, employees, and consumers to ensure compliance with NYS laws.

NYS also launched a first-of-its-kind statewide Exploited Workers Task Force in 2015 to root out worker exploitation issues by identifying and halting illegal practices in multiple industries across NYS. In 2016, the Governor issued Executive Order 159, combining the missions, powers, and duties of the Nail Salon, Joint Enforcement, and Exploited Workers’ task forces into the Joint Task Force on Employee Misclassification and Worker Exploitation.

**Standing with Labor Unions Facing Uncertainty**

Governor Cuomo signed landmark legislation in April 2018 to increase access to, and protect union membership in, NYS’s public-sector workplaces in anticipation of an adverse ruling in the pending Supreme Court case Janus v. AFSCME. The legislation makes it clear that members who pay union dues will receive certain benefits and services, and unions, while they serve the interests of all workers in bargaining units they represent, cannot be forced to provide full benefits of membership to those who do not pay for them. The new law strengthens unions by requiring public businesses to notify the relevant union within 30 days of a new employee being hired, rehired, or promoted into a bargaining unit represented by that union; provide the new employee’s contact information; and permit union representatives to meet with new employees promptly and for a reasonable amount of time without charge to leave credits. Legislation signed into law in 2017 allows full union dues to be deducted from NYS taxes.
Unemployment Insurance Reform

In 2013, Governor Cuomo signed major reforms into law, which increased benefits for workers, decreased costs to businesses, and modernized the UI system by making it sustainable and self-correcting. Businesses are paying nearly $200 less per worker in overall federal and NYS UI contributions compared to 2015. The maximum benefit amount for UI claimants rose to $450 in October 2018 and in 2019 was set at 36% of the average weekly wage ($504). This will continue to increase by 2% of the average weekly wage each year until it reaches 50% in 2026.

Combatting Sexual Harassment

NYS is a national leader in the fight against sexual harassment. As part of the 2019 budget, Governor Cuomo signed into law the nation's most comprehensive sexual harassment package. This package expanded workplace harassment protections in the NYS’s Human Rights Law to include contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants, or others providing services in the workplace; required businesses to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy and training; and mandated that all NYS contractors submit an affirmation that they have a sexual harassment policy and provide annual training to all of their employees.

In 2019, Governor Cuomo signed legislation that enacted additional workplace harassment protections as part of his 2019 Women’s Justice Agenda. This legislation strengthens NYS’s anti-discrimination laws to ensure employees can seek justice and perpetrators will be held accountable by eliminating the restriction that harassment be “severe or pervasive” in order to be legally actionable; mandates that all non-disclosure agreements allow employees to file a complaint of harassment or discrimination; and extends the statute of limitations for employment sexual harassment claims filed from one (1) year to three (3) years.

HOME2 Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Help Obtaining Meaningful Employment and Education (HOME2) RFP was released on July 17, 2015. The RFP targeted service providers based in New York City that assist 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.

The initial $500,000 contract was approved for the Ali Forney Center for the period of November 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016, with the option for NYSDOL to renew annually at its discretion, for $500,000 a year, for up to four annual renewals (5 years total). The initial contract was renewed in calendar years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, bringing total funding for all four years to $2,500,000.

Opportunity Youth Career Exploration and Access (OYCEA)

Three Opportunity Youth Career Exploration and Access (OYCEA) RFPs were released in 2018 for service providers in the City of Albany, City of Syracuse, and specific communities in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The funds will support the provision of career exploration and supportive services to youth, with programming focused on in-demand occupations as well as engagement with business partners and other organizations. This is part of Governor Cuomo’s multi-pronged approach to fighting MS-13 and other gang violence where local organizations will focus on work readiness training and employment for those at risk of joining gangs. Twenty-two organizations were awarded with up to $300,000 of WIOA funding totaling $6.3 million.

Governor Cuomo Initiative for Re-Entry of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
Work for Success is a jobs initiative aimed at reducing the high unemployment rate among the thousands of New Yorkers returning home from prison. NYSDOL continues to collaborate with DOCCS supervision to schedule Career Center appointments for parolees and NYS correctional facility inmates released to the community. Since 2012, this program has served more than 40,000 individuals and connected more than 27,000 (68%) to jobs.

In September 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 ten NYS licensing and employment regulations;
- Set uniform guidelines that evaluate qualified applicants for NYS 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 NYS. Fair Chance Hiring will remove the requirement that applicants for competitive positions within NYS agencies disclose information on prior convictions until and unless the agency interviews the candidate and is interested in hiring them for a specific position.

In 2017, NYSDOL/DEWS sent staff in the Albany Central Office to a curriculum developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and facilitated by staff at the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), to obtain Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) certification. Having OWDS certified staff available allows NYSDOL to deliver Reentry Employment Specialist (RES) curriculum across NYS. This 16-hour curriculum, also developed by the NIC, provides staff with the knowledge and skills needed to work with justice-involved individuals who are looking to reenter the workforce. Topics include information on job seeking strategies specific to those with criminal justice involvement-related barriers, such as Records of Arrests and Prosecutions (RAP) sheets, Certificates of Rehabilitation, and the Federal Bonding Program. As of May 2019, NYSDOL delivered the RES training three times to more than 100 staff across NYS.

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 Unit (PDU) is responsible for oversight and coordination of WIOA youth programs, serving as a single point of contact on youth issues and for other youth-serving NYS agencies (i.e., NYSED, OCFS, and OTDA) and core partner programs, in support of youth initiatives statewide. Through the dual lens of career and youth development, NYSDOLPDU seeks to provide policy guidance; offer professional development opportunities; develop curriculum and tools; and identify best practices from NYS, the nation, and the globe. The ultimate goal is to help position youth for a successful transition to adulthood and 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 WIOA-required program elements. These services are provided to both in-school and out-of-school youth (OSY). Some local areas serve only OSY and refer in-school-youth (ISY) to other providers as appropriate.

Consistent with the strategic visions and goals advanced in the Combined Plan, NYS is committed to enhancing program alignment and service delivery. NYS established an interagency workgroup to analyze service delivery strategies and identify opportunities for improvement across all participant populations including OSY. The Youth Collaborative workgroup aims to improve coordination of services based on youth developmental needs at the local level. WIOA expanded the 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.

LWDBs have the option to provide service elements through their staff and/or a network of competitively procured youth providers across NYS’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.

NYSDOL PDU coordinates and supports youth activities across NYS through many strategies including technical assistance; local area data monitoring; bi-monthly conference calls and webinars; and outreach. As NYS transitions from a period of WIOA implementation to compliance, and additional staff time is freed up, PDU staff is revisiting past best practices in supporting schools that request assistance with college and career readiness. A recent request from Saratoga High School led to the creation of a half day event with three elements: (1) an opening presentation to highlight why soft skills are critical; (2) a series of workshops for students that included budgeting for life after high school, taking a non-traditional path to employment through apprenticeships, building resumes, and using social media with an eye to the future; and (3) a NYSDOL-staffed booth that offered resources to educators who want to embed college and career readiness lessons into their classrooms. NYSDOL will pilot this concept in 2020 and expects to customize this offering by reviewing the possibility of an online module to allow schools to take this information and make it their own. PDU learned from past work with schools and youth providers that there is a strong need for flexibility in meeting youth, and those who serve them, where they are in the career development process.

The need for local flexibility carries over to the development of criteria and 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 Plan. Technical assistance was provided to the LWDBs explaining the calculation of the 5% limit for qualifying ISY under this criterion, and the need for the policy criteria to be both objective and quantifiable for monitoring and reporting purposes.

TA #19-2, informing local areas about youth eligibility requirements, will help LWDBs conduct WIOA youth program eligibility requirements more effectively. NYSDOL PDU will also establish templates for other policies, such as work experience, follow-up, supportive services, incentives, and ITAs for OSY.

Technical assistance is shared with local areas, NYS agencies, and those CBOs serving youth to ensure that all WIOA required program elements are made available to ISY and OSY across NYS, and that they are effectively implemented. Assistance includes individual and group technical assistance sessions and bi-monthly Youth Issues webinars to disseminate workforce information pertaining to youth. In addition, NYSDOL PDU 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 issues 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;
- Implementing new WIOA service elements;
- Learning about WIOA indicators of performance; and
- Understanding WIOA youth program eligibility criteria.

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 PDU will continue to update and develop tools and resources on the following:

- 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 PDU, WIOA youth programs across NYS started to integrate CareerZone/JobZone into their program design. Enhancements to CareerZone and JobZone will continue;
- NYS Agency Coordination – PDU will continue work with NYSED, OTDA, OCFS, and ACCESS-VR to improve the coordination of services for youth and young adults across NYS;
- Technical Assistance – Provide technical assistance to local areas, NYS agencies, and those CBOs serving youth through continual communication and bi-monthly Youth Issues calls to disseminate workforce information pertaining to youth. This will help reinforce the effective youth program implementation, including all 14 WIOA-required program elements. In addition, PDU 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; and
- 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 resources for WIOA Youth Providers are under development.

Professionals working with youth will use these resources 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 PDU:

- CareerZone User’s Guide, updated in 2018, to highlight the recent updates and changes to this NYSDOL career exploration and planning system;
• 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; and
• Other tools, resource guides, and templates (i.e., eligibility guide, follow-up policy template, frequently asked questions (FAQ) and study guide for required elements).

**Attending and Not Attending School**

**Attending and/or enrolled in a school as defined by NYS:**

Youth enrolled in and attending the following institutions or programs are considered attending school for Youth Program eligibility determination:

1. A school registered with NYSED, including but not limited to, public, private, charter and religious schools; or a home-school program where the participating youth is registered with the local school district.
2. An HSE and dropout re-engagement program funded by the public K-12 school system. The four pathways to high school equivalency accepted in NYS are found at http://www.acces.nysed.gov/hse/high-school-equivalency-hse.

The following apply to both items 1. and 2. above:

- Use the NYSED Application Business Portal found at https://portal.nysed.gov/pls/sedrefpublic/SED.sed_inst_qry_vw$.startup to search for registered schools in NYS.
- Note that NYS residents must attend/participate in programs registered with NYSED to achieve a valid diploma or equivalency.
3. Credit-bearing courses at a post-secondary school, including colleges, junior colleges, community colleges, two-year colleges, universities, professional and technical schools, and degree-granting institutions.

**Not attending any school as defined by NYS, unless the school is specifically excluded by WIOA:**

Youth ages six to sixteen are required to attend school in NYS (or, if home-schooled, the youth must be registered with the local school district). Some school districts mandate the compulsory age of school attendance through age 17. Per NYS law, if a youth has not enrolled and attended a school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter (45 days) and is within the age of compulsory school attendance, the youth is considered as not attending school for the purposes of Youth Program eligibility determination. Youth attending Adult Education Programs under WIOA Title II, YouthBuild Programs, Job Corps Programs, and HSE programs and dropout re-engagement programs not funded by the public K-12 school are considered not attending school under WIOA.

**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 Plan. 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 CCRS issued by OCTAE as the state academic standards for adult education in NYS. In 2018, ACCES-AEPP issued an RFP for WIOA Title II Section 173 grants and contracts that required every funded provider to provide instruction meeting federal CCRS, beginning July 1, 2018 through at least 2021, with the possibility of extensions. Any new grant competition conducted during the Combined State Plan period will continue this requirement.

- The Office of Academic Affairs at CUNY, a longtime provider of professional development and curriculum development for HSE and college and career transition programming, have been instrumental in rolling out the new NYSED/CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework across the state in support of enhanced achievement on the TASC™ test. NYSED/CUNY has conducted a total of 12 institutes since 2014 intended to provide turn-key training to a cohort of Master Teachers representing seven geographic regions from across NYS. To date, a total of 187 Master Teachers have successfully completed one or more of these institutes. These Master Teachers were then charged with providing the turn-key training throughout the states regionally through the Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) centers. The NYSED/CUNY curriculum spans all five content areas represented on the TASC™, math, science, social studies, reading, and writing. As a result of the RAEN turn-key training, Master Teachers have conducted more than 450 workshops statewide reaching more than 4,200 teachers providing services in literacy programs as the local level.

- In addition to the courses developed and offered through the Institutes on a range of TASC™ topics, a cohort of Master Teachers were trained in CCRS as it applied to ESL. In 2019, these same workshops will be revised to include lower level ESL components. A complementary Career Pathway project was also completed in 2018. 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, recorded regionally, 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 is accompanied by including the CareerKits in the various institutes completed since 2018 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. 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.

- The most recent addition from the NYSED/CUNY initiative are 16 Fast Track GRASP Math electronic packets. The packets provide lessons and practice in the high-priority topic areas on the TASC™ test. Students develop underlying concepts as an introduction to each topic and then practice applying what they learned
in context. Students work through TASC™-style questions followed by guidance on test-taking skills and explanation of answer choice design that mirrors what students will face on the TASC™ Math subtest. In addition, each packet includes a language section focused on the specific math topic. NYSED wanted to identify the most challenging Math concepts that would be found on the TASC™ Math Subtest. The content of the Fast Track GRASP Packets was advised by the NYSED content specialist who had first-hand knowledge of the TASC™ Math Subtest content. NYSED’s current pass rate on the TASC™ Math Subtest is the lowest of the 5 sections, and NYSED is committed to improving this pass rate. NYSED contracted with CUNY under an MOU to build the packets and include these most challenging areas to give students the chance to learn these areas of math before taking the Math Subtest.

- The resulting 16 Fast Track GRASP Math packets are also made available on the CollectEdNY website for easy access to teachers across the state in any adult education HSE preparation program.

Proposed Training Activities for 2020-2024

New activities being implemented fall into seven (7) 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 assuring Master Teachers are compensated for providing the NYSED/CUNY turn-key training to teachers and volunteers associated with adult literacy programs funded by NYSED; 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 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 Master Teachers, involving them in the creation of problem-sets and lessons to be shared statewide. Mini-grants will be offered to selected Master Teachers to develop lesson sets/instructional products via a proposal process;

• An Institute to deepen and broaden the knowledge and skills of ELA Master Teachers, involving them in the creation of lessons to be shared statewide. Mini-grants will be offered to selected Master Teachers to develop lesson sets/instructional products via a proposal process; and

• An Institute to provide new training in ESL aligned to the new federal standards for existing and new Master Teachers in ESL (Institute will be videotaped).

Additionally, 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.


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.

**Continued Development and Expansion of [www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org](http://www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org)**

www.TeachingtotheCoreNY.org was launched in April 2015 as a comprehensive single resource to support teaching to higher federal CCRS for adults. Resources include a statewide training calendar for NYSED/CUNY Master Teacher training in each RAEN region, training modules videotaped from CUNY Master Teacher Training Institutes, and instructional videos filmed by Master Teachers and RAENs.

**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 Master Teacher Institute conducted by NYSED/CUNY for Master Teachers in the region.

**Roll-out of the Teaching Support System (TSS)**

In December 2014, ACCES-AEPP 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 created 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.

Key features of the TSS 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 performance of the students on the TASC™ test; and
• A way for teachers to track class attendance.

Teachers are 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.

Implementation of TSS is complete. The ASISTS team continues to maintain the software and add features in response to the needs of NYSED policies and the teaching community.

**Implementation of the Case Manager Portal (CMP)**

To support coordination of adult education with its WIOA partners, ACCES-AEPP 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 and task lists;
• 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;
• Dashboards showing participant demographics, activity and outcome status; and
• A wide range of reports, from case management activity reports to NRS tables.

In 2019, ACCES-AEPP and the LAC ASISTS team convened a small group of experienced case managers. Through webinars and a series of online surveys, the case managers guided the design of the portal and its different features. The development of the first version of the CMP is complete. The LAC ASISTS team is working with a small group of programs to pilot the software and solicit feedback. The portal was made available to the entire state in December 2019.
Local Education Activity Funding

During fiscal year 2017-2018, ACCES-AEPP moved through a rigorous and lengthy timeline to amply prepare a quality RFP under WIOA. In NYS, this RFP included four distinct competitions: WIOA Program Area 1, serving both ESL and ABE/ASE literacy students; Program Area 2, serving Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education; Program Area 3, serving Corrections Education; and Program Area 4, serving 56 Literacy Zones across NYS. In addition to WIOA federal funds, it also included a significant amount of NYS funding under our WEP.

Significant highlights of the RFP:

- All instruction must be aligned with federal CCRS 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. SSNs collected from participants will be used to track these measures through NYSDOL’s UI database. Those without SSNs will be manually tracked by programs.
- The RFP made a major commitment to integrated education and training and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programming as part of career pathways. NYSED made the policy decision that WIOA Title II funding will not support the training component of these new instructional approaches. It identified significant funding opportunities for training funds including WIOA Title I, Employment Preparation Education State Aid, SUNY and CUNY Full-time Equivalent Aid, tuition, foundation funding, and local funding.
- The RFP supported the transition of the TABE from TABE 9/10, which ended June 30, 2019 to TABE 11/12, which is the NYS approved assessment for literacy beginning July 1, 2019. The time leading up to TABE 11/12 statewide adoption was 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 RAEN centers. CUNY’s Office of Academic Affairs will continue to provide professional development to Master Teachers to turnkey training to 5,500 adult education teachers regarding TABE 11/12 math, and the alignment of TABE 11/12 math on NYS’s approved HSE exam, the TASC™.
- All applicants were required to identify “next step” opportunities as part of a career pathway.
- All applicants attested that they are providing equal opportunity for participants with barriers to participate in programs and services, using Attachment 7 GEPA Attestation Form.
- NYSED agreed 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

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NYS WIOA 2020 Combined Plan 96 DRAFT 01-17-2020
Data Assessment

Demographic data collected on our students indicates that roughly 46% are receiving some form of public assistance and 43% 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. With unemployment rates being very low as of recent reporting, the number of students attending classes has decreased as many students are able to secure viable employment without a HSE diploma. The drop in enrollment from FY2017 to FY2018 is attributed solely to the newest NYSED initiative where NYS-exclusive funding was removed from the federal match and consequently removed from the NRS Guidelines. In spite of this drop in enrollment, NYSED Adult Education program performance has remained in the top quartile consistently for the past five consecutive years. NYS also implemented an additional ESL assessment (BEST Literacy) aimed at assessing the writing skills of ESL students who already achieved the maximum score on the existing ESL assessment (BEST Plus), which focuses only on the students’ verbal skills.

Another major change evidenced in our state performance data is the addition of the 4th pathway to a HSE diploma. This pathway enables TASC™ applicants to substitute a passing Regents score from their high school for one or more of the TASC™ subtests. Since its inception in April of 2018, more than 6,000 4th pathway diplomas were issued. A significant number of these were achieved by students enrolled in ACCES-AEPP funded programming. This has impacted performance data positively.

Another major effort from ACCES-AEPP is the ongoing support and integration of the CCRS. NYS continues to enlist the quality professional development talent in CUNY and continues to provide opportunity for every RAEN region in the state to identify and develop the skills of Master Teachers who turnkey all they learned to their own regional programs. These 991 well trained Master Teachers attend annual institutes where they are provided updated toolkits and training materials 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 and literacy volunteers 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.
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 Career Center System (Wagner-Peyser, Vets, WIOA, and TAA combined customer base), NYS implemented a statewide strategy of utilizing state merit staff 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 NYS priority. NYSDOL provides high quality continuous development to workforce professionals to ensure excellent customer service to both job seekers and businesses. This is bolstered by the use of state merit staff in the delivery of the Wagner-Peyser program.

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, which include providing:

- 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 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 System, including but not limited to training/retraining.

**Key Reemployment Services Requirements**

UI claimants are co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Adult and/or DW 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.

Seamless delivery of the Wagner-Peyser and UI programs in the state with merit staff continuing to help UI recipients get back to work by providing comprehensive reemployment services through the One-Stop Career Center System has been and will continue to be a successful model for NYS.

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 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 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/requests for accommodation (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 Employment Services (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 domestic MSFWs, H-2A foreign guest workers and Agricultural businesses for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2024 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 NYS One-Stop 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 to ensure the jobs they provide are filled with the available, domestic labor supply. 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 PY18 agricultural and MSFW activity, projected levels of agricultural activity in PY19, and projected numbers of MSFWs in NYS in PY19;

(2) *Outreach Activities* - A description of how MSFWs across the state will receive services in PY19, as well as an assessment on staff and the resources available for outreach;

(3) *NYS’s 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.
- Common languages include Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Korean.
- Farmworkers are MSFW, seasonal, and year-round workers depending on the commodity.
- Approximately 8,000 seasonal farm workers are H-2A visa foreign guest workers.

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 transportation;
- Assistance with language barriers; and
- Assistance with finding work in agriculture by word-of-mouth and friends/neighbors.

In NYS, domestic farmworkers tend to be workers that work at area farms seasonally. In the off season, domestic 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 PY18, 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. Data compiled by NYSDOL includes:
### Ag Businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workforce Estimate (current)</th>
<th>Employed Year-round</th>
<th>Migrant Workers</th>
<th>Seasonal Workers</th>
<th>H-2A Guest Workers</th>
<th>Non-Ag Duties on Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Operations</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>17418</td>
<td>3223</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4109</td>
<td>6189</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year-Round Operations</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>2235</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1759</td>
<td>19653</td>
<td>4738</td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>4163</td>
<td>6203</td>
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</table>

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

NYSDOL outreach staff create regional outreach plans (ROPs) which are a 6-month plan for how outreach and compliance will be conducted. In reviewing the 2018 ROPs, the field staff focused on seasonal operations as the priority. The 2018 estimates for NYSDOL field activity are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms W/Field Activity</th>
<th>Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers</th>
<th>Year Round Workers</th>
<th>H-2A Guest Workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>860</td>
<td>5977</td>
<td>3234</td>
<td>5720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Farms W/Field Activity</td>
<td>MSFW Est.</td>
<td>Year-Round Est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegany</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broome</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattaraugus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cayuga</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chautauqua</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemung</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenango</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Clinton</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Cortland</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Delaware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutchess</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Erie</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>394</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Fulton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesee</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Livingston</td>
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<td>Monroe</td>
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<td>Nassau</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneida</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onondaga</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>278</td>
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<td>Orleans</td>
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<td>121</td>
<td>211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oswego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otsego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schenectady</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 PY18, 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 2,825 MSFWs; 1,987 H-2A foreign guest workers and 1,310 year-round farmworkers in PY18.

Assessment of AgLP Progress and Assessment of Equity Ratio Indicators:

NYSDOL’s Division of Immigrant Policies & Affairs (NYSDOL/DIPA) reviewed the field staff Regional Outreach Plans (ROPs) for 2018 and the following detailed assessment of each Agriculture Labor Specialist’s (AgLS) ROP\(^1\) indicates how services were provided to all farmworkers in NYS:

- **Region 01 consists of Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond and Suffolk counties.**
  Approximately 219 farms are listed in the Farm List which include Seasonal operations; nurseries that operate virtually year-round and several Vineyards that may be using a part time seasonal crew. In addition, there are approximately 27 known year-round operations that include equine and poultry operations. The Island’s agriculture is diverse and includes vegetables, fruit, vineyards and agri-tourism. The 2018 season began late this year due to a cold start. The Mid-Season report updated the number of farms from 227 to 243; however, many of these farms were true year-round operations of farms to be developed. An updated review of responsibilities placed the AgLS’ goal at 169 farms and completing 165 with on-site outreach services. Farms with business services were at 71 and only a few operations (about 3) reported a reduction of workforce or no employees. The estimated 3,443 significant contacts included 1,216 MSFWs, 655 year-round farmworkers and about 1,572 H-2A workers.

- **Region 02 consists of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester counties.**
  Approximately 93 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of the DIPA work is focused. Although employees may be found at over 50 known year-round operations such as several packing operations, these are visited as time permits and/or assigned (except for hybrid operations that grow, and pack produce,

\(^{1}\) Numbers are greater than MSFWs served. AgLSs serve all farm workers in the field: seasonal, migrant and year-round.
The 2018 season had significant weather impact in the region. The month of March in particular, brought significant snow accumulation in excess of 15 inches, which in combination with considerable rainfall, caused the soil to become extremely wet and muddy. Delays due to weather were over two weeks for ground crops. Fruit trees experienced some weather-related conditions later in the season. The continued wet weather required significant spraying and caused some harvest difficulties contributing to loss in the area. Due to the lack of domestic workers, the interest in the guest worker program has seen a steady increase every year. Several farms already participate in the program and several more have requested business services on this topic, including labor camp assessments. A large portion of the farms, about 78, received business services through labor needs or via field activity; approximately 59 farm operations received worker services; an estimated 10 farms had a reduced workforce or no employees this season (a factor for H-2A interest). The AgLS encountered about five new farms which have been added to the farm list. The 913 contacts made in the territory included 266 domestic MSFWs; 159 year-round farmworkers and 223 H-2A workers. She continues to cover the Farmworker Community Center in Goshen to provide worker services to farmworkers and immigrant workers in other industries. For the upcoming 2019 season, R02 and R07 have been merged due to a local staff retirement.

**Region 04 consists of Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie counties.** Approximately 62 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA work is focused. The 2018 season had some impact in the area, several farmers experienced an over two weeks delay to the start of the season due to weather; thus, some planned activity was also delayed. Approximately five businesses did not have workers, or their workforce was reduced this year. Due to operational needs, field work was reduced in this territory to about 37 seasonal operations to focus on businesses that would benefit more from a FV and to assist in the neighboring territory, Region 07, due to staff retirement, as per the Mid-Season report. Most of the seasonal operations received business services, 44 through labor needs or during field activity; and worker services was provided to approximately 26 farms during outreach field activity (about five farms did not have workers or had reduced their workforce). The 338 contacts in the territory included 60 domestic MSFWs, 20 year-round farmworkers and 95 H-2A workers. Pre-occupancy housing inspections increased slightly to about 23. The AgLS covered the Columbia County Migrant network meeting; provided field activity support to R07 due to the staff assigned retired. She reached about 6 medium/large operations in that region; performed Backstretch outreach work at Saratoga, Belmont; presented at the Albany Summer Youth Employment program event; and Mobil Mexican consulate work. Please note that this AgLS ceased working for DIPA in September 2018; thus, this region will be combined with Region 06, which will be reflected on the upcoming ROP.

**Region 05 consists of Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties.** Approximately 115 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. Lack of available domestic workers resulted in more farms turning to the H-2A program to fulfill their temporary labor needs. As part of the outreach strategy this year, farms with ongoing USDOL Wage and Hour (W&H) investigations, or farms with favorable compliance history were omitted from a field visit. Business services were provided through 66 separate contacts to seasonal operations through labor needs contact or during field activity; and worker services were provided to approximately 55 farms during outreach field activity. The 466 contacts included 132 domestic MSFWs, 46 year-round farmworkers and 179 H-2A workers. 15 pre-occupancy inspections took place for employers with a housing capacity of four or less participating in the H-2A program. The AgLS is based in the Syracuse Career Center. It should be noted she conducted supportive field activity in Region 09. Other activity included participation in the CNY Agricultural Workers’ Coalition and the Finger Lakes Coalition of Farmworker Serving Agencies. The AgLS conducted additional outreach via the Mobile Mexican Consulate, the NYS Fair and the Harvest Festival.
• **Region 06 consists of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties.** Approximately 48 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. The 2018 season in this territory had some weather impact, however, it does not appear to have been as severe as in the lower Hudson Valley. Lack of domestic workforce was felt by some farms where a few (three) did not operate or had a reduced workforce. As part of the outreach strategy in this region, farms with ongoing USDOL W&H investigations or farms with a favorable history were going to be omitted from a field visit this year due to operational needs – the original 48 farms with a scheduled outreach visits were reduced to 28 during the Mid-Season. Business services was provided to practically all seasonal operations (45) through labor needs contact or during field activity; and worker services was provided to approximately 16 farms during outreach field activity (a few farms did not have workers during the FV). The 354 contacts included 47 domestic MSFWs, 20 year-round farmworkers and 72 H-2A workers. Due to the size of some farms, pre-occupancy inspections are a good portion of the off-season work. It should be noted that an AgLS performed supportive field activity to three farms in the lower Hudson Valley (Region 07) after the assigned staff retired mid-season. In the Capital region, she provided end of season support work (R&S Apple/Pear Survey) to Region 04 after the AgLS assigned also ceased working at DIPA. The AgLS performed several site visits to the backstretch as a special project assignment that included investigative support and a presentation to many workers who may be agricultural workers after the horse racing season is over. Other activity included outreach via the Mexican Mobil consulate, participation at the Anti trafficking taskforce, workers’ rights presentation at a Literacy Zone site and at Albany’s Summer Youth Employment program. Please note that for the 2019 season, Region 04 and Region 06 have been combined which will be reflected on the upcoming ROP.

• **Region 07 consists of Delaware, Sullivan and Ulster counties.** Approximately 65 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. The 2018 harvest season was affected by weather. Wet and cold weather delayed operations over two weeks for vegetable and ground crops. Tree fruit farms began well, however, continued wet weather during harvest proved to be challenging and caused some loss in the industry. This region was short staffed all year, which required DIPA management to seek assistance from neighboring Agriculture Labor Specialists. Several modifications were implemented to best cover the region throughout the year including adjusting the mid-season Regional Outreach Plan. Field outreach was reduced to about 45 operations based on priorities and other factors. Most of the seasonal operations received business services (51) through labor needs or via field activity; worker services were offered at 45 farms during outreach activity (three small operations were reported to have no workers this year). The 700 contacts in the territory included 215 domestic MSFWs, 139 year-round farmworkers and 215 H-2A workers.

• **Region 09 consists of Cayuga, Chemung, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates counties.** Approximately 210 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. Lack of available domestic workers resulted in more farms turning to the H-2A program to fulfill their temporary labor needs. As part of the outreach strategy this year, farms with ongoing USDOL W&H investigations, or farms with favorable compliance history were omitted from a field visit. As such, the original 129 farms with scheduled outreach activity were reduced to 88 during the mid-season review. Business services were provided through 112 separate contacts to seasonal operations via labor needs contact or during field activity; and worker services were provided to approximately 92 farms during outreach field activity. The 1,355 contacts included 329 domestic MSFWs, 90 year-round farmworkers and 682 H-2A workers. Four pre-occupancy inspections took place for employers with a housing capacity of four or less participating in the H-2A program. The AgLS is based in the Syracuse Career Center and conducted office hours in the Geneva and Lyons Career Centers as well. It should be noted she conducted outreach with workers in the backstretch at the Saratoga Race Track, as part of a special project assignment. Other activity included participation in the CNY Agricultural Workers’ Coalition, the Finger Lakes Coalition of
Farmworker Serving Agencies and the CNY Anti-Trafficking Taskforce. The AgLS conducted additional outreach via the Mobile Mexican Consulate, the NYS Fair and the Harvest Festival.

- **Region 10 consists of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Orleans, Steuben, and Wyoming counties.**
  Approximately 90 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. Lack of available domestic workers resulted in more farms turning to the H-2A program to fulfill their temporary labor needs. As part of the outreach strategy in 2018, farms with ongoing USDOL W&H investigations, or farms with favorable compliance history were omitted from a field visit. Business services were provided through 84 unique contacts to seasonal operations through labor needs contact or during field activity; and worker services were provided to approximately 50 farms during outreach field activity. The 1,141 contacts included 371 domestic MSFWs, 78 year-round farmworkers and 454 H-2A workers. Three pre-occupancy inspections took place for employers with a housing capacity of four or less participating in the H-2A program. The AgLS is based in the Rochester Career Center and conducted office hours in the Albion Career Center as well. It should be noted that she assisted in supportive field work in Region 11 and Region 09. Other activity included participation in the WNY Coalition of Migrant Farmworker Serving Agencies and the WNY Anti-Trafficking Coalition Taskforce. The AgLS conducted additional outreach via the Mobile Mexican Consulate and per the Consulate’s request also conducted joint field work with their staff. She also provided end of season support work (R&S Apple & Pear Survey).

- **Region 11 consists of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties.**
  Approximately 95 seasonal operations can be found in the territory, where most of DIPA’s work is focused. Lack of available domestic workers resulted in more farms turning to the H-2A program to fulfill their temporary labor needs. As part of the outreach strategy this year, farms with ongoing USDOL W&H investigations, or farms with favorable compliance history were omitted from a field visit. Business services were provided through 187 separate contacts to seasonal operations through labor needs contact or during field activity; and worker services were provided to approximately 79 farms during outreach field activity. The 1,117 contacts included 476 domestic MSFWs, 80 year-round farmworkers and 212 H-2A workers. Five pre-occupancy inspections took place for employers with a housing capacity of four or less participating in the H-2A program. The AgLS works from the Buffalo Career Center and she conducted office hours at the Lockport and Dunkirk Career Centers as well. It should also be noted that she performed supportive field activity in Region 10. Other activity included outreach via the International Institute of Buffalo and other community organizations.

Data based on the Equity Ratio Indicators for PYs 2015-2018 indicate that NYS typically meets three of the five indicators (referred to jobs, referred to supportive services, and job development contacts).

**NYSDOL/DIPA training:**

NYSDOL/DIPA provides annual training to staff. Annual training focuses on providing better employment and labor law compliance services in innovative ways. As always, we will also continue to review the quarterly 5148 data to determine if the training has helped with reporting requirements. NYSDOL/DIPA will continue to ensure that field staff are appropriately trained to ensure proper documentation of services provided to all farmworkers.

*(iv) 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. Based upon this consistent and steady
increase, it is believed that the level of agricultural activity in PY19 will be equal to, or greater than, the level of agricultural activity in PY18.

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 guest workers, the estimated number of MSFWs in NYS for PY19 totals 19,000 individuals.

Based on staffing, the county assignments will change from PY19-PY23 to ensure that staff are available to cover the required Foreign Labor Certification Unit (FLCU) and outreach activities. In PY20 and beyond, an increased focus will be placed on educating and assisting Agricultural businesses in complying with the new Farm Laborer Fair Labor Practices Act. This new bill will take effect on January 2020. The new protections for farm workers regarding overtime, day of rest, collective bargaining, and the like will be the primary education focus for employers and workers.

(v) 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 19,000 or more farmworkers will be in NYS during PY19.

Outreach Activities

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

The seven bilingual AgLS (two of the seven outreach positions are in the process of being filled) are stationed in NYS Career Centers 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 19,000 farmworkers in PY19 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.

Assessment of available resources:

For PY19 there are currently seven AgLS (field staff) and three Supervisors who conduct full-time outreach to MSFWs. The AgLP also has two FLCU Specialists that process H-2A and H-2B job orders, but also assist with the domestic recruitment activities. The 2 FLCU Specialists are also trained to be able to conduct field outreach as needed. The Division Director also maintains direct contact with farmworkers and conducts outreach to Farmworkers with a hands-on approach to ensure NYSDOL/DIPA provides information and services relevant to the distinct needs of agricultural workers.

In addition to the 10 full-time AgLP staff, the 2 FLCU Specialists, the Director, the NY SMA will conduct outreach throughout PY19-PY23.

During PY18, Agriculture Labor Program staff received training on the following:

- Refresher training on AgLogs Database;

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3 Two AgLS will be in NYSDOL’s Central Office located in Albany, NY. All other staff work out of Career Centers.
• Complaint Referral Process;
• H-2A Updates on Housing Inspection;
• Regional Outreach Plan Refresher;
• Investigative Techniques;
• Training on Food Safety Management Act; and
• Workers Compensation Training by The Advocate for Injured Workers.

Additionally, the Director provided a special field outreach project titled “Outreach to Female Farmworkers” in 2017. Through this project, outreach and education about sexual harassment and workplace violence was provided to businesses and female farmworkers on seasonal farms. In 2018, this special project has evolved 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.

In PY19-PY23, AgLP staff will continue to work closely with PathStone Corporation. NYSDOL and PathStone executed a Non-Financial Cooperative Agreement on February 5, 2019. NYSDOL will comply with the cooperative agreement requirements. 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.

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 PY18, the AgLP staff provided services and information from the Alamo, on average, two days per week. This will continue as we further develop the services that farmworkers can access at this location.

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

Tools used to conduct outreach:
To reach an estimated 19,000 MSFWs, as well as year-round agricultural workers in PY19, 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.

Field packets also contain a field registration form for workers seeking services through NYSDOL. Staff will be refocused on offering on-the-spot field registrations. In addition, the staff tailors 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 (WIOA 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 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 farms 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, an MOU 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 PY19, 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. Additionally, 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 educational material at events 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;
- 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 Employment Services (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.

The AgLP staff craft their regional outreach plans twice a year: one for the January through June timeframe and then another for July through December. Prior to the harvest season, AgLP staff contact businesses to discuss their anticipated labor needs for the harvest season. The AgLP staff discuss 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 was made available to the groups listed below and they were given a 30-day window to provide feedback and comments. The following groups and organizations were invited directly 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.

No comments were received.

**MSFW Career Centers**

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

**TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE**

The primary goal of the 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 DW Program, in addition to TAA-specific services provided by state merit staff; 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 DWs, including Trade-certified workers, receive services available through the One-Stop Career Center 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 (TA #04-6.5 and subsequent amendments) to ensure all TAA customers are co-enrolled as DWs 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 reemployment, assessment, labor market information, career advisement, case management, and follow-up services available through the local One-Stop 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 delivered by state merit staff 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 is submitted to 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, and fact finding indicates trade implications prompting the layoff/closure, the RRRC will assist the business with filing the TAA petition or will file directly on behalf of the affected workers. Similar action is taken when a layoff/closure does not trigger the WARN thresholds and the RRRC becomes aware through business intelligence. 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 USDOL that a new TAA petition is filed, the Statewide Trade Act Coordinator alerts the System, activating Rapid Response services.

The Rapid Response Team conducts onsite and offsite customized service orientations for workers, covering reemployment services, NYS 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 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 mailed.
The Statewide Trade Act Coordinator in turn advises key local NYSDOL and 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 DWs (including Trade-certified workers) who possess marketable skills needed by local businesses. It may also identify DWs (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 (including needs for reasonable accommodation), 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; classroom, online, OJT, or apprenticeship.

Training

Career planners, working with the trade-affected worker, determine when training is appropriate for the worker given their 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/Trade Re-adjustment Allowances (TRA). 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 TAA 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 LWDBs. LWDBs 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 LWDBs 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 LWDBs on federal TAA funds, WIOA National Emergency Grant (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 TAA-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 TAA-approved training – NYSDOL/DEWS;

• Provide required reports to USDOL and others as required by law or regulation – NYSDOL/UID, NYSDOL/DEWS, and NYSDOL/R&S; and

• Ensure the integrity of data for reports provided to federal agencies as required by law or regulation – NYSDOL/UID, NYSDOL/DEWS, and NYSDOL/R&S.

Role of LWDBs

LWDBs ensure 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.

LWDBs set local policies for a TAA service strategy that coordinate various service delivery approaches to:

• Assist DWs eligible for TAA 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.

LWDBs ensure that DWs eligible for TAA benefits, who are unable to find suitable employment through WIOA Title I basic services, are co-enrolled in WIOA Title I DW services for referral to WIOA-funded individualized and TAA-funded training services.

Managed Resources

TAA resources are utilized to help support common systems utilized by NYSDOL and the One-Stop Career Center System to provide integrated intake, case management, and reporting for our co-enrolled TAA-impacted customers. This includes OSOS, which for the immediate future, 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 NYS and local levels.

Trade Act Tracker is a web application database that contains customer information regarding TAA/TRA eligibility and benefits. Individual records for this database are created by the NYSDOL/UID Benefits Section. The database is accessed by the TAA Program Unit as well as UID for training records and TRA/RTAA payment information. Local level TAA staff have limited access to the database to issue customer waivers. Local level TAA staff can also generate reports regarding eligible workers covered under TAA petitions. The Trade Act Tracker, along with Peoplesoft and OSOS is utilized by NYSDOL/R&S to generate data for federal Reporting.

The NYSDOL website 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 R&S 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 (TAARA) of 2015 went into effect on June 29, 2015. This Act restored the group eligibility requirements and benefits available under the 2011 Amendments, and re-opened 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 TAARA is authorized through June 30, 2021. If the Act is allowed to sunset, provisions within the Act authorize the TAA Program to operate for one year, beginning on July 1, 2021 returning to reduced eligibility and level of benefits.

Going Forward

Program Expansion and Staff Capacity Building

NYS recognizes that opportunity to expand usage of the TAA Program lies in maximizing the number of quality petitions filed on behalf of workers. We are looking at staffing models which focus new effort on researching industry trends with the goal of increasing petition filings while continuing to rely on state merit staff to provide TAA specific services. We anticipate piloting a model which expands collaboration with Rapid Response and will lead to an increase in certified petitions, and therefore a rise in the number of eligible program participants. This effort will allow us to serve more trade-affected workers who will benefit from the TAA Program.

To assist TAA staff in raising awareness of the TAA program, NYS created new marketing materials for affected workers and businesses at career fairs and Career Centers.

NYS continues to provide training to all Career Center professionals regarding the benefits of the TAA Program. A series of webinars centers on proper data entry and quality case management. Additional regional staff training will focus on the processes Career Centers use to guide access to TAA benefits. NYS emphasizes that providing continuous case management services to TAA customers will result in successful outcomes.
SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

Purpose

The purpose of the SCSEP State Plan (henceforth referred to as “the Plan”) is to outline a four-year strategy for the provision of employment training and other authorized activities for eligible individuals; as well as provide a description of the planning and implementation process for SCSEP services. The Plan considers the distribution of eligible individuals and employment opportunities across the state.

The goal of this Plan is to explain how NYS, through NYSOFA, will administer and supervise SCSEP through long-term coordination among the various state SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees, and to facilitate the efforts of key stakeholders. This occurs through coordination with LWDBs and other WIOA partners. These partners’ efforts to work collaboratively to provide job seekers and businesses with seamless service across the System will assist in accomplishing the goals of SCSEP. There is an emphasis on the importance of strengthening partnerships between grantees and program providers and involvement in community initiatives. The grantees are expected to work collaboratively to provide employment training for SCSEP participants at agency host or training sites. The anticipated outcomes are to improve self-sufficiency among participants, provide meaningful civic engagement opportunities that help strengthen communities, and transition SCSEP participants toward employment opportunities.

SCSEP is a community service and work-based training program for older workers authorized in Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and administered USDOL/ETA. SCSEP is the only federally-sponsored employment and training program targeted specifically to low-income older individuals.

SCSEP provides subsidized, part-time, community service training for unemployed, low-income persons age 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Through this program, older workers have access to SCSEP services and employment training assistance through the One-Stop Career Center System. Program participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the highest of the federal, state, or local minimum wage.

Service priority is given to individuals meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Is a veteran or a spouse of a veteran;
- Is 65 years of age or older;
- Has a disability;
- Has limited English proficiency;
- Has low literacy skills;
- Resides in a rural area;
- Has low employment prospects;
- Has failed to find employment after utilizing services provided under Title I of WIOA; or
- Is homeless or at risk for homelessness.
NYS WIOA 2020 Combined Plan


- Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (A4TD);
- New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA);
- PathStone Corporation (PSC); and
- The Workplace, Inc. (TWP).

In addition, there are seven national SCSEP grantees also providing SCSEP services in NYS:

- A4TD;
- Easter Seals, Inc. (ES);
- Senior Service of America, Inc. (SSA);
- National Council on Aging, Inc. (NCOA);
- National Urban League (NUL);
- TWP; and
- The National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA).

Each organization was invited to contribute to the development of this Plan.

**Economic Projections and Impact**

**Long Term Job Projections**

In the full Economic Analysis section of the Combined Plan, projections for jobs in NYS are detailed for in-demand and emerging industries and occupations. For all workers, including older workers, the industry sector of Health Care and Social Assistance is in highest demand with occupations including Personal Care Aides, Home Health Aides, Social and Human Service Assistants, and Child Care Workers. Ambulatory health care services also provide opportunities for employment in clerical, administrative, and management staff. The retail trade industry provides occupations for older workers as salespersons, clerks, and order fillers. The leisure and hospitality sector provides the second highest rate of growth in NYS since 2010, presenting further employment opportunities for older workers in service-related occupations.

Table 1. details the significant industries in NYS by the eight SCSEP regions.

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<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counties in Region</strong></td>
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<td>Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Rockland, Westchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Albany, Fulton, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Clinton, Essex, Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tioga, Tompkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Genesee, Monroe, Seneca, Wayne, Yates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chautauqua, Erie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Long Term Job Projections and Unsubsidized Employment**

All NYS SCSEP projects rely on collaboration with the local Career Centers for Labor Market Information (LMI) to identify in-demand businesses and to access training and participant skill development strategies for SCSEP participants that best match the demand of the local economy. In identifying key local businesses and potential job opportunities, SCSEP staff, in coordination with the SCSEP participant, develop an IEP. The IEP is a plan for a participant that is based on an assessment of that participant conducted by the appropriate SCSEP staff person, or a recent assessment or plan developed by another employment and training program, and a related service strategy. The community service assignment with a host agency is an important aspect of the IEP since it provides a work environment to obtain needed job skills. The goal of the IEP is to develop the participant’s training plan that will lead to an appropriate employment objective.

Some SCSEP projects have built strong partnerships with the Home Health Care sector. The Home Health Care partners provide training and hire older workers. Also utilized are OJT partnerships in the Security Guard industry. SCSEP projects also provide ancillary services to assist host agencies in providing training opportunities for eligible participants. Some of the training opportunities fall under the following general categories:

- Business/financial clerk;
- Computer operator;
- Kitchen aide/food preparation;
- Clerical;
- Receptionist;
- Maintenance/custodial; and
- Classroom aide.

**Current and Projected Employment Opportunities**

Table 2. New York State, Persons Ages 55 and Over, shows the number and percentage of persons age 55 and over by Industry. The greatest number of persons 55 and over in NYS are employed in:

- Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance Industry;
- Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative, and Waste Management Services;
- Retail Trade;
- Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing;
- Manufacturing; and
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU (Not in Universe)</td>
<td>2,743,420</td>
<td>47.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting, and Mining</td>
<td>22,761</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities</td>
<td>204,927</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>170,313</td>
<td>2.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>223,971</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>72,494</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>253,185</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>67,636</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>239,224</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative, and Waste Management Services</td>
<td>332,185</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>940,332</td>
<td>16.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>184,398</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services, Except Public Administration</td>
<td>172,565</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>162,743</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, last worked 5 years ago or earlier or never worked</td>
<td>12,100</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,803,037</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Current Population Survey March 2018 Supplement

The industries listed below present the highest probability for unsubsidized employment for most SCSEP participants:

- Personal Care and Services
- Home Health Aides;
- Personal Care Aides; and
- Physical Therapist Aides.

- Office and Administration
  - Administrative Assistant;
  - Medical Secretaries; and
  - Office Clerks.

- Retail
  - Sales Clerk;
  - Cashiers; and
  - Customer Service Reps.

- Food Preparation & Service Workers
  - Cooks; and
  - Food Aides.

SCSEP projects utilize O*NET, developed under sponsorship of USDOL/ETA through a grant to the North Carolina Department of Commerce. The O*NET database contains occupations covering the entire U.S. economy. The Interactive Content Model in O*NET details the knowledge, skills, characteristics and abilities needed for these occupations.

O*NET provides a summary for each occupation that details the tasks, technological skills, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, education, work styles and values, and wage and employment trends associated with each occupation.

Additionally, O*Net Online has been successfully integrated with My Next Move directly into the SCSEP participant’s IEP by at least one grantee, A4TD. Prior to enrollment, the applicant, with the assistance of the A4TD and Host Agency Supervisor, will do a skills self-assessment for each item in the Abilities, Work Styles, Work Activities, and Tasks. This assessment provides a blue print for the participant by determining what skills and training(s) need to be developed, what skills the Host Agency can address and what skills need to be developed outside of the community service assignment. Within the first 6 months of the participant’s enrollment, an assessment with the participant, A4TD staff and the Host Agency Supervisor is performed to determine what skills the participant has become proficient in and which skills need improvement. This process provides a training track to increase the participant’s ability to achieve unsubsidized employment.

Service Delivery and Coordination

Coordination of SCSEP with Other Programs

A complete detail of the development and activities of the NYS WIOA Interagency Team is included in this Combined Plan in the Workforce Development Activities and Implementation Strategies sections. NYSOFA, representing SCSEP, joined the team in late 2015.
Coordination with WIOA Title I Programs

The WIOA Interagency Team was originally formed to work together on the 2016 NYS Combined Plan. The Interagency Team continued to meet to develop strategies for the implementation of WIOA and coordination of services, referrals, and information sharing between partners, increasing awareness and understanding of the various Title I programs. The continued participation of the NYSOFA SCSEP staff on the team ensures that SCSEP eligible individuals are represented in the One-Stop Career Center System. WIOA mandates a MOU between all required partners with the LWDB and CEO(s). The MOU must detail the SCSEP project’s involvement in the One-Stop Career Center System.

Coordination with Other Titles of the Older Americans Act

NYSOFA is the state unit on Aging and oversees the activities carried out in the state under the other titles of the OAA. Historically, NYSOFA’s operation of SCSEP was performed through its Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and their contractors, participating in SCSEP throughout NYS. As of July 1, 2018, NYSOFA changed its SCSEP operation from funding through 29 County AAAs to 8 regional programs awarded through a competitively bid RFA. The result left one SCSEP region, New York City, still operated by the AAA and the remaining seven regions operated locally by three additional National Grantees; A4TD (which operates in five regions), PathStone, and TWP. Even though NYSOFA’s state SCSEP program may no longer be operated through the AAAs, there is collaboration between the new regional SCSEP operators and the AAAs. NYSOFA will continue to encourage the collaboration between the AAAs and their contractors and National Grantees in serving the employment needs of older workers. This will be achieved through in-person meetings, conference calls, and other methods of communication.

Coordination with Other Public and Private Entities

The supportive services SCSEP projects must provide to ensure the best possibilities for the success of SCSEP participants rely on coordination with not only AAA delivered services, but also other private entities and programs providing services to older adults and those with special needs or disabilities. Each SCSEP project throughout the state accesses partners instrumental to SCSEP participant outreach, training, and placements. A cooperative relationship with NYSED/ACCESS-VR enables state projects and National Grantees to access assistance for participants with disabilities. This partnership also provides vocational rehabilitation and training/job development alternatives for older clients. Other cooperative relationships that subgrantees have cultivated include: Literacy Volunteers, OCFS/NYSB, local community colleges, SUNY, county DSS offices, regional museums, and local economic development agencies.

Coordination with Labor Market and Training Initiatives

All of NYS’s SCSEP projects rely on coordination with the local Career Centers for LMI, and job training and participant skill development. In addition, the collaboration with local community-based organizations, educational institutions, and governmental entities as host agencies continues to provide in-demand training and potential employment placements. Local SCSEP staff will continue to reach out to local businesses and other resources to expand relationships with those local businesses to ensure that community service employment assignments are truly providing the skill training that meets the needs of both participants and businesses.

Coordination with One-Stop Career Center System

The continued participation of NYSOFA SCSEP staff on the WIOA Interagency Team represents SCSEP as an active partner in the One-Stop Career Center System and the goal of improving coordination of the system. SCSEP
projects in NYS have close working relationships with the Career Centers. Many of the SCSEP program coordinators have an ongoing presence at the Career Centers and serve as the primary point of contact for older job seekers. SCSEP participants will be assigned to the local Career Centers to assist with administrative duties, providing valuable assistance to the Career Center while enhancing their training for unsubsidized employment. This coordination also assists with outreach, especially to rural areas of NYS. NYSOFA will encourage the continuation of these collaborative efforts, which will include using Career Centers for job orders, LMI, coordination on intensive services/training needed by specific participants, and other resources of value to SCSEP. In addition, NYSOFA will continue to encourage SCSEP projects and Career Centers to collaborate on joint training activities and job fairs, share job leads, and work together to engage the business community in Career Center and SCSEP initiatives that support local business interests.

Efforts Working with Rural Economic Development Offices

SCSEP operation, because of the limited nature of employment opportunities and transportation options, can present a challenge in rural areas. SCSEP efforts to work with local economic development offices are especially crucial in rural locations. In NYS, the REDC is a key component of Governor Cuomo’s transformative approach to state investment and economic development. In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 REDCs to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The REDCs are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The REDCs have redefined the way NYS invests in jobs and economic growth by putting in place a community-based, bottom up approach and establishing a competitive process for state resources. Each REDC has implemented plans that will create jobs in the communities in each region and, except for New York City, includes rural areas. This Plan will encourage each SCSEP sub-grantee to continue with its efforts to work with their local economic development office. NYSOFA will assist all sub-grantees, with a focus on rural areas, in reaching out to local economic development offices.

Long Term Strategy for Engaging Businesses

In the State Strategies section of the Combined Plan, several methods of business engagement are discussed to be utilized by the various WIOA partners. One of the WIOA Interagency Team’s workgroups is dedicated to the development of a common system for agencies to track their engagements of businesses. It is the goal of each SCSEP project to provide the training needed for each participant to maximize their potential toward transition to unsubsidized employment. In order to achieve this goal, strategies for engaging and developing partnerships with businesses within industries and occupations most likely to employ SCSEP participants provide the best opportunities.

SCSEP projects continually seek out employment opportunities with businesses and industries located in their communities. They track business trends and employment opportunities through participation/membership in their LWDBs, workforce committees, and chambers of commerce. SCSEP projects utilize staff as job developers. Part of their job development responsibilities entail meeting with local and regional businesses to discuss involvement with SCSEP, listen to the businesses’ needs, and offer the opportunity for SCSEP participants to meet the businesses’ needs. These one-on-one contacts are the basis for developing training strategies with the business, developing on-the-job experience contracts, or directly filling jobs while establishing or maintaining partnerships.

SCSEP projects utilize online programs to access information about jobs in specific areas or counties, along with required skill levels. Once identified, staff can contact those businesses who fall into high demand or high growth areas. Frequent contact with local businesses allows SCSEP staff to provide participants with information on local
job availability and the skills needed to obtain those jobs. Staff are also involved in business outreach activities such as visiting with employer representatives at job fairs, involvement of employers in Job Search/Job Club training, and any other networking activities that result in business relationship building. Staff welcome the opportunity to provide information on hiring, training, and retaining older workers through meetings, seminars, workshops, presentations, and any other venues where potential businesses may be present. Though not all attendees will be direct business contacts, these activities help spread the word about the value and availability of older workers, address older worker stereotypes, and introduce businesses to the ageless workforce concept.

**Long Term Strategy for Serving Minority Older Individuals**

NYS is a leading recipient of immigrants and minorities from around the globe. Three of NYS’s largest cities (New York City, Albany, and Buffalo) have populations nearly half comprised of minorities (56%, 50% and 43% respectively). In 2014 NYSOFA added the dedicated position of Advocacy Specialist to promote equal access of all individuals and assure prioritization of services to those in greatest economic and social need. NYSOFA also focuses on equal access to services for rural residents, individuals with disabilities, Native Americans, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals at risk for institutional placement.

The Advocacy Specialist works with all programs serving older adults to increase the cultural competency and capacity to serve older minority individuals successfully, statewide. NYSOFA requires that all aging programs are compliant with the legal requirements as identified in the OAA, as well as the Elder Law, Civil and Human Rights legislation, including the NYS Human Rights law, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Federal Executive Order 13166, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

For some minority individuals with limited English proficiency, language access presents a potential barrier to employment. To mitigate this barrier, SCSEP projects make SCSEP enrollment and recruiting materials available in Spanish and other languages. Projects have access to telephone interpretation services, and some projects have bi-lingual program staff available to serve participants.

In addition to these efforts, the Plan’s long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP will be the continued encouragement of the recruitment of minorities. Minorities, especially, those with poor employment prospects, will be emphasized over the duration of the Plan to be a priority of NYSOFA and the aging network in NYS. Local SCSEP projects will continue to be required to give increased attention to recruiting and training the most disadvantaged through cooperative recruitment efforts with local community service programs and minority agencies. Community agencies that serve low-income individuals and minorities will be called upon, where appropriate, to serve as SCSEP worksites. Outreach strategies will include senior employment fairs, local media articles, announcements in newspapers, newsletters, and flyers designed to reach diverse ethnic groups. Monitoring of participation by minorities will continue to be included in the NYSOFA sub-grantee monitoring tool. If a SCSEP project is identified as under-serving minorities, a corrective action plan will be required, and training will be provided. NYSOFA will provide ongoing technical assistance and training to projects with specific focus placed on minority recruitment for both the participant and/or host agency to rectify and address any barriers to unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP projects will continue to recruit veterans in collaboration with the Black Veterans for Social Justice and Veterans Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) representatives at Career Centers. Recruitment material and presentations are made available throughout local well-established community service networks, including AAA and other service delivery systems for those 60 and older. Other outreach efforts have been made toward assisting under-represented populations by coordinating with agencies that target low income priority older
adults, such as English as a second language training programs and minority service agencies. DFTA’s SCSEP program will continue to target lower income neighborhood centers, homeless shelters, food pantries, organizations that work with clients recently released from incarceration, and public housing. In addition, faith-based organizations, long known for their outreach to underserved individuals, will also be part of the strategy to ensure that minority populations are included in SCSEP. A new organization was recently added, the Council of Peoples Organization, whose mission is to assist immigrant families, particularly individuals from South Asia and individuals who are Muslim.

**Community Services Most In Need**

SCSEP projects were surveyed to identify the anticipated needs of SCSEP participants coupled with the locations of those community service groups working to meet those needs. The needs most identified for SCSEP participants include housing, nutrition, transportation, and an array of services designed to support self-sufficiency and independence. Additionally, many of the locations identified to meet those needs will also serve as host agency sites. Another need identified by the New York City Department for the Aging (NYC DFTA) will focus on SCSEP eligible individuals being released from prison.

Below are samples of the survey responses received from counties with SCSEP services.

Region 1 (Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond Counties):
- Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP)
- The Correctional Association of NY
- NYC Department of Homeless Services
- NYC Housing Authority
- Andrew Jackson Senior Center
- Dyckman Senior Center
- Self-Help Benjamin Rosenthal Prince Street Senior Center
- Fort Green Council, Inc
- NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (intergenerational initiative).
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce

Region 2 (Rockland and Westchester Counties):
- Peter Chema Senior Center
- Town of Greenburgh (Theodore Douglas Young Community Center)
- Westhab, Inc.

Region 3 (Albany, Fulton, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties):
- Salvation Army of Saratoga
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Emmanuel Baptist Church
Regions 4 & 5 (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties):

- The ARC of St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties
- Ft. Drum Regional Health Planning Organization
- Watertown Urban Mission
- Child Advocacy Center of Northern NY
- Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Northern NY
- St. Lawrence County Agency on Aging
- North Country Prenatal Council
- CREST Center
- Potsdam Library
- St. Lawrence County Arts Council
- St. Lawrence County Health Initiative
- Community Health Center of the North Country
- Catholic Charities of the North Country

Region 6 (Tioga and Tompkins Counties):

- Broome Tioga BOCES

Region 7 (Genesee, Monroe, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates Counties):

- Attain Labs in Monroe County & Wyoming County
- Rochester Educational Opportunity Center
- Action For a Better Community
- Notre Dame Learning Center
- Community Action of Wyoming County
- Lifetime Assistance
- Center for Disability Rights
- Urban League of Rochester
- Rochester Libraries

Region 8 (Chautauqua and Erie Counties):

- Community Action Organization
- Saving Grace Ministries Inc.
- Rural Outreach Center
- Olmstead Center for Sight
• Buffalo City Mission
• Genesis Center
• Read to Succeed
• UB Educational Opportunity Center
• NYS Corrections and Community Supervision
• Northwest Mental Health Community

Long Term Strategy to Improve State SCSEP Program

With encouragement from USDOL/ETA, between 2016 and 2017 a NYSOFA exploratory committee examined the design of the program. As a result of the committee’s analysis of the structure of SCSEP in NYS, it was determined that regionalizing NY SOFA’s SCSEP program would maximize efficiencies and resources, resulting in the optimization of opportunities for unsubsidized employment for SCSEP participants.

NYSOFA’s SCSEP program was operated through a network of 29 AAA sub-grantees, who either directly provided or contracted out the program. Some of the County projects had only 3 authorized positions; these positions are then modified due to NYS’s higher minimum wage than the Federal minimum wage, resulting in programs having as few as two authorized positions. Due to the low number of authorized positions, staff overseeing these authorized positions are often responsible for other programs operated by the sponsoring agency, making it difficult for staff to become well-versed in the complex regulations and program requirements of SCSEP and giving the program complete attention. Regionalizing was intended to result in efficiencies at both the state and local level in the operation of the program.

NYSOFA issued a RFA on January 25, 2018 that identified eight regions throughout NYS that contain state Grantee authorized positions. Additionally, authorized positions were swapped with two different National grantees in order to create the regions. As a result of the RFA, beginning July 1, 2018, four SCSEP regional providers; A4TD, DFTA, PSC, and TWP were awarded 5-year contracts, to be renewed annually, to provide the state SCSEP service in eight regions. (Attachment B: Regional Map, available at https://aging.ny.gov/new-york-state-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-four-year-combined-state-plan-2020-2023).

Regionalization creates an economy of scale for the programs. By being responsible for more authorized positions, staff are able to devote more time to SCSEP, resulting in a better understanding of the program requirements. Additionally, there is more consistency across the state by having only 8 programs instead of 29. NY SOFA is able to provide an increased level of technical assistance and an optimized level of attention to each sub-grantee. On-site monitoring and data validation will occur for all programs annually. NY SOFA anticipates that regionalization will not only improve administrative practices but will also result in a better experience for participants and an increase in placements into unsubsidized employment.

Continuous Performance Improvement

The Plan’s strategy over the next four years for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants’ entry into unsubsidized employment will include a combination of ongoing technical assistance and training provided to sub-grantees. Given the continued impact the minimum wage has on the number of authorized positions available to SCSEP participants in NYS, projects will focus efforts on job development. This focus will facilitate SCSEP participant’s goal of obtaining unsubsidized employment and will provide authorized position openings for new participants.
Beginning in PY 2018, SCSEP grantees must follow the performance requirements from the Interim Final Rule (IFR) published on December 1, 2017, which revises the measures at 20 CFR 641.700, implementing the new performance requirements specified by the Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2016. On July 30, 2018, USDOL/ETA issued a Final Rule adopting the IFR as final without change. The implementation of these new performance goals and targets has renewed focus on these performance measures.

A need for continued technical assistance with the “follow-up” activities was identified. Improvement in “follow-up” activities will ensure that each sub-grantee has entered the earnings data necessary to be included in the performance level of “entered employment.” Additionally, over the next four years sub-grantees will be encouraged to utilize all sources of training (SCSEP virtual modules and live trainings) provided through USDOL/ETA related to improving performance as well as other aspects of SCSEP.

Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

Locations and Populations Most In Need

Attachment C, Population Figures and Percentage, available at https://aging.ny.gov/new-york-state-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-four-year-combined-state-plan-2020-2023, details the New Yorkers age 55 and older who earn 125% or less of federal Poverty Guidelines. There are approximately 1 million New Yorkers who are eligible for SCSEP. Of those:

- 61% are Women and 38% are Men;
- 58% White; 20% African-American; 9% Asian; and 13% other;
- 79% Not-Hispanic and 21% Hispanic;
- 66% Native born; 24% Naturalized; and 10% Foreign-born, Non-Citizen;
- 32.9% did not complete High School; 34.5% High School/GED; 12.5% some College, but no degree; 5.7% Associates Degree; 8.9% Bachelor’s Degree; and 5.5% higher than a bachelor’s degree;
- 46.6% are disabled;
- 6.5% are Veterans.

Counties of SCSEP Projects

Attachment D, located at https://aging.ny.gov/new-york-state-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-four-year-combined-state-plan-2020-2023, details the PY 2019 Geographic Areas to be Served – Areas Affected by Project. The number of assigned SCSEP authorized positions are based on USDOL/ETA’s distribution factor, which serves as the foundation for equitable assignment of SCSEP positions. USDOL/ETA uses census data by county and annual program appropriations to calculate the allocation of authorized positions for each county in the state. The number of authorized positions is proportional to the number of eligible people in the county compared to the eligible state population.

Included in Attachment C, PY 2019 ED Chart, is the listing by county of the number of SCSEP authorized positions. There are no changes from PY 2018, however, there were changes from PY 2017 because of position swaps with National Grantee, A4TD that were negotiated in order to construct the eight state SCSEP regions.

Table 4. details the Authorized Positions exchanged between NYS and A4TD to establish the eight NYS SCSEP Regions.
Table 4. Authorized Positions change between NYS and A4TD to make 8 State SCSEP Regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PY 17 AP</th>
<th>Swap Proposal</th>
<th>PY 17 Post Swap AP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>A4TD</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>St. Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tompkins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tompkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seneca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Onondaga</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Cortland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cortland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneida</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Oneida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Niagara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sullivan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 NY slots swapped

Current Slot Imbalances

Table 5. below contains data taken from USDOL/ETA’s sponsored SCSEP ED website, [www.scseped.org](http://www.scseped.org), which shows the authorized positions by County in the NYSOFA SCSEP project and compares the Variance between modified positions (based on NYS’s minimum wage) and enrolled positions as of September 30, 2019.

Table 5. Enrollment Variance (Program Year 2019 through the 1st Quarter July 1, 2019 – September 30, 2019)
*NYC includes: Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond Counties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New York County</th>
<th>Authorized Positions</th>
<th>Modified Positions</th>
<th>Enrolled Positions</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Variance %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>140.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chautauqua</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-16.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-29.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York*</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rensselaer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The impact of NYS’s minimum wage continues to present a challenge for all SCSEP projects in the state. Even though it appears that some programs are over-enrolled at this time, they will come into balance by the end of the PY. It is also the goal of each program to bring any under enrollment in balance by the end of the PY. In some SCSEP projects that are over enrolled, adjustments in the number of community service hours was decreased in order to keep the project within equitably distributed funding.

**Long Term State Strategy for Equitable Distribution of SCSEP Positions**

**Moving Positions from Over-Served to Underserved Locations**

NYSOFA plans to continue to work with all SCSEP National grantees operating in NYS on equitable distribution of SCSEP slots. This will provide an opportunity for any issues surrounding equitable distribution to be cooperatively resolved between both state and National grantees. Through continued review of slot distribution, NYSOFA, in consultation with NYS National grantees and the approval of USDOL/ETA, will determine if moving slots between sponsors and/or counties will be necessary.

**Equitable Service in Urban and Rural Areas**

The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas:

- Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people;
- Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people.

“Rural” encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

NYS is a combination of highly populated counties (NYC – 100%urban) and sparsely populated counties (Hamilton County – 100%rural). On a statewide basis (based on the 2010 Census), the percentage of the total population in an area designated as urban is 88% and the percentage in an area designated as rural is 12%. Of NYS’s 62 counties, 32 counties have at least 50% of their population in areas designated as urban, while 30 counties have fewer than 50% of their population in areas designated as rural.

Table 6. below shows the Urban/Rural population and percentage of population for each county in NYS. New York City includes Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond Counties.

Table 6. NYS Urban & Rural Population & Percentage (sorted by % Urban)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY NAME</th>
<th>TOTAL POP.</th>
<th>URBAN POP.</th>
<th>% URBAN</th>
<th>RURAL POP.</th>
<th>% RURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>8,175,133</td>
<td>8,175,057</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassau</td>
<td>1,339,532</td>
<td>1,336,957</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>311,687</td>
<td>309,451</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>1,493,350</td>
<td>1,454,506</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>38,844</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westchester</td>
<td>949,113</td>
<td>918,044</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>31,069</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>744,344</td>
<td>696,334</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>48,010</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schenectady</td>
<td>154,727</td>
<td>142,107</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>12,620</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>919,040</td>
<td>832,615</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>86,425</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>304,204</td>
<td>274,708</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>29,496</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onondaga</td>
<td>467,026</td>
<td>408,239</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>58,787</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>99,710</td>
<td>79,220</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>20,490</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>372,813</td>
<td>289,524</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>83,289</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>216,469</td>
<td>167,892</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>48,577</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemung</td>
<td>88,830</td>
<td>67,352</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>21,478</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broome</td>
<td>200,600</td>
<td>148,330</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>52,270</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saratoga</td>
<td>219,607</td>
<td>153,809</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>65,798</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rensselaer</td>
<td>159,429</td>
<td>110,784</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>48,645</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneida</td>
<td>234,878</td>
<td>157,406</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>77,472</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>65,707</td>
<td>43,413</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>22,294</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>50,219</td>
<td>29,660</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>20,559</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tompkins</td>
<td>101,564</td>
<td>57,543</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>44,021</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chautauqua</td>
<td>134,905</td>
<td>75,732</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>59,173</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cortland</td>
<td>49,336</td>
<td>27,493</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>21,843</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster</td>
<td>182,493</td>
<td>98,473</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>84,020</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>107,931</td>
<td>56,698</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>51,233</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>116,229</td>
<td>60,382</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>55,847</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>55,531</td>
<td>27,558</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>27,973</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herkimer</td>
<td>64,519</td>
<td>31,092</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>33,427</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>65,393</td>
<td>29,654</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>35,739</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayuga</td>
<td>80,026</td>
<td>35,386</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>44,640</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>35,251</td>
<td>14,574</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>20,677</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>73,442</td>
<td>30,151</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>43,291</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesee</td>
<td>60,079</td>
<td>24,100</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>35,979</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steuben</td>
<td>98,990</td>
<td>39,229</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>59,761</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>93,772</td>
<td>36,855</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>56,917</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>42,883</td>
<td>16,776</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>26,107</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattaraugus</td>
<td>80,317</td>
<td>30,719</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>49,598</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswego</td>
<td>122,109</td>
<td>46,701</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>75,408</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence</td>
<td>111,944</td>
<td>42,548</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>69,396</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>51,599</td>
<td>19,259</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>32,340</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individuals Afforded Priority of Service

The OAA sec. 518(b) requires that eligible individuals who meet the criteria in the chart below, shall have priority for community service employment and other authorized activities provided by SCSEP.

The chart below details those priority individuals who qualify based on one or more of the following criteria as well as the estimated number of older New Yorkers who meet the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Groups</th>
<th>New York Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 +</td>
<td>2,902,695*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a disability (65+)</td>
<td>970,717*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills (55+)</td>
<td>517,340**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below from 2010 Census:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reside in rural areas (55+)</td>
<td>698,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are veterans or their spouses who meet the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act (65+)</td>
<td>577,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have low employment prospects (55+)</td>
<td>210,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided under Title 1 of WIOA</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are homeless or at risk for homelessness</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: American Community Survey, 2014 One Year Estimates
**Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2013 5 Year Sample
For the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the state, see:


For the relative distribution of eligible individuals, see


**Steps to Avoid Disruptions in Staffing**

NYS will allow for a gradual shift in positions as they become vacant to areas where there has been an increase in the eligible population. This does not mean that participants will be entitled to remain in subsidized community service positions indefinitely. All steps will be taken to promote transition to unsubsidized employment.

Grantees and sub-grantees will have to notify NYSOFA before any transfer of positions from one geographic area to another. If NYSOFA is in agreement with the transfer of positions, NYSOFA will then submit, in writing, the proposed changes in distribution that occur after submission of the equitable distribution report to SCSEP National and the Federal Project Officer for approval. All grantees are required to coordinate any proposed changes in position distribution with the national grantees that operate in the state, including the State Project Director, before submitting the proposed changes to SCSEP National and the Federal Project Officer for approval. The request to SCSEP National for approval will include the comments of the State project director.

**SCSEP Operations**

*Administrative*

**SCSEP Program Staff at NYSOFA in the Division of Local Program Operations (LPO)**

SCSEP is administered by staff within the Division of Local Program Operations. The primary responsibilities of staff in regard to SCSEP are to monitor sub-grantee programs, provide technical assistance and training (including for the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR system (SPARQ)), create and/or modify policies and procedures as necessary, disseminate SCSEP program updates, coordinate with National grantees on equitable distribution, oversee the preparation and submission of Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), provide ongoing training and support to sub-grantees, and coordinate with WIOA partners and other employment and training programs.
The Aging Services Program Coordinator 2 (ASPC2) will spend 10% of their time to support the programmatic requirements for the administration of SCSEP in NYS. The ASPC2 will be responsible for the unit’s management including collaborating with the LPO Assistant Director, the LPO Division Deputy Director and other Executive Management Team members in setting unit policies and procedures. The ASPC2 will also supervise the Aging Services Program Coordinator 1 (ASPC1) who functions as the Team Leader/Program Coordinator level of the unit.

The ASPC1, to be determined, will spend 35% of their time in support of SCSEP, and their duties will include:

- A leadership role in higher level policy issues such as staying abreast of program changes brought about by federal legislation, regulation and policy directives, as well as state driven changes to the program (i.e., changes to minimum wage requirements and reviewing and modifying program policies at the state level as necessary);
- Supporting the programmatic requirements for the administration of SCSEP in NYS;
- Acting as the point person in interacting with federal grantor agencies, office management, and others on local program specific matters;
- Providing direct supervision for the lead and assistant Aging Services Representatives (ASRs) for SCSEP;
- Responsibility for the supervision of the development of the SCSEP annual funding application submitted to USDOL/ETA as well as the annual contract renewal documents for sub-grantees;
- Providing SCSEP training and guidance to the lead and assistant ASRs for SCSEP;
- Supervising annual data validation and on-site monitoring performed by the two ASRs; and
- Working with the lead and assistant ASRs for SCSEP in developing program changes in policies and operations and assume lead responsibility for implementing the changes through the ASRs and local grantees.

The lead ASR for SCSEP has over five years of experience implementing SCSEP and will spend 100% of their time supporting the programmatic requirements for the administration of SCSEP in NYS and will be known as the SCSEP Program Director. Their duties will include:

- Responsibility for the development of the SCSEP annual funding application submitted to USDOL/ETA;
- Reviewing and recommending for approval the annual contracts and/or renewals for sub-grantees;
- Representing NYSOFA in attending meetings with National grantees and other interested parties to discuss items such as equitable distribution of program funds and enrollee authorized positions, program coordination, and other issues relevant to the program;
- Responsibility for all aspects of SPARQ including administration of SPARQ user passwords, monitoring participant records for USDOL reporting purposes, monitoring program performance, providing SPARQ training to all sub-grantee SCSEP Coordinators, and brokering help requests from SPARQ users with help@scsep-help.com;
- Participating in monthly USDOL SCSEP all-grantee calls;
- Providing technical support and assistance, responding to sub-grantee questions, and disseminating SCSEP program updates and rules and regulations to subgrantees;
- Performing on-site monitoring and required annual data validation;
• Working in consultation with the ASPC1 and the assistant ASR to update SCSEP policies and procedures; and
• Maintaining coordination with employment organizations and groups in NYS.

The lead ASR for SCSEP also maintains an active role on the NYS WIOA Interagency Team. These duties include:
• Responsibility for the development and implementation of MOUs as required under WIOA;
• Ensuring MOUs meet the needs of SCSEP and providing guidance and technical assistance to the local negotiators and signatories for SCSEP;
• Collaborating with NYSDOL and other required Career Center partners on the Combined State Plan; and
• On-going communication and training to SCSEP sub-grantees regarding WIOA.

The assistant ASR for SCSEP is new to NYSOFA as of June 2019 and has over 20 years of experience working in human resources, policy development, and program management. The assistant ASR will spend 40% of their time supporting the programmatic requirements for the administration of SCSEP in NYS. At first, their time will be devoted to training and eventually their duties will include:
• Assisting with the development of the SCSEP annual funding application submitted to the USDOL/ETA;
• Reviewing and recommending for approval the annual contracts and/or renewals for sub-grantees;
• Responsibility for all aspects of SPARQ including: administration of SPARQ user passwords, monitoring participant records for USDOL reporting purposes, monitoring program performance, providing SPARQ training to all subgrantee SCSEP Coordinators, and brokering help requests from SPARQ users with help@scsep-help.com;
• Participating in monthly USDOL SCSEP all-grantee calls;
• Providing technical support and assistance, responding to sub-grantee questions, and disseminating SCSEP program updates and rules and regulations to subgrantees;
• Performing on-site monitoring and required annual data validation; and
• Working in consultation with the ASPC1 and the lead ASR to update SCSEP policies and procedures.

The Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the Division of Local Program Operations will both spend 10% of their time maintaining an active oversight role of SCSEP. The Deputy and Assistant Director review the annual grant application, SCSEP State Plan and Modification, and all policies and procedures, as well as consult on any higher-level issues. Additionally, NYSOFA’s counsel and senior attorney spend approximately 5% and 15% of their time on SCSEP respectively. NYSOFA’s counsel and senior attorney remain very active in SCSEP through weekly meetings with the SCSEP program staff. Both attorneys consult on all policies and procedures and are members of the NYS WIOA Interagency Counsel Team. The attorneys work to ensure the MOU template and guidance provided by the NYS WIOA Interagency Team both complies with regulation and represents the needs of SCSEP.

Contracting Staff in the Division of Finance and Administration

NYSOFA employs five staff with a primary responsibility of contract and payment management. As a result of regionalization, SCSEP is now administered through eight direct contracts with regional providers, as opposed to through grant awards given to 29 AAAs, as it was in the past. The contract management staff are responsible for
working with program staff on the development of annual contract renewal documents for contractors receiving state and/or federal funds, reviewing submitted applications, and the development and approval of contracts, which includes SCSEP. The contract management staff also assist in the annual preparation of this application and are responsible for preparing the quarterly and annual financial reports required by this grant for USDOL.

- The contract management staff will work with program staff to conduct on-site monitoring, which will include a fiscal component.
- The contract management staff will provide ongoing technical assistance via phone, email, and conference calls to local sub-grantees on fiscal matters.
- The contract management staff will review, and process claims for payment that are submitted by local sub-grantees. Each contract management team member spends approximately 5% of staff time on SCSEP activities.

Organizational Chart


Training Provided to Local Staff

NYSOFA will notify all sub-grantees of the latest SCSEP instructions, advisories, policy, and procedures by Program Instructions (PI), Informational Memorandums (IM), Technical Assistance Memorandums (TAM) and emails. The SCSEP Program Director maintains an email list of all sub-grantee SCSEP Coordinators to provide email “blasts” whenever information needs to be transmitted quickly or to provide other information that may be of interest. A phone list is maintained for the need of direct, immediate contact with the sub-grantees. Sub-grantees are also made aware of appropriate USDOL/ETA sponsored webinars or teleconferences. The SCSEP Program Director monitors SPARQ reports for participant rejects, utilization of SPARQ Management reports, and performance measure compliance.

Additionally, email and phone communication is utilized to inform sub-grantees of any updated information and to provide open discussions on general questions that may help address program concerns or to provide assistance with SPARQ training and technical assistance. NYSOFA will hold technical assistance calls, a practice similar to what is done on the national level with the monthly All Grantee calls and the Region 1 Peer to Peer calls with all sub-grantees on a quarterly basis and on an as needed basis as issues arise. These NYS SCSEP Project Director calls continue to be a way for NYSOFA to provide training on various program aspects as well as to provide updates and solicit feedback. The most recent calls focused on the transition from the old program structure to the new regional structure, educating the new providers on NYSOFA policies and procedures and providing them a copy of all current programmatic guidance.

One of the greatest benefits of moving to a regional model of SCSEP services has proven to be the vast experience and capacity the Regional Providers have for SCSEP and workforce training.

Monitoring Projects for Program and Financial Compliance
The annual process of data validation and on-site monitoring provides NYSOFA staff the opportunity to make certain regional SCSEP providers are in compliance with SCSEP regulations and that communicated information has been implemented. The NYSOFA monitoring tool reviews all required SCSEP policies and regulations and is an effective indicator in determining if the providers are following USDOL statutes, regulations, and policies. Follow-up letters are sent to the providers indicating the results, strengths, and weaknesses (if any) found during the monitoring visit. If any issues related to SCSEP policies and regulations are found, a corrective action plan is required, and the Program Director works with the provider until the issue is resolved. Data validation coupled with the follow-up of those results provide further assurance that understanding and compliance with SCSEP regulations are implemented throughout the program area.

NYSOFA fiscal staff will monitor each regional provider through onsite monitoring. Fiscal staff previously monitored SCSEP when conducting onsite monitoring of each AAA since the program was previously administered by 29 AAAs. Now that the program is operated through a regional model, fiscal staff created a SCSEP-specific monitoring tool and will conduct onsite visits with each regional provider after the final claims are submitted.

State Management of Providers

Between PY 17 and PY 18, NYSOFA underwent a total transition of its program, moving from 29 county based sub-grantees to 4 regional providers operating 8 regions (1 provider operates 5 regions). Additionally, authorized positions were swapped with two different National grantees in order to create the regions. The New York City Department for the Aging was the only sub-grantee from the previous program structure to remain as a sub-grantee after a competitive RFA process, resulting in approximately half of the participants having to be transferred to a new provider. NYSOFA worked closely with both its out-going and in-coming sub-grantees on all transition activities, including sending notification letters to all impacted participants and host agencies, holding a series of transition calls with providers, facilitating the scheduling of transition meetings with participants and host agencies with both the out-going and incoming subgrantee present, and arranging for the transfer of any necessary participant files. If there are changes in sub-grantees in the future, NYSOFA will undertake a similar transition process.

Recruitment

Pursuant to eligibility and selection priorities of SCSEP participants described under 20 CFR §641, Subpart E – Services to Participants - program participants must be at least 55 years old, unemployed, not job-ready, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to individuals who:

- Are Veterans;
- Are over age 65;
- Have a disability;
- Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
- Reside in a rural area;
- Have low employment prospects;
- Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop Career Center system; or
Are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Local sub-grantees will continue to be required to give increased attention to the recruiting and selection of the most disadvantaged through cooperative recruitment efforts with local community service programs and minority agencies. Community agencies that serve low-income individuals and minorities will be called upon, where appropriate, to serve as SCSEP worksites. Outreach strategies will include senior employment fairs, local media articles, announcements in newspapers, newsletters, and flyers designed to reach diverse ethnic groups. The SCSEP providers in NYS have close working relationships with the Career Centers. Many SCSEP projects have a staff presence at the Career Centers and serve as the primary point of contact for older job seekers. This coordination assists with outreach, especially to rural areas of the state.

Once potential participants are recruited for SCSEP, they will be determined for eligibility. All eligible applicants will be enrolled in the program in the order of applications received, with those who have any priority characteristics, starting with veterans, being enrolled first. If there are no available authorized positions, applicants will be placed on the wait list in the order their application was received, but as openings occur, applicants will be retrieved from the wait list according to the enrollment priorities for SCSEP and their position on the wait list.

**Income Eligibility**

SCSEP participants’ income will be reviewed for recertification each year by the appropriate regional program staff. TEGL 12-06 is used to determine income eligibility. The recertification must be completed prior to June 30 of each year to ensure income has been recertified for each program year. The program staff must also be aware of any significant changes in income or family size that may affect eligibility. If, at any time, program staff suspects that a participant may be over income, they may be asked to provide the necessary documentation. If a participant is determined to be over-income on the recertification date, or at any other point during SCSEP participation, they will be provided a thirty (30) day written notice of termination that includes the reason for termination and a copy of the grievance procedures. The program staff will refer the participant to other employment and training services for assistance.

In order to safeguard personal identifying information, all participant records must be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet with access limited to authorized personnel. All required documentation, both fiscal and programmatic, must be retained for three program years after the end of the program year in which the document was generated. For participants who enter unsubsidized employment after exiting the program, this means three program years after the end of the program year in which all follow-up activity is ended.

**Orientation**

**Participant Orientation**

Sub-grantees, prior to placement at a community service assignment, must provide orientation to SCSEP participants and provide a participant handbook that includes the orientation information. Orientation is the ideal forum in which to provide participants with important information on the program; to address expectations and desired outcomes; and explain participant’s rights and obligations, grievance procedures, safety issues, and any other information deemed necessary to ensure a positive experience.

**Host Agency Orientation**
Sub-grantees must also provide SCSEP orientation to host agency partners to ensure they understand their role in the success of SCSEP participants and their responsibilities in supporting a participant’s goal for an unsubsidized job. Additionally, host agencies must understand “maintenance of effort” to ensure participants are not substitutes for regular staff and the importance of completing the host surveys.

**Durational Limits**

NYSOFA complies with 20 CFR 641.570, which states, eligible individuals may participate in the program for a maximum duration of 48 months in the aggregate (whether or not consecutive). However, NYSOFA does offer two optional durational limit waivers for participants that qualify as frail or are 75 or older, which allow them to remain enrolled in the program beyond 48 months. For a participant to qualify as frail they must be 55 years of age or older and determined to be functionally impaired, as certified by a health professional, because the individual:

- Is unable to perform at least two activities of daily living without substantial human assistance, including verbal reminding, physical cueing, or supervision; or
- Is unable to perform at least two such activities without such assistance; or due to a cognitive or other mental impairment, requires substantial supervision because the individual behaves in a manner that poses a serious health or safety hazard to the individual or to another individual.


**Assessments**

After a participant is determined eligible to participate in SCSEP, they will be interviewed to determine job interests, current skills, and past work and volunteer experience. Assessing a participant’s work history, skills and interests, talents, physical capabilities, aptitudes, needs for supportive services, occupational preferences, training needs, potential for performing community service assignments, and potential for transition to unsubsidized employment allows program staff to find the most appropriate community service assignment and employment goal.

An initial assessment is performed upon program entry, unless an assessment was already performed at the Career Center. Subsequent assessments may be made as necessary but must be made no less frequently than two times during a twelve-month period (including the initial assessment).

Sub-grantees will use the information gathered during the assessment to develop an IEP that includes an appropriate employment goal for each participant. If an assessment was performed and an IEP developed at the Career Center, that assessment and IEP will satisfy the requirement for a SCSEP assessment and IEP. The initial IEP should include an appropriate employment goal for each participant. Thereafter, if the grantee determines the participant is not likely to obtain unsubsidized employment, the IEP must reflect other approaches to help the participant achieve self-sufficiency, including the transition to other services or programs. The IEP should be updated as necessary to reflect information gathered during the subsequent participant assessments.

**Community Service Assignments**

The types of community service assignments are as diverse as the people and locations served. Development of community service assignments is an ongoing process. It requires staff to be aware of local community needs
and the reality of the local job market. Agencies and organizations that can become host agencies and provide training most useful to the participant and present the best opportunity for participant employment will be identified. Methods used to match participants with community service training can vary, but selection of assignments are based primarily on participant need and interest as determined by the assessment and documented in their IEP.

There are circumstances under which participants will be placed in the administration of the project itself. Sub-grantees meet the definition of a host agency - a public agency or a private nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and, therefore, are eligible to be a community service assignment for participants. Participants may be placed at a project office if it is appropriate based on their assessment and IEP. All participants will have the equal opportunity to the number of hours worked per week and all will be paid at the prevailing local minimum wage.

The types of host agencies used are varied based on local job markets but must meet the definition for host agencies listed above and provide participants the opportunity to gain skills that will assist them with their goal to achieve unsubsidized employment. Although host agency development is ongoing, selection of assignments is based primarily on participant need as determined by the assessment and documented in their IEP.

The community service assignment is an important aspect of the IEP, since it provides a work environment in which to obtain needed job skills. The goal of the IEP is to plot the participant’s training plan that will lead to an appropriate employment objective. Placement will be tailored so that the participant can gain both skills and experience in a specific type of work.

SCSEP participants generally work at their community service assignments or other job training for 20 hours per week. However, the number of hours is determined by the local project depending on available funding.

The fringe benefits offered through the sub-grantees generally include:

- Social Security and Medicare;
- Workers Compensation;
- NYS Mandated Disability;
- NYS Paid Family Leave (applicable eligible for disability insurance);
- Unemployment Insurance (for participants assigned to a public entity).

Procedures for ensuring adequate supervision takes place in the orientation process, both with participants and host agencies. Project staff will provide participants orientation to explain what is expected and required of them as a participant in SCSEP. The host agency will provide supervision while the participant is at the training site. The orientation of the host agency emphasizes the importance of the supervision and job training they provide to the participant to assist them in their ultimate goal of achieving unsubsidized employment.

**Training**

The training the participant receives at the host agency during their community service assignments provides the day-to-day training toward developing the job skills needed to achieve unsubsidized employment. Because the community assignment is based on the participant’s assessment and the goals outlined in the IEP, the training received at the host agency provides job relevant experience. In addition to this training, sub-grantees
may arrange skill training provided that it is realistic and consistent with the participant’s IEP; these trainings, for example, may be for updating computer skills or customer service training, as long as the training makes the most effective use of the participant’s skills and talents; and prepares the participant for unsubsidized employment. Training may be provided by the sub-grantee or through other arrangements, including but not limited to, arrangements with other workforce development programs. All of NYS’s sub-grantees rely on coordination with the local Career Centers for training and participant skill development, which best match the demand of the local economy. In addition, the collaboration with local community-based organizations, educational institutions, and governmental entities as host agencies continues to provide in-demand training and potential employment placements.

**Supportive Services**

Supportive services may be necessary to assist SCSEP participants in successfully participating in their community service assignments as well as helping them to gain and retain a job, since supportive services may be provided during the 6-month post-placement period to assist with job retention.

Local partners such as AAAs and local Career Centers can assist with providing supportive services; such as counseling, job coaching and other forms of assistance from other social services agencies that will aid in supporting the participant in their goal of unsubsidized employment.

Supportive services can also be provided with the SCSEP grant by paying for help with incidentals such as transportation assistance, work shoes, badges, safety equipment, and uniforms. However, because funds are limited, low or no cost assistance will be obtained through local partnerships. Supportive services are also needed for SCSEP participants who fail to find unsubsidized employment. These participants will miss the support received from their community assignment and a pay check. Local AAAs and DSS agencies assist with supports that are available at the local level.

**Participant Termination**


**Complaints and Grievances**


**Maximizing Enrollment**

Sub-grantees are encouraged to fully enroll to meet their available modified positions. This may involve temporary over enrollment, however, the large discrepancy between the federal minimum wage and the various local minimum wage rates in NYS have impacted the amount of maneuverability sub-grantees have
within available slots. To maximize enrollment but also keep within funding limitations, NYSOFA ensures sub-grantees are aware of where they stand with respect to spending on enrollee wages and benefits as the program year progresses. The number of assigned SCSEP authorized positions is based on USDOL’s distribution factor which serves as the foundation for equitable assignment of SCSEP positions. Any over enrollments will be temporary and not affect the balance of equitable distribution requirements.

**Performance**

Beginning in PY 2018, SCSEP grantees must follow the performance requirements from the Interim Final Rule (IFR) published on December 1, 2017, which revises the measures at 20 CFR 641.700, implementing the new performance requirements specified by the OAA. On July 30, 2018, USDOL/ETA issued a Final Rule adopting the IFR as final without change. USDOL also added SCSEP performance data elements to the PIRL and grantees began reporting on the new performance measures in the first quarter of PY 2018, which began July 1, 2018.

The new performance measures, as specified in the SCSEP Final Rule and section 513 of the OAA (42 U.S.C. 3056k, as amended by P.L. 114-144) are as follows:

- (a) hours (in the aggregate) of community service employment;
- (b) the percentage of project participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the project;
- (c) the percentage of project participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the project;
- (d) the median earnings of project participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the project;
- (e) indicators of effectiveness in serving employers, host agencies, and project participants; and
- (f) the number of eligible individuals served, including the number of participating individuals described in subsection (a)(3)(B)(ii) or (b)(2) of section 518.

**Summary of PY 2019 Performance Goals and Targets**

Grantee: New York

Community Service Goal: 80.0%
Quarter 2 Employment Target: 36.6%
Quarter 4 Employment Target: 27.9%
Median Earnings Target: $4,180
Effectiveness in Serving Participant: 88.2
Effectiveness in Serving Host Agency: 87.2
Effectiveness in Serving Employer: 85.8
Service Level Goal: 171.8%
Most-in-Need Goal: 2.88

*First 2 years* – Before the beginning of the first program year of the grant, each grantee must reach agreement with USDOL on levels of performance for each measure listed in §641.700 for each of the first two program
years covered by the grant agreement. In reaching the agreement, the grantee and USDOL must take into account the expected levels of performance proposed by the grantee and the factors described in item (c) of the above listed performance measures. The levels agreed to will be considered the expected levels of performance for the grantee for such program years. Funds may not be awarded under the grant until such agreement is reached. At the conclusion of negotiations concerning the performance levels with all grantees, USDOL will make available for public review the final negotiated expected levels of performance for each grantee, including any comments submitted by the grantee regarding the grantee's satisfaction with the negotiated levels.

*Third and fourth year* – Each grantee must reach agreement with USDOL prior to the third program year covered by the grant agreement, on levels of performance for each measure listed in §641.700.

Given this new method for determining performance measures, a projection beyond these initial goals does not seem practical at this time.

**Administrative Costs**

There is no increased administrative cost request in this Plan.

**SCSEP Assurances**

**State and Area Agencies on Aging**

The draft SCSEP Plan prepared by NYSOFA was forwarded to the 23 participating local AAAs and to all local SCSEP program directors via e-mail for comment. The draft plan was also posted on the NYSOFA public website for public comment.

**State and Local Boards under WIOA**

The draft plan was posted on NYSDOL’s website. Additionally, NYSDOL provided State and LWDB members with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Plan.

**Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the state**

All National grantees were contacted to comment and provide recommendations on the Plan.

**Social service organizations providing services to older individuals**

Many social service organizations in NYS are actively involved with SCSEP as host agencies. In transmitting the draft Plan, local program operators were directed to inform host agencies and other social service organizations that the Plan was available for comment on the NYSOFA website.

**Affected communities**

Both the NYSDOL and NYSOFA websites are designed to reach and inform the general public, in addition to the populations both agencies serve. Each website has general information about their relevant subject areas on employment and aging. This ensured an extensive review of the draft Plan by the general public in the grantee service areas.

**Unemployed older individuals**

NYSOFA and the National grantees network of SCSEP providers were encouraged to share the draft Plan with the organizations they contract with and to make the draft Plan accessible for trainees within their program.
Community-based organizations serving older individuals
All grantees were asked to share the draft Plan with community-based organizations that are or have been SCSEP host agencies. NYSOFA sub-grantees were encouraged to share the draft Plan with program participants and other community groups serving older adults.

Business and Labor organizations
Businesses, labor organizations, and the general population that NYSOFA or the grantees and sub-grantees have contact with were encouraged to comment on the Plan.
DESCRIPTION a: INPUT OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

OCFS/NYSCB held in-person public forums and statewide teleconferences in 2019 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 2020 State Plan, OCFS/NYSCB will hold a statewide teleconference for input and comments from consumers and stakeholders. The SRC met on September 19, 2019 to review and provide input into the 2020 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 September 19th 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.

SRC Comment 1: In the Supported Employment (SE) goals section, description f, the hourly salary is listed as $8.95/hour. This should be updated to reflect at least the goal of minimum hourly wage.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: This was updated in the Plan after the draft was posted, and now reads:

OCFS/NYSCB has four primary goals for FFY 2020: the first is to increase the number of individuals placed in supported employment; the second is to maintain hourly wages to at least current minimum wage.

SRC Comment 2: Description c mentions that OCFS/NYSCB remains a member of the Interagency Council for Services to Persons Who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing. The SRC noted that this council is no longer active, and this should be researched and updated in the Plan.
OCFS/NYSCB Response: The Interagency Council for Services to Persons Who are Deaf, Deaf-blind or Hard of Hearing exists by law. OCFS/NYSCB remains a member of this Council.

SRC Comment 3: The SRC noted that the dates indicated for new placement contracts and vocational evaluation contracts is a date in the future from the time of the comments, 2020.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: OCFS/NYSCB noted that the future date was correct. Given the required review period and time frame of State Plan clearance and public comment periods, this information was added to include relevant work that will come to fruition prior to the March 2, 2020 submission date of the Plan.

SRC Comment 4: The SRC noted that at times the responses and information seem to be repetitive.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: Yes, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has specific portal headers that each require a response. Some of the information is duplicative and appears repetitive as a result.

SRC Comment 5: The SRC inquired why in description m: Order of Selection, we have the same response, that OCFS/NYSCB is not implementing an Order of Selection.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: Order of Selection was discussed with the SRC and OCFS/NYSCB does not anticipate being in the position to consider or need to implement an Order of Selection in the foreseeable future.

SRC Comment 6: The SRC noted the track changes carry over in description I, in regard to the number of staff employed by OCFS/NYSCB.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: This was corrected to accurately reflect the correct number, 123, in the final version.

SRC Comment 7: The SRC noted that the staff of OCFS/NYSCB tend to be on the older side, as listed in description i.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: OCFS/NYSCB acknowledges this comment from the SRC.

SRC Comment 8: In description c, under the section on the NYS Promise Initiative, OCFS/NYSCB indicates that it is on the steering committee and the language as written indicates that the initiative ended in July 2019. The SRC would like this to be updated with definitive information on the end of this initiative as well as any updates on the data results.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: OCFS/NYSCB corrected the end date of the program to September 1, 2019. A Fidelity Executive Summary was provided for review and posted on the NYS Promise website each year of the program. Data for 2019 is not yet available as the program ended in September 2019.

SRC Comment 9: In description p, there was a typo in regard to the spelling of LaGuardia Community College.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: This was corrected and updated in final version.

SRC Comment 10: In description f, the SRC would like to have added language to include the SE in-person office by office training and follow up Webinars in the last section of the paragraph containing the four SE goals for 2020.

OCFS/NYSCB Response: OCFS/NYSCB agrees and the following language was added for clarity:
3. The designated State unit’s explanations for rejecting any of the Council’s input or recommendations. Responses in a. 2 above address alternate options, where applicable.

**DESCRIPTION b: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS**

OCFS/NYSICB 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/NYSICB 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/NYSICB. In the past year, through the NET partnership, OCFS/NYSICB has shared information and job postings from federal and corporate partners with OCFS/NYSICB staff and placement partners. In addition, OCFS/NYSICB 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, and 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, BJIC 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/NYSICB 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/NYSICB and CRP staff together for training and networking on issues related to workforce development.

OCFS/NYSICB implemented a new five-year vocational evaluation and placement contract which began January 1, 2020. OCFS/NYSICB worked to increase the network of providers throughout the state, reaching out to new providers through the NYS General VR agency. 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 2020.

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 enables consumers with a Social Security Ticket to Work to obtain the services they need from OCFS/NYSCB. As they complete their services with OCFS/NYSCB, consumers are given access to a 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, which began in 2013 and was extended for one year, through September 2019, strove 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.

OCFS/NYSCB in partnership with NYSDOL, continues to meet monthly as part of the Youth Collaborative which seeks to increase awareness of agencies serving out-of-school youth and increase referrals for services. Other youth focused agencies are also part of the collaboration and include OTDA, NYSED/ACCESS-VR, NYS Higher Education (OHE), and the OCFS Child Welfare and Community Services/Bureau of Youth Development and Crossover Initiatives.

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, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and VR/transition services that help students begin to identify and explore their career interests. These services support obtaining competitive integrated employment outcomes including supported employment. In addition, OCFS/NYSCB counselors may be able to provide job related occupational tools, purchase low vision aids, facilitate and coordinate work based learning experiences and assist in obtaining employment.

OCFS/NYSCB employs nine 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. 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 work 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. The newly developed Office of Special Education Educational Partnership was established in 2019. OCFS/NYSCB will continue to access the resources available through the network of Regional Partnership Centers. The Partnership Centers will continue to provide 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 federally funded project which provides technical assistance to improve services for children and youth who are deaf-blind (ages 0-21). The contract supporting NYDBC was extended from October 1, 2018 through September 20, 2023. 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 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 their 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 revised in 2019. The policy provides information about the requirements, roles and responsibilities of VR in preparing students with disabilities for competitive integrated 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 revised the State Education Agency (SEA) Agreement in 2018 and is awaiting signatory approval. 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, 2019. With two new contractors approved; Alphapointe and Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Northern New York. 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](http://www.visionloss.ny.gov), and are revised as needed.

New contracts are in the approval process and will be in place by January 1, 2020. 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.

NYSCB conducts quality assurance reviews with all Comprehensive Services Contract providers, ATC providers and placement providers on a regularly scheduled basis. The reviews will cover all contracted services and will measure provider performance against contractual standards and contract guidelines. The quality assurance review includes an off-site review of randomly selected participant case files, a participant satisfaction survey and on-site meetings with direct service staff and administration. A report detailing the results of the review and any recommendations for improvement is shared with the provider and the NYSCB district office(s) in the provider’s catchment areas.

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. We currently have 16 vendors 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 FY2020: the first is to increase the number of individuals placed in supported employment; the second is to maintain hourly wages to at least current minimum wage; 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 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, 2019. Supported Employment is an outcome based-funded model. OCFS/NYSCB works
cooperatively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to provide opportunities for supported employment across the state. OCFS/NYSCB staff has been trained on policy and procedure for the supported employment process.

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 provides extended supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities 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 has worked closely with NYSDOL and NYSED to coordinate the effectiveness in serving employers' performance measure. An important part of that coordination is representation by OCFS/NYSCB on all 10 regional business engagement teams through NYSDOL. OCFS/NYSCB is represented by area district managers and will allow OCFS/NYSCB direct access to businesses within a community that are working with NYSDOL for services.

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 NYS/ACOTES-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 assist 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, work readiness skills, 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. 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 OPWDD and 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.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to be an active member of the New York State Emergency Support Function Annex with NYS DOH, the administrator of the state Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. This group coordinates activities to provide services from federal, state, and local resources during times of disaster relief and emergency assistance. OCFS/NYSCB and DOH meet monthly as part of this collaborative group and are involved in maintaining the priorities and mission set forth, including access to management, reporting, support, and planning for disasters and emergencies for individuals with disabilities and NYS residents who are legally blind.

**DESCRIPTION 1: 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 June 30, 2019, OCFS/NYSCB employees totaled 123 individuals, resulting in 118.8 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 eight positions currently, any additional staff above eight FTE must be meet with a corresponding decrease in another area or office. OCFS/NYSCB is in the process of filling all vacant positions.

The total number of field staff was 68, with 10 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 2023, 31 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 26 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 three of the five 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Total Positions</th>
<th>Current Vacancies</th>
<th>Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>O&amp;M Instructor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vision Rehabilitation Therapist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, 2018 and ending December 31, 2018, the colleges reported the enrollment outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Employees Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA</th>
<th>Graduates Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA</th>
<th>Graduates from the Previous Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Hofstra University</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hunter College, CUNY</td>
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<td>State University of New York at Buffalo</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Hunter College, CUNY O&amp;M/RT*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Eligible for Academy Certification of Vision</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 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.

2. Increase opportunities for staff in-service training.

3. 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, and highest degree earned.

4. Continue to recruit qualified VRCs, O&Ms, and RTs including those from diverse backgrounds or who have foreign language skills.

5. Continue to partner with NYSED/ACCES-VR, ACCES-Adult Education, NYSDOL, and OTDA, and other agencies participating in the WIOA Interagency workgroup as applicable, with regard to the CSPD and the long-term training of workforce employees.

6. Provide financial stipends to master’s level students who complete an internship program at OCFS/NYSCB as part of their VRC program.

7. Provide financial reimbursement to VRCs 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.

8. 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 VRCs. 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 are of limited English proficiency (LEP) 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 NYSED 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 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 NYS 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 (i.e., 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)”⁴. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCFS/NYSCB Consumers⁵</th>
<th>2016 ACS Disability Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White only</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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⁵ 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.
**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'.


- **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 \( \alpha \), 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.6

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.

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6 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 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations:</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of vocational skills</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consumer motivation</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

○ **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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Psychosocial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural:</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban:</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban:</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Supervisors rated “neurologic impairments” much lower than counselors (7% vs 38%), and “cognitive” and “psychosocial” somewhat higher than counselors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neurologic</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Psychosocial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor:</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor:</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/NYSB 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/NYSB continue to be important in predicting successful employment outcomes for OCFS/NYSB 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) 2019 and 2020. 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 $29,000,000 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 $170,000 and an average cost of comprehensive services of $8,000.

OCFS/NYSCB is not implementing an Order of Selection.

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**DESCRIPTION I: STATE GOAL & PRIORITIES**

OCFS/NYSCB updated the goals and priorities developed for the 2018 State Plan Modification. These goals and priorities were 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. RSA conducted onsite monitoring in April 2018, at the time of these proposed State Plan updates. OCFS/NYSCB received the monitoring report October 1, 2019 and it was published on RSA’s website. OCFS/NYSCB continues to work with RSA to establish time frames and standards for evaluation for those findings that resulted in Corrective Action Plans.

Goal 1: Improve and expand consumer services.

Goal 2: Monitor cases closed in Competitive Integrated Employment for one year after closure and work to increase baseline performance measures, including retention with employer during second and fourth quarters after exit quarter by 1% each Program Year.

Goal 3: Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services for individuals who are blind throughout NYS.

Goal 4: Increase staff capacity to deliver quality services to consumers.

OCFS/NYSCB did not collect data for the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA in FY 15; however, the goals in this section are in line with the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA. These goals will be re-evaluated and adjusted as needed after performance data is obtained.

**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 2019, 33 individuals received supported employment services. A total of eight consumers were successfully placed in supported competitive employment and transitioned to extended supported employment services. The average hourly wage increased from $9.72/hr. to $12.29/hr., and the average number of hours worked per week slightly decreased from 21.6 to 16.25. Referrals increased from 24 to 33.

OCFS/NYSCB has four primary goals for FFYs 2020 and 2021: the first is to increase the number of individuals placed in supported employment; the second is to maintain hourly wages to at least the current minimum wage; 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 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 NYS. 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 offers extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities through the NYSED/ACCES-VR CRS contract network of providers. 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 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 OPWDD or OMH, as appropriate.
DESCRIPTION OF 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 OPWDD and OMH 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.
4. Utilize information gathered during the Quality Assurance process to identify regionally-specific needs and increase activities in those areas to support participant outcomes and collaboration between OCFS/NYSCB and partner providers.

Goal 2: Monitor cases closed in Competitive Integrated Employment for one year after closure and work to increase baseline performance measures, including retention with employer during second and fourth quarters after exit quarter by 1% each Program Year.

Strategies
1. Increase collaborative efforts with community rehabilitation providers in regard 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. Expand partnerships with America’s Job Centers in addition to the other core partners; NYSDOL, ACCES-Adult Education and NYSED/ACCES-VR, to increase access to services needed by OCFS/NYSCB consumers.
3. Support and promote the Business Enterprise Program in order to increase employment opportunities and successful outcomes.

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.

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 consumers for success in educational or training settings and employment. ATCs, 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 ATCs 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 service component was implemented in June 2015 and continues in the re-issued 2019-2023 Comprehensive Services Contract. 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. Sixty-one individuals met the criteria for case finding during FY 2018 and a portion of FY 2019. 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 their 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 10-13. OCFS/NYSCB is also focused on increasing pre-employment transition services for youth ages 14-21.

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 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, OPWDD, and 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 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**

OCFS/NYSCB will use Innovation and Expansion funds in FY 2020-2022 to incorporate new placement related initiatives in the upcoming job placement contract scheduled to begin January 1, 2020.

OCFS/NYSCB will use Innovation and Expansion funds during FY 2020-2022 to add two new outcomes to the OCFS/NYSCB Job Placement contracts with entities providing job placement services. The New Employer Outcome will allow payment to a contractor that secures a successful placement for a participant with a business or employer not previously known to OCFS/NYSCB. The Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) Outcome will allow payment to a contractor when after working with a participant to
obtain employment, the participant engages in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) for a minimum of two months.

Both of these outcomes are intended to incentivize the placement contractor providers to expand their employer base and work to assist participants to increase earnings beyond SGA.

In addition, OCFS/NYSCB will use Innovation and Expansion funds for a new Professional Level Work Experience Training outcome in the Comprehensive Services Contract. OCFS/NYSCB VR Counselors may refer for a Professional Level Work Experience Training for participants that have an advanced education, certificate, or skills in a specific field but have little hands-on experience or recent employment. The expectation upon referral would be for the contractor to develop a work experience at a higher level of responsibility or skill requirement that matches the goal on the participant’s IPE.

**DESCRIPTION p: EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS**

**Goal 1: Improve and expand consumer services**

1. Develop additional vocational training programs that meet the needs of consumers and businesses.

   OCFS/NYSCB is working to re-develop the training required to become a licensed BEP manager. Training will focus on practical application of materials learned and also incorporate Hadley BEP Licensing Training components.

   All Comprehensive Service Contractors approved to provide the service of Vocational Skills Training were required to submit new curricula for the programs they would provide under the service and were approved by senior management prior to implementation.

2. Continue to foster and expand the current working relationships with OPWDD and OMH on both the local and state level.

   OCFS/NYSCB staff continues to build relationships with community rehabilitation providers and partner state agencies to increase referrals for SE services. OCFS/NYSCB staff received SE training and discussed the importance of OPWDD and OMH in the provision of services. As part of that initiative, OCFS/NYSCB reached out and presented on OCFS/NYSCB and vision loss to many of the general Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). OPWDD in particular has been an ongoing partner and presented to the children’s counselors and transition counselors on OPWDD services including vocational services and eligibility.

   OCFS/NYSCB continues to be represented on the MISCC (Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council). Opportunities for interaction continue during ongoing meetings.

3. Improve consumer access to English as a Second Language training programs, literacy and the high school equivalency test prep programs and educational services.

   We continue to work closely with our State Rehabilitation Council to advocate for a fully accessible TASC™ for blind state residents.
Goal 2: Increase the number of competitive employment outcomes using Fiscal Year 2014 data on the number of competitive employment outcomes as a baseline.

1. Increase collaborative efforts with community rehabilitation providers in regard 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 and the services provided by OCFS/NYSCB.

OCFS/NYSCB, with the assistance of American Foundation for the Blind, met with 11 large businesses with a statewide footprint at Google NYC for a day of discussion on inclusive hiring and business engagement. OCFS/NYSCB and the community partners presented on the roles of VR and CRPs and the businesses had opportunities to present and ask questions, as well as hear from blind professionals. A report was generated from the American Foundation of the Blind (AFB) and we will convene workgroups work on the action items with a goal of creating hiring and internship opportunities participants.

OCFS/NYSCB is making progress on developing business engagement with the other WIOA partners in the 10 workforce regions in NYS. OCFS/NYSCB has representation on the 10 regional business engagement teams along with NYSED/ACCES-VR and OTDA. These teams will allow OCFS/NYSCB district managers direct contact to businesses working with NYSDOL and better allow us to understand the businesses hiring needs at a local level.

OCFS/NYSCB’s Quality Assurance team conducted a follow up review with a CRP in the Albany and Syracuse District Office territory. A meeting included staff from both the OCFS/NYSCB offices and CRP to continue strengthening relationships and increasing referrals to the CRP.

In August 2019, OCFS/NYSCB BEP and outreach staff met with a newly contracted CRP in Watertown, NY to develop and implement outreach efforts as well as expand community relationships.

2. 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 continues to be the regional representative for Region 2 on the National Employment Team through CSAVR. This connection puts OCFS/NYSCB in direct contact with businesses interested in working with VR and allows those connections to then be shared at a regional level to access OCFS/NYSCB’s talent pool.

OCFS/NYSCB also coordinates its own placement consortium in the New York City area. This group consists of all of the placement providers as well as other vision loss community stakeholders. The group gathers every six weeks to share business leads and best practices. Businesses and community resources are also brought into each meeting to share information and help the staff and CRPs better understand opportunities for collaboration.
3. Expand partnerships with America’s Job Centers as well as the four core partners (NYSDOL, ACES-Adult Education and NYSED/ACCES-VR), to increase access to services needed by OCFS/NYSCB consumers.

OCFS/NYSCB continues to build bridges with each of the 96 career centers across NYS. OCFS/NYSCB developed an introduction to OCFS/NYSCB training and has shared that with staff at each center in the region. These trainings are provided by local OCFS/NYSCB staff who would then be in the region working with that center. OCFS/NYSCB now has staff sharing space and meeting participants in a number of centers and continues to be a resource for general Workforce Development staff. OCFS/NYSCB also worked collaboratively with the other WIOA partners to develop a shared release of information and referral form to make shared services more seamless for participants.

4. Support and promote the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) in order to increase employment opportunities and successful outcomes.

OCFS/NYSCB implemented and continues to hold joint staff meetings that include VR and BEP staff to work on increasing VR participant referrals to BEP as well as to increase BEP manager’s hiring rate of OCFS/NYSCB VR participants seeking competitive integrated employment.

The OCFS/NYSCB VR/BEP liaison group meets via teleconference quarterly to discuss BEP processes, training program schedules, discusses concerns and provide feedback and collaboratively work to improve the BEP referral and training process.

OCFS/NYSCB continued to address issues pertaining to program expansion through active participation with the State Committee of Blind Vendors.

5. Work with NIB to develop competitive integrated employment opportunities in the Service sector.

OCFS/NYSCB is actively working with NIB subsidiary Empire State Employment Resources for the Blind, to develop a three-year strategic plan highlighting strategy to develop Competitive Integrated 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 as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.

OCFS/NYSCB has increased the promotion of services in underserved, rural regions by advertising in local news publication and free shopper magazines in their “For the Community” sections. Letters were sent to eye doctors and school districts in underserved and rural areas of NYS to introduce and expand knowledge of OCFS/NYSCB services.

An OCFS/NYSCB interview between an OCFS/NYSCB Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a radio station that airs in Oneida County, was conducted and aired on the radio. This interview included talking points that explain VR services, the history of and contact information for OCFS/NYSCB. The interview was aired in its entirety and portions of the interview were used as a Public Service Announcement (PSA), that runs as time permits on the radio station. Also, OCFS/NYSCB recorded a 30-second advertisement, which airs on radio stations offering no cost PSAs. Radio stations and news publications continue to be canvassed for inclusion in OCFS/NYSCB’s advertisements and PSAs.

2. Promote awareness of OCFS/NYSCB services through participation in a variety of community events including job fairs and culturally specific outreach activities; social media exposure; direct
outreach to eye care providers; and distribution of marketing materials in multiple languages and formats to a wide variety of entities.

OCFS/NYSCB has presented at many regional agencies such as Catholic Charities of Schoharie County and a newly developed Albany White Cane Day, which occurred in October 2019. Various cultural and awareness days are attended by OCFS/NYSCB staff statewide.

OCFS/NYSCB has representation at NYS legislative disability awareness days, and regional job fairs. OCFS/NYSCB has a representative on each of the regional business services teams across NYS and regional NYSDOL job fair information is shared. District Office Managers are also on the distribution list generated by NYSDOL for job fairs occurring within their territory.

In conjunction with the National Library Service for the Blind, OCFS/NYSCB’s VR intake materials were converted to audio cartridges and are available to the public in this new widely accessible format.

**Goal 4: Increase staff capacity to deliver quality service to consumers**

1. Encourage staff to attend supervision and management training in connection with succession planning.
   OCFS/NYSBC is working to develop district office dashboard data based on submitted RSA-911 reports to support supervisory staff in understanding where training needs lie and how their office is doing regarding statewide joint performance measures.

2. Continue new 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 Dead-Blind Collaborative (DBC).

In partnership with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), OCFS/NYSCB:

- Attends and acts as presenters at DBC trainings, workshops and events;
- Collaborates on OCFS/NYSCB participant cases;
- Attends webinars;
- Shares and observes each other’s programs and curricula;
- Cross refers participants, accessing many services from DBC and OCFS/NYSCB; and
- Receives direct consultations and accesses information and referrals.

DBC maintains an ongoing relationship with Laquanda Community College (LCC) for training in deaf education.

OCFS/NYSCB has also sponsored participant and counselor staff for training via this DBC and LCC partnership.
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 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Plan. OCFS/NYSCB placed 323 individuals in competitive integrated employment. This was a decrease of 95 individuals from FY 2017 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 FFY. 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 as well as closing out cases that should have been closed in status 28 in years prior. The average hourly wage increased to $23.74 in FY 2019 from FY 2017 when the average hourly wage was $20.73.

NYSCB was mostly successful in achieving goals 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 additional 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 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 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 their
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 DRCs in America’s Job Centers and to participate in 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, submitted in 2020.

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds in FYs 18 and 19

OCFS/NYSCB used Innovation and Expansion funds for the following projects in FYs 2018 and 2019.

OCFS/NYSCB used innovation and expansion funds during FY 2018 and 2019 to support participants in two newly developed pre-employment transition skills programs at the Visions Rehabilitation Center in NYS. The programs are run by VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The 4-week summer Pre-ETS program focuses on helping students begin to identify their occupational interests and develop the skills to reach their goals. The 15-week program is designed to provide vocational skills training combined with work readiness skills to prepare our youth for the world of work. The program has expanded to include additional certification programs and a summer session in addition to fall and spring. Students are enrolled in either Rockland County BOCES certificate programs or Rockland County Community College certificate programs. Vocational training program options for certification include Administrative Professional, Certified Nursing Assistant, IT Support Professional and Bookkeeping in addition to many other options. OCFS/NYSCB had 32 students participate in the programs.

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:

   The Vocational Rehabilitation division of NYSED/ACCES–VR continues to have primary responsibility for supported employment programs and other integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in NYS. A MOU is in place covering the respective roles and responsibilities of OCFS/NYSCB, NYSED/ACCES–VR, OPWDD, and 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 NYSED/ACCES–VR funds or through natural supports in the workplace. 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. Vendors receive Guidelines for Supported Employment which are updated as needed and convey the expectations for quality services. NYSED/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 NYSED/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 NYSED/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 SRC advises NYSED/ACCES-VR on issues related to WIOA priorities and the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. The SRC represents a diverse cross-section of NYSED/ACCES-VR participants, agencies and organizational stakeholders committed to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The responsibilities of the SRC include, but are not limited to, the review and feedback on substantive policy changes, review of participant satisfaction surveys, and supporting the alignment of SRC and NYSED/ACCES-VR priorities with WIOA priorities. The SRC has designated the following committees to manage and complete their responsibilities: Executive Committee; Membership Committee; Policy and Planning Committee; Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee; Workforce Development Committee; and Transition Committee.

Council Reports

As noted above, the SRC focuses on aligning its priorities with NYSED/ACCES-VR’s Combined State Plan Goals and Priorities. This includes identifying how the activities of the SRC, such as presentations at quarterly meetings and committee work, are utilized for the development of its recommendations to NYSED/ACCES-VR. The SRC’s 2018 annual report outlines collaborations with NYSED/ACCES-VR that will help to advance the work toward the identified Combined State Plan Goals and Priorities including:

Executive Committee:

- Maintain open communication between SRC and NYSED/ACCES-VR leadership;
- Adopt annual and quarterly meeting themes and priorities;
- Work with NYSED/ACCES-VR to coordinate standing committee operations; and
- Work with NYSED/ACCES-VR to support SRC leadership and succession planning.

Workforce Development Committee:

- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with the NYSED/ACCES-VR Statewide Business Relations Network/Integrated Employment Specialists (IES);
- Support NYSED/ACCES-VR in scaling up innovative approaches to business engagement;
- Advance recommendations on business considerations associated with new customized employment services; and
- Promote and recommend improvements in business incentives (Tax, Work Try Out (WTO), OJT).

Transition from School to Adult Life Committee:

- Review and provide input on efforts to recruit and serve “out of school” youth (i.e., disenfranchised youth, high school dropouts, and justice involved youth); and
- Receive updates on the effectiveness of the CDOS credential. Continue to assess barriers to employment for CDOS credentialed NYSED/ACCES-VR participants.
Policy & Planning Committee:

- Participate in activities leading up to revisions in NYSED/ACCES-VR policies;
- Review and advance recommendations associated with implementation of new WIOA services (i.e., pre-employment transition, customized employment, assistive technology, and postsecondary education); and
- Review and advance recommendations on collaborations and other Combined State Plan provisions.

Quality Assurance & Improvement Committee:

- Review and advise NYSED/ACCES-VR on its efforts to improve the quality of vocational rehabilitation services;
- Advise on the selection of performance indicators for quality assurance and/or improvement and review and provide input on the NYSED/ACCES-VR services that meet WIOA goals;
- Advise NYSED/ACCES-VR on its efforts to improve the quality of due process opportunities for participants and due process related data provided by NYSED/ACCES-VR; and
- Advance quality service recommendations to NYSED/ACCES-VR both informally and via the 4.2 process.

Membership Committee:

- Recruit and retain SRC members who are interested individuals with disabilities, and/or advocates, family or guardians and/or organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities;
- Management of SRC orientation and mentoring of new SRC members; and
- Review the attendance, participation, and professional contribution of SRC members during their first term to determine whether the member may continue to serve for a second consecutive term.

State Plan Public Hearings and State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations

NYSED/ACCES-VR submitted a draft of its section of the Combined State Plan in August 2019 to the SRC and provided a presentation at its September 2019 quarterly meeting. The draft was posted for public comment, and six (6) in-person public hearings and two (2) telephone calls were conducted in September 2019 to solicit feedback from participants, families, vendors and the public. Written comments were received in addition to verbal commentary at the public hearings. Upon review of all public comment, NYSED/ACCES-VR noted that the common theme was the continued need to provide services to students and youth, and increased partnership between state and community agencies. NYSED/ACCES-VR revised areas of the Plan based on the public comment, when appropriate.

The following is a summary of the SRC’s recommendations:

SRC Recommendation 1: Update the key functions of the SRC Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee and include a section on the SRC Membership Committee.

Response 1: NYSED/ACCES-VR revised the description of the key functions of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee and included information about the Membership Committee in the Combined State Plan.

SRC Recommendation 2: Quantify information provided in the Plan whenever possible.
Response 2:  NYSED/ACCES-VR provided data relevant to the sections of the Combined State Plan, when appropriate.

SRC Recommendation 3: Provide additional detail (i.e. training information, Section 511 outreach, model for collaboration, citations) throughout the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment section of the Plan.

Response 3:  NYSED/ACCES-VR completes a triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the most recent one, completed in 2017, was included in the Combined State Plan. NYSED/ACCES-VR will work with a consultant to complete the next Comprehensive Needs Assessment in 2020 and will share the SRC’s comments for review and consideration.

SRC Recommendation 4: NYSED/ACCES-VR should work with sponsors of registered apprentices and federal contract holders with disability affirmative action obligations as a strategy to effectively serve business.

Response 4: NYSED/ACCES-VR will take this recommendation under consideration.

SRC Recommendation 5: Increase the number of participants that respond to the satisfaction survey.

Response 5: NYSED/ACCES-VR is also interested in ways to increase the number of participants that respond to the satisfaction survey and welcome suggestions and/or strategies from the SRC.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

NYSED/ACCES-VR does not request a waiver of statewideness. The services provided under the Combined 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 State agencies that do not participate in the System to improve access to appropriate vocational training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Interagency cooperation and coordination in service delivery is a driving force within Title IV of WIOA and Chapter 515 of the Laws of 1992, NYS Integrated Employment legislation, and is essential for supporting people with disabilities to obtain and maintain their competitive integrated employment. This interagency collaboration occurs at both the state and local levels. NYSED/ACCES-VR executed several MOUs and MOAs to formally support these collaborations and participates in statewide and local meetings, workshops, and trainings to maintain communication with all partners.

Memoranda of Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding

NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with a variety of entities to enhance vocational rehabilitation services and placement opportunities for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants. Many of these efforts are described in MOA and MOU. Although some partner agreements have not been updated recently, they demonstrate NYSED/ACCES-VR’s overall value and commitment to collaboration to best support people with disabilities. More importantly, the agreements and understandings have established a foundation for relationships that continue to evolve and grow to meet participants’ changing needs. Because
formalized structures may limit innovation, NYSED/ACCES-VR’s approach is to maintain flexibility with its collaborations.

Several of the key agreements include:

- Memorandum of Interagency Understanding regarding Supported Employment, between NYSED/ACCES-VR, OCFS/NYSCB), OMH, and 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 2013;
- MOA for WIA: Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy between NYSED and Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB), June 30, 2000;
- MOA to Provide Services to Individuals who are Deaf/Blind, November 1999 between NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/NYSCB;
- MOU between NYSED/ACCES-VR and OMH, October 1999;
- MOU between NYSED/ACCES-VR and OASAS, July 2010;
- MOA to promote and expand vocational rehabilitation services between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, September 2010;
- MOA between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Seneca Nation of Indians’ Vocational Rehabilitation Program, July 2019;
- Statement of collaboration between NYSED/ACCES-VR and New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association (NYSFAAA), March 1, 1998;
- Joint Agreement between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of Higher and Professional Education (OHPE), August 4, 1994; and

State Programs Carried Out Under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998

The NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs administers the TRAID program as the lead agency under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The TRAID program’s mission is to coordinate statewide activities to increase access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology for people with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR has a MOA with the Justice Center that supports the 12 TRAID Centers across NYS.

Programs Carried Out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture

NYSED/ACCES-VR does not currently have a formal partnership with USDA Rural Development, however, several District Offices serve rural communities and partner with businesses, community organizations and government entities in these communities to provide vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities who live in rural parts of NYS.

Non-Educational Agencies Serving Out-of-School Youth
As referenced in the MOAs and MOUs, NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with several state agencies (i.e. OMH, OASAS, OPWDD) that provide services to individuals with disabilities, including out-of-school youth. NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to work with the Job Corps and Youth Build programs to best meet and serve the needs of out-of-school youth. Opportunities to expand these relationships and initiate new ones continues to be a priority.

**State Use Contracting Programs**

All NYS agencies must procure commodities, services, and technology in accordance with Article 11 of NYS Finance Law which states in Section 162 the following: “To advance special social and economic goals, selected providers shall have preferred source status for the purposes of procurement in accordance with the provisions of this section. Procurement from these providers shall be exempted from the competitive procurement provisions of Section 163 of this article and other competitive procurement statutes. Such exemptions shall apply to commodities produced, manufactured or assembled, including those repackaged to meet the form, function and utility required by state agencies, in New York State and, where so designated, services provided by those sources in accordance with this section.”

Two of the three preferred sources are the NYS Preferred Source Program for New Yorkers who are Blind and the NYS Industries for the Disabled. NYSED/ACCES-VR fully complies with NYS procurement requirements and purchases from each of these preferred sources.

**COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS**

NYSED/ACCES-VR considers the coordination of services to students and youth with disabilities as one of its main priorities. NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with the NYSED Office of Special Education and local school districts to support students with disabilities in preparation for employment, postsecondary education, and community living when they leave school through the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and/or vocational rehabilitation services. In FFY 2018-19, NYSED/ACCES-VR served approximately 36,500 students representing close to 40% of the participants served that fiscal year. For students with an IEP, NYSED/ACCES-VR staff work with the student, parents (when appropriate), and the school to coordinate the IPE with the IEP. NYSED/ACCES-VR policies identify the requirement to develop timely IPEs, within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination, for all participants including students and youth.

**Formal Interagency Agreement with the State Educational Agency**

The NYS Education Agency Agreement (SEA) between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the Office of Special Education was signed by the two offices and 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 new agreement on the Provision of Transition Services will reflect the federal requirements, including the provision of Pre-ETS and will provide 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 transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment.

**Consultation and Technical Assistance**

Recognizing the importance of having a dedicated focus on students and youth, NYSED/ACCES-VR implemented the Transition and Youth Services (TAYS) Team in 2014 by creating Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in Transition and Youth (SRVC TAYS) positions in each of its 15 District Offices. In addition to the SVRC TAYS, positions for a Transition and Youth Services Manager and Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor were created and are based in the NYSED/ACCES-VR Central Office.

The TAYS team assists NYSED/ACCES-VR to meet its WIOA priorities related to students and youth. Based on these priorities, the TAYS work to:

1. Engage students, youth, parents, high schools, transition specialists, and youth organizations in exploring and planning career choices, including Pre-ETS, that connect to a full range of postsecondary options for training, career development, and employment;

2. Improve the number, quality, and rate of employment outcomes for students and youth participating in NYSED/ACCES-VR services;

3. Identify best practices and evidence-based approaches and tools for implementation by NYSED/ACCES-VR staff that will lead to increased vocational outcomes for students and youth;

4. Increase collaborations with multiple stakeholders, including other state agencies, Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) and Regional Partnership Centers staff (Regional Partnership Centers replaced the previous Regional Special Education-Technical Assistance Support Centers);

5. Support the implementation of Pre-ETS by providing information and technical assistance to students, families, schools, and community agencies. Oversee the provision of Pre-ETS for potentially eligible students provided by approved vendors; and

6. Oversee the provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students provided by approved vendors.

The NYSED/ACCES-VR TAYS team is knowledgeable in evidence-based practices for supporting students and youth with disabilities to achieve successful vocational outcomes and serves as a resource and support to NYSED/ACCES-VR staff, school districts, and community agencies. Since their inception the TAYS Team has:

- Developed a statewide transition and student referral system that streamlines the NYSED/ACCES-VR application process and reduces barriers to students’ access to postsecondary services;

- Designed and implemented consistent NYSED/ACCES-VR orientation presentations for high-school students, out-of-school youth, and postsecondary students and youth;

- Identified and provided training to NYSED/ACCES-VR staff on best practices for working with students and youth; and

- Provided technical assistance to NYSED/ACCES-VR staff, schools and other community agencies serving students and youth.
In addition to the TAYS, all NYSED/ACCES-VR counselors provide information and support to students and youth with disabilities and their families.

**Transition Planning**

NYSED/ACCES-VR counselors work closely with school districts to assist a student in moving to post-school life by trying to prevent or minimize gaps between the educational and vocational rehabilitation systems. NYSED/ACCES-VR counselors:

- Coordinate and collaborate with school personnel to identify and foster the referral of students with disabilities for Pre-ETS and/or vocational rehabilitation services;
- Work collaboratively with school district special education staff about the development of both the IEP and IPE to best support a student’s transition;
- Work with local Career Centers and businesses to develop work experiences for students;
- Share information with students, parents (when appropriate), and school staff about the current labor market, community resources, community-based services, adult service programs, and independent living centers; and
- Work in collaboration with contracted vendors, state agencies (i.e., OPWDD, OMH), and other community agencies to provide meaningful vocational experiences to students with disabilities to contribute to a positive employment outcome.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

- The NYSED Office of Special Education and NYSED/ACCES-VR will work in collaboration with school districts and other state agencies on a coordinated approach to the provision of transition services (i.e., School districts have the primary planning and programmatic responsibilities for the provision of transition services for their students);
- School districts are responsible for the coordination of educational programs and services, including transition planning, that prepare students with disabilities for adult living, learning, and earning;
- School districts are financially responsible for transition services mandated by federal and state laws and regulations;
- NYSED/ACCES-VR is fiscally responsible for providing transition Pre-ETS and/or vocational rehabilitation services that are not otherwise mandated through special education requirements, in accordance with NYSED/ACCES-VR policies; and
- When coordinating services through the IEP and the IPE the student, and when appropriate the student’s parents, are the primary source of information regarding the student’s needs, goals and services.

**Procedures for Outreach**

NYSED/ACCES-VR outreaches to schools to provide information and access to Pre-ETS and/or vocational rehabilitation services. These outreach efforts support the sharing of information with students with a disability and their parents, when appropriate.
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborates with non-profit vocational rehabilitation service vendors statewide to increase access to competitive, integrated employment opportunities. Currently, NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with 355 Core Rehabilitation Service (CRS) vendors. The five-year contracts were executed on January 1, 2019 to expand NYSED/ACCES-VR’s capacity and delivery of Pre-ETS, to improve the quality of service delivery, and to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes. The CRS contracts include specific vocational rehabilitation service deliverables, criteria for monitoring contract compliance and criteria to monitor the quality of services. Payment rates were modified to be commensurate with similar service delivery systems that provide employment and prevocational services.

CRS offers participants a variety of employment supports, including vocational rehabilitation entry, assessment, assistive technology, rehabilitation technology, job preparation services, job placement, driver rehabilitation, adjunct services, and supported employment. Consistent with WIOA regulations, supported employment intensive services are offered for up to 24 months and extended services for youth are available up to age 24 and/or up to 4 years, whichever happens first. When vendors identify unmet business needs, they can develop customized employment opportunities to fill those needs that support the skills, talents and interests of the participant.

NYSED/ACCES-VR also provides the five required Pre-ETS through the CRS contracts to students with disabilities who are eligible for NYSED/ACCES-VR services. In addition to CRS, NYSED/ACCES-VR released a new RFP, Pre-ETS for Students with Disabilities, which will establish contracts, effective January 1, 2020, to deliver Pre-ETS to students who have not yet applied or been determined eligible for NYSED/ACCES-VR services.

ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

NYS continues to utilize the interagency MOU regarding Supported Employment as its framework for implementation and improvement to supported employment services. NYSED/ACCES-VR was designated as having the primary statewide responsibility for program development and administration of integrated employment, including intensive supported employment services. In addition to NYSED/ACCES-VR, OPWDD offers intensive supported employment services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in need of more staff-intensive supported employment services. OMH also offers intensive supported employment services to its participants and all individuals may apply to NYSED/ACCES-VR at any time.

NYSED/ACCES-VR engages supported employment vendors and business communities in identifying innovative approaches to increasing successful employment outcomes for people receiving intensive supported employment services. Dialogue continues to take place about strategies for:

- Increasing the use of assistive technology;
- Addressing concerns around liability as it relates to businesses’ willingness 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.
OPWDD and OMH work collaboratively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to provide comprehensive supported employment services in NYS. All three agencies are responsible for the extended phases of supported employment. NYSED/ACCES-VR has extended services available for youth, up to age 24 and/or for 4 years, whichever happens first, and adults when they are not eligible for extended supported employment services from either OPWDD or OMH.

NYSED/ACCES-VR provides oversight for vendors delivering supported employment services to its participants. Vendors are required to submit participant reporting to NYSED/ACCES-VR and District Office staff meet with vendors bi-annually. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR conducts regular quality reviews of its vendors.

**COORDINATION WITH BUSINESS**

NYSED/ACCES-VR has a Business Relations team that includes a Statewide Coordinator 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. The IES team works with businesses to create possible job opportunities for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants.

NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to implement strategies with the other core partners for a collaborative approach to heightening the focus on business needs and to strengthen and streamline workforce system efforts (Additional detail can be found in the Workforce Development Activities section of this Plan). NYSED/ACCES-VR developed partnerships to support these efforts including: 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 NYATEP. NYATEP serves a cross-section of the major titles of WIOA, including LWDBs, Career Centers, partner programs, and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to work closely with NYATEP under WIOA implementation to increase communication and common understanding of the law across the four titles. This work helps to support partners’ understanding of vocational rehabilitation services and inclusion of it within their local System.

Each year NYSED/ACCES-VR recognizes outstanding businesses during NDEAM. This nationwide campaign raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities, past and present, and the businesses that hire them.

**INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

NYSED/ACCES-VR has longstanding partnerships with OPWDD, OMH, and OCFS/NYSCB. Additionally, in 2014, NYS established an Employment First policy outlining strategies for the inclusion for people with disabilities in the workforce. Many of the policy’s strategies build upon the existing interagency linkages and OPWDD, OMH, and NYSED/ACCES-VR continue to provide targeted, evidence-based employment services training to employment staff to support the goals of Employment First.

OPWDD provides person-centered services, supports, and advocacy to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. OPWDD works in partnership with NYSED/ACCES-VR to identify how the two systems can collaborate on employment for people with I/DD. OPWDD and NYSED/ACCES-VR have an agreement that OPWDD-eligible individuals receiving certain pre-employment programs, known as Pathway to Employment, Employment Training Program (ETP) or Prevocational Services, can participate in these services without a need for a formal
determination of ineligibility for 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 significant levels of support to engage in work activity. This is typical due to very limited exposure to employment and vocational experiences for people participating in Pathway to Employment, Employment Training Program or Prevocational Services. The interagency agreement allows for the maximum amount of choice by the individual as to which vocational and/or pre-vocational service best fits their need at a point in time. Throughout the process 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

*Qualified Personnel Needs*

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to establishing and maintaining adequate staffing of VRCs and relies on NYSED’s Fiscal and Human Resources Information Management System and the VR Reporting System to assess its qualified personnel needs. NYSED/ACCES-VR collects data from these two 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 this information to project 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 applicants, eligible individuals, and participants, and perform administrative tasks to facilitate service delivery. NYSED/ACCES-VR does not employ any other rehabilitation staff, such as mobility instructors or rehabilitation teachers.

There are 296 FTE VRC filled positions. NYSED/ACCES-VR projects that 155 VRCs are 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 86 FTE VRCA filled positions. NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates it will need 53 VRCAs over the next five years. The projection is based on a ratio of 1 VRCA: 3 VRC, and 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.

*Personnel Development*

Effective July 1, 2017 the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) assumed responsibility for continuing the mission and vision of CORE through its accreditation process. CACREP solely accredits counseling specializations at the masters and doctoral degree levels at institutions of higher education. CACREP-accredited counseling programs have met the highest-level national standards for counselor preparation in the United States.

The CACREP-accredited programs in NYS are: University at Buffalo –SUNY, Hofstra University, and Hunter College –CUNY.
Institutions of Higher Education (CACREP) Student Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Students enrolled</th>
<th>Employees sponsored by agency and/or ED/OSERS/RSA</th>
<th>Graduates sponsored by agency and/or ED/OSERS/RSA</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>University at Buffalo - SUNY</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hofstra University</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter College - CUNY</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student enrollment at NYS CACREP-accredited programs decreased over the past few years. In 2018, there were 186 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 2018, student enrollment decreased from the previous FY enrollment of 99 students to 53 students.
- Hofstra University student enrollment in FY 2018 increased from the previous FY enrollment of 26 students to 37 students.
- CUNY Hunter College student enrollment in FY 2018 decreased from the previous FY enrollment of 142 students to 96 students.

**Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

NYSED/ACCES-VR works with 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 2018 and 2019, 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 VRCs.

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 District 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 internship, and these are offered three times a year at NYSED/ACCES-VR. When resources allow, paid internships are made available to students.

More than 345 students participated in the internship program since 2006 with 71 VRCs hired. In 2018, NYSED/ACCES-VR provided 25 internship opportunities.

**Personnel Standards**

NYS does not have state certification or licensure for VR counselors. NYSED/ACCES-VR uses the national standard established by the CRCC for its VRCs. The participation of VRCs in an educational program to meet the standard is regularly monitored to evaluate compliance with NYSED 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 language or in the Spanish language. Proficiency must be at a level that 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 IPE, or determine case closures. To be eligible for employment, VRCAs must meet the following qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in vocational rehabilitation, social work, counseling, or psychology; or
- Bachelor’s 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:

- Providing direct services beyond routine personal care or supervision to adults or adolescents with a disability in a rehabilitation program or facility; or
- Providing vocational or educational services to adults or adolescents with a disability 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 updates, including a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of students, youth, and adults with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR has several mechanisms to support the provision of staff training as it is critical to the development and retention of qualified staff and for the provision of quality services. Training may be provided by in-house staff; organizations contracted to train on a specific topic; NYSED/ACCES-VR sponsored staff attendance at conferences; federally-funded training resources specific to vocational rehabilitation; and other state-agency sponsored and WIOA core partner trainings.

An annual review of training needs is completed with NYSED/ACCES-VR staff. This includes review of satisfaction with, and effectiveness of, trainings provided in the prior year. These results, as well as consideration for the diversity of staff, skill levels, experiences and needs are used to develop an annual master training schedule. Some examples of training offerings to staff included ethics, partnering with families, adolescent development and its impact on vocational rehabilitation, generational differences and their impact on vocational rehabilitation, working with older adults, labor market information and
use of The Career Index Plus, how to have difficult discussions (crucial conversations), and learning about various disabilities (i.e. autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain). Training is provided through a variety of modalities such as webinar, video-conference, workshops, and attendance at local, regional and statewide training programs and conferences.

**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 and federal 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 their certification requirements.

Key partnerships exist with the following state agencies and organizations that support the sharing of information, training, and knowledge: OASAS; OPWDD; OMH; Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE); New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (NYAPRS); NYATEP; and the NYS Independent Living Council (NYSILC). As part of a continuous quality improvement process for staff training, NYSED/ACCES-VR is also engaging national partners for evidence-based training specific for VRCs. Examples of these new partnerships include NYSED/ACCES-VR working with Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) and the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (MHTTC).

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 TAG (see the Workforce Development Activities section of the Plan for additional detail), which includes linkage to local Career Centers. TAG 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.

**Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

NYSED/ACCES-VR ensures adequate services to applicants, eligible individuals, and participants with limited English proficiency, or who use other modes of communication such as sign language, by employing staff able to communicate in more than one language, including sign language. When such staff is not available, NYSED/ACCES-VR obtains the services from contractors that are certified or state-approved interpreters to communicate with applicants, eligible individuals, or participants to support the provision of vocational rehabilitation 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-ETS and transition services for students with disabilities within the agreed upon roles between NYSED Office of Special Education and NYSED/ACCES-VR. The coordination of meaningful transition services for students with disabilities is a priority for NYSED/ACCES-VR. Within NYSED, NYSED/ACCES-VR collaborates with the P-12: Office of Special Education.

Training on the CDOS continues, as it relates to NYSED/ACCES-VR’s overall efforts in serving students and youth. The CDOS is a NYS educational credential that, when pursued, requires students 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 a student’s demonstrated knowledge and experience for entry-level employment.

**STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT**

*Background*

In 2017 NYSED/ACCES-VR commissioned a study to assess the extent to which the needs of individuals with disabilities in NYS were being addressed and to develop strategies to promote continuous quality improvement within the VR program. The results and recommendations of the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment are outlined in this section. Updates have been made where appropriate in response to recommendations, however, further changes have not been made as the 2020 Comprehensive Needs Assessment will not be completed prior to finalization of the Combined State Plan.

**2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) was conducted to understand:

- NYSED/ACCES-VR’s 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 WIOA requirements;
- The cultural competence and readiness of VR counselors and community rehabilitation program (CRP) personnel to meet unique needs of communities of color and underserved/unserved 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 *Technical Assistance Guide* from the USDOE, 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 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 through examination of literature and secondary data. Specifically, high-level analyses were conducted of the 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 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: (1) to understand outcomes for students and youth with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR; and (2) 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 at: [https://rsa.ed.gov/display.cfm?pageid=75](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 SRC 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 communities of color 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 VR 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 sub-minimum, or more specifically, less than minimum wage among current NYSED/ACCES-VR participants.

Two sub-minimum 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 sub-minimum 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 businesses at those sites also participated in in-depth interviews.
The online survey of community-based providers included questions directed at providers of subminimum 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 businesses have found effective in engaging with 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 businesses. In addition, focus groups were conducted in Manhattan and Western New York with businesses 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 and expressed needs of the group. Three in-depth interviews with state-level personnel helped surface normative needs and additionally explored 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. 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 database of individuals with disabilities employed in sub-minimum wage settings 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 RFP provided service definitions for the new Pre-ETS services and other youth employment services 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 businesses operating under section 14(c) certificates under the Fair Labor Standards Act and approximately 9,200 individuals employed at sub-minimum wage. During 2016 and 2017, NYSED/ACCES-VR implemented a statewide intervention to fulfill shared responsibilities of NYSED/ACCES-VR and sub-minimum wage businesses under section 511 of WIOA. The purpose of the intervention was to educate and support sub-minimum 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 conducted at sub-minimum 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 a sub-minimum wage employee’s interest in pursuing competitive integrated employment, obtain appropriate signatures to verify participation in the intervention, and provide NYSED/ACCES-VR applications to interested sub-minimum 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 sub-minimum wage business 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 sub-minimum wage employment settings. Further, there was a substantial recall bias involved in the design, especially given the functional limitations of the sub-minimum wage informants.

One thing 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 sub-minimum 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 sub-minimum wage employees and business staff recognized and validated the importance of relationships 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 sub-minimum 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 sub-minimum wage businesses 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 sub-minimum wage employment and expansion of SE services.

- **Supporting the transition of sub-minimum 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.

  In 2018, NYSED/ACCES-VR explored the option of contracting with an external entity to provide counseling and guidance about vocational rehabilitation services and competitive integrated employment to individuals working in 14(c) sites. Due to financial resources and constraints, NYSED/ACCES-VR chose to allocate funds to services for participants and completed the counseling and guidance activities with internal staff. As of July 1, 2019 the number of businesses operating under Section 14(c) certificates were 62 with approximately 3,500 individuals employed under sub-minimum wage, a decrease of an estimated 5,700 people since last reported on November 1, 2017.

- **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.

NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to work closely with partners in OMH, OPWDD, OCFS/NYSCB, Developmental Disability Planning Council, and the NYS Justice Center to create multiple paths to employment for individuals with developmental disabilities and/or mental health needs.

**Definition of minority, unserved and underserved populations**

Traditionally certain demographic groups have been underrepresented in the state VR program. This 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, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and those receiving public welfare such as Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI), TANF, SNAP, and HUD assistance.

**Outputs from CaMS analysis**
In 2017, 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. In FFY 2017-18, NYSED/ACCES-VR caseloads reflected the following participant demographics: 51% White, 24% Black, 17% Hispanic and 8% Asian and other.

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 business 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.

  In 2018 NYSED/ACCES-VR reviewed the recommendations and began incorporating suggestions into staff training, and will share training resources with the WIOA core partners as appropriate.

**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 several 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: co-location and referral. Co-location 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 (i.e., 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 several 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 MOUs, delaying obtainment 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, human capital, and funding. Participants felt that training and technical assistance 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 USDOL 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 USDOL 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 System; (c) types and formats of data needed to inform NYSED/ACCES-VR stakeholders for continuous quality improvement; (d) ways 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 (i.e., 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, USDOL 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 has been exploring the development of a 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 Y-TAC. 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 has been working with existing training contractors to integrate this knowledge into existing training events across all levels of the organization.

As per this recommendation, NYSED/ACCES-VR has worked closely with its various training contractors for the additional education and training about the diversity of people served and the availability of tools and labor market information to improve the planning and delivery of services to participants.

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 IEP and about 40,000 students have a 504 plan. To determine the projected fiscal forecast for Pre-ETS, 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-ETS, it is determined that students’ Pre-ETS 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-ETS need.

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-ETS. It is estimated that 95% (19,000) of the those meeting the WIOA student definition do not need Pre-ETS. Most postsecondary students were provided with Pre-ETS while in high school, through IEP transition services; directly through NYSED/ACCES-VR (or have been assessed by NYSED/ACCES-VR as not needing Pre-ETS); received similar services through the
higher education institution; or 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-ETS. 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 offered. There are efforts in place that have been expanded to include a focus on the availability of Pre-ETS 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-ETS, 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-ETS 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 were identified above as potentially in need of the Pre-ETS. 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-ETS to 2,000 of those students who are currently receiving one or more Pre-ETS. NYSED/ACCES-VR expects the number projected to be served.

Please note, available data were used to complete this section when it was written for the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Updated data that reflects increased enrollment in higher education for students with disabilities and projections for an increased number of students to receive Pre-ETS will be completed as part of the upcoming 2020 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

1. 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.

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, and other structuring mechanisms. 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 regarding 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 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 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 vendor partners. NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently exploring making this training available to all employment service providers and will include strategies for working effectively with 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 developing a technical assistance plan across the WINTAC and Y-TAC. 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.

NYSED/ACCES-VR, through a contract with the NYS Consortium for Advancing and Supporting Employment (CASE), provides training and technical assistance to its CRPs. Staff at CRPs are required to complete core courses in employment services delivery, advanced employment services practice, employment services administration, student and youth transition, and business engagement.

**Coordination of services under IDEA**

To ascertain the coordination of services under title IV of WIOA and IDEA, a series of focus groups were 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 technical assistance to school personnel on making quality VR referrals, and developing a process of ensuring employment-related goals are clearly identified in student IEPs.

**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 IDEA, and titles I and 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 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 MOUs** between NYSED P-12, NYSED/ACCES-VR and other core WIOA partners to ensure effective implementation.

  As referenced in the Coordination with Education Officials section, NYSED/ACCES-VR is currently in the final stages of finalizing an MOU with the NYSED Office of Special Education.

- **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 increased over 15%. NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.

  While the CES model was effective in providing school administration staff information and education about NYSED/ACCES-VR services, it did not allow for direct contact with students. With the implementation of Pre-ETS, NYSED/ACCES-VR chose to sunset the CES model with the expiration of contracts in June 2019. To effectively support students receipt of Pre-ETS and/or vocational rehabilitation services, a streamlined process is needed and NYSED/ACCES-VR staff and vendors providing Pre-ETS and/or vocational rehabilitation services can effectively support schools staff similar to the CES model and also work directly with students.

- **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 its 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.

  As stated earlier in this section, NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with NYS CASE to provide a series of trainings to its CRPs specific to working with students and youth. Examples of core courses include Working with Students and Youth: Authentic Engagement, and Creating a Framework of Services for Students and Youth.

- **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 Y-TAC 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 businesses 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 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-ETS 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 business engagement and job matching.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has continued to expand its understanding and implementation of WIOA priorities both with its collaborations with other core state agency partners and directly with the individuals that it serves. Activities with the core partners include the sharing of training resources through the interagency TAG workgroup. Strategies for supporting people with disabilities have been shared via the interagency Business Engagement Work Group and their associated trainings. These opportunities to share learning and resources have helped to improve all the core partners’ understanding of WIOA priorities and their services to individuals with disabilities.

The provision of quality vocational rehabilitation services to students and youth continues to be a priority for NYSED/ACCES-VR. Expansion of Pre-ETS began with the newest CRS contracts in January 2019 and are expected to further increase in 2020 with the contracts for the provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students. Investments in training about strategies for working with students, youth and their families for both CRPs and NYSED/ACCES-VR staff have been, and continue to be, expanded upon.

**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 continues to monitor the rates of successful closures for both adults and youth to identify trends and strategies for improvement.

**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-ETS for in-school students with disabilities 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-ETS 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, 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 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.

NYSED/ACCES-VR has leveraged the learning from the WIOA Interagency Youth Collaborative about working with youth and the various community-based services that support them. With the expansion of the provision of Pre-ETS by vendors in January 2019, NYSED/ACCES-VR was able to increase partnerships with schools and services to students. This collaboration will further increase in 2020 with the contracting for Pre-ETS to be provided to potentially eligible students.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES**

NYSED/ACCES-VR expects that during FFY 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.

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 2019-2020 to be approximately 29,700. NYSED/ACCES-VR forecasts the number of individuals to potentially be served in FFY 2019-2020 to be approximately 90,600. 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 as 29,700. NYSED/ACCES-VR forecasts the number of individuals to potentially be served in FFY 2019-2020 to be approximately 90,600. NYSED/ACCES-VR served 96,191 in FFY 2016 and 93,047 in FFY 2017, which is above the previous Combined State Plan estimate of 90,600 for FFY 2017. NYSED/ACCES-VR expects to serve at least the projected number of individuals, 90,600, in FFY 2019-2020.

As required in 34 CFR 361.29(b)(2), NYSED/ACCES-VR estimates that under Title I and Title VI Part B, approximately 10% of the estimated 90,600 individuals served during FY 2019-2020 will receive SE services. All individuals receiving SE services will be served using a combination of Title 1, Title VI Part B funds and state funds.
STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The following NYSED/ACCES-VR 2020 Combined State Plan priorities and goals are designed to reflect WIOA common performance measures.

Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR.

• Goal 1.1: Evaluate employment rates for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants at 2nd quarter after exit.
• Goal 1.2: Evaluate employment rates for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants at 4th quarter after exit.
• Goal 1.3: Evaluate median earnings for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants after exit.

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: Pre-ETS will be made available to students with disabilities 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 NYSED/ACCES-VR’s participant satisfaction surveys.
• Goal 3.2: Through use of established contract performance measures for vendors, 80% of vendors will meet or exceed the established benchmark for quality contract deliverables.

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 participants who obtain skills gain.
• Goal 4.3: Increase the percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential.

Priority 5: Effectively serve businesses.

• Goal 5.1: Increase business penetration.
• Goal 5.2: Increase number of business customers with repeat service.

ORDER OF SELECTION

NYSED/ACCES-VR is not implementing an Order of Selection.

GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

Federal Title VI, Part B funds for SE services were initially used to develop model programs to identify effective SE services for diverse populations. In NYS these funds alone are not sufficient to meet the overall demand for SE services. NYSED/ACCES-VR’s total funding level for SE contracts for FY 2018 was $9 million. The Title VI, Part B funds to serve approximately 9,200 individuals accounted for
$851,960. NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue the operation of the SE 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 SE services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR maintains agreements (MOU and Integrated Employment Implementation Plan, Chapter 515 of the NYS Laws of 1992) with OMH, OPWDD, and OFCS/NYSCB, which define NYSED/ACCES-VR as the source for intensive funding; however OPWDD and OMH can also provide intensive funding for SE.

Program evaluation of SE includes a review of data from interagency quarterly reports and on-site reviews by NYSED/ACCES-VR. Successful and exemplary practices have been disseminated to the staff of the state agencies involved.

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 quality programs that could be used for replication purposes; and
- Establish successful SE programs that will provide technical assistance to other programs.

NYSED/ACCES-VR counselors manage the IPE of each participant receiving intensive SE services, as well as adults in extended services and youth in extended services funded by NYSED/ACCES-VR (Youth extended services funded by NYSED/ACCES-VR are for youth up to the age of 24 or have been provided for a maximum of four years, whichever comes first). Plan and service management includes monitoring progress toward vocational outcomes or revising outcomes as needed.

Expanded Supported Employment Services and Extended Services for Youth

NYSED/ACCES-VR, OPWDD, and OMH are responsible for the extended phases of SE. As previously stated, NYSED/ACCES-VR has extended SE services available to youth (up to age 24 and/or for four years, whichever happens first) and to adults when they are not eligible for extended SE services from either OPWDD or OMH. OPWDD and OMH work collaboratively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to provide comprehensive SE services in NYS.

Supported Employment Programs

As stated previously, NYSED/ACCES-VR is responsible for administering, establishing standards for, and monitoring the intensive services component of SE programs in NYS except those funded by OPWDD or OMH. NYSED/ACCES-VR is also responsible for the provision of extended services to individuals who are not eligible for such services through other sources (i.e. OPWDD, OMH). In October 2006, NYSED/ACCES-VR, with the cooperation of OMH, OPWDD and OFCS/NYSCB, established the Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team for ongoing coordination of the implementation of SE intensive and extended services in NYS. The Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team consists of employment program managers from the respective state agencies.

NYSED/ACCES-VR SE services are provided by vendors utilizing a performance-based contracting system. Payments are based on the attainment of milestones and outcomes for SE.
**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 SE 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.

**Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR.**

Goals for this priority include: Evaluate employment rates for NYSED/ACCES-VR participants at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit and median earnings after exit.

Strategies:
- Continue to access NYSED/ACCES-VR and NYSDOL wage data to evaluate median earnings after exit and establish any additional data needs to evaluate 2nd and 4th quarter employment rates after exit.
- Collaborate with WIOA core partners and other state agencies that serve individuals with disabilities, and utilize the jointly developed referral and release of information process. This agreed upon process streamlines access to services across the programs and better integrates VR services with the employment preparation resources of each of the WIOA core partners.
- Strengthen and enhance activities that promote OJT and WTO opportunities.
- Continue to strengthen local partnerships with school districts and postsecondary institutions.
- Continue to provide experiential learning and work experiences through summer, part-time and temporary work experience.
- Collaborate with the OCFS/NYSCB, OPWDD, OMH and the NYSED Office for Special Education on implementing better methods for youth with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.
- Provide referral and access for benefits counseling at key points in the VR process.
- Provide training to job placement vendors on employment trends and business needs, including what constitutes a good resume for a particular field.
- Continue to collaborate with the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs’ TRAID program to develop innovative options for the purchase, use, and sharing of assistive technology to individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

**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, including students’ and youths’ with disabilities, will be commensurate with the NYS population rates for those populations based on race, ethnicity and disability; and Pre-ETS will be made available to students with disabilities to establish a solid foundation upon which to build their career path.
Strategies:

- Continue statewide distribution of NYSED/ACCES-VR brochures aimed at students, youth, families, parent involved school organizations (i.e., PTA and SEPTA) and professional staff that work with students and youth.

- Continue to increase awareness in the postsecondary community of vocational rehabilitation services. Collaborate with college offices that support students with disabilities, meet with parent/student groups during the colleges’ summer orientations, and attend college career events.

- Continue to provide and encourage the display of NYSED/ACCES-VR recruitment posters and information specific to student and youth in schools (both traditional and non-traditional) and in other settings that work with students and youth with disabilities.

- Work directly with schools, community agencies and other partners to ensure that Pre-ETS for students with disabilities are available to students who are eligible and potentially eligible for NYSED/ACCES-VR services as needed and appropriate.

- Engage the ILCs to support a coordinated effort between VR services and ILC services, such as peer mentoring, that support a student or youth to sustain their independent living and vocational rehabilitation efforts as identified on the IPE.

- Increase training opportunities specific to working with students and youth for NYSED/ACCES-VR staff.

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 NYSED/ACCES-VR’s participant satisfaction surveys; and through use of established contract performance measures for vendors, 80% of vendors will meet or exceed the established benchmark for quality contract deliverables.

Strategies:

- Continue to seek input from participants through an annual satisfaction survey and evaluate results for opportunities for improvement in the quality of services provided.

- Continue to 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 identified deficits.

- NYSED/ACCES-VR staff will continue to review and rate reports by vendors on their established contract deliverables.

- Maintain the provision of on-going training for supervisors through various modalities such as in-person meetings and trainings, webinars, and conference calls. Trainings focus on the multiple roles of a supervisor and provide updates on policy, data collection, requirements for timeliness of eligibility and IPE development and to ensure consistent communication with all staff.

- Continue providing NYS CASE professional development training to supported employment vendors, at no cost to the vendors, to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the supported employment program.

- Maintain the identification of additional mechanisms that allow for continuous feedback from participants, business, and vendors.
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:

- Collaborate with Office of Special Education Technical Assistance Partnerships (TAPs), the Regional Partnership Centers, and the Early Childhood and School-Aged Family and Community Engagement FACE centers designed to provide support to schools, students and families.
- Partner with all vendors to increase the collection of postsecondary credentials upon a participant’s completion of an educational program.
- 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: Increase business penetration and increase business customers with repeat service.

Strategies:

- Utilize OSOS as the case management system for tracking NYSED/ACCES-VR’s business engagement activities that relate to penetration and services provided to business.
- Continue to provide training to businesses on topics as requested, including accommodations and financial incentives.
- Actively participate on the LWDB(s) in each local region.

Provision of Assistive Technology Services and Devices

NYSED/ACCES-VR provides assistive technology services and devices as needed by an individual in each stage of the vocational rehabilitation process. The New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs administers the TRAID program, whose mission is to coordinate statewide activities to increase access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology for people with disabilities. NYSED/ACCES-VR has a MOA with the Justice Center that supports the 12 TRAID Centers across NYS.

Outreach Services

NYSED/ACCES-VR has been very successful in educating the public about vocational rehabilitation services for New Yorkers with disabilities. Previous efforts have included an advertising bus campaign; contracting with vendors to educate school personnel about NYSED/ACCES-VR services; hosting or participating in transition fairs; facilitating round tables and information sessions with mental health associations, juvenile justice organizations and other community partners; partnering on LWDBs; partnering with local educational agencies and municipal governments; and having a visible presence in local communities across NYS. NYSED/ACCES-VR will continue to engage in many of these activities.

Improve and Expand Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Students with Disabilities
As discussed earlier, NYSED/ACCES-VR staff work collaboratively with local school districts to support a student’s transition from school to postsecondary options. Specifically, NYSED/ACCES-VR’s TAYS team has been working to continue to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students by:

1. Engaging students, youth, parents, high schools, transition specialists, and youth organizations in exploring and planning career choices, including Pre-ETS, that connect to a full range of postsecondary options for training, career development, and employment;

2. Working to improve the number, quality, and rate of employment outcomes for students and youth participating in NYSED/ACCES-VR services; and,

2. Increasing collaborations with multiple stakeholders, including other state agencies, Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) and Regional Partnership Centers staff (Regional Partnership Centers replaced the previous Regional Special Education-Technical Assistance Support Centers).

NYSED/ACCES-VR will be expanding its provision of Pre-ETS in 2020 with the issuance of contracts to vendors to provide the five required services to potentially eligible students in NYS.

Working with Community Rehabilitation Providers

NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with its community rehabilitation programs and networks. Through its contracting process, NYSED/ACCES-VR sets standardized expectations for the provision of services to participants, timeliness of meeting deliverables, and a process for continuous quality review. The newest five-year contracts started on January 1, 2019. NYSED/ACCES-VR supports vendors through a vendor engagement process that offers technical assistance to support the provision of quality services to participants.

Performance Accountability Measures

NYSED/ACCES-VR has sought to align several of its Combined State Plan priorities and goals with the WIOA accountability measures. Examples include increasing the employment rate and median earnings for individuals with disabilities upon exit from vocational rehabilitation services, increasing the percentage of participants with a postsecondary credential, and effectively serving business.

Strategies for Working with Statewide Workforce Investment System

NYSED/ACCES-VR works closely with the WIOA core partners to fully implement the commitments as outlined in the Combined State Plan. Cross-agency trainings on business engagement and working with participants with disabilities, as outlined earlier in this Combined State Plan, have been completed and the interagency TAG workgroup continues to meet to identify other cross-agency training opportunities.

Achieving Goals and Priorities Consistent with the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The earlier outlined strategies were designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and to meet the WIOA performance expectations. The priorities and goals are consistent with the needs identified in the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Innovation and Expansion Activities

NYSED/ACCES-VR uses innovation and expansion funds to support the SRC and the NYSILC. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR is identifying opportunities and activities for use of this funding to further support recommendations from the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Overcoming Barriers to Equitable Access and Participation in Vocational Rehabilitation Services

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to equitable access and participation in vocational rehabilitation services for all individuals with disabilities. Barriers to equitable access to vocational rehabilitation services that
are being addressed include the expansion of Pre-ETS to serve students who are potentially eligible in 2020, utilization of the WIOA release and referral process to support the provision of services to individuals with disabilities working with more than one core partner, and improved coordination of supports and services between NYSED/ACCES-VR and the ILCs to better support participants in their achievement of vocational rehabilitation goals.

EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION

Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the VR Goals and Priorities

NYSED/ACCES-VR continually evaluates progress towards goals and priorities. Reported below are strategies and achievements towards the goals and priorities. Additional achievements are listed in the VR Program’s Performance on Performance Accountability Measures portion of the Combined State Plan.

Priority 1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by NYSED/ACCES-VR. Goals to support this priority include evaluating employment rates at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit, and median earnings after exit. NYSED/ACCES-VR and NYSDOL entered into a data sharing agreement in 2019 and NYSED/ACCES-VR received wage data for participants with successful closures in PY 17-18. NYSED/ACCES-VR plans to continue to evaluate employment rates and median wage based on wage data provided by NYSDOL. Please see VR Program’s Performance on Performance Accountability Measures below for additional details.

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 Pre-ETS will be made available to students with disabilities to establish a solid foundation upon which to build their career path. There was an .82 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 met the established minimum target of .80. Since FFY 16-17 the number of students receiving vocational rehabilitation services from NYSED/ACCES-VR has increased from 34,464 to 35,102 and is anticipated to further increase with the continued provision and expansion of Pre-ETS in 2020 to serve potentially eligible students.

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 vendors will meet or exceed the established benchmark for quality contract deliverables.

The 2018 Participant Satisfaction Survey was sent to 10,000 participants. 84% of respondents indicated overall satisfaction with the quality of service received. This is a 5% improvement in satisfaction from the 2017 survey and work will continue toward meeting the 90% goal. Strategies, as noted earlier in the Combined State Plan, include continued training for both NYSED/ACCES-VR staff and vendors that support the continuous quality improvement of services provided to participants.

The NYSED/ACCES-VR vendors in 2018 rated 98% satisfactory for the quality of their contract deliverables. Monitoring will continue to ensure continued compliance with quality contract deliverables.
Priority 4: Increase the percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential. NYSED/ACCES-VR is tracking information and continuing to develop strategies such as increasing partnerships with educational organization for the sharing of a participant’s achieved postsecondary credential.

Priority 5: Effectively serve businesses. Goals for this priority are to increase business penetration and increase business customers with repeat service. In 2019, NYSED/ACCES-VR began tracking efforts to work with businesses utilizing the OSOS case management system. Strategies include continued and increased utilization of the OSOS case management system to more effectively monitor and evaluate business penetration and repeat business customers. Please see VR Program’s Performance on Performance Accountability Measures below for additional details.

Factors that Impeded Achievement of the Vocational Rehabilitation Goals and Priorities

NYSED/ACCES-VR, with the partnership of NYSDOL, in 2019 was successful in accessing systems and data needed to monitor and evaluate progress towards its vocational rehabilitation goals and priorities. As previously outlined in the Combined State Plan, NYSED/ACCES-VR received wage data from NYSDOL and began using its OSOS system for tracking business engagement. For the first time NYSED/ACCES-VR has been able to compare data needed for 2nd and 4th quarter rates of employment and earnings after exit and to document and track its business engagement activities. Increased use of these data and systems will be needed to further improve upon NYSED/ACCES-VR’s evaluation of its progress towards its goals and priorities.

Challenges with the ability to match NYSED/ACCES-VR participants with the available wage data are further identified in the VR Program’s Performance on Performance Accountability Measures below and may prove to be a continued impediment.

Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of Supported Employment Priorities and Goals

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to increasing the SE successes of participants, including students and youth with most significant disabilities. Focus for participants is on career attainment and competitive integrated employment with opportunities for advancement. To build to these better outcomes, training continues to be provided to SE vendors. NYSED/ACCES-VR, through a contract with NYS CASE, provides training and technical assistance to SE vendors who are required to complete core courses in employment services delivery, advanced employment services practice, employment services administration, student and youth transition, and business engagement.

Factors that Impeded the Achievement of Supported Employment Priorities and Goals

While NYS follows the current trend of unprecedented unemployment rates for people without disabilities, the high rate of unemployment for those with disabilities remains the same. Businesses’ expectations for employees in all positions, including entry-level, are focused on their ability to complete many different tasks as well as being able to multi-task. As a result, businesses are less willing to customize employment or carve jobs to better meet the abilities of some people with most significant disabilities, thus impacting the obtainment, maintenance, and rate of employment.

VR Program’s Performance on the Performance Accountability Measures
NYSED/ACCES-VR continues to progress on its efforts to evaluate the primary indicators of performance as outlined under Section 116 of WIOA. In 2019, NYSED/ACCES-VR established a data sharing agreement with NYSDOL to obtain wage and employment rate data. The first available data set for the purposes of reporting for the Combined State Plan is for PY 17-18. While these data have been useful for evaluating NYSED/ACCES-VR’s performance measures, limitations do exist that impact the reporting. For instance, these data do not account for when a person entered the quarter as employed or how many hours worked in the quarter. Additionally, approximately 25% of the participants to be linked to the wage data from NYSDOL did not match (i.e., social security numbers were not consistent across the two data sets) and therefore could not be included in this reporting. Lastly, the wages of people who are self-employed or in the military are also not included in this match. NYSED/ACCES-VR will seek to identify strategies to further improve the rate of matching of participants that exited with the available wage data.

• **Employment Rate-2nd Quarter After Exit:** The rate of employment at the second quarter after exit from NYSED/ACCES-VR services in PY 17-18 was 67.7%.

• **Employment Rate-4th Quarter After Exit:** The rate of employment at the fourth quarter after exit from NYSED/ACCES-VR services in PY 17-18 was 66.7%.

• **Median Earnings- 2nd Quarter After Exit:** The median earnings at the second quarter after exit from NYSED/ACCES-VR services were $3,484.

• **Median Earnings- 4th Quarter After Exit:** The median earnings at the fourth quarter after exit from NYSED/ACCES-VR services were $3,849.

• **Credential Attainment:** NYSED/ACCES-VR is tracking information and continuing to develop strategies such as increasing partnerships with educational organization for the sharing of a participant’s achieved postsecondary credential.

• **Measurable Skills Gain:** Similar to the credential attainment, NYSED/ACCES-VR is tracking information and continuing to develop strategies such as increasing partnerships with educational and training organizations for documentation of progress or a credential.

• **Effectiveness of Serving Businesses:** In 2019, NYSED/ACCES-VR began tracking efforts to work with businesses utilizing the OSOS case management system. NYSED/ACCES-VR can now track and evaluate business penetration and repeat customer data. As of June 30, 2019, 820 business were served by the NYSED/ACCES-VR IES team with 785 unique businesses served. As learning and use of the OSOS system increases, it will provide valuable data for identifying NYSED/ACCES-VR’s efforts to increase business penetration, repeat business customers, and retention with the same business.

**Innovation and Expansion Activities**

NYSED/ACCES-VR uses innovation and expansion funds to support the SRC and the NYSILC. Additionally, NYSED/ACCES-VR is identifying opportunities and activities for use of this funding to further support recommendations from the 2017 Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

**Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services**

Individuals with the most significant disabilities who participate in NYSED/ACCES-VR SE programs engage in assessment, job planning, counseling, job development, job placement, intensive job-site training and extended job retention services. NYS’ Chapter 515 of the Laws of 1992 on integrated employment, including SE, is implemented through a collaborative interagency process in NYS. NYSED/ACCES-VR is responsible for competitive integrated employment, including intensive SE services, except for those services provided directly by OPWDD and OMH. NYSED/ACCES-VR, OPWDD, and OMH are responsible
for the extended phases of SE. As previously stated, NYSED/ACCES-VR has extended SE services available to youth (up to age 24 and/or for 4 years, whichever happens first) and to adults when they are not eligible for extended SE services from either OPWDD or OMH. OPWDD and OMH work collaboratively with NYSED/ACCES-VR to support the provision of comprehensive SE services in NYS.

**Scope of Supported Employment Services**

SE services are comprised of on-going services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in SE that:

- Are provided singly or in combination to assist a participant to achieve competitive integrated employment;
- Are based on a determination of the needs of the participant 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.

SE services provide all the supports necessary to assist the participant 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 interacting 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.

Strategies are customized to meet the needs of the participant and business and to assist the participant in meeting business expectations. Job coaches use available community resources in meeting participant needs and to assist him/her in maintaining employment.

Youth with significant disabilities are provided opportunities to receive the services necessary to support their achievement of competitive integrated employment. SE outcomes need to be in competitive integrated employment, or if the employment is in an integrated setting but not at a competitive wage, then the participant is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment.

As NYSED/ACCES-VR has a large supported employment program and provided SE services to approximately 9,200 people in FFY 2018-2019. NYSED/ACCES-VR expects to continue to exceed the minimum 50% required allotment for the provision of supported employment, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities services for a period of up to four years. NYSED/ACCES-VR will also provide a non-federal share of at least 10% of the funds reserved for the provision of SE services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

NYSED/ACCES-VR contracts with vendors for the provision of SE services through CRS contracts. SE vendors, in cooperation with the state agencies, have the following responsibilities:
• Actively involve participants and families, when appropriate, in assessment, planning and decision making throughout the service delivery process;

• Consider the participant's and business' needs with the nature and frequency of vendor's services including job placement;

• Through a participant-centered decision-making process, pursue the goals detailed in the IPE by using SE resources to assist the participant;

• Report on programmatic and fiscal deliverables as outlined in the SE guidelines;

• Deliver SE services in accordance with federal and state standards and the contractual obligations for the service; and,

• Strive continuously to evaluate the efficacy of the services and make improvements as needed.

SE vendors’ contracts are performance-based with vendors receiving payments once milestones and outcomes are attained. NYSED/ACCES-VR conducts on-site case reviews of SE vendors to evaluate quality and identify areas for continuous quality improvement. NYSED/ACCES-VR monitors and evaluates all vendor-provide reports such as monthly progress reports, career development in extended services, participant satisfaction and quality outcomes.

NYSED/ACCES-VR is committed to maintaining a knowledgeable SE services workforce. NYSED/ACCES-VR requires professional development and employment services training for all vendor staff providing SE services. These trainings are offered at no cost to the vendor by NYS CASE, which receives its funds for these trainings from NYSED/ACCES-VR.

**Timing of Transition to Extended Services**

Extended services are provided after a participant achieves job retention. Rehabilitation occurs when the participant is employed for a length of time adequate to ensure stability of the employment outcome and the participant, business, vendor and NYSED/ACCES-VR vocational rehabilitation counselor agree that job retention was achieved.
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://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 being part of the interagency state plan writing workgroup under the WIOA Interagency Team.

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 Perkins V. This includes approval of infrastructure support for the System because NYS 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, OCFS/NYSCB, NYSED/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. In addition, NYSOFA, DOS, and NYSED/CTE-Perkins were involved in development of the State Plan. 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. 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 LWDBs and CEOs; 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, businesses, other state agencies, community rehabilitation providers, Independent Living Centers, and individuals with disabilities, to encourage their participation in the meetings. Families, their advocates, businesses, 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 core partner agencies (NYSDOL, OCFS/NYSCB, NYSED/ACCES-VR and NYSED/ACCES-AEPP) 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.

OCFS/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, ILCs, members of the NYSCB SRC, 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:

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:

NYS Non-Discrimination Plan

Additionally, page 21 of OCFS/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). OCFS/NYSCB’s policy statement indicates compliance with non-discrimination as well as language on the OCFS/NYSCB Application for Services. OCFS/NYSCB’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 OCFS/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.

OCFS/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):


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:


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 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 its 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 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 DVOP specialist:

http://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/ta12-12-4-veterans-priority-of-service.pdf

Policy for Appointment to LWDBs by CEOs

NYS established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by CEOs for the appointment of LWDB members:


Policy for LWDB Certification Every Two Years by Governor

NYS established written policy and procedures to ensure LWDBs are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2):

Policy for SWDB Allocation Distribution

NYS established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the SWIB help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with CEOs in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions:


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:

https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/lwda.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

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:

NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/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 will request the following two waivers as part of this Combined Plan:

1. Waiver of the 75% OSY expenditure rate on statewide workforce investment activities

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived

Language that requires the 75% OSY requirement be imposed on statewide workforce investment activities identified in WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A).
Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the proposed waiver.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver

The waiver will allow NYSDOL the ability to focus state-level youth funds on the provision of services to ISY via targeted RFPs for those services without being obligated to simultaneously issue OSY RFPs amounting to at least three times the amount proposed for ISY programs.

Alignment with USDOL policy priorities

This waiver will allow the state to maintain the 75% OSY expenditure requirement in the 33 LWDBs while improving outcomes for ISY through the issuance of RFPs to serve this population using funds for statewide activities.

Individuals impacted by the waiver

The waiver will directly impact ISY, who would otherwise not be able to be served due to the 75% OSY funding requirement. It will not impact OSY, who will continue to be served at the same funding levels in the 33 LWDBs in the state.

Process for monitoring progress and the collection and reporting of outcomes related to the waiver

NYSDOL will monitor progress and ensure accountability for federal funds in connection with this waiver by collecting and reviewing monthly expenditure, performance and other reports, through regular contact with the ETA Regional Office liaisons, and through its monitoring and performance accountability system.

Notice to affected local boards

Should the waiver be granted, NYSDOL would issue an electronic notice that will be disseminated to the System in the state (including LWDB Directors and Chairs).

2. Waiver of the requirement for Eligible Training Providers to collect and report performance data for all students enrolled in training.

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived

WIOA Section 116(d)(4)(A) and 122; 20 CFR 677.230(a)(4) and (5) and 20 CFR 680.400- 680.530.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

There are no State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the proposed waiver.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver

The waiver will ease the reporting burden placed on training providers approved to be listed on the NYS ETPL by requiring them to collect and report performance data on only those students funded with WIOA dollars. It is expected that the proposed change will lead to increased participation of providers on the ETPL, and an increase of performance reporting by those providers for the more limited universe of students/participants. Both outcomes will bolster customer choice. The waiver will also lead to stronger partnerships and improved relationships between training providers and the public workforce system, including the LWDBs. Finally, the waiver would lead to the possibility that provider performance data could be verified through the NYS case management system, OSOS. NYSDOL previously has not used OSOS to verify performance data since OSOS is limited to WIOA participants and there is no way
for NYSDOL to verify information provided for non-WIOA students, which is the vast majority of students in most training providers, such as community colleges.

Alignment with USDOL policy priorities
The waiver would allow training providers in NYS to focus on training student/participants rather than the reporting burden of collecting data on all students, while maintaining WIOA’s requirement that providers collect and report performance data in a meaningful way (i.e. reporting on WIOA participants).

Individuals impacted by the waiver
Individuals who participate or who wish to participate in training services via ITAs, NYS Workforce Development Staff, and training providers will benefit from this waiver.

Process for monitoring progress and the collection and reporting of outcomes related to the waiver
NYSDOL staff involved with the administration of the ETPL and performance reporting will periodically examine the effectiveness and impact of this waiver. This strategy will use the goals outlined above as guidance

Notice to affected local boards
Should the waiver be granted, NYSDOL would issue an electronic notice that will be disseminated to the Workforce Development community in the State (including LWDB Directors and Chairs).

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): https://labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ta/ta-16-8-lwdb-oversight-and-monitoring-responsibilities.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 ten Significant MSFW centers and the AOP 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
NYSED/ACCES-VR and OCFS/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, 2023. 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.

- 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.


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.


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Chief Fiscal Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPLICANT ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>DATE SUBMITTED</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Education Department</td>
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Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of their 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 their 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: Ms.   * First Name: Phyllis   Middle Name:   
* Last Name: Morris   Suffix:  
* Title: Chief Financial Officer
* SIGNATURE:   * DATE:
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Certifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>NYS may legally carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The State Plan must provide assurances that:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:</strong> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:</strong> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:</strong> The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) is an independent State commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council <strong>Option B selected</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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; <strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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; <strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>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. <strong>Yes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>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. <strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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**
  (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 ACRONYMS

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
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
EFL: Educational Functioning Level
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
FACE: Family and Community Engagement
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
OCFS/NYSCB: New York State Office of Children & Family Services, Commission for the Blind
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
APPENDIX 1: WIOA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

NYS Governor
(Oversight)

NYS Department of Labor

NYS Office of Children & Family Services, Commission for the Blind

NYS Board of Regents
(Oversight)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
NYS Workforce Investment Board

Title I - Adult, DW and Youth
Program Delivery:
• NYS Career Centers
• Partner Programs Delivery

Title IV – Voc. Rehabilitation
Program Delivery:
• District Offices
• Service Providers

Title III - Wagner-Peyser
Program Delivery:
• NYS Career Centers

Title II - Adult Education
Program Delivery:
• RAEN Centers
• Adult Education Providers

Advisory Counsel
ACCES-VR
State Rehabilitation Council

Other State Agencies
• NYS Office of Mental Health;
• NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

NYS Workforce Development System Services
Additional Partners as Represented on the SWIB: Empire State Development Corporation; NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance; State University of New York; City University of New York (CUNY)
**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Year 2018</th>
<th>Program Year 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed/Expected Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth*</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
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<td>Youth*</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
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<td>(Second Quarter after Exit)</td>
<td>Adults</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Measurable Skill Gains</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
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<td>Adult Education</td>
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<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
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Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Type &amp; Level</th>
<th>NYS 2018-2019 Targets</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ABE – Beginning Basic Education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ESL – Advanced</td>
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