

WEST CENTRAL REGION

STRATEGIC PLAN

Program Years 2016 - 2020



Please be advised WDB may revise this document at any time to comply with regulations provided by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development and the U.S. Department of Labor. Section 108(d) of WIOA states the Plan will be made available 30 days prior to submission for public for comment. The Plan will be published on website: www.skillupmissouri.org or a paper copy may be obtained at 3208 W 16th Street, Sedalia MO 65301.

**West Central Region
Four-Year Strategic Plan
Program Years 2016 - 2020**

Table of Contents

I.	STRATEGIC ELEMENTS	3
II.	OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS	27
III.	ADMINISTRATION	39
IV.	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	56
V.	CONTRACTS/BUDGETS	80
VI.	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	83
	1. LIST OF COMPREHENSIVE ONE-STOP CENTERS	85
	2. LOCAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES POLICY	88
	3. MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING	104
	4. COST SHARING AGREEMENT	230
	5. LOCAL WDB BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST	238
	6. LOCAL WDB BY-LAWS & ATTESTATION	242
	7. CEO MEMBERSHIP & BY-LAWS	255
	8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY	261
	9. SUB-STATE MONITORING POLICY	265
	10. BUSINESS SERVICES PLAN	306
	11. MOU BETWEEN WDB & COMMUNITY COLLEGE	315
	12. LOCAL COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT PROCESS	317
	13. PLANNING BUDGET SUMMARIES 2016-2017	326
	14. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES CERTIFICATE	333
	15. COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE POLICY	335
	16. YOUTH PROGRAM INCENTIVE PAY SCHEDULE	342
	APPENDIX – LABOR MARKET DATA	343

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

I. Local Workforce Development Board's Vision

State the Board's vision for the LWDA and how this vision meets, interprets, and furthers the Governor's vision in the PY16–PY20 WIOA Missouri Combined State Plan.

The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc. (WDB) has developed and administered job training programs in thirteen counties in the West Central Region for thirty-three years. The board's response to changing workforce challenges and priorities continues to be guided by:

The Vision of the Workforce Development Board: To assess and respond to the training and employment needs of our workforce stakeholders in ways that restore and build competitive, robust local economies.

To accomplish our mission and strengthen our role in the delivery of training and employment programs, the Workforce Development Board has adopted the following key principles:

- Customers shall access services at Missouri Job Centers in the West Central Region operated under the Next Generation Career Center (NGCC) service model that values both skills and jobs. Every job seeker that enters the NGCC door will leave as a better job candidate because of the value-added, integrated services received;
- Training and Education are the means by which an individual's skills and competencies are increased - thereby increasing the individual's long-term employment/earnings potential;
- Individuals will be provided training that is effective, impactful, and leads to an individual's self-sufficiency and attainment of long-term employment goals;

and

- Resources to be invested in training must be focused toward a sector-based, career pathways system designed through collaboration among local employers, education partners, economic development and workforce colleagues.

The WDB has realized success over the years through innovation in programming and a strong financial compass. The WDB is ever watchful for new ideas and concepts introduced by the US Department of Labor and the Missouri Division of Workforce Development, anticipating necessary changes to the system and upgrading our program design and delivery systems to address those changes.

II. Local Workforce Development Board's Goals

Provide the Board's goals for engaging employers and preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating

to the performance-accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

In order to “skill up” our workforce, the WDB has an ongoing commitment to working closely with our business, education, and community partners, often acting as a catalyst for change. Convening local employers, a county commissioner and representatives of K-12, Career and Technical Education, community college as well as four-year institutions, Adult Education and Literacy, economic development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP), Vocational Rehabilitation, and community-based organizations through the Region’s sector strategy activities opened the dialogue necessary for workforce stakeholders to identify desirable job-related skills, soft skills and demand timelines that support regional economic growth.

It is the intention of the Workforce Development Board to engage a broad spectrum of the employers in the region to identify skills gaps within the available labor force. By fully understanding the needs of businesses in our area, we can help job seekers leverage current skills and identify training to meet the workforce shortfalls. Not only will the Region’s top three sectors be represented (manufacturing, healthcare, and food processing/agri-business) but also any second or third level sectors with employment potential based on customer demographics. Opportunities for adults and youth, particularly those with barriers to employment will be aggressively sought.

At the time of submitting the Region’s four year plan for public comment, the goals associated with the performance accountability measures were not yet available (and quite possibly will not be made available from the Division of Workforce Development until as late as July 1, 2016). The Workforce Development Board anticipates meeting and /or exceeding the upcoming negotiated performance goals based on historical performance levels while remaining steadfast in our mission to provide a fully integrated service delivery approach to job seekers and our business/industry partners. The Workforce Development Board and the Missouri Job Centers of the West Central Region will strive to find ways to step beyond the ‘bricks and mortar’ of our Centers, and embrace the role of collaborator and convener of employment and training resources to help effect change and rebuild strong local economies.

III. Local Workforce Development Board’s Priorities

Identify the workforce development needs of businesses, jobseekers, and workers in the LWDA, and how those needs were determined.

In the West Central Region, the Workforce Development Board, its’ staff and subcontractors, have been monitoring the changing employment needs of America’s businesses and their workers for over thirty years. The Local Elected Officials, the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., and our core partners recognize that in order to foster continuous improvement we must work together to ensure the local workforce system is in sync with the needs of our businesses, job seekers, and workers. With an unemployment rate for February 2016 in the region ranging from 4.8% to 7.2%, the demographics of the available applicant pool presents challenges.

Utilizing focus groups, surveys, one-on-one interviews with job seekers and employers as well as the Missouri Economic Research Information Center (MERIC) and tools such as Burning Glass Technologies, it is possible to recognize issues to be considered and addressed:

- An aging workforce – with imminent retirement of the “baby boom” generation, a shortage of specialized labor could result. Focus on “skilling up” incumbent workers as well as opening more entry points into joining a sustainable talent pipeline for youth, adults, veterans, and individuals with disabilities is important to the economic growth of the region and the state.
- Attention to common skills – research shows common skills listed in job advertisements as desirable by employers are communication, organization, writing skills, business fundamentals, customer service and problem solving top the list.
- An overwhelming lack of “soft skills” – a problem repeatedly noted by many area businesses involves less than acceptable performance as relates to punctuality, attendance, listening skills, attitude, initiative, and personal appearance. These issues will require the attention of all partners to facilitate improvements.
- Attention to basic skills – while many of these skills are thought to be acquired in primary and secondary school and enhanced through post-secondary and workforce training opportunities, skills gap analysis suggests this is still an area of concern. A solid foundation in reading, writing, applied math, logic flows, and information gathering, etc. must be developed to prepare for occupation-specific training to follow. Training and education will need to be provided through multiple approaches tailored to learning styles and personal circumstances such as age, disability, need for flexible hours of instruction, affordability, prior work history, and accessibility issues.
- Specific occupational skills – skills that keep pace with industry trends and the changing needs of business through diplomas, certificates and degrees. Stackable industry-recognized credentials may be made available through on-job training; apprenticeships; and short term courses and specialized training provided by community colleges and four-year universities.

Impacting the cultural and systemic changes necessary to realize positive movement in the priorities noted will involve efforts by community partners, businesses and WIOA Title I, Title II and Title IV providers. There is much work to be done but the right partners are at the table.

IV. Economic, Labor Market, and Workforce Analysis

If using Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) data, please indicate the source is MERIC. If using another resource, please reference the source. MERIC regional representatives can be found online at:

https://www.missourieconomy.org/about_us/contactus.stm#Regional_Contacts

A. Economic Analysis

1. Describe the LWDA's current economic condition, including the following information by county (if your LWDA includes more than one county) and the overall region:

- Average personal income level;
- Number and percent of working-age population living at or below poverty level;
- Unemployment rates for the last five years;
- Major layoff events over the past three years and any anticipated layoffs; and
- Any other factors that may affect local/regional economic conditions.

Average Personal Income Level

AVERAGE WAGES 2014 in Comparison to 2011					
County	Average Hourly Wage 2014	Average Annual Wage 2014	Average Hourly Wage 2011	Average Annual Wage 2011	Variance of Hourly Wage
Bates	\$12.89	\$26,806	\$11.62	\$24,179	\$1.27
Benton	\$12.51	\$26,017	\$11.43	\$23,783	\$1.08
Carrol	\$14.81	\$30,813	\$13.69	\$28,474	\$1.12
Cedar	\$11.15	\$23,196	\$10.95	\$22,776	\$0.20
Chariton	\$14.53	\$30,217	\$13.99	\$29,102	\$0.54
Henry	\$17.07	\$35,501	\$14.17	\$29,475	\$2.90
Hickory	\$10.24	\$21,297	\$9.67	\$20,118	\$0.57
Johnson	\$14.10	\$29,239	\$13.35	\$27,768	\$0.75
Lafayette	\$14.33	\$29,796	\$12.85	\$26,735	\$1.48
Pettis	\$15.00	\$31,205	\$14.75	\$30,685	\$0.25
St. Clair	\$11.08	\$23,055	\$10.05	\$20,894	\$1.03
Saline	\$15.07	\$31,339	\$14.72	\$30,615	\$0.35
Vernon	\$16.38	\$34,073	\$15.23	\$31,676	\$1.15
Overall Region	\$13.78	\$28,658	\$12.81	\$26,637	\$0.97
Source: MERIC, Quarterly Census of Employment 2014, 2011					

Percent of Persons at or Below Poverty Level 2013

Bates	17.8%
Benton	21.2%
Carroll	16.3%
Cedar	22.4%
Chariton	14.6%
Henry	16.6%
Hickory	24.1%
Johnson	16.9%
Lafayette	13.9%
Pettis	17.4%
St. Clair	24.7%
Saline	17.7%
Vernon	18.8%
Overall Region	18.6%

Under 15% - Less than 15% of people live in poverty

15.2% - Up to 1 in every 5 people are in poverty

Over 20% - More than every 5th person in these counties is in poverty

MAJOR LAY-OFFS/ANTICIATED LAY-OFFS

The West Central Region has been fortunate that in the past three years there have only been three major layoff events. One involved the closing of a community hospital in Osceola, affecting approximately 60 individuals and the closing of American Standard Brands in Nevada, affecting 133 individuals and 27 individuals losing jobs at Schreiber Foods in Clinton.

In all cases, the Employment Transition Team and the local Job Center provided information and referral to services. Workshops to assist with resume preparation and interviewing were provided, On-the-Job training placements were made, individuals took advantage of tuition assistance through Trade Act and local formula funds to return to school and supportive service needs were identified and met. At this time no additional layoffs of this magnitude are anticipated.

B. Labor Market Analysis

1 Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

Missouri's WIOA partnership includes a functional bureau of state government housed within the Department of Economic Development called the Missouri Economic Research Information Center (MERIC). The following economic analysis has been

prepared to explain the West Central Workforce Development Area’s economic conditions and trends, as well as to explain pertinent industrial and occupational demand.

Real-Time Labor Market Analysis

In 2012 MERIC began using a new tool to assess current, or real-time, demand for occupations throughout the state. The tool, provided by Burning Glass Technologies, captures online job advertisements and aggregates those jobs by occupation and industry codes. While on-line advertisements do not represent all job openings, as other informal networks are also used, it does provide a broad picture of hiring activity and serves as one measure of current labor demand.

Industrial Demand

Industry demand analysis from February 2015 through January 2016 showed that the Healthcare Industry (Hospitals, Offices of Health Practitioners and Nursing Care Facilities) was a top job advertisement. Insurance Carriers, Trucking and Education also had a high number of job advertisers.

Industries such as Restaurants have high turnover rates so the large number of job advertisements can reflect the need to refill positions rather than to add new jobs.

Top Ten Real-Time Labor Demand Industries by Online Job Ads

Industry	Job Postings
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	661
Insurance Carriers	275
General Freight Trucking	231
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	225
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	211
National Security and International Affairs	205
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	203
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	164
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	144
Building Material and Supplies Dealers	138

Source: Burning Glass Technologies (February 1, 2015-January 31, 2016)

Occupational Demand

Job analysis highlights the top ten occupations West Central Region employers advertised for in the past year. Truck Drivers were in the greatest demand followed by Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons, and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses. Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers and Customer Service Representatives followed. Additional health care occupations, such as Physical Therapists and Nursing Assistants also made the list.

Real-Time Labor Market Analysis provides a snapshot of current labor demand that is particularly helpful to current job seekers interested in who is hiring and for what occupations. MERIC has developed products, like the Real Time Labor Market Summary, using this tool. The Labor Market Summary provides both a regional and statewide snapshot of data found in job ads and is published every other month. MERIC and DWD

will continue to explore how this data can inform workforce and economic development efforts to meet the needs of businesses around the state.

Top Ten Real-Time Labor Demand Occupations by Online Job Ads

Occupation	Job Postings
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	983
Registered Nurses	632
Retail Salespersons	293
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	238
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	207
Customer Service Representatives	182
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	176
Physical Therapists	174
Nursing Assistants	168
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	164

Source: Burning Glass Technologies (February 1, 2015-January 31, 2016)

2. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Industry

MERIC develops long-term employment projections based on industry trends and staffing patterns for each workforce development region. The table below describes the industries projected to have the most job openings from 2012 to 2022 based on both growth and replacement needs in the West Central Region.

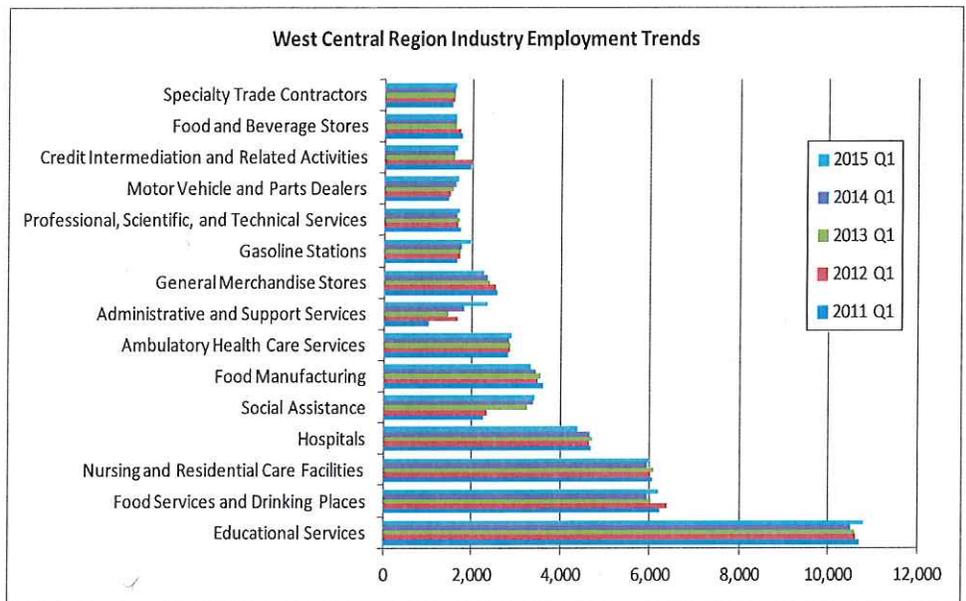
For the 2012-2022 time period, the top net change for industry employment in the West Central Region are projected to be Educational Services (876); Food Services and Drinking Places (745); Social Assistance (634); Administrative and Support Services (532); and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (529).

West Central Region 2012-2022 Industry Projections

Title	Employment		Change	
	2012	2022	2012-2022	
	Estimated	Projected	Numeric	Percent
Educational Services	10,322	11,198	876	8.49%
Food Services and Drinking Places	6,631	7,376	745	11.24%
Social Assistance	2,855	3,489	634	22.21%
Administrative and Support Services	1,420	1,952	532	37.46%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4,084	4,613	529	12.95%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,269	2,789	520	22.92%
Specialty Trade Contractors	1,576	2,076	500	31.73%
Hospitals	4,156	4,620	464	11.16%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,548	1,918	370	23.90%
General Merchandise Stores	2,725	2,980	255	9.36%

Source: MERIC Employment Projections

Industry employment trends offer insight on the industries that are growing over time in a given area. The chart below is a snapshot of employment over 5 years in industries located in the West Central Region. During the 5 year period, the highest employment growth is in the industries of Administrative and Support Services; Social Assistance; and Gasoline Stations. Other industries not in the top 15, but showing strong



growth numbers are Machinery Manufacturing; Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods; Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers; Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing; and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing.

Source:

US Census Bureau, QWI Explorer Application (qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov)

Occupations

The long-term occupational projections for the West Central Region show that the top job openings are in the Food and Retail Service Industries. The definition of *Total Openings* is the projected new growth along with replacement needs. Cashiers, for example, shows a total projected employment of 3,010 for 2022, only 113 more than the 2012 estimate of 2,897 jobs. This means of the 1,365 job openings over 10 years, 1,252 are replacement openings due to turnover while only 113 are new. Total openings are important to job seekers while new jobs indicate where new training needs may be found.

In addition to *Total Openings*, several occupations are projected to grow much faster than the overall region and have a large number of openings (at least 100 over 10 years). The occupations of Home Health Aides and Personal Care Aides are projected to grow by 24 percent or more. Rounding out the fastest growing occupations in the top ten are Team Assemblers; Customer Service Representatives; Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers; Cooks; Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses; Registered Nurses; Truck Drivers; and Supervisors of Food Prep and Serving.

West Central Region Top Ten Long-Term Occupation Projections Sorted by Total Openings

Occupation	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Growth Openings	Replacement Openings	Total Openings
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,648	3,060	412	1,011	1,423
Cashiers	2,897	3,010	113	1,252	1,365
Retail Salespersons	2,314	2,510	196	791	987
Waiters and Waitresses	1,362	1,436	74	655	729
Nursing Assistants	1,995	2,228	233	379	612
Office Clerks, General	1,930	2,037	107	405	512
Personal Care Aides	1,576	1,962	386	113	499
Registered Nurses	1,367	1,560	193	265	458
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,320	1,469	149	290	439
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	1,093	1,190	97	339	436

Source: MERIC Employment Projections

3. Employers' Employment Needs

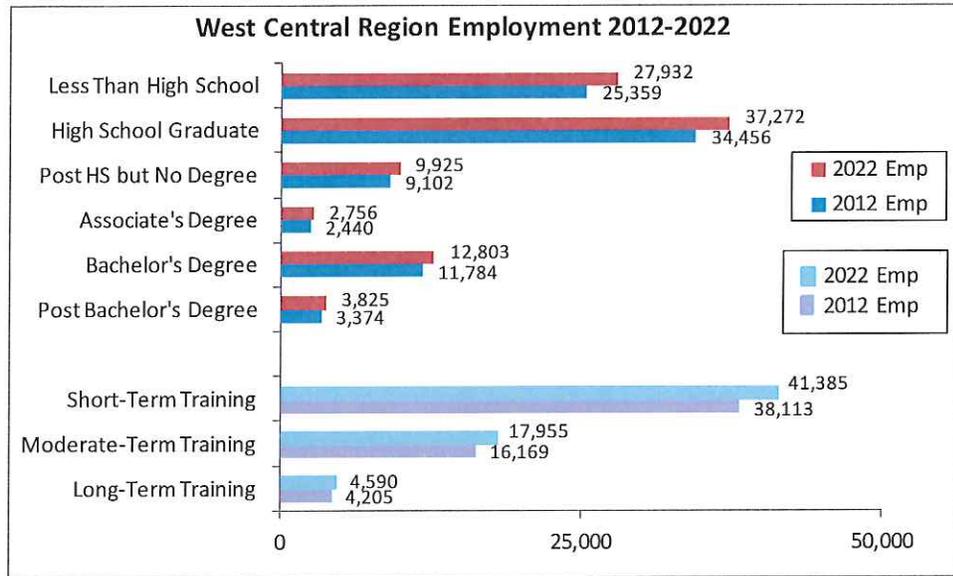
Identify the job skills necessary to obtain current and projected employment opportunities. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations, provide an analysis of the employment needs of employers. Describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Long-Term Projections – Jobs by Education Level

Occupations typically requiring short-term OJT are expected to account for the largest portion of 2022 employment change in the West Central Region. Occupations requiring short-term OJT are projected to experience the highest number of increased employment at over 3,200, or 8.6 percent growth. Employment in occupations requiring moderate-term OJT is also expected to grow by approximately 1,700, or 11.0 percent.

Increased employment is also anticipated for occupations requiring a bachelor's degree. Employment for this education level is projected to increase by just over 1,000, or 8.6 percent. Occupations requiring an associate's degree or some post-high school training will increase by over 1,100 workers.

As estimated for the year 2022, 69 percent of workers in the West Central Region will be employed in occupations that require no formal postsecondary education (includes short-term OJT to work experience in a related occupation). Workers in occupations that require just a bachelor's degree will account for over 14 percent of the total employment in 2022.



Top Occupations by Education Level

The 2012-2022 long-term occupations projections were used to identify the top ten occupations based on total openings and level of education or training needed. Top occupations requiring short to moderate-term training include service and support sector occupations. Healthcare, Driver and Supervisor occupations dominate the top new openings requiring at least long-term training or as much as an Associate's degree. The top occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher include Education, Management, and Accountants and Auditors.

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West Central Region Top Ten Long-Term Occupation Projections Sorted by Total Openings

Occupation	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Growth Openings	Replacement Openings	Total
Now - Typically requires short-term on-the-job training					
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	2,648	3,060	412	1,011	1,423
Cashiers	2,897	3,010	113	1,252	1,365
Retail Salespersons	2,314	2,510	196	791	987
Waiters and Waitresses	1,362	1,436	74	655	729
Office Clerks, General	1,930	2,037	107	405	512
Personal Care Aides	1,576	1,962	386	113	499
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,093	1,190	97	339	436
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Ex	1,666	1,870	204	201	405
Childcare Workers	1,234	1,265	31	363	394
Customer Service Representatives	864	1,002	138	235	373
Next - Typically requires an associate's degree or long-term training					
Nursing Assistants	1,995	2,228	233	379	612
Registered Nurses	1,367	1,560	193	265	458
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,310	1,492	182	210	392
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	977	1,118	141	239	380
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	850	962	112	240	352
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,189	1,239	50	259	309
Cooks, Restaurant	838	968	130	165	295
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	870	941	71	167	238
Teacher Assistants	763	803	40	173	213
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	475	524	49	113	162
Later - Typically requires bachelor's degree or beyond					
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,320	1,469	149	290	439
General and Operations Managers	1,249	1,396	147	234	381
Substitute Teachers	1,132	1,198	66	193	259
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Educ	682	711	29	185	214
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	608	677	69	134	203
Accountants and Auditors	390	457	67	115	182
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	677	586	0	109	109
Graduate Teaching Assistants	387	423	36	58	94
Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors	315	339	24	67	91
Physical Therapists	174	221	47	43	90

Source: MERIC Employment Projections

C. Workforce Analysis

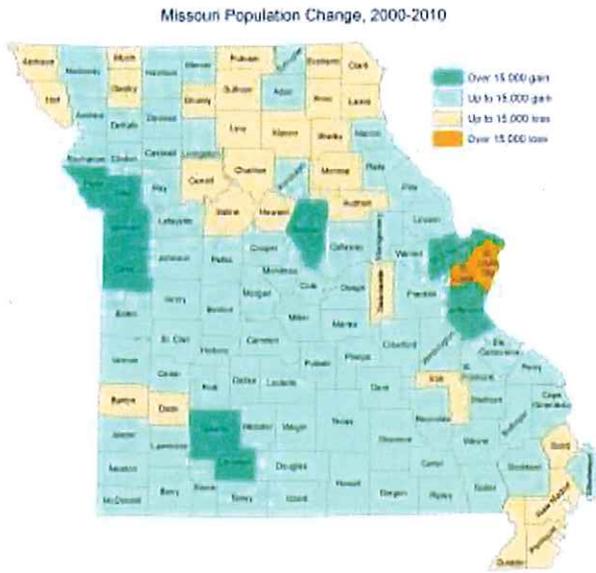
Describe the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA¹. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups² in the economic region and across the LWDA.

Geographic Change

With the most recent census, St. Louis and Kansas City remain the largest population centers for Missouri and show some shifting of populations further out from the urban core. The overall population of the West Central Workforce Development Area has increased by nearly 10,000. Of the 13 counties in the region, the population increased in all but 3 counties.

¹ Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English-language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

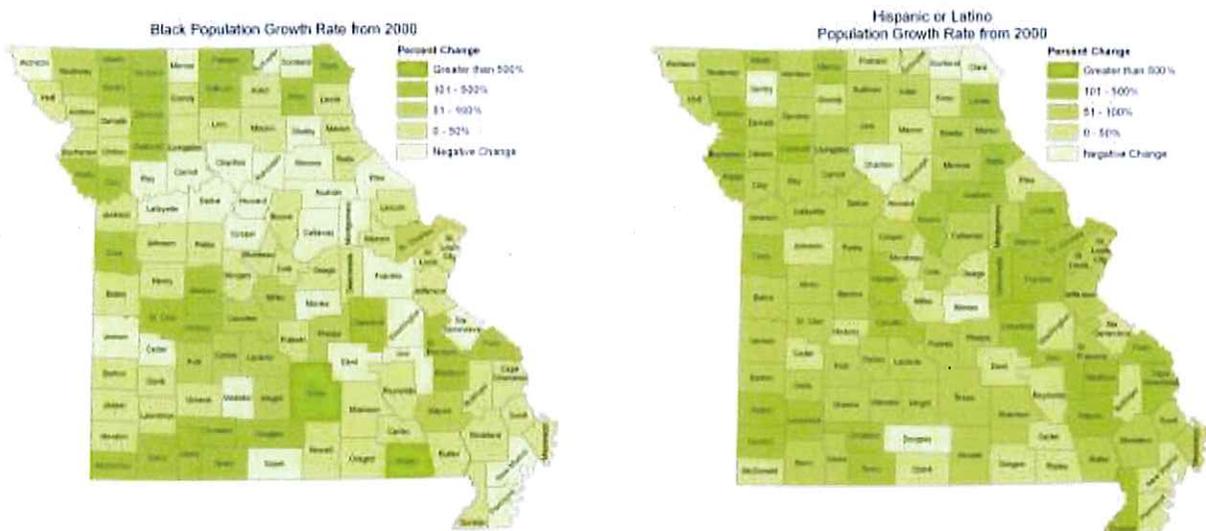
² Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.



Minority Population Growth

Missouri experienced population increases in the Black and Hispanic or Latino minority groups during the 2000's. The West Central Region experienced similar increases. In 2010, the Black population is just over 6,400 in the region, representing 2.4 percent of the region's population. By comparison, the Missouri and U.S. Black populations represent smaller percentages of the total population at 11.6 and 12.6 percents, respectively.

The Hispanic or Latino population in the West Central Region also increased. The minority group numbers just over 9,200 and accounts for 3.4 percent of the population in the region. 3.5 percent of Missouri's total population was Hispanic or Latino in 2010, compared to 16.3 percent for the U.S. The full datasets are available in Table 2: Black Population Rates and Table 3: Hispanic or Latino Population Rates in the Appendix.

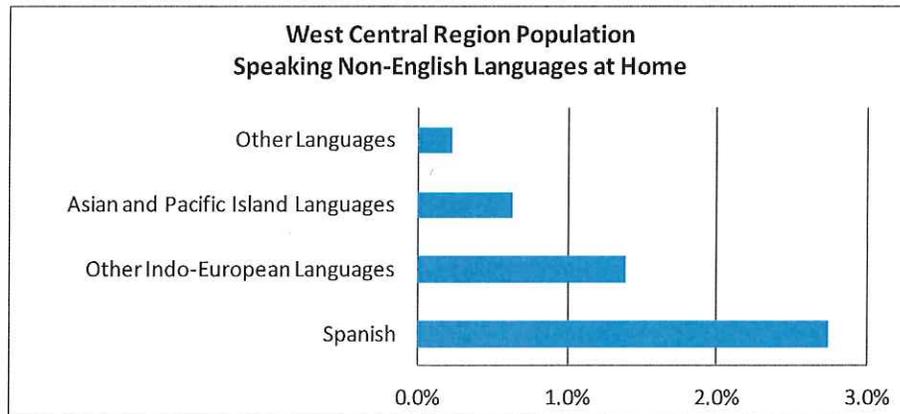


Limited English Proficiency

According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 5 percent (8,323) of the West Central Region's population age 18-64 spoke a language other than English at home. The most common non-English languages spoken in the region's homes were Spanish (2.7 percent); Other Indo-European Languages (1.4 percent); Asian and Pacific Island Languages (.6 percent); and Other Languages (.2 percent).

The total percentage of the population speaking languages other than English at home is lower in the West Central Region than in Missouri. Statewide, 6.6 percent of the population, or 244,947, speak non-English languages at home. In Missouri, the most common non-English language is Spanish (2.7 percent), followed by Other Indo-European languages (1.9 percent), Asian and Pacific Island Languages (1.4 percent) and Other Languages (.5 percent).

The percentage of individuals speaking languages other than English at home across the nation is much higher than the state average. In the U.S., 13.6 percent of the population speaks Spanish at home. Residents speaking Other Indo-European languages and Asian and Pacific Island languages total 3.7 percent each, while those speaking Other Languages is 1 percent.

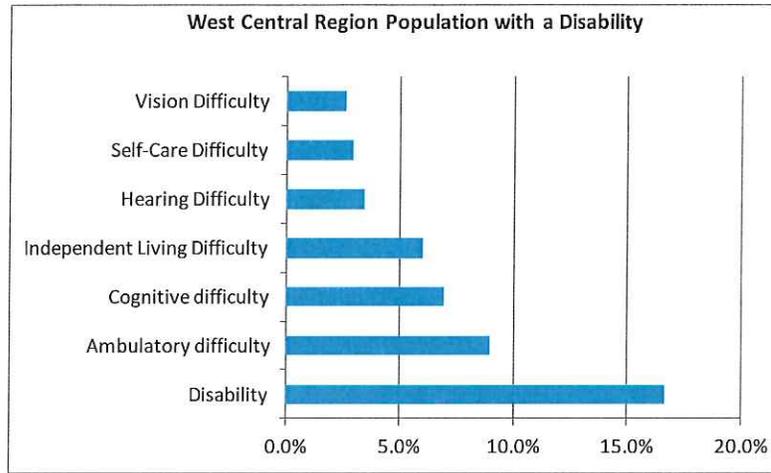


Individuals with Disabilities

According to the American Community Survey 2010-2014 estimates, 16.7 percent, or 25,020 West Central Region residents age 18-64 had a disability. Ambulatory difficulty was the most prevalent disability type at 9.0 percent of the county population. About 6.9 percent of the population had a cognitive difficulty, followed by 6.0 percent with an independent living difficulty.

The percentage of individuals with disabilities was consistently higher in every category in the West Central Region than the state and nation. Statewide, 12.4 percent of residents of the same age group had a disability. Missourians with an ambulatory difficulty was the highest at 6.6 percent, followed by cognitive difficulty (5.4 percent) and independent living difficulty (4.4 percent).

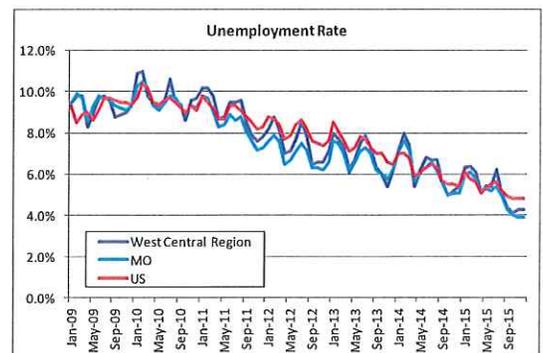
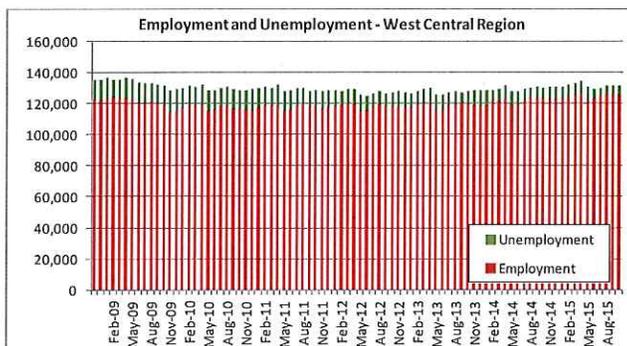
In the U.S., 10.2 percent of the population had a disability. Nationwide, individuals with ambulatory difficulty total 5.2 percent, while 4.3 percent have cognitive difficulty and 3.6 percent have independent living difficulty.



1. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the LWDA.

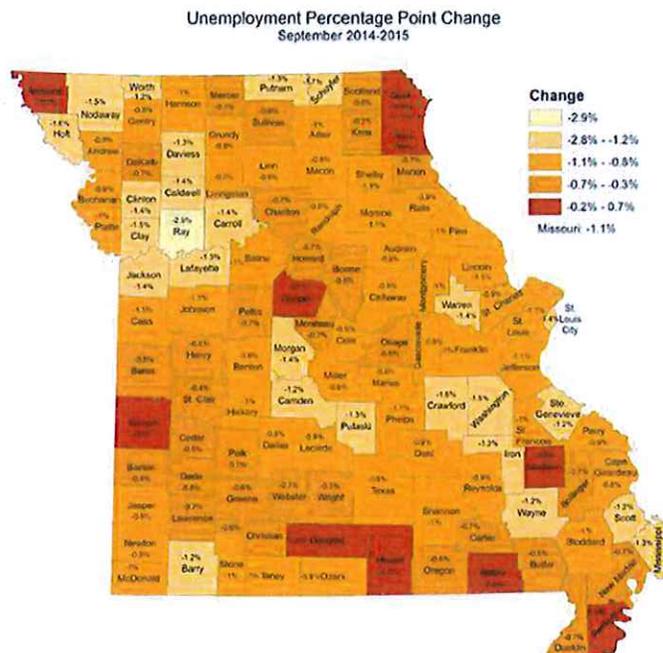
During the recession, the number of Missourians employed in the West Central Region decreased, while the number of unemployed increased to a high of 11 percent. Over time, employers have become more confident in hiring workers, increasing total employment to just over 126,000 at the end of 2015. The unemployment rate has decreased to a low of 4.3 percent in December 2015, between the Missouri unemployment rate of 3.9 percent and the US at 4.8 percent. These numbers, queried from Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), includes all employment, including self-employed workers.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Even with the low unemployment rate statewide, Missouri still has pockets where the unemployment rate is high. The brighter news is that unemployment has decreased in every county during the past year. Of the 13 counties in the West Central Region, the

greatest decrease in unemployment is in Carroll County at 1.4 percent. Numbers for each county are available in Table 4 of the Appendix.



2. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor-market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

Industry Employment Trends

The West Central Region experienced overall employment growth of 0.7 percent from 2009 to 2014, which is lower than the statewide employment growth of 2.2 percent. Industries with the largest employment growth were Administrative and Support Services (42 percent), Food Services and Drinking Places (7.4 percent), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (5.1 percent). The health care industry group had the highest employment totaling 13,674 jobs. Five industries had declining employment during the time period: Social Assistance (-42.1 percent), Food Manufacturing (-8.3 percent), General Merchandise Stores (-7.9 percent), Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (-1 percent), and Educational Services (-0.5 percent).

NAICS Sector	2009 Employment	2014 Employment	Change	Percent Change
Total Region Employment	81,834	82,441	607	0.7%
Educational Services	9,733	9,687	-46	-0.5%
Food Services and Drinking Places	6,006	6,448	442	7.4%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,125	6,066	-59	-1.0%
Hospitals	4,688	4,743	55	1.2%
Social Assistance	6,125	3,549	-2,576	-42.1%
Food Manufacturing	3,646	3,342	-304	-8.3%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,742	2,865	123	4.5%
General Merchandise Stores	2,609	2,403	-206	-7.9%
Administrative and Support Services	1,630	2,315	685	42%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,785	1,876	91	5.1%

Industry Wage Trends

The West Central Region saw overall wages increase by 9.5 percent, or over \$2,600, slightly higher than the statewide wage growth of 9.4 percent. Wage growth was especially pronounced in the production/manufacturing industry group especially in the Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction (47.3 percent), Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (16.6 percent), and Chemical Manufacturing (13.9 percent) industries. Other Industries with large wage growth were Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods (27.9 percent), Hospitals (26.2 percent), and Professional Scientific, and Technical Service (21.4 percent).

NAICS Sector	2009 Wages	2014 Wages	Change	Percent Change
Overall Region Average Wage	\$28,296	\$30,984	\$2,688	9.5%
Utilities	\$68,220	\$68,832	\$612	1.0%
Chemical Manufacturing	\$56,892	\$64,788	\$7,896	13.9%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	\$36,000	\$53,016	\$17,016	47.3%
Hospitals	\$40,296	\$50,832	\$10,536	26.2%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	\$34,860	\$44,568	\$9,708	27.9%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	\$33,852	\$39,468	\$5,616	16.6%
Educational Services	\$39,240	\$39,240	\$0	0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$31,956	\$38,808	\$6,852	21.4%
Machinery Manufacturing	\$34,800	\$38,700	\$3,900	11.2%
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	\$31,428	\$36,960	\$5,532	17.6%

Industry Clusters

The West Central Region's highly concentrated industries are based in manufacturing and construction industries, according to the location quotient indicator. The location

quotient (LQ) indicator describes how concentrated an industry is in a region in relation to the nation, with 1.00 being the national average. The most concentrated industry group is manufacturing, led by Food Manufacturing (1.92) and followed by Chemical Manufacturing (1.35) and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing (1.17). Construction industries are a major part of the economy led by Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction (2.08) and Specialty Trade Contractors (2.00).

NAICS Sector	2009 Location Quotient	2013 Location Quotient
Utilities	1.69	2.40
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	2.29	2.39
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	0.86	2.08
Specialty Trade Contractors	0.84	2.00
Food Manufacturing	4.82	1.92
Chemical Manufacturing	0.20	1.35
General Merchandise Stores	1.50	1.38
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1.93	1.17
Machinery Manufacturing	2.40	1.16
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	0.75	0.92

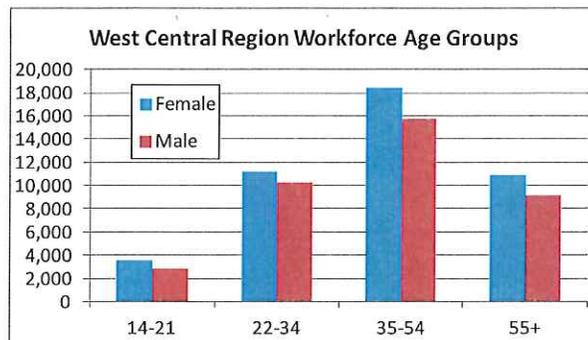
The industry demand is consistent with occupational job postings seen in the Top Ten Real-Time Labor Demand Occupations by Job Ads data found in Section IV.B.1. In this table, the highest number of job ads is for Truck Drivers. Registered Nurses; Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses; Physical Therapists and Nursing Assistants, are also in demand, and would be employed in Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. With a concentration of manufacturers, occupations such as Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing; Customer Service; and Truck Drivers are also heavily advertised.

3. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

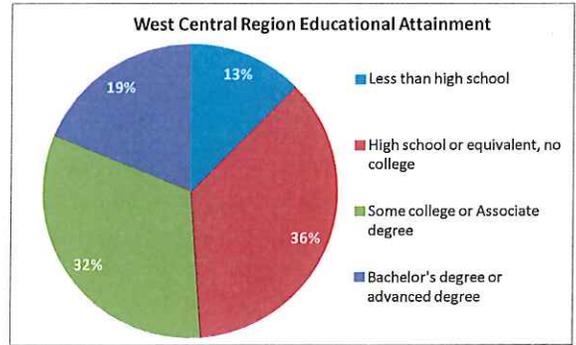
Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

The total population of the Missouri workforce is 2,594,137, and the West Central Region is home to over 82,000, or 3.2 percent of the state's workforce. The age group for workforce is defined as 14 years or more.

The population of the workforce in the state is aging. In Missouri, 22 percent of the workforce is age 55 or more for both the male and female populations. In the West Central Region, a higher percentage of the male and female workforce falls into the 55 and over age group at 24 and 25 percent, respectively.



The educational attainment rate for West Central Region is lower than the average for Missouri. In the West Central Region, 87 percent of the workforce has a high school diploma or higher, compared to 88 percent for the state. The number of workers who have not obtained a high school diploma is 13 percent in the West Central Region and 12 percent statewide.



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4. Skill Gaps

Describe apparent “skill gaps.”

Analysis of the skills and education gaps that employers have identified is an important step in determining what training issues need to be addressed. National business surveys point to skills gaps that have negatively impacted the economy, such as a 2015 manufacturing survey that indicated 6 out of 10 positions remain unfilled due to talent shortage, even with a large number of unemployed manufacturing workers available for hire³. MERIC has developed target industry competency models, conducted business surveys, and recently acquired a real-time labor market skills demand tool that provides valuable insight into the needs of Missouri employers.

MERIC conducted Industry Competency Model analysis for many of the state’s targeted industry sectors, such as Energy, Information Technology, Transportation, and Life Sciences. In doing so, the reports revealed that workers will need to enhance their existing skills sets to meet the demands of new and evolving technologies used in these growing industry sectors, and employers seek a good skill mix of both technical and soft skills in their workers. Interdisciplinary knowledge is a key ingredient to success, especially in high-tech sectors. Proficiency in rules and regulations was also rated as highly important and necessary for work in today’s complex business environment.

The Industry Competency Model reports also highlighted issues related to the overall aging of the workforce. The

Top West Central Region Real-Time Labor Demand Skills

Top Baseline Skills Needed	Rank
Communication Skills	1
Organizational Skills	2
Writing	3
Customer Service	4
Computer Skills	5

HEALTHCARE	
Top Specific Skills Needed	Rank
Patient Care	1
Treatment Planning	2
Critical Care	3
Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)	4
Surgical Services	5

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	
Top Specific Skills Needed	Rank
Technical Support	1
System and Network Configuration	2
Software Installation	3
System Administration	4
Wide Area Network (WAN)	5

FINANCE	
Top Specific Skills Needed	Rank
Accounting	1
Personal Computers	2
Data Entry	3
Business Development	4
Appointment Setting	5

ENGINEERING	
Top Specific Skills Needed	Rank
Mechanical Engineering	1
Repair	2
Inspection	3
Lean Manufacturing	4
Process Control	5

MANUFACTURING/PRODUCTION	
Top Specific Skills Needed	Rank
Inspection	1
Repair	2
Hand Tools	3
Power Tools	4
Mathematics	5

Source: Burning Glass Technologies (February 1, 2015-January 31, 2016)

³ The skills gap in U.S. manufacturing 2015 and beyond. Deloitte Consulting and the Manufacturing Institute, 2015. Complete report at www.themanufacturinginstitute.org

imminent retirement of a large segment of workers across the targeted sectors could result in a shortage of this specialized labor pool. The ability to produce a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers will be important for the success of these sectors and the economy as a whole.

Each year MERIC staff assist the St. Louis Community College to survey hundreds of companies in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) regarding workforce issues⁴. In 2015 the survey found that 57 percent of businesses identified a “shortage of workers with knowledge or skills” as the main barrier to expanding employment, followed by “economic conditions” at a distant second of 35 percent. The top shortcomings of job applicants were mostly soft skills such as poor work ethic (#1), lack of critical thinking (#2), and lack of communication or interpersonal skills (#3). Lack of general business or industry knowledge rounded out the top four. These shortcomings are consistently the top issues businesses identify in this survey and mirror the “soft skills” challenge that can be seen across the country in various business surveys. This very large business survey, while limited to the St. Louis MSA, is a good proxy for the issues other businesses face throughout the state. Furthermore, the importance of soft skills revealed in these surveys can be seen in online job ads that consistently rank these skills as a top desire for applicants.

MERIC analyzes the real-time job ads for workforce regions, which are one representation of job demand, versus the supply of job seekers in the state’s workforce development system and develops a report each year highlighting results⁵. In 2015 the West Central Region had the largest labor supply and demand gaps in Health Care and Related Occupations; Business and Sales; and Science and Technology. For example, Health Care and Related Occupation job ads accounted for nearly 31.8 percent of all postings but less than 10 percent of job seekers were looking for employment in these occupations. These gaps represent opportunities for job seekers, who can get training, to apply for occupations that are in higher demand.

West Central Region employers indicate through job advertisements the basic and specialized skills needed to be successful in their business. While these needed skills do not necessarily point to gaps, it does provide a snapshot of skill demand and reinforces some of the findings from earlier surveys and competency model analysis. MERIC researchers analyzed over 8,382 online job advertisements from February 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016 using a tool from Burning Glass Technologies, to determine what skills were in greatest demand over the year.

When considering all occupations, common skills are listed the most in job advertisements and show that basic business fundamentals, communication, organization and writing skills are the most cited. Customer service skills and computer skills complete the list of top five common skills.

⁴ State of the St. Louis Workforce 2015. St. Louis Community College Workforce Solutions, August 2015. Available at: <http://www.stlcc.edu/Workforce-Solutions/St-Louis-Workforce/>

⁵ Missouri Labor Supply & Demand Analysis. Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, February 2015. Available at: https://www.missourieconomy.org/pdfs/statewide_labor_supply_n_demand_analysis.pdf

Analysis of specific occupational clusters shows more targeted skill needs in jobs related to healthcare, information technology, finance, engineering and manufacturing. Many of these occupational clusters relate to the industries Missouri has targeted for economic growth.

Basic skills cover a broad range of topics, such as reading and writing, applied math, logic flows, information gathering, ethics, etc., and mainly relate to the educational efforts of primary and secondary schools, institutions of higher learning, and workforce training programs. From the workers' standpoint, many of these skills are hopefully gained through education and early work opportunities as a younger person; however evidence from skills gap analysis suggests this is still a challenge. Partnerships by educators, businesses, workforce economic developers should continue to focus efforts on this issue as these basic skills form the foundation for successful, occupation-specific training to follow.

Specific occupational skills are learned through longer-term employment in an industry which provides training or through the more formal education of apprenticeships, community colleges, or four-year universities. Attaining these skills, outside of business experience and training, presents some challenges to job seekers, particularly those who have been unemployed for a long time period, and to educational institutions. Job seekers need affordable, flexible training alternatives, especially if the person needs to work while gaining new skills. Education providers work to keep up with industry trends and technology while also needing to adapt to new, cost-effective learning methods. As with basic skill development, stakeholders in a healthy, growing economy must also partner to meet the needs of both workers and business.

Missouri's opportunities for long-term economic growth will increasingly depend on a well-educated, flexible workforce that responds quickly to changing business needs. Targeted efforts to prepare workers start at a young age, are honed through higher education and work experience, and are sustained by a culture and ability to embrace life-long learning. Taking bold, and sometimes difficult, steps to equip Missouri's workforce for success will be one of the strongest economic development tools a state can have in retaining and attracting the industries of the future.

MERIC, the WIOA agency leadership and the Sector Strategy research will strive to incorporate real-time feedback from employers about the current status of labor market information in each region and for the state.

D. Workforce Development, Education, and Training Activities Analysis

Describe the workforce development services and activities, including education and training in the LWDA, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce. Include education and training activities of the core programs and mandatory and optional One-Stop Delivery System partners.⁶

⁶ Mandatory One-Stop partners: Each LWDA must have one comprehensive One-Stop Center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners. In addition to the core programs, for individuals with multiple needs to access the services, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the One-Stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins Act), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Insurance, Re-entry Programs, and YouthBuild.

The workforce development services and activities in the West Central Region, that include education and training activities, follow the core principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

- 1) Increase access and opportunity for individuals with barriers to employment. The region does this by utilizing the Next Generation Career Center model within the Job Centers which affords each customer the opportunity to know their skills, improve their skills and market those skills to potential employers. A universal, initial skills assessment identifies whether an individual is job search ready or in need of skills enhancement. The opportunity to earn National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) using the ACT skills certification system is offered to all customers.
- 2) Support the alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development systems. Currently referral systems are being refined among partners to ensure customers have access to the best mix of services and resources available in the region to move them along a career pathway that leads to self-sufficiency.
- 3) To provide individuals with the skills, labor market information and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment. Jobs Centers offer specialized workshops focusing on resume preparation, interviewing skills, how to effectively network and more to assist each customer in becoming a better job applicant. The overall need of our job seeker population is to possess a multitude of skills sets so they can continuously evolve with the ever-growing workplace.

1. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development services and activities identified above.

Strengths

- i) The Next Generation Job Center Integrated Service Delivery Model has allowed for a robust menu of workforce services to offer both businesses and individuals in the region. For example when job seekers earn the NCRC, they earn a portable credential that helps define their skills for employers.
- ii) The positive side of the issues discussed is that every core, required, and even optional partners are coming to the table with ideas, service offerings and resources aimed at improving the personal and work-related outlook for the members of our communities which in turn will enhance the productivity and competitiveness of our employers and their organizations.
- iii) While there is no single job training approach that is right for all workers, having access to accurate and up-to-date labor market data provided by MERIC and other sources, as well as information and guidance about career and training opportunities, help our customers customize a plan through more informed education and employment decisions.

Weaknesses

- i) Employers have indicated that finding workers, even with college degrees, with adequate basic skills was a challenge. Throughout the workforce, job applicants often lack basic personal effectiveness competencies such as communication skills, work ethic, discipline, critical thinking or interpersonal skills. These are a few of the weaknesses that the workforce system is primed to address. Regional Sector Strategy Team meetings validated the need for job readiness training to be more broadly embedded in K-12 curricula. As these skills are honed through elementary and secondary school years, graduates will be better prepared to move along the career continuum to on-the-job training, Career and Technical Education or higher post-secondary coursework.
- ii) The negative side of the issues discussed is the complicated nature of the systems. The absence of aligned and standardized data systems makes it extremely difficult to track a client's progress.
- iii) Jobs in the region today are requiring more highly-skilled workers. Workplace skills are essential in all industries to advance in the fast-paced economy and to improve efficiency within the region. The speed at which technology is changing and evolving impacts key skill deficiencies among the unemployed and underemployed population.
- iv) Local Workforce Development Capacity
Provide an analysis of the capacity of local entities to provide the workforce development services and activities to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the LWDA.

WIOA's requirement for robust relationships across programs is evident in the partnerships being created and/or strengthened throughout the region. The individual capacities of each partner are evident in the scope of services they provide and the exemplary performance of their programs, as measured both by federally reported performance measures and key business metrics such as total number of customers served, effective labor force attachment and skills progression. The capacity of all partners is expected to grow as we build an integrated, demand-driven workforce system where all are equally included.

WDB and Job Centers in the region maintain partnerships with various community-based organizations. These relationships reduce duplication and enhance services provided to job seekers and employers. Most recently a group (Nexus) was formed to coordinate and thus reduce the number of visits employers might receive from various business services representatives. Members attending the monthly Nexus meetings include: Center for Human Services, MO Vocational Rehabilitation, Experience Works, Community Action Agencies, Probation and Parole, Rehabilitation Institute KC, Preferred

Family Healthcare, IMKO Temp Service, WIOA Youth representatives, Job Point, Job Center staff and WDB staff. Job openings, referrals and placements are shared through one-point-of-contact, currently the WDB.

WDB and Job Centers also work collaboratively with various other local Chambers of Commerce, economic development agencies, local career and technical centers, local high schools, colleges, as well as Title II adult education and literacy providers to name a few.

Our strengths include increased focus on outreach services to customers, especially individuals with barriers to employment, through enhanced collaboration, coordination and partnership development with local community agencies.

Additionally, development of improved employer outreach strategies incorporating local economic development partners benefits both employers and job seekers in the local area. Tapping into the experience and skill of our local economic development partners, we can more effectively engage with employers in key, high-demand industries and better coordinate on-the-job training programs to provide training in these high priority occupations. A Sector Strategies Leadership Team has been formed to evaluate and implement sector strategies and career pathways to provide accelerated pathways to employment in in-demand occupations. The partners who make up the Sector Strategies Leadership Team come from economic development, local community college, MO Vocational Rehabilitation, Title II AEL, MO Department of Social Services, county commission, WDB staff and private business.

Opportunities for improvement include the development of a soft skills program for schools to assist with preparing youth for employment, marketing manufacturing as a viable career, attracting professionals to rural Missouri communities and developing a skilled talent pool for local employers.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

V. Local Structure

A. LWDA Profile

Describe the geographical workforce development area, including the LWDA's major communities, major employers, training and educational institutions (technical and community colleges, universities, etc.), population, diversity of the population, and relevant growth trends.

"The West Central region consists of 13 counties and five larger communities: Sedalia, Warrensburg, Clinton, Marshall and Nevada. Its three major lakes – Truman, Stockton and Pomme de Terre – offer recreation and tourism, while Whiteman Air Force Base, home of the B-2 Stealth bomber, offers military protection. Though the western most counties are included in the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the region is mostly rural but dotted with several self-sufficient micropolitan communities. The top industry sectors include Agribusiness, Manufacturing and Healthcare.

The current population of 280,406 shows a slight increase between the years 2000-2010 according to the U.S. Census figures . The West Central region boasts a stable population and employment base.

Civilian Labor Force (CLF) information gathered from Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) and the Missouri Office of Administration for July 2015 reveals the greatest "available labor pool" resides in Johnson County with Pettis County following close behind. *The "Civilian Labor Force" represents those who have jobs or are seeking jobs, are at least 16 years old, are not serving in the military and are not institutionalized.*

According to the West Central Region Labor Market Analysis report published on the MERIC website, the population of the workforce is aging. This report shows that in the West Central Region, 23.67% of the workforce is age 55 or older. The percentage for the state is slightly lower, with an average of 21.44% for the same age group.

Hickory County, Benton County and St. Clair County have the state's largest share (29.6%, 25.9% and 22.4% respectively) of people ages 65 and older while Johnson County is one of the Missouri counties with the smallest share (10.7%) of people age 65 and older.

Ten percent of the region's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) population is categorized as disabled. The counties with the highest percentages of the CLF population identified as being disabled are Cedar (11.8%), Hickory (14.5%), and Vernon (11.8%).

County Name	2014 Total Population	Civilian Labor Force (July 2015)
Bates	16,584	8,526
Benton	18,806	7,079
Carroll	9,043	4,756
Cedar	13,952	5,997
Chariton	7,694	3,875
Henry	22,028	10,027
Hickory	9,219	3,916
Johnson	54,362	22,448
Lafayette	32,688	17,894
Pettis	42,225	21,169
St. Clair	9,457	11,156
Saline	23,347	3,978
Vernon	21,001	9,976
	280,406	130,797

Females in the region outnumber males 54% to 46%. Of the total Civilian Labor Force PY14 the “white alone” population equals 75,259 leaving less than 5,000 people in all other race categories combined (U.S. Census, *LEHD, First Quarter 2014*). Approximately 3.3% of the Civilian Labor Force population is Hispanic or Latino.

Additionally, each community continually provides information relating to their diversity needs through focus groups, chambers of commerce, community based organizations, employer-based committees, public service agencies, Local Elected Officials, board members, and other representatives. The Workforce Development Board and the Missouri Job Centers strive to identify changing needs by staying in touch with the communities, as well as utilizing statistics provided through other resources including MERIC.

WIOA Census Demographics by County									
Location	Race <i>LEHD, First Quarter 2014</i>						Ethnicity <i>LEHD, First Quarter 2014</i>		
	<i>American Indian or Alaska Native Alone</i>	<i>Asian Alone</i>	<i>Black or African American Alone</i>	<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone</i>	<i>Two or More Race Groups</i>	<i>White Alone</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hispanic or Latino</i>	
Bates	21	18	70	0	30	3,469	3,608	65	
Benton	26	16	55	0	31	3,254	3,382	64	
Carroll	7	13	57	0	16	2,286	2,379	47	
Cedar	24	14	26	0	32	3,103	3,199	45	
Chariton	6	6	63	0	10	2,063	2,148	18	
Henry	48	39	178	6	73	7,319	7,663	141	
Hickory	4	0	7	0	8	1,011	1,030	13	
Johnson	116	151	568	17	194	11,244	12,290	439	
Lafayette	36	72	266	6	85	8,012	8,477	240	
Pettis	121	176	752	25	225	16,926	18,225	912	
Saline	51	93	454	12	99	8,265	8,974	536	
St. Clair	9	16	54	0	14	1,717	1,810	32	
Vernon	50	51	108	5	81	6,590	6,885	150	

Source: MERIC WIOA Census Demographics by County

The number of households in the region in the period 2010-2014 was 112,860. The average per capita income (in 2014 dollars) for the region is calculated as \$20,413 and the median household income (in 2014 dollars) as \$39,194.

Within the thirteen counties lie two state post-secondary educational institutions, the University of Central Missouri and State Fair Community College; and three private educational institutions, Missouri Valley College, Cottey College, and Crowder College. In addition to the two- and four- year facilities, there are seven vocational-technical/career center locations in Carrollton, Clinton, Lexington, Marshall, Nevada, Sedalia, and Warrensburg. More than 100 high schools call the West Central region home.

Training/Education Institutions	
State Fair Community College	Sedalia
State Fair Career & Technology Center	Sedalia
American College of Hair Design	Sedalia
Central Methodist University – SFCC Campus	Sedalia
University of Central Missouri	Warrensburg
Warrensburg Area Career Center	Warrensburg
Central Missouri Dental Assisting	Warrensburg
Clinton Technical School	Clinton
State Fair Community College - Clinton	Clinton
Lex La-Ray Technical Center	Lexington
Wentworth Military Academy and College	Lexington
Missouri Valley College	Marshall
Saline County Career Center	Marshall
Park University	Whiteman AFB
State Fair Community College	Whiteman AFB
University of Central Missouri	Whiteman AFB
Cottey College	Nevada
Crowder College	Nevada
Missouri Welding Institute	Nevada
Nevada Regional Technical Center	Nevada
State Fair Community College – Warsaw High School	Warsaw

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Major Employers	
Bates County	Chariton County
Bates County Memorial Hospital	Chariton Park Health Care Center
Medical-Lodge of Butler	Brunswick Nursing Home
Wal-Mart	Hampton Feed Lot
Benton County	AgriServices of Brunswick
Regal Beloit	Henry County
Newmans Foods	TC Transcontinental Packing Inc
Warsaw Health & Rehabilitation	Champion Brands
Good Samaritan Nursing Home	Evans Pipe Steele LLC
Elbeco Inc	Schreiber Foods
Phoenix Manufacturing	Royal Oaks Hospital
Carroll County	Schreiber Foods
Carroll County Memorial Hospital	Hickory County
Life Care Center of Carrollton	Lucas Oil Speedway
Carroll House	Christian Healthcare
Cedar County	Applewood Lane Corp
Cedar County Memorial Hospital	Johnson County
Community Springs Healthcare	EnerSys Energy Products
Dairy Farmers of America	Alstom Signaling
Hammons Products Inc	Stahl Specialty
Southwest Psychiatric Rehabilitation	Janesville Acoustics
Stockton Nursing Home	Northrup Grumman
Witt Printing Co	Whiteman Air Force Base
	University of Central Missouri
Lafayette County	Missouri Veterans Home
Milbank Manufacturing Co	Western MO Medical Center
Old World Spice	Saline County
TTG Inc	Cargill
Higginsville Rehabilitation Center	Conagra Foods
John Knox Village East	Coreslab
Lafayette Regional Health Center	Fitzgibbon Hospital
	Marshall Habilitation Center
Pettis County	Missouri Valley Community Action Agency
Duke Manufacturing	Missouri Valley College
Gardner Denver	St. Clair County
General Cable	Appleton City Manor
Inter-State Studios	Truman Lake Manor
Maxion Wheels	Ellet Memorial Hospital
ProEnergy Services	West Central MO Community Action Agency
Waterloo Industries	Vernon County
Bothwell Regional Health Center	Moore-Few Care Center
Center for Human Services	Nevada Regional Medical Center
State Fair Community College	Nevada Rehabilitation Center
Tyson Foods Inc	3M Company

Relevant Growth Trends

Industry Expansion 2015

In the past year the West Central Region has announced expansions in manufacturing and distribution. The companies include:

Janesville Acoustics	New Automotive Supplier Manufactures fiber based acoustical products for automotive industry	Johnson County
8760 Service Group	40 New Jobs Maintenance, Construction and Fabrication services for the Power Industry	Pettis County
Stribling	Expansion of Facility Co-Pack, Warehousing & Distribution Center	Pettis County
BioStar Systems	New Biogas Facility Anaerobic Digestion Technology	Pettis County
Coreslab Missouri	60 New Jobs Precast/prestressed concrete products	Saline County
3M	Facility Expansion Graphics & Signage Production	Vernon County

B. Local Workforce Development System

*Describe the workforce development system in the LWDA. Identify the programs that are included in that system and how the Board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs. Describe how the Board plans to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). **Include a list of all standing committees.***

The workforce development system in the West Central Region is driven by an engaged assembly of presiding commissioners; a committed, talented board of directors made up of private business and public sector partners; and invested providers of services through three comprehensive job centers covering thirteen, predominately rural counties.

Business and industry board members represent agriculture, manufacturing, banking, insurance, healthcare and retail sectors.

Public sector partners represent Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner/Peyser, economic development, TANF/MWA, education, older workers, labor and an electrical apprenticeship program.

The Region's standing committees are:

Executive

Personnel and Nominating

Finance and Audit

Planning and Operations

Youth Task Force performs in an advisory capacity for Planning & Operations Committee

Ad Hoc committees and/or special sub-committees are convened to address specific issues requiring action that is deemed expeditious by the Board. The WDB Chairperson is responsible for appointing each board member to a standing committee, annually.

The Executive Committee is composed of the four Board Officers and the Chairpersons of the standing committees. The Executive Committee has the authority to act on the business of the Board which must be resolved/completed prior to the next scheduled board meeting which takes place every other month.

The Personnel /Nominating Committee leads the efforts to engage and enlist board members to the WDB. They also prepare the slate of officers to be presented to the full board for vote. This committee reviews and revises, as necessary, the WDB Personnel Policies. The Personnel/Nominating Committee shall report meeting results to the Full Board and make appropriate recommendations, as applicable to conduct business.

The Finance/Audit Committee shall review the Workforce Development Board's financial system, budgets, program costs, and the Workforce Development Board's subcontracts to ensure that costs are necessary, reasonable, and within appropriate cost categories. This Committee shall review the state of Missouri generated fiscal monitoring and audit reports, and inform the Board of the fiscal or financial status and levels of compliance. This committee shall also have the responsibility of seeing that a Fiscal Operations Manual is prepared and adhered to. This manual shall include all financial operational procedures including the audit process. The Finance/Audit Committee shall report meeting results to the Full Board and make appropriate recommendations, as applicable to conduct business.

The Planning/Operations Committee shall assist in designing the planning/oversight process, and approve the monitoring system developed by the staff, make recommendations to the Board on monitoring criteria and performance measures, review reports on program performance, and review corrective action reports. This committee oversees and consults with the Youth Task Force. The Planning/ Operations Committee shall report meeting results to the Full Board and make appropriate recommendations, as applicable to conduct business. Also deals with all One-Stop issues which includes access to individuals with disabilities.

The Youth Task Force is an advisory committee to the Board for youth activities. This task force will consist of members of the Board and other community members with expertise or an interest in youth services. This committee is responsible for assisting in the development of the local plan relating to eligible youth. This task force may suggest and coordinate youth activities authorized by the Act and other duties deemed appropriate by the Board. The Chairperson of the Youth Task Force must be a member of the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc.

The Board will retain the responsibility for conducting oversight of local youth programs operating under federal law to ensure both fiscal and programmatic accountability. The Youth Task Force shall report meeting results to the Planning and Operations Committee and make appropriate recommendations, as applicable to conduct business.

The WDB through Memorandums of Understanding (see attachment 3) and/or contracts identifies how they will work with and support our partner entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs. Most partner MOUs (under section 3 – “Services to Be Provided”) have identified specific services to be provided by each partner and often the funding source they use to provide that specific service. This information assists all parties in identifying opportunities for sharing resources to assist common customers.

For example in PY 15, utilizing this information and an established line of open communication, 40 additional students were able to access WIOA funds to assist with tuition and fees at the Carl D. Perkins authorized Career and Technical Schools in the region: Saline County Career Center, Lex La Ray Technical Center, Warrensburg Area Career Center, Nevada Regional Technical Center and the Clinton Technical School.

Most importantly, each partner (core, required and community) has demonstrated a commitment to working together for the benefit of those we serve and we move forward together seeking out more opportunities for partnership.

C. Local Facility and Partner Information

1. *Identify the One-Stop partners that are physically located at each of the comprehensive (full-service) center(s) in the LWDA, and the services provided by these partners, and list them in **Attachment 1** to the Plan.*
2. *Identify the local comprehensive One-Stop Center(s), including current mailing and street addresses, telephone and fax numbers and list them in **Attachment 1** to the Plan.*
3. *Identify the local affiliate sites, including current mailing and street addresses, telephone and fax numbers and list them in **Attachment 1** to the Plan.*
4. *Identify the One-Stop partners that are physically located at each of the affiliated sites and the services provided by these partners and list them in **Attachment 1** to the Plan.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 1

VI. Local Strategy Implementation

Describe the Board's goals and strategies for operation, innovation, and improvement under WIOA (20 CFR §679.560).

WIOA required strategies. Please include strategies addressing:

1. *Career Pathways;*
 - A pathway to self-sufficient employment will be charted with a focus on the job seeker and the employer. The sector strategies developed in the region will assist

employers by providing a qualified applicant pool and job seekers will be knowledgeable of which career cluster will provide the best employment and career advancement opportunities. Once any partner sets an individual on a career pathway, every partner takes responsibility to contribute, as appropriate, to the participant's success along that pathway.

2. *Employer Engagement;*

- Employer engagement is critical on the front end in providing input for programs that prepare job seekers for entry level and higher skilled positions. Their engagement is also critical as a partner in providing employment opportunities to job seekers when openings occur at their places of business. Employer engagement is continually sought through coordination, collaboration and cooperation with Partners via sector strategy activities, work-related club presentations, the Business Services Team, economic development projects, Missouri Works Training contracts, and a regional outreach group of partner representatives called Nexus.

3. *Business Needs Assessment;*

- The needs of local businesses are assessed through personal contacts made by Partners, feedback from private sector members of the Workforce Development Board, analysis of local labor market reports, monitoring of job order requirements and help-wanted advertisements using advanced technology.

4. *Alignment and Coordination of Core Program Services;*

- Interagency alignment and coordination will be a process. Initially, the Missouri Job Center staff will be responsible for serving as the hub for service referrals. Through inter-agency meetings and staff training, Job Center staff will be knowledgeable of the services available through core partners and be able to give customers the information they need to make informed choices. A local resource guide will be developed by MJC staff which will be shared with core partners as well as each of the 19 required One-Stop partners to facilitate referrals to the MJC for direct access to any service in the system.
- Referrals will be documented to include the method of referral and subsequent follow-up. Each referral will include an initial assessment (to the degree information can be shared), listing of services already planned, and the service requested of the organization receiving the referral.
- Current core partner-based activities being used to align the programs include:
 - ✓ TANF – has a representative that sits on the local Workforce Development Board that provides direction for program consideration. Any participant referred to Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) must complete the same assessment as required by Title I (Career Ready 101).
 - ✓ TANF – ability to apply for benefits online.

- ✓ Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP) will be operated through the Missouri Job Center system. Each METP participant may be co-enrolled in Title I and Title II services to provide them immediate access to career pathways information, training and employment services.
- ✓ Family Support Division (FSD) allows the use of jobs.mo.gov for their client's job searches. The time logged in is counted towards their required participation hours for respective programs.
- ✓ AEL (Title II) – has a representative that sits on the local Workforce Development Board. AEL assists adults to become literate and to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency. Activities which may be offered to clients are: remedial reading, writing, mathematics, literacy training and study skills, English for non-English speakers, bilingual training, and high school equivalency preparation. AEL currently partners with the region in the delivery of the Scholars@Work Program and coordinates remediation and testing services and referrals between the AEL sites and the Job Centers.
- ✓ Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation has a representative that sits on the local Workforce Development Board that provides direction for program accessibility, physical access to services, and assistive technology needs for individuals with disabilities.
- ✓ Rehabilitation Services for the Blind – RSB is a new partner to the workforce system in the West Central Region. RSB has assisted in the past with providing technical assistance in regard to assistive technology but more recently has begun participating at Workforce Development Board meetings. We anticipate this partnership will grow and take on an expanded relationship. RSB can provide individuals who are blind or visually impaired access to vocational training, job development and placement, support services, post-employment services, and computer/adaptive equipment.

5. *Outreach to Jobseekers and Businesses;*

- Outreach to Job Seekers is conducted through several avenues. The region's Missouri Job Centers offer a robust menu of services aimed at making every job seeker a better, more informed job candidate through labor market information, career exploration activities, job seeking assistance, access to regional, state, and national job openings through the website www.job.mo.gov, resume preparation assistance, assessments, workshops, access to short and long term skill-building training, supportive services information, skills certifications such as the National Career Readiness Certificate, job specific training and certifications, placement assistance, opportunities for on-the-job training, and tuition assistance, to name a few. Methods of referral and opportunities for co-enrollment with other workforce partners will be continually refined. Collaborating with partner agencies to develop a triage approach to serving customers will increase awareness of area resources and avoid duplication of services.
- The Adult Education Program is piloting a new staffing initiative, called Transitions in Partnership (TIP) to connect students with core and required partners, local employers, and post-secondary institutions. A dedicated case manager/job coach

will be responsible for connecting targeted AEL students with available partners, services, and opportunities to achieve employment and/or post-secondary enrollment.

- Outreach to Businesses may take the form of providing cost-saving human resources assistance through the posting of jobs on www.jobs.mo.gov, assistance with placing and filling job orders, the collection of applications, applicant pre-screening, interviewing space and assistance, assessments, National Career Readiness testing, workshops, sponsoring hiring events and job/career fairs and more.
 - ✓ In many instances, businesses also realize reduced training costs through work experience placements, on-the-job training reimbursements and transition of students completing industry-specific certificate and degree courses.
 - ✓ Business Services Team members as well as Nexus affiliated partner staff coordinate employer appointments and share job leads so businesses are afforded the most applicable services with the least amount of disruption to their schedules. Members of the Nexus group include the Job Center Business Team (Business Services Representatives, Marketing Specialists, Functional Leaders, Agricultural Employment Services Representative and local Veterans Employment Representatives); in addition, VR Business Outreach Specialists, MWA Job Placement Specialists, Children's Therapy Center Placement Specialist and other local partners participate in monthly coordination meetings/training.
 - ✓ Outreach is also conducted through economic development events, regional employer meetings and forums, local human resource groups, industry associations and Chambers of Commerce.

6. *A. Access—Improvements to Physical and Programmatic Accessibility.; B. Customer Service Training;*

A. Access

- The West Central Region is home to three comprehensive Missouri Job Centers located in Sedalia, Clinton and Nevada. In December 2015, the Clinton facility relocated from a building on the north side of the community to a newer building on its very active downtown square. This relocation has shown a dramatic increase in foot traffic. The Job Center in Sedalia has been housed for many years in a Reed Act building which is currently on the market for sale. This location lacks parking and training rooms are located on the main floor as well as in the basement. A new location is being sought that will allow more partners to be co-located and all services to be available on the main floor. Certification of the One-Stop Centers will provide regular review and updating of any issues related to physical and programmatic accessibility in each of the centers.
- An Access Point for Missouri Job Center services is available in one of our more remote communities which provides limited resources to job seekers and employers. The Access Point is housed in the Hickory County Library in the town of Wheatland.

- Customers, both Job Seeker and Employers, may access resources online through www.jobs.mo.gov . The website is designed to allow access to labor market information, assessment tools, career exploration information, training and education provider contacts, Job Center locations, information on job postings, informative workshops, tax credit programs, etc.
- The workforce partners have been collaborating with the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD Center) for technical assistance. Surveys were utilized to gather information from job seekers on the social, environmental and physical accessibility of the Missouri Job Centers. The feedback from these surveys was shared with each region's EO Officer. On-going evaluation and recommendations are made in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Workforce Development to improve training and technical assistance for serving our customers with disabilities.

B. Customer Service Training

- Customer Service is an integral component of many jobs. For this reason, customer service training is available for staff and customers through workshops and/or on-line training options but it is also imbedded in how Job Center staff members interact every day with customers. Modeling desirable behavior can be very impactful. Key points to be reinforced through demonstration:
 - ✓ **Empathy, Patience and Consistency** – developing an ability to deal with all sorts of customers, whether they are irate, frustrated, full of questions or chatty.
 - ✓ **Adaptability** – able to handle surprises, sense a customer's mood and adapt accordingly.
 - ✓ **Clear Communication** – use of specific unambiguous language, maintaining a positive delivery.
 - ✓ **Work Ethic** – use of strong time management and prioritization skills ensuring all customers are provided timely assistance.
 - ✓ **Knowledge** – of Job Center products and the resources available.

7. Assessment

- To best assist customers in establishing goals and understanding the steps necessary to achieve those goals, it is necessary to know from what position they are starting. Initial assessment will be conducted to identify skill levels; which include literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency; aptitudes; abilities, to include skills gaps; barriers to employment and supportive service needs. Additional assessments will be available to evaluate interests, personality traits, etc.
- Specialized assessments, diagnostic testing, or in-depth interviewing may be utilized.
- A One-Stop Operator or One-Stop Partner will not be required to conduct a new interview, evaluation, or assessment of a participant if a recent interview, evaluation, or assessment was conducted by another education or training program and it is deemed appropriate.

8. *Support Services*

- Services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA may be made available as applicable.
- Efforts must be made to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services, prior to approval for payment under WIOA.

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ADMINISTRATION

VII. Assurances

Describe the process used by the Board to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and labor organizations, and input into the development of the Plan, prior to submission of the Plan.

The West Central Region's Five-Year Strategic Plan has been made available for a thirty-day review and comment to the general public, businesses and industry, representatives of diverse populations, and representatives of local labor organizations. Notices of availability and the plan were posted on or before April 25, 2016, on the region's website at www.skillupmissouri.com in its entirety. A copy of the plan was also made available at the main office of the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., 3208 West 16th Street, Sedalia, MO 65301.

The Workforce Development Board is comprised of at least the minimum number of federally mandated agency partners, as well as the required number of private sector businesses partners to maintain a quorum. Currently the board retains a 58% private sector membership; 14 positions are filled with representatives of business across the thirteen region. The remaining 43%, or 10 individuals, represent mandated partners such as labor organizations, secondary and postsecondary education, community-based organizations, etc. The Planning and Operations Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Personnel and Nominating Committee, and the entire board of directors are provided numerous opportunities to provide input and guidance during the development of the plan. On March 23, 2016, members of the Workforce Development Board, including private sector and mandated partners, local elected officials, and staff, discussed during committee meetings and the full board session the design of program activities, enhanced services to customers, services to youth, and the development of the four year strategic plan.

Many of the attachments to the Plan were developed as guiding documents through each program year and brought before the governing board committee(s) and the full board for discussion and finally, a vote of approval. Numerous other agencies provided input into the development of the plan through the provision of local information, identification of need, and program design and activities.

Full board review and approval of this Plan in its' entirety will be sought at the regularly scheduled board meeting on May 25, 2016. At that time the 30-day period for public review will have concluded, and DWD will be notified in writing of the vote of final approval by the full board. As active members of their respective communities and the board, board members continually assist the Chief Elected Officials and staff in designing appropriate services and operations that will best meet the needs of the Region.

VIII. Local Policies and Requirements

- A. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES—*Please include as **Attachment 2**, the Board's policy for Supportive Services to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities. This policy*

must address the requirements in [DWD Issuance 12-2010, "Statewide Supportive Services Policy."](#)

- Supportive Services shall be available to all West Central Region participants registered and participating in activities authorized under WIOA. Payments will be based on need and funding availability. Participants **must** be actively participating in approved services and be unable to obtain such supportive services through other means. Referrals to partner agencies within our communities including faith-based organizations, non-profits, clothes closets, women's shelters, United Way, Community Partnerships, the Salvation Army, and others may be made if Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resources are deemed inappropriate or if Title I funding is unavailable. Where more than one resource is available, the primary focus will be the coordination of benefits. Should other resources be identified, WIOA will be the last payee. Job Center customers that are not WIOA eligible are referred to partner agencies, including those listed above, for supportive services. Staff follow up is an important part of providing referrals to insure that customer needs are met. Each Job Center maintains a local "resource guide" of providers and their contact information.
 - ✓ Supportive services may include assistance with transportation, childcare/dependent care needs, emergency housing, and work-related tools, work attire/uniforms, testing fees, legal aid services and needs-related payments.
 - ✓ All supportive services will be provided in accordance with DWD Issuance 12-2010, Attachment 1 "Statewide Supportive Services Policy" or any subsequent DWD issuance addressing supportive services.

- **SEE ATTACHMENT 2**

B. ADULT—Describe the criteria to be used by the Board to determine whether funds allocated to a LWDA for Adult employment and training activities under WIOA sections 133(b)(2) or (b)(3) are limited, and the process by which any priority will be applied by the One-Stop Operator.

- The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., recognizes that funds provided under the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act through formula allocations may be limited for the Adult population at times. WIOA Section 133(b)(4) grants authority to the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB), with the Governor's approval, to transfer up to 100% of the annual allocations between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This flexibility certainly provides the opportunity to deliver services to participants based on the customer flow of each region.
- In the event that the funds allocated to the West Central Region for adult employment and training activities are limited, priority for individualized career services requiring fully documented eligibility status and training services funded with the Title I Adult funds will be determined as follows:

- ✓ **First priority** will be given to veterans and other adults who are recipients of public assistance.
 - Veteran - an individual who served in active duty in the military, naval, or air service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.
 - This includes full-time National Guard service. It also includes service with a Reserve component. In both cases, this must be active duty service, rather than training.
 - Spouses of eligible veterans are entitled to priority access.
 - Priority consideration is also recognized for the spouses of an eligible veteran who is missing in action, a captured POW, or a detainee of a foreign power.
 - Recipients of Public Assistance –an individual who receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving, or in the past six months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), supplemental security income program (SSI), or State or local income-based public assistance.

- ✓ **Second priority** will be given to unemployed individuals who are not recipients of public assistance but low-income individuals who possess barriers to employment with those possessing a higher number of barriers being given preference over those with less barriers.
 - Low-income individual means an individual who:
 - Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving , or in the past six months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), temporary assistance for needy families program (TANF), supplemental security income program (SSI), or State or local income-based public assistance.
 - Is in a family with a total family income that does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.
 - Qualifies as a homeless individual (Violence Against Women Act of 1994) or a homeless child or youth (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act).

- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.
 - Is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made.
 - Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements for cash payment or income level requirements as described above, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet such requirements.
- The Workforce Development Board has determined individuals with the following barriers will be afforded priority of service status:
- School Dropout—an individual who is no longer attending any school and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
 - Basic Skills Deficient—an individual 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.
 - Limited English Proficiency—an individual who is unable to communicate in English (for a person whose native language is not English).
 - Parenting Teen—an individual who is currently a teen parent or became a parent prior to reaching age 20.
 - Lacks Significant Work History—an individual that has not worked full-time or part-time for the same employer longer than three consecutive months in the prior two-year period.
 - Long-term Unemployed—an individual who has not been employed for 15 out of the past 26 weeks, concurrently or consecutively, including those that have quit or were fired.
 - Older Individual—a person 55 years of age or older.
 - Ex-Offender—an individual who has a record of arrests or conviction of a misdemeanor or felony.
 - Unique cases as approved by authorized staff of the Workforce Development Board.

C. *YOUTH—WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(VIII) establishes that an eligibility criteria for Out-of-School Youth (OSY) is “a low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.” Please explain how the Board will define, identify, document, and serve youth participants meeting this eligibility criteria.*

WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(VII) establishes that an eligibility criteria for In-School Youth (ISY) is “an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational

program or to secure and hold employment.” Please explain how the Board will define, identify, document, and serve youth participants meeting this eligibility criteria.

- The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc. engages the region’s Youth Task Force and partner agencies to identify and reach the area’s neediest youth. Referrals and coordination of services are utilized to best meet the needs of local at-risk youth. Some of the Youth Outreach Partners include:
 - ✓ Missouri Job Center staff
 - ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation
 - ✓ Adult Education and Literacy
 - ✓ Area secondary schools/counselors
 - ✓ Housing Authorities
 - ✓ Family Support Division
 - ✓ Pathways Behavioral Healthcare
 - ✓ Probation and Parole
 - ✓ Drug Court
 - ✓ New Life Center
 - ✓ Golden Valley Door of Hope
 - ✓ Domestic Violence Shelters
 - ✓ Head Start
 - ✓ Birthright
 - ✓ WIC
 - ✓ Community Police Departments
 - ✓ West Central Missouri Community Action Agency
 - ✓ Missouri Valley Community Action Agency
 - ✓ Boys & Girls Club
 - ✓ Show-Me Christian Youth Home
 - ✓ Butterfield Youth Services
 - ✓ Community Centers and Youth Programs
 - ✓ Division of Youth Services
 - ✓ On My Own
 - ✓ New Haven
 - ✓ Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
- The Workforce Development Board will utilize WIOA eligibility guidelines to identify in-school (ISY) and out of school (OSY) youth.
- Youth will be identified via intake assessments conducted by WIOA staff and/or partner agency referrals.
- Eligibility and participation activity will be documented in the State-approved data base system with an individual case file retained in the Youth Program service provider office.
- The Workforce Development Board has defined the youth eligibility criteria for *“requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment”* as an individual who falls into one of the following categories:
 - Has been or is at risk of becoming a statistic of one of the following:
 - Placement in substance abuse facility/alternative residential care/group home - This includes but is not limited to receiving services through facilities providing treatment programs for those

suffering from drug and/or alcohol addiction and mental health; supportive environments for youth in crisis such as those with backgrounds of abuse, neglect, abandonment and other unfortunate circumstances . Verification is obtained through referrals from partners such as Show-Me Christian Youth Home, On My Own, Pathways Behavioral Healthcare, Chafee Foster Care etc. Discharge documents or letters from counselors are also accepted.

- Behavior problems at school/truancy/family literacy problems/victim or witness of violence - Issues relating to behaviors at school or truancy are verified through school truancy officers, counselors and/or special education coordinators. DESE-recognized Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan or behavior intervention plans are provided. Family literacy problems are often identified through AEL providers and/or high school counselors with grade level and IEP information. Exposure to violence is verified via police reports and domestic violence shelter referrals, when available.
- Repeated suspensions from an educational facility or employment situation– More than one suspension in any one year is verified through school truancy officers, attendance reports, or written suspension notification from employer.
- Second generation (or more) public assistance recipient - Verified through Family Support Division documentation.

- Have had three or more jobs in the last 6 months verified by payroll records.
- Youth who reside in an economically depressed rural area with limited opportunities for gaining work maturity skills and/or career exploration in their chosen field – Verified with the use of Labor Market Information (LMI) available from such sources as Missouri Economic Research Information Center (MERIC).
- Youth working but considered underemployed...working less than full time, working for minimum wage with no benefits or opportunity for advancement or needs employment in education-related field – Verified through paycheck stubs and school-related documentation such as certificates.
- The mix of services to be provided for each youth will be individualized. Eligible youth will be able to access program activities designed to enhance and improve their opportunities to complete education and training programs that will provide them with job readiness skills and competencies.

D. VETERANS—*Describe how veteran's priority, as required by Public Law 107-288, will be incorporated into all programs.*

- The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veteran's Employment Representative (LVER) are fully integrated into the region's Missouri Job Centers. Each Job Center within the West Central Region follows the preference requirements of Public Law 107-288. Veterans will receive priority of service in programs for which they are eligible. Every effort is made to engage covered veterans and their spouses in the programs and services of the workforce system. All Title I contracts with program operators within the region include this language and expectations for serving veterans.

- Targeted outreach efforts are conducted at Whiteman Air Force Base (WAFB) on a monthly basis through the WAFB Family Resource Center.
- Individuals entering a Job Center in the West Central region will view signage posted throughout the facility to advise veterans of their priority of service status. Individuals may then self-disclose their veteran status or discuss such during the registration, intake and/or assessment processes.
- In compliance with WIOA law, the priority of provision of services in regard to veterans is established as follows: first to be served will be public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals who are also veterans. Among participants who are not public assistance recipients or low-income individuals, veterans will receive priority over non-veterans.
- When a customer is identified as a veteran or covered individual, printed materials are provided that detail their eligibility for and scope of available services.
- If available on-site, the veteran or eligible spouse may be referred to a Veterans Representative for further assistance, as applicable.
- The role of the DVOP/LVER staff will be to assist veterans with serious barriers to gain employment through intensified efforts coordinated with WIOA case management staff when the veteran is co-enrolled.
- Every staff member of a Missouri Job Center in the West Central Region is charged with promoting and supporting the Show-Me Heroes Program. The SMH program, in addition to promoting the hiring of veterans and recognizing the employers who do so, includes employment and training services, case management, placement and supportive services as needed for National Guard and Reservists returning from deployment, their spouses and separating active duty military personnel.

E. INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS (ITAs)—*Identify the funding limit for ITAs.*

The following ITA funding limits apply per program year for a period of up to two years, but may be waived by the WDB after a determination of need, resources available, timeframe for completion, alternate funding sources for training/ITA providers, and other pertinent information.

YOUTH	Maximum of \$5,000/yr.
ADULT	Maximum of \$5,000/yr.
DISLOCATED WORKER	Maximum of \$5,000/yr.

F. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES—Describe how the Board will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services is available and fully accessible to all individuals with disabilities. In particular, identify those resources that are available in the Board’s Products & Services Box to assist in the provision of these services.

- The WDB Methods of Administration ensure that all One-Stop services are available and accessible to individuals with disabilities through assistive technologies and the availability of brochures and other materials in multiple formats. The local EO Officer monitors for assurances of full programmatic and architectural accessibility annually.

In an effort to broaden the composition pool of those considered for participation in programs and activities, DWD has made region-specific demographic information

available to the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., to aid in reaching out to those with Limited English-language proficiency (LEP), and has utilized assistive technology available through the Job Centers to make services available to individuals with disabilities. The Workforce Development Board and its partners work together to provide persons with disabilities navigation through the Next Generation Career Center system. The region is committed to providing the disabled community a conduit to training, employment, and supportive services.

- Each Job Center in the region is required to maintain specific Assistive Technology including: Window Eyes Screen Reader, Zoom Text, Big Keys LX Keyboard, Trackball Mouse, Phone Amplifier, Ubi Duo (Face to Face Communication), TTY, and Relay Service. Missouri workforce partners receive support in the form of technical assistance and equipment on request from the Equipment Technology Consortium. This partnership has been valuable in ensuring services provided to customers with disabilities are as effective as those provided to other customers. All equipment is utilized when assisting customers with Products and Services (individually and during group participation) to ensure service delivery is effective and beneficial to the customer. Additional resources for Job Center staff include: access to a Language Line and American Sign Language Interpreters.
 - The ASL (American Sign Language) Interpretation Service is available upon request at no charge. Customers in need of ASL Interpretation Services may contact the nearest Missouri Job Center by phone/TTY using Missouri relay 7-1-1 to request this service for upcoming visits. Job center team members ensure all customers who disclose their disability, special needs or limitations are directed to product box websites for additional assistance/resources. Recruitment brochures and other materials are distributed or communicated electronically as well as in written and/or oral form to staff, clients, and the general public to identify the WIOA Title I financially assisted programs or activity in question as an “equal opportunity employer/program.” They also communicate that “auxiliary aids and services are available on request to individuals with disabilities.”
 - Additionally, WDB has made available a guide to *Assuring Equal Access to Job Seekers with Disabilities in Missouri’s One-Stops*, which details applicable legal requirements, access standards and implementation steps; and the Accommodation Policy is posted on the region’s website.
- G. ONE-STOP SERVICES—*Describe how the Board will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services is available to all individuals with limited English proficiency. In particular, identify those resources that are available in the Board’s Products & Services Box to assist in the provision of these services.*
- WDB has taken specific steps to broaden the composition of its participant pool to include individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Consistent with DWD Issuance 06-2014, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) person is someone who is not able to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with WDB/Job Center staff.

- WDB has conducted LEP training to ensure that all staff and partners are knowledgeable and capable of providing services to LEP individuals and that they adhere to DWD Issuance 06-2014 regarding Providing Meaningful Access to Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). WDB has requested that each Job Center identify all staff and partners in the region who are fluent in more than one language. Access to over-the-phone language services is provided in more than 170 languages and “I Speak” cards are posted near the welcome area in each Job Center. Additionally the West Central Region developed a Language Access Plan to ensure meaningful access to programs, services and activities for all customers with limited English Proficiency.
- Language barriers will be assessed by a task force made up of MO Job Center staff, WDB staff, ESL teachers, employers and representatives from community agencies who serve LEP persons.
- The initial implementation of local outreach activities will begin in the coming year from the MO Job Center in Sedalia with the Spanish speaking population. The MO Job Center contract staff member who is bilingual (Spanish/English) will be utilized in the process. Outreach flyers will be created in both English and Spanish and will be posted in ethnic groceries, medical clinics, laundromats, and social service agencies. This Outreach Plan will be expanded to other counties as well.
- WDB is committed to making its services available to LEP persons as part of its mission “to ensure equal access to all WDB programs, services, and activities.” Based on this commitment, WDB makes every attempt to meet the needs of their customers by ensuring universal access to their programs and activities for all eligible individuals. The following are effective practices with regard to providing universal access to programs and facilities:
 - ✓ Employ staff who are bilingual
 - ✓ Provide bilingual signage, web resources, and other materials
 - ✓ Coordination of services with AEL and the English Literacy and Civics Education Program
 - ✓ Applicable brochures, flyers and forms translated for LEP persons
- All customers, regardless of their Limited English Proficiency (LEP) receive, free of charge, the assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to the programs, services and information of the Missouri Job Centers. Language barriers will be identified and strategies will be developed to overcome such barriers which may include coordination with the local community college’s ELL or Citizenship classes.
- The Missouri Division of Workforce Development (DWD) distributes to the region the following materials in Spanish: DWD-PO-72, DWD-PO-79 (both Dislocated Worker –Rapid Response); DWD-100, Complaint and Grievance Guide; - DWD PO-319, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker; - DWD-101, Discrimination Complaint Form; and the DWD-102, “EO is the Law Poster.”
- The West Central Region’s Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer routinely reviews existing policy and procedures to determine necessary updates in populations served through the Job Centers. Use of family members, friends, or other informal interpreters’ present

ethical and other privacy complications. For this reason, the Region utilizes other resources to provide appropriate translation services. Currently, Spanish is the most common non-English language spoken in the region. Resources and activities that are part of the region's Products & Services Box include:

- ✓ A professional telephone interpreting service
- ✓ Resources in a different language
- ✓ Bilingual Staff
- ✓ Missouri Migrant Education English Language Learning
- ✓ Community Service Referrals

H. NEXT GENERATION CAREER CENTER MODEL (NGCC)—*Describe how the Board promotes integration of services through co-enrollment processes, beyond the automatic co-enrollment of the NGCC model.*

The West Central Region embraced the NGCC model of integration from very early in the planning and implementation phases. As NGCC re-configured the job centers away from the “program silo” approach of service delivery of the past, the West Central Region’s Workforce Development Board decided to move away from the typical contracted program service provider concept to a new “staff only” type of contracting. Through a re-defined Request for Proposal (RFP), staff members were hired to join current Wagner-Peyser staff assigned to Welcome, Skills and Jobs Teams along with the regional Business Services Team. The team approach with functional leadership provides the spirit that drives the true integration being realized. All team members continue to receive on-going training in their areas of responsibility as well as being cross-trained for other team functionality. In addition to WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) team members, the West Central Region has been expanding the integration of services through stronger ties and co-enrollment opportunities with Title II (Adult Education and Literacy programs) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation programs) partners. Collaboration in meeting the needs of our common customers means a broader range of wrap-around services, more efficient use of limited funding, stronger delivery models, more effective case management, a cooperative approach to meeting employer needs, and a sense of support as each partner contributes their resources and talent in assisting customers along their chosen career pathway.

I. TRAINING EXPENDITURE RATE / LOCAL CRITERIA FOR TRAINING RECIPIENTS—*Provide your Board’s proposed training expenditure rates for both the Adult and Dislocated Worker regular formula fund allocations. In addition, describe the local process for determining who will receive training under the NGCC initiative.*

- The West Central Region will provide training opportunities for those individuals in need of training services to obtain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. The Workforce Development Board anticipates utilizing approximately (20%) twenty percent of the Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funded allocations on training level activities. This percentage is based on historical data and the Board’s past opportunities to access other funding sources to serve Adults and Dislocated Workers in the region. For example, in PY 15 the WDB spent approximately 28% of their Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds on training level services. During the same time period, the WDB

utilized NEG-JD MO-40, Dislocated Worker 25% and Show-Me Heroes funding to support training level services totaling an additional \$224,970. The Board remains open and receptive to identifying the best mix of funding streams available to best serve the region's target populations. In absence of these additional funding opportunities, the Board would re-assess the percentage of Adult and Dislocated formula funds to be utilized for training level services for the time period in question.

- Adherence to the priority of service policy will be upheld, which includes veterans, youth, seniors, ex-offenders, and low-income individuals. While neither WIOA nor the Workforce Development Board requires a progression of services in order to access training level services, it has been determined that to better assess the preparedness of participants for training level activities, customer engagement in career level services will be evaluated. Participation in workshops such as financial literacy, National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessments, interest inventories and any remediation efforts may be considered when determining readiness. Other considerations include current transferrable skills, past training, past performance, assessment results, employer expectations, growth potential for jobs related to the placement or area of study are also factors evaluated. Members of the NGCC Skills Teams and Functional Leaders will identify and recommend to the Workforce Development Board, for final approval, those participants they deem eligible and appropriate to move into training level services. These individuals must be appropriate for, in need of training services, and have the skills and qualifications required to successfully participate in the selected program of training that is linked to employment opportunities in the local area. Such due diligence makes it possible to support as many local customers as possible with the available funding.
- J. TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (AEL)—*Provide a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce development activities with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Title II provider(s) of AEL in the LWDA. Include a description of the alignment-review process for DESE Title II applications as required by WIOA section 108(b)(13).*

The WDB coordinates workforce activities with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Title II providers of AEL in the local region. State Fair Community College and Nevada R-V School District are the current providers of AEL in the thirteen counties of the West Central Region. Coordination includes referrals to AEL of individuals in need of remediation in a specific subject or the earning of a high school equivalency. AEL refers individuals to the Job Centers for labor market information, workshops related to job seeking, and eligibility determination for training program funds. AEL in the West Central Region has received funding to participate in a statewide pilot project, called Transitions in Partnership (TIP) to connect students with core and required partners, local employers, and post secondary institutions. A dedicated case manager/job coach will be responsible for facilitating these connections to enhance student success. The pilot will run through Fiscal years 2016 and 2017, with a final report to develop best practices that will be shared with all WIOA partners.

Also included is the alignment-review process required by WIOA law. A review will be conducted of the applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under

Title II for the local area to determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan; and making recommendations to promote alignment with the plan such as concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under Title I; serving individuals in the region most in need of AEL services such as individuals with low levels of literacy skills, English language learners, eligible individuals with disabilities - including those with learning disabilities.

- K. TITLE IV: VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION/REHABILITATIVE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (VR/RSB)—Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act includes both VR/RSB programs. *Describe how the Board will coordinate workforce development activities with these programs. Boards are encouraged to develop a subcommittee on disability services. Describe the partnership with these agencies as this subcommittee is developed.*

The Workforce Development Board and the Missouri Job Centers are currently in different stages of development in our partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) in the West Central Region.

Vocational Rehabilitation staffs two offices in the region; one in Sedalia and one in Nevada where the office is co-located in the Job Center building. The supervisor in Sedalia represents VR on the Workforce Board and sits on the Planning and Operations Committee which oversees all services provided through the Next Generation Career Center model. The Planning and Operations Committee will also be charged with addressing how services to individuals with disabilities will be delivered. The Sedalia VR Supervisor was also instrumental on the Leadership Team for the region's Sector Strategies initiative.

Our partnership with Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is in the formative stages. RSB directs services in the West Central region through two offices; one in Kansas City North which serves nine of the West Central region's counties and one located in Springfield which serves four of our southern counties.

VR and RSB already have a cooperative agreement in place to serve individuals who are Deaf-blind which provides the opportunity for each agency to serve individuals with multiple disabilities by taking advantage of the skills and expertise within each agency, while at the same time, utilizing the resources of both agencies to the best advantage.

The Workforce Development Board is eager to join, strengthen and improve our commitments to these partners through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each entity. The MOUs will address referral processes, coordination of services, cross-training to improve staff development, sharing of job leads, placement assistance, etc. It is through these collaborations that we will be able, as a team, to provide seamless, coordinated services to our common customers.

- L. APPRENTICESHIPS—*Describe the Board's policy on providing apprenticeships.*

The Workforce Development Board agrees with the US Department of Labor that registered apprenticeship is an effective "earn and learn" model with a long history of industry support

and involvement. The critical strategies that are called for in WIOA, such as sector strategies and career pathways, are at the heart of the apprenticeship model.

The combination of on-the-job learning with job-related instruction - while earning a wage is very attractive to job seekers with a need to produce income to support self and often families. Opportunities for apprenticeships have expanded over the years from mainly construction and building trades to now include careers in healthcare, information technology, transportation, and energy. What once was viewed as a union-based activity has now grown to also include Registered Apprenticeship sponsors such as employers, community colleges and universities, workforce development boards, industry associations, and the military. There are currently 274 Registered Apprenticeship job classifications listed in twelve of the region's thirteen counties. While these job classifications do not reflect actual job openings at this time, it does represent the availability of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors for area positions. Many of the Registered Apprenticeship programs noted are located in larger population centers such as Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield and Columbia; however, there are seven training sponsors located in the West Central Region. The Workforce Development Board will continue to seek out partners interested in expanding the availability of registered Apprenticeship programs available in the local area.

As WIOA puts more focus on Registered Apprenticeships, the need for pre-apprenticeship training becomes more obvious. This need was validated recently at a meeting with a local Electrical Registered Apprenticeship Program trainer (a new WDB Board member) where a disappointing, but common statistic was shared. The last local Electrical Apprenticeship class started with 17 individuals but only three were able to complete the course - due mainly to difficulties with work applications involving math. For this reason, the Board, the Division of Workforce Development, State Fair Community College, and labor representative(s) are currently researching the development of a pre-apprenticeship program to enhance the readiness of our job seekers to enter Registered Apprenticeship programs. Collaboration between pre-apprenticeship programs and the Job Centers of the West Central Region will play a valuable role in preparing entry-level workers for Registered Apprenticeship careers while contributing to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce.

IX. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery

Describe the One-Stop Delivery System in the LWDA, including:

- A. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PROGRAM AND PARTNERS—*A description of how the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants;*

The Workforce Development Board realizes the quality of job center staff directly impacts the quality of services provided to our Missouri Job Center customers. To that end, the Board opted to secure the most talented individuals available to deliver services through the Next Generation Career Centers in our region. Utilizing an alternative Request for Proposal (RFP) design option, the Board changed from contracting for

specific program services to contracting for staff dedicated to delivering all services through a team approach. Training is on-going with attention to utilizing subject matter experts through various delivery modes to support continuous improvement for all team members within the Job Centers.

To ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and to ensure that all providers of service meet the employment needs of local employers and our participants, the Workforce Development Board will remain diligent in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of such service provision. Performance and consumer report information will be evaluated through DWD's Continuous Improvement Review Team, the local Job Stat Team, Functional Leaders, Business Services Team, Toolbox 2.0, MoPerforms, One-Stop Certification process and customer surveys. Data to be considered includes number of enrollees, number of people exiting, completers, placements, wages at placement, retention, costs, timeliness of services, scope of value-added services, customer service feedback, etc. Any areas of concern will trigger prompt corrective action and technical assistance.

B. ALIGNMENT AND DATA INTEGRATION—Describe how all partner agencies will strengthen their integration of services so that it provides a more seamless system; and include:

1. MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)—A copy of each MOU between the Board and each of the One-Stop partners (or one “umbrella” MOU for the same purpose) concerning the operation of the One-Stop Delivery System in the LWDA. Include as **Attachment 3** an updated copy of the MOU with current signatures and dates; if available for Plan submission (DWD requires the MOU to be submitted to the State by July 1, 2016). Missouri Job Centers must ensure that equal access to employment and training services are provided to the farm workers and agricultural employers in their LWDAs. See DWD Issuance 12-2015 https://jobs.mo.gov/sites/jobs/files/dwdissuance12-2015_12232015.pdf. (See **Infrastructure Cost Sharing note in section 3 on page 9.**)

ATTACHMENT 3 will be included in the Local Plan submission to the state per July 1, 2016 deadline. An “umbrella” MOU with attachments per each partner is currently being negotiated. A description as to how each partner will strengthen their integration of services so that it provides a more seamless system will be included.

2. MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKERS / AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES WIOA section 167 provides the framework for agricultural services delivery. National Farmworkers Jobs Program (NFJP) services and grants are implemented at 20 CFR Part 685, as proposed. The current Section 167 Grantee, UMOS—United Migrant Opportunity Services, must be included in the MOU as the NFJP partner. The Plan should address how the LWDB will cooperate with UMOS and the State Agricultural Employment Services office to provide employment and training services to this population.

The Workforce Development Board cooperates with the State Agricultural Employment Services staff and the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) program in regard to services in the West Central Region. According to the Missouri Economic Research

and Information Center (MERIC), nine of the thirteen counties in the region are considered to have a high degree of specialization in agriculture. At least four of the counties show greater than seven organic farming operations in the county and the trend is expected to increase. The Next Generation Career Centers in the West Central Region are striving to provide unduplicated/integrated services across all programs with accommodations being made whenever possible to engage agricultural workers and business owners in value-added services. The Job Centers provide a full range of employment services, benefits and protections to include the full range of counseling, testing, job and training referral services to the populations served by these two programs.

SEE ATTACHMENT 3

3. COST-SHARING AGREEMENT - *Include as **Attachment 4** the negotiated cost-sharing worksheet agreement for each Missouri Job Center that includes the line items' dollar amounts and percentage rates for DWD and the Board. (Note: Although the WIOA statutory deadline for finalized infrastructure cost-sharing agreements is July 1, 2016, DOL has used its administrative authority to extend that deadline to July 1, 2017, Nevertheless, an interim infrastructure cost agreement, which may be short of specificity, is still a required component of the LWDB One-Stop MOUs due to DWD on July 1, 2016.)*

SEE ATTACHMENT 4

- C. PLANNING PROCESS AND PARTNERS—*The expectation is that the Board will involve business, organized labor, local public officials, community-based organizations, WIOA service providers, and other stakeholders in the development and review of this Plan. Describe the plan-development process, including how input for the Plan was obtained by all the partners involved in the MOU.*

The Planning and Operations Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Personnel and Nominating Committee, and the entire board of directors are provided numerous opportunities to provide input and guidance during the development of the plan. On March 23, 2016, members of the Workforce Development Board, including private sector and mandated partners, local elected officials, and staff, discussed during committee meetings and the full board session the design of program activities, enhanced services to customers, services to youth, and the development of the four year strategic plan.

Many of the attachments to the Plan were developed as guiding documents through each program year and brought before the governing board committee(s) and the full board for discussion and finally, a vote of approval. Numerous other agencies provided input into the development of the plan through the provision of local information, identification of need, and program design and activities.

Full board review and approval of this Plan in its' entirety will be sought at the regularly scheduled board meeting on May 25, 2016. At that time the 30-day period for public review will have concluded, and DWD will be notified in writing of the vote of final

approval by the full board. As active members of their respective communities and the board, board members continually assist the Chief Elected Officials and staff in designing appropriate services and operations that will best meet the needs of the Region.

X. Administration and Oversight of the Local Workforce Development System

- A. *Identify the One-Stop Operator(s) for the comprehensive One-Stop Centers and affiliates in the LWDA, and state the method used to designate and certify the One-Stop Operator(s).*

The One-Stop Operator for the three comprehensive One-Stop Centers in the West Central Region is Preferred Family Healthcare, Employment/Workforce Services. The method utilized to select the One-Stop Operator was a competitive bid process as outlined in the Workforce Development Board's [procurement policy](#).

The contract for One-Stop Operator(s) is due for re-bid again in the spring of 2017, with the successful bidder to be in place by July 1, 2017. The competitive bid process approved by the Workforce Development Board will be utilized in designating the successful bidder.

- B. *Identify the members of the Board, the organization or business they represent, and the category (i.e., business, labor, adult education and literacy, vocational rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser DWD, higher education, economic development, TANF, Other) in **Attachment 5** to the Plan. The certification/recertification form submitted for the certification process may be used.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 5

- C. The Board must review its by-laws annually and complete the "Local Workforce Development Board's ATTESTATION FOR REVIEW OF BY-LAWS" form included near the end of this document. *Include the Board's current by-laws and the completed attestation form (copy is included in this guidance) as **Attachment 6** to the Plan.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 6

- D. *If the LWDA includes more than one unit of local government, the Chief Elected Officials (CEO) may develop a CEO agreement; however, it is not mandatory under WIOA law. If the LWDA is including a CEO agreement, please specify the respective roles of the individual CEOs and include the agreement as **Attachment 7**. Also, include any CEO by-laws that are in effect. (The CEO membership should be reviewed after each county and/or municipal election, as applicable, for any changes. If there are changes in the CEO membership, or leadership, a new CEO agreement will need to be signed and submitted to DWD by the first day of June following the election.)*

The Chief Elected Officials do not have an agreement document but do operate under the CEO By-Laws.

SEE ATTACHMENT 7

- E. Include as **Attachment 8** to the Plan, the Conflict of Interest Policy for Board members, staff, and contracted staff to follow (reference [DWD Issuance 15-2011](#), "Transparency and Integrity in Local Workforce Investment Board Decisions" or successive issuances).

SEE ATTACHMENT 8

- F. Include the sub-state monitoring plan, as defined in [DWD Issuance 15-2010](#), as **Attachment 9** to the Plan.

SEE ATTACHMENT 9

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XIII. Local Administration

A. *Identify the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and CEO to be used to measure the performance of the Board and to be used by the Board for measuring the performance of the Local Fiscal Agent (where appropriate), eligible providers, and the One-Stop Delivery System in the LWDA. (Instructions for this planning item will be sent after the PY 2016 locally negotiated performance goals are finalized.)*

- “On July 22, 2015 the Department (USDOL) issued an Information Collection Request (ICR) for implementing WIOA performance requirements according to Section 116. Section 136 of WIA will remain in place until the performance requirements under WIOA have been fully implemented.”
- “Section 116 of WIOA, which outlines the performance accountability requirements, including the indicators of performance, does not take effect until July 1, 2016.”
- “Under the Department’s (USDOL) transition authority, in order to provide for an orderly transition from WIA to WIOA, states are required to use the WIA performance metrics in Section 136 to report on WIOA participants for one program year.”
- “This means that WIOA participants who became WIOA participants after July 1, 2015, are being measured according to the WIA Section 136 performance measures.”
- WIOA measures for PY15 – July 1, 2015 until July 1, 2016—will be an extension of WIA metric methods, and the annual report by October 1, 2016 will also be WIA measures.

B. *Identify the Local Fiscal Agent, if one is designated by the CEO.*

The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., as authorized by the chief local elected official is the grant recipient and fiscal agent for the West Central Region of Missouri’s WIOA Title I funds.

C. *Describe the competitive (procurement) process used to award the grants and contracts in the LWDA for activities carried out under subtitle I of WIOA, including the process to procure training services for Youth and any that are made as exceptions to the ITA process. Include as **Attachment 12**, the information on the following processes: advertisement/notification to prospective bidders, time period bidders have to respond to the solicitation, evaluation, and award/non-award notification. This may include those pages from the Board’s procurement guidelines that describe the competitive-procurement process and the process to procure Youth training providers.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 12

D. *Describe how the Board is working toward eliminating duplicative administrative costs to enable increased training investments.*

The Workforce Development Board and its Finance and Audit standing committee and Executive Committee are vigilant in their efforts to maintain administrative costs at the

lowest level possible while ensuring no duplication exists. This is accomplished in several ways:

- Financial audits are routinely conducted by a qualified, independent firm as well as regularly scheduled monitoring of service providers to ensure costs and services are non-duplicative.
- The WDB utilizes one staffing provider through a competitive bid process vs. multiple program service providers.
- Payments are processed by WDB Fiscal Department staff as opposed to multiple service provider fiscal departments. (i.e. OJT reimbursements, Classroom Training, participant payroll, support services, etc.).
- Job Center facility costs are shared among partners. Additional partners are identified and invited to consider co-location with the job centers as space or new facilities become available.
- The WDB Conference Center is used as meeting space for committee and board meetings thus reducing costs at hotels, etc. The conference center also serves as a training facility for the pre-apprenticeship classes, etc.

WDB board and staff work to ensure that there are uniform methods of service delivery. Through this system administrative costs are reduced, desired contract performance is maintained while fostering the growth of valuable training programs.

- E. *Identify how the Board ensures that services are not duplicated. In particular, explain how the NGCC model affects this process.*

The NGCC integrated model has allowed the Workforce Development Board to work with the state to streamline service delivery by removing bureaucratic silos thus removing the opportunity for duplicative efforts. Also, functional teams made up of a cross section of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff encourages better coordination with more open lines of communication. In addition, enhanced and expanded relationships with core and other required workforce partners through development of Memorandums of Understanding has provided opportunities to better define roles and coordinate efforts in service to common customers.

- F. *Include the Planning Budget Summaries for Program Year 2016 and Fiscal Year 2017 in **Attachment 13** to the Plan.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 13

- G. *Complete and sign the "Statement of Assurances Certification" form located in this guidance and include this as **Attachment 14** to the Plan.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 14

- H. *Establish and define the local policy and procedure for Complaint and Grievance Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA. Both policies should be incorporated into the MOU and disseminated throughout the LWDA for all workforce development professionals to understand and implement. This should adhere to federal and state complaint and grievance guidance and policy (new DWD issuance is due out soon called, WIOA Grievance and Complaint Resolution Policy) –Include either a*

*statement that the Board will follow the state policy or develop a local policy and include a copy as **Attachment 15** to the Plan.*

In accordance with the Missouri Complaint and Grievance Policy and Missouri Methods of Administration, the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc. follows the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). *The Workforce Development Board will follow Missouri's Grievance and Complaint Policies and Procedures Plan as outlined in Issuance 09-2012.* Furthermore discrimination against applicants, beneficiaries, and employees on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, religion, and political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in financially assisted programs or activities is prohibited. If an applicant, program beneficiary or employee thinks they have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I - financially assisted program(s) or activity, they may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either a local or state named Equal Opportunity Officer or The Director of the Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor.

SEE ATTACHMENT 15

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PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The core programs partners in Missouri are:

- Adult program (Title I of WIOA);
- Dislocated Worker program (Title I);
- Youth program (Title I);
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II);
- Wagner-Peyser Act program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III);
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV); and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation—General Rehabilitation Services for the Blind;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

In addition to the above, the Combined State Plan partners include:

- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; Programs authorized under Section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 [7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)];
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act [42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.]); and

XI. Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies

Describe how the LWDA is assisting customers in making informed choices based on quality workforce information and accessing quality training providers. In particular, identify those resources that are available in the Board's Products & Services Box to assist in the provision of these services.

Many job seekers looking for employment opportunities in the West Central Region depend on the staff and resources they find at one of the local Missouri Job Centers. Service delivery is a process based on staff actively working with a customer to identify job or career goals, researching the required skill sets for desired position(s), and connecting customers to other products to assist with deciding which options to pursue in order to realize their goals.

Workshops are available at all Job Centers in the region, covering many topics relevant to the customers being served. Topics are added and customized based on the need of our clients. Workshops such as Career Exploration, WIOA 101, Skills-To-Pay the Bills, and FASFA Completion, etc. help broaden a customer's perspective when making career choices.

Assessments provide a means to measure a job seeker's skills, knowledge, abilities, strengths, and interests. Talify is utilized as well as O*Net which provides multiple assessment tools such as Ability Profiler, Interest Profiler, and Work Importance Locator. The earning of a National Career Readiness Certificate verifies to employers anywhere in the United States that applicants have the essential core employability skills in Reading, Math, and Locating Information. The level of certificate earned can be associated with jobs profiled in ACT's database. A customer striving for a higher level position may access remediation software to refresh or build their skills.

The online Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) is available to research local employment dynamics and labor market information. Job development and placement efforts utilize local level data to assist clients in making informed choices regarding their career paths by providing wage data, turnover rates, current vacancies and positions with projected growth.

For those customers interested in Occupational Skill Training/Classroom Training, the Eligible Training Provider System is accessible via the jobs.mo.gov website. Information such as costs and performance data is available for all WIOA-approved training providers and courses of study.

B. Adults and Dislocated Workers

1. *Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of all Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities in the LWDA. Please include how the Board uses products and services, such as workshops, assessment products (KeyTrain, WorkKeys/National Career Readiness Certificate [NCRC], Talify, etc.) and jobseeker skills products (such as Optimal Résumé, etc.), to engage customers and assist with their re-employment efforts.*

Re-employment of Adult and Dislocated Workers will be accomplished through engaging clients through career and training level services as eligibility, appropriateness, and funding dictates. It is the goal of each Next Generation Career Center staff member to ensure customers leave the Job Center a better job applicant than when they walked in. To this end, staff-supported services will be emphasized and Missouri Job Center services will be continuously promoted as Product and Services Box offerings expand. Available employment and training activities include: eligibility determination; outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and services available through the one-stop delivery system; initial and specialized assessments including literacy, numeracy, English Language proficiency, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs; labor exchange services, job search and placement assistance; workshops, employment statistics information; performance information and program cost per eligible providers of training; local performance information; provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation; development of an individualized employment plan; short term pre-vocational services; adult work experience, occupational skills training; on-the-job training; skill enhancement services; adult education and literacy activities; retention assistance; and follow-up.

2. *Include a description of the local ITA system and the procedures for ensuring that exceptions to the use of ITAs, if any, are justified.*

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are provided through the Skills Team under the NGCC model. While neither WIOA nor the Workforce Development Board requires a progression of services in order to access training level services, it has been determined that to better assess the preparedness of participants for training level activities, customer engagement in career level services will be evaluated.

Participation in workshops such as financial literacy, National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessments, interest inventories and any remediation efforts may be considered when determining readiness. Other considerations include current transferrable skills, past training, past performance, assessment results, employer expectations, growth potential for jobs related to the placement or area of study are also factors evaluated. Members of the NGCC Skills Teams and Functional Leaders will identify and recommend to the Workforce Development Board, for final approval, those participants they deem eligible and appropriate to move into training level services.

WIOA funding for classroom training is made available to customers who:

- Exhibit the need and aptitude for additional training to obtain employment that provides a self-sufficient wage;
- Are unable to obtain grant assistance or other federal and/or state sources to pay for all or part of the cost of training;
- Require funding assistance beyond that which is available through other grant sources.

Coordination of funds will be required when Higher Education Act (HEA) Title IV financial assistance such as Pell Grants is available to WIOA training-eligible customers. The customer may enroll in WIOA-funded training while his/her Pell Grant application is pending. Participation in a WIOA-funded training program shall not require participants to apply for student loans or incur debt as a condition for participation. Should the student decide to apply and receive student loans to assist with living expenses, etc. while attending training, a Funding Use Statement may be required if the loans are applied to the student account prior to the Pell Grant and WIOA funds to document there was a need at the time the student applied for WIOA assistance. At no time will the customer receive payment of WIOA funds as part of a remaining credit balance.

Training services shall be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an eligible provider. The Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) may be accessed through the jobs.mo.gov website to identify WIOA-eligible training providers, available courses, costs associated with training, program descriptions, completion rates, wage expectations, etc.

Use of WIOA funds in the West Central Region will be targeted to “approved courses” with completion timeframes within a two-year period, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board on a case-by-case basis. This could be a certificate earned in one year or less, a two year associate degree or the last two years of a bachelor’s degree program. It is not the intent of the Workforce Development Board to fund degrees beyond that of bachelor’s level or to fund training for individuals already possessing credentials sufficient to obtain employment in skill areas representing projected job openings. The Planning and Operations Committee of the Workforce Development Board will provide input in considering any exceptions to this policy due to extraordinary circumstances. All funding considerations will be based on participant’s county of residence, funding source and availability, program eligibility, assessment results, the participant’s ability to complete requested training, and areas of

study related to jobs with an A or B grade per MERIC data. Jobs representing grades below A or B for the area will require additional review. One-stop Job Center staff will utilize locally-developed forms in the request for funding, approval and payment processes.

Exceptions to the use of ITAs will only be made in the following instances:

- When the training services provided are On-the-Job training or Customized Training programs.
- When the training is less than 40 hours as described under Missouri's Eligible Training Provider Certification.
- When a vendor relationship exists (short-term training is available to the general public and is purchased by the WDB for specific purposes.)
- When the WDB determines there is a short-term training service of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or other state or federal agency to serve special customer populations that face multiple barriers to employment. Individuals with multiple barriers to employment include those who are low-income with substantial language or cultural barriers, ex-offenders, those who are basic skills deficient, and/or homeless individuals.

3. *Provide a description of how Unemployment Insurance claimants will be provided reemployment services, including how Worker Profiling and Re-employment Services (WPRS) will be delivered on a weekly basis between the DWD and partner staff.*

Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services is an early intervention strategy for those individuals most likely to exhaust their UI benefits. The NGCC staff, both partner and DWD, engage them through the welcome, skills and/or jobs functional teams where they are able to access all products and services offered such as workshops designed to assist with resume preparation, job search, labor market information, etc., and on-line skills tools and national skills assessments designed to assist with their reemployment.

4. *Describe the Board's strategies for promoting and increasing the number of participants in work-based learning and On-the-Job Training (OJT).*

The West Central Region has a history of promoting the use of the OJT as a means of serving customers. The job seeking customer and the employer as customer, both reap the rewards of on-site training customized to the individual's background and experience and the company's specific procedures for conducting their business.

The West Central Region's Business Services Team is the foundation of all outreach and job development within the region with work-based training and the OJT program being a cornerstone. The Business Services Team includes local and state Business Services Representatives, Veteran's representatives, Functional Leaders and members of the Jobs Team from each of the three comprehensive job centers in Nevada, Clinton and Sedalia. Promotion of OJT is accomplished through face-to-face meetings with employers, preparing mass marketing campaigns, conducting

business surveys, making telephone cold calls, and monitoring Toolbox for potential matches for specific job orders. OJT is used to also enhance job placement for Occupational Skill Training students upon completion of school.

The West Central Region is comprised of thirteen counties but is divided into three internal service areas for the purposes of rapid response, outreach, job development, business services, and public relations, etc. This local configuration allows **each** Job Center within the region to develop a close working relationship and rapport with their community business and industry customers within an assigned area. In the event a large project is identified, the Business Services Team members from one area of the region are able to easily provide back-up assistance to another area of the region. It is a goal of the West Central Region to have local businesses look to their local Missouri Job Center for all their workforce needs, whether it be hiring or in cases of lay-off. As these relationships continue to be forged, county commissioners, local economic developers, human resource managers, postal workers, mechanics, shop clerks, neighbors, etc.; become part of an informal yet highly effective network that provides early information on job openings, company expansions, training issues, etc. Utilization of such a grassroots intelligence system allows the Next Generation Career Center Teams to move into action rapidly to meet employers' needs.

5. *Explain the Board's strategies for increasing the attainment of credentials, degrees, and certificates by participants in your LWDA and any accommodations you have made to make attainment easier (i.e., collocation of AEL centers, extended hours, etc.). In addition, please describe the Board's approach to ensuring every Missouri Job Center customer has the opportunity to take the WorkKeys assessments and obtain a NCRC. This should include how the Board collaborates with the local community college(s) in the LWDA to provide space and/or proctoring services for WorkKeys assessments on an as-needed basis.*

The Missouri Job Centers of the West Central Region continue to focus on increasing the number of customers accessing skill development and training services to facilitate their involvement along their career path.

There are Adult Education and Literacy locations in the majority of the counties within the region, with many offering extended hours.

To strengthen the positive effect of customer choice, all customers of the NGCC will be afforded the opportunity to know their skills and improve their skills in order to secure positions offering a wage supporting self-sufficiency or better. The opportunity to know their skills is provided through various assessments and earning National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC). Improving their skills is possible through work-based learning opportunities and earning recognition for their skill levels through attainment of diplomas, credentials, degrees, and certificates.

The Workforce Development Board and State Fair Community College are partners to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding NCRC group testing, campus space, and proctoring support.

Supportive services are provided to assist participants in staying engaged in their training. Co-enrollment and co-support is achieved through cooperation of multiple agency partners.

C. Employment Transition Team

Describe how the Board coordinates with the LWDA's Employment Transition Team Coordinators to ensure that information and services are delivered in a seamless fashion, including how pre-layoff services are coordinated and provided. In addition, please provide a description of the proactive measures that are taken to identify potential layoffs in the LWDA, how information is shared with LWDA's Employment Transition Team Coordinators and how layoff aversion strategies are coordinated. See [DWD Issuance 07-2015, "Statewide Employment Transition Team Policy,"](#) Oct. 21, 2015.

The Employment Transition Team (ETT) consists of state-level Coordinators assigned to specific regions to act as the single point of contact for activities in response to disasters, mass layoffs, plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals in the area. Their role is to prevent or minimize the impact on workers, businesses, and communities.

Communication among the ETT Coordinator, WDB Executive Director, Missouri Job Center Functional Leaders and the West Central Region's Business Services Team members is crucial to responding quickly and in a seamless fashion. The Business Services Team members have established relationships with many of the local businesses and are able to provide early warning of potential layoffs and early intervention opportunities. The ETT Coordinator ensures the local region is aware of any pending layoffs, the layoff schedule, the number to be laid off and the occupations affected. The size of the layoff, the timing, and the employer's schedule will determine whether worker meetings will be conducted as on or off site events.

Designated Missouri Job Center staff will assist the ETT Coordinator by attending ETT meetings and cover the MJC services portion of the presentations; as well as participate in on or off site services such as resource fairs, registration events, delivering ETT informational packets, providing informational flyers, etc.

D. Youth

WIA Youth Councils are not continued under WIOA. WIOA allows for redesignation of an existing Youth Council as a Youth Standing Committee if its membership and expertise meets the WIOA requirements [(WIOA sec. 107(b)(4)(C)]. Please document whether the Board will designate a Youth Standing Committee. If a Youth Standing Committee is not designated, then the Plan needs to state that the Board is not using a Standing Youth Committee. Whether the Board retains responsibility and oversight of Youth services or a

Standing Committee is established, the Board should describe how the Board or Youth Standing Committee will meet the requirements of 20 CFR 681.100–681.120, as proposed.

1. *Describe the composition of the Youth Standing Committee (if designated) and its participation in the design of Youth services in the LWDA; the development of the Plan relating to Youth services; its role in the procurement of Youth service providers and recommending eligible Youth providers to the Board, ensuring the 14 elements are a part of the services planned and conducting oversight with respect to eligible Youth providers of Youth activities and the procurement of Youth service providers. [\(See DWD Issuance 16-2014, "WIOA Standing Youth Committees Requirements," July 1, 2015.\)](#) Also, provide information regarding the Youth Standing Committee meetings, such as any core agenda items that would be included, and the planned meeting schedule (i.e., the first Tuesday of every quarter, etc.).*

WIOA does not require the Youth Councils established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). However, the Workforce Development Board opted to continue utilizing a Youth Standing Committee called the Youth Task Force which reports to the Board's Planning and Operations (P&O) Committee. The P&O Committee is responsible for oversight of all program/operational issues in the region with the Youth Task Force being responsible for focusing on all youth-related program/operational issues and making recommendations to the P&O Committee which in turn reviews and makes recommendations to the full Board.

The Youth Task Force is an advisory group designated to focus on the region's local youth workforce system on behalf of the Workforce Development Board. The composition of the West Central Region's Youth Task Force includes key partners engaged in services to youth and/or interested parties invested in the future of our local youth. Specifically, the Chairperson of the group is a private sector member of the WDB who also serves on the Planning and Operations Committee. Other Task Force members include additional private sector employers, a County Commissioner, an Adult Education and Literacy Director, a member of the juvenile justice system, representatives of human services and/or agencies specializing in youth, Job Corps, and a parent of a WIOA- eligible youth. Every effort is made to encourage participation by a previous program participant or other young person able to provide input and feedback on program design and services offered. This last position tends to revolve with several youth rotating in and out of attendance based on their schedules, interests and life circumstances.

The Youth Task Force meets on the same morning as the regularly scheduled full Workforce Development Board meetings, which is the fourth Wednesday of every other month.

Core agenda items of the Youth Task Force meetings generally include:

- ✓ Sub-contractor reports - Discussions regarding the counties within the service area and issues that are facing the youth within those counties. Possible solutions to any issues, especially through the fourteen program elements, are explored
- ✓ Sharing of youth job leads
- ✓ Discussion of performance measures and contractual benchmarks

- ✓ Additional funding opportunities that may be available to assist in leveraging resources
- ✓ Review of new Issuances, as applicable
- ✓ Status of grant award(s) as necessary
- ✓ Upcoming events and activities

The involvement of the Youth Task Force occurs on several levels:

- ✓ Increase awareness of important youth issues to communities, local decision makers, employers, educators, etc.
- ✓ Participate in outreach strategies such as presentations to business, civic, faith-based, and community-based organizations
- ✓ Provide input to WDB strategic planning efforts in areas impacting the eligible local youth population
- ✓ Maintain a data base of youth providers
- ✓ Provide input on scope and timelines of Requests for Proposals (RFPs)
- ✓ Participate on RFP evaluation team
- ✓ Make recommendations to the Workforce Development Board's Planning and Oversight Committee regarding the awarding of grants for youth programming
- ✓ Provide leadership and oversight regarding performance, quality of deliverables, and continuous improvement
- ✓ Assess and align resources in the region to support youth employability, cultural enrichment, and leadership development
- ✓ Broaden the youth employment and training focus in the area to incorporate economic development
- ✓ Coordinate the youth activities that are authorized by the WIOA establishing linkages with other organizations that serve youth
- ✓ Promote and celebrate accomplishments/achievements/successes of local youth

2. *Provide a description and assessment of the types and availability of Youth activities in the LWDA, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. This description should include:*

Activities are designed for youth of the region through a comprehensive approach to enhance the success of youth and young adults in the workforce. The fundamental principles emphasized in WIOA that are supported regionally include career exploration and guidance, occupational skills training in in-demand fields, quality work experiences, career pathway development, post-secondary education and apprenticeships.

- a. *How the Youth activities in the LWDA are developed to ensure the 14 program elements are available within the LWDA;*

Every youth participant receives case management. The activities offered and services received will be driven by the goals, strengths, and barriers identified in their Objective Assessment and addressed through the joint-development of an Individual Service Strategy.

- b. *The actual services provided by the LWDA for Youth, the element they represent, and how they fit within DOL's themes (see TEGl 05-12) for the emphasis on serving Youth within a comprehensive Youth development approach;*

The 14 elements required under WIOA to be made available to youth are offered as follows in the region:

- *Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and evidence-based Drop-Out Prevention and Recovery Strategies* – provided by WIOA Youth program service providers, vocational rehabilitation, adult education and literacy, junior and high school staff, juvenile detention officers, community college TRiO program tutors, MU Extension office, Job Corps, faith-based and community based organizations such as Center for Human Services, Community Action Agencies, Door of Hope, New Beginnings, Boys & Girls Club, and domestic violence facilities.
- *Alternative Secondary School Services* – available through WIOA-funded Scholars@Work program, Adult Education and Literacy, Whittier High School (Sedalia), Waverly Regional Youth Center (Waverly), Warrensburg Detention Center (Warrensburg), Rich Hill Youth Development Center (Rich Hill), Heartland R-V School (Nevada), and Gateway Educational Center (Warrensburg) and others.
- *Paid and Unpaid Work Experience* – offered through WIOA-funded work experiences, State Park Youth Corps, TANF Summer Jobs, Project SEARCH, Sedalia Project FIT (Forty-hour Internship Tryout), as well as additional opportunities routinely being researched. A pre-apprenticeship course for the Electrical Union is currently being developed with State Fair Community College. Youth ages 18-24 are encouraged to co-enroll in the Title I Adult program to access On-the-Job (OJT) opportunities.
- *Occupational Skills Training* – funding available for Out-of-School Youth through Youth Program funding and Adult funding, if co-enrolled. Youth are also assisted with filing for PELL grants to offset the costs of post-secondary courses. All training providers approved in Missouri are identified in the Eligible Training Provider System.
- *Education and Workplace Preparation offered concurrently* – the Scholars@Work program, a combination of work experience and AEL, a pre-apprenticeship course of study and/or participation in a registered apprenticeship program, supports this training option.
- *Leadership Development* – The WDB Youth Program provider offers Leadership University with guest speakers and outside trainers at least once per year, leadership development workshops are offered

on a rotating basis, youth advisors embed leadership opportunities into program activities, peer tutoring, community service, and life skills training. Youth interact with Youth Task Force members as well as volunteer at local career fairs, community events, and are invited guest speakers at youth-related functions.

- *Supportive Services* – available per policy through Youth Program service provider and community resources identified in community resource guides.
- *Adult Mentoring* – available through work experience placements, area school counselors, probation and parole officers, Community Action Agencies and Youth Task Force members. The current youth program provider for the entire region, Preferred Family Health, recently purchased an on-line, easily monitored, mentoring software program that allows on-line interaction between a youth and a screened mentor which will prove to be very efficient for youth living in rural areas of the region.
- *Follow-Up Services* – The Youth Service Provider encourages on-going dialog with participants after exit should they be in need of allowable supportive services, or any other support to ensure success post program.
- *Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling* – offered through local partner programs as appropriate (drug & alcohol abuse, mental health). Career and academic guidance provided by Youth program service provider.
- *Financial Literacy Education* – “Skills to Pay the Bills” workshop offered to all youth program participants through Youth Program provider as well as financial literacy training provided by MU Extension.
- *Entrepreneurial Skills training* – is made available through MU-University Extension.
- *Labor Market Information* – is shared with all youth through the WIOA enrollment process and continually through program participation.
- *Preparation for and Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training* - The Youth Program provider offers Career Ready 101 assessments, assistance with filling out college applications, completing the FASFA, setting up college tours, and workshops to address interviewing skills along with resume and cover letter development. They also provide assistance in identifying employment opportunities while attending school, as needed.

c. *The process for identification of Youth service providers;*

Youth service providers are identified through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The RFP scope and timeline are established with input from the Youth Task Force and/or Planning and Operations Committee of the Workforce Development Board. The Request for Proposal notification is

then well advertised on the Workforce Development Board website as well as through other means. See *Attachment 12- Local Competitive Procurement Process*. An RFP packet of information is provided to all entities maintained in a database of interested youth program providers/bidders. An entity may request to be included on the bidder's list of providers by making a written or verbal request to the Workforce Development Board. The Workforce Development Board also periodically conducts outreach to identify additional potential bidders of youth services.

Identification of potential youth program providers may come from recommendations made by WDB Board members, Youth Task Force members, other Workforce Development Boards, and partner agencies. Connections are also made through conferences and vendor marketing initiatives.

- d. *The evaluation of service providers for performance and impact (please provide details on frequency and criteria);*

Evaluation of a service provider's performance and impact is accomplished routinely through Continuous Improvement Reviews which are performed formally on an annual basis but informally analyzed weekly by the WDB Compliance Manager. Youth Task Force bi-monthly meetings include an agenda item where enrollments and expenditures are reviewed with consideration of the monthly Contract Progress Reports.

- e. *The providers of the Youth services in the LWDA, including the areas and elements they provide;*

Preferred Family Health, formerly Alternative Opportunities, Inc., currently holds the Youth Program contract for all thirteen counties of the West Central Region. They provide:

- *Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and evidence-based Drop-Out Prevention and Recovery Strategies*
- *Alternative Secondary School Services*
- *Paid and Unpaid Work Experience*
- *Occupational Skills Training*
- *Education and Workplace Preparation offered concurrently*
- *Leadership Development*
- *Supportive Services*
- *Adult Mentoring*
- *Follow-Up Service*
- *Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling (career & academic)*
- *Financial Literacy Education*
- *Labor Market Information*
- *Preparation for and Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training*

- f. *How year-round services are provided to Youth 14–24 years of age that are still in high school or out of school;*

Year round services are provided to all eligible In-School and Out-of-School Youth with accommodations made in consideration of in-school schedules. Year round services are provided to Youth 14-24 years of age that are still in high school or out of school by the Youth service providers' youth advisors. These advisors attend activities within the schools and communities such as after-school programs, career fairs and outreach activities. The youth advisors meet with school counselors to discuss the activities and services provided for the youth in the area. They also participate in transition activities for the graduating seniors providing them with information on Job Center services such as the National Career Readiness Certificate and youth opportunities. For those out-of-school youth, the youth advisors also attend monthly inter-agency meetings to provide and coordinate with area agencies to get the information into the hands of the youth those agencies work with.

Coordination meetings are also held and information provided to local youth agencies who work closely with at-risk and neediest youth such as youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, and homeless youth. It is through these agencies that referrals are made to the WIOA youth program. Partner agencies identified through this process include but is not limited to: Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri Family Support Division, UMOS, Job Point, West Central Missouri Community Action Agency, Missouri Valley Community Action Agency, Probation & Parole, Community Food Banks, Public Housing, Y.E.S. (Youth Excited About Sports), Salvation Army, homeless shelters, and juvenile justice centers, among others.

- g. *An example of the flow of services for a Youth in the LWDA (please include all aspects, including intake, objective assessment process, assessment, coordination of services, follow-up, etc.);*

Youth engagement takes place over several appointments. The following is an example of how the flow of services might occur:

- Appointment #1 -Informal assessment through discussion of youth's current life status in order to determine if the youth might meet youth program guidelines and one or more of the identified barriers to employment such as homeless, pregnant/parenting, basic skills deficient, offender, school dropout, foster child, etc. Youth are made aware of the scope of youth services available in the region. A jobs.mo.gov profile is completed. The youth is then given a list of required documentation that must be provided such as photo identification, social security card and documentation of income/verification of food stamps.

- Appointment #2 - Interest assessments will be made available at this time. If they are an out-of-school youth, a TABE test (Test of Adult Basic Education) is scheduled to assess skill levels and knowledge. For in-school youth, an interest assessment will be done to determine possible worksite placements that would be of interest to the youth in potential career fields.
- Appointment #3 - The third appointment addresses the TABE scores for out-of-school youth. The enrollment process will be completed after review and approval by the Youth Program Coordinator. The youth will also be given referrals to other agencies, as deemed necessary, to address identified issues or barriers in their current situation and any of the fourteen program element activities needed. The OA and ISS are developed with the participant and youth advisor.
- If earning a high school equivalency is identified as a goal, the youth will be counseled in regard to his/her readiness to interview as a possible candidate for the Scholars@Work Program. If remediation is needed first, plans will be made for that course of action. Then should the youth be recognized as a possible candidate, an interview will be scheduled with the Scholars@Work selection panel. If work experience is a more appropriate course of action, an interview will be set up with an employer offering the opportunity to work in a field of interest that matches a career pathway identified by the youth.
- Placement into Scholars@Work or at a work experience worksite then requires a Worksite Agreement, Training Plan, Orientations for worksite supervisors and youth to be completed.
- During the time that the youth is placed at a worksite, monitoring and meetings will occur on a regular and consistent basis with any and all issues being addressed at that time.
- Throughout the course of participation, the youth advisors will provide tutoring as needed, they will offer opportunities for the youth to meet with representatives from local colleges and universities, Job Corps representatives, Job Point representatives, and military recruiters; among others.
- Upon completion of their work experience hours, the youth advisor continues to work with them to find employment, complete FAFSA forms and college enrollments or other trainings on at least a monthly basis.
- After completion of participation, the youth is placed into WIOA follow-up services and the youth advisor makes at least quarterly contacts with them for 12 months to ensure successful transition to education and/or employment.

h. *The procedures for serving Youth that are most in need (homeless, disabled, offenders, etc.); and*

In order to determine priority of service, the youth advisors complete a Youth Barriers Worksheet. Some of the barriers to employment listed on this form include:

- basic skills deficient, runaway, offender, homeless, pregnant/parenting, school dropout, foster child/aged out of foster care, individual with a disability, English language learner, subject to juvenile/adult justice system etc.
- Locally, the definition for “requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment “involves the following:

Is the youth currently or at risk of becoming a statistic of one of the following:

- ✓ placement in substance abuse facility, alternative residential care or group home;
- ✓ behavioral problems at school, truancy, family literacy problems, witness or victim of violence, chronic health problems;
- ✓ repeated suspensions from educational facility or employment situation, second generation public assistance.

Also addressed are those youth who have had three or more jobs within the past six months, are considered “under-employed” (working less than full time, needs employment in education-related field, or working for minimum wage with no benefits or opportunity for advancement) or those youth living in an economically depressed rural area with limited opportunities for gaining work maturity skills and/or career exploration in a chosen career pathway.

There are also criteria in place to determine who could benefit most from youth training and employment programs. These criteria include: resources available for basic skills enhancement, agreement to actively participate in AEL/GED classes for those out-of-school youth who are literacy/numeracy skills deficient, and/or requiring improvement in employability skills.

- i. *The identification of the partnerships and describe the coordination of services with other agencies within the LWDA.*

The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc. and Subcontractors coordinate with several agencies in each of the counties within the region. These agencies include but are not limited to: Missouri Valley Community Action, West Central Missouri Community Action Agency,

State Fair Community College, Crowder College, University of Central Missouri, Golden Valley Door of Hope, Center for Human Services, the local school districts for every community, Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City, Vocational Rehabilitation, Boys & Girls Clubs of West Central Missouri, Johnson County Board of Services, WILS, Pathways, Burrell Behavioral Health, Catholic Charities, Family Support Division in each county, Job Corps, Job Point, Salvation Army, local Housing Authority offices, Community Food Pantries and Clothes Closets, many businesses and industries within each community, local homeless shelters and juvenile justice/probation and parole offices, among others.

Services are coordinated through service referrals, attending local inter-agency meetings, giving presentations to various agencies, meeting with local business and industry for the development of worksite agreements, meeting with local school counselors, regular meetings with Adult Education and Literacy instructors in each area. Each participant signs a release of information that is utilized to ensure that they are being provided with the services that are available to them.

3. *Provide a description of any innovative service-delivery projects for OSY currently operating in the LWDA or a project the Board is planning to implement. Describe the Board's involvement in the projects, and the Board's efforts to continue involvement and funding for the continuation of these projects.*

The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc., continually seeks to establish partnerships that provide both innovative and educational opportunities for the area youth. Currently, the Board supports two initiatives that may be considered as innovative service delivery projects which support WIOA's focus on Out of School Youth (OSY).

The first partnership involves both the State Fair Community College and Nevada R-V School District offices of Adult Education and Literacy. This partnership is a vital part of our Scholars@Work program, in which, the coordination of services ensures the success of the youth enrolled. Youth are co-enrolled into both the WIOA youth program and the AEL/HiSet completion program. By working together, the staff of each program tutors and works intensively with these youth to expedite the attainment of their high school equivalency. The average length of attainment is approximately twelve weeks. In addition to the attainment, during the twelve week timeframe, the youth go from basic skills deficient to proficiency in up to five subject areas and proficiency in both soft skills and work readiness skills. In addition to earning a wage while remediating during this time, incentives are rewarded as benchmarks are accomplished.

SEE ATTACHMENT 16: "INCENTIVES"

Acceptance into Scholars@Work is a competitive process. The youth must apply for a spot, interview with a selection panel, and if "hired" into the program, must dress in uniforms, punch a time clock and live by the same attendance, productivity, and

behavioral expectations standard in the unsubsidized world of work. The added bonus is that upon earning their high school equivalency, many youth have significantly improved their “soft” skills AND often feel empowered to tackle post-secondary training.

A second initiative deals with pre-apprenticeship training. Contributing partners to developing the training curriculum includes one of the Workforce Development Board’s Union Representatives, WDB Board staff, State Fair Community College administrators and instructors, and the Division of Workforce Development’s Manager of Youth and Adult programs. A high percentage of apprentices failing to complete their program noted “math” as one of the main reasons. A pre-apprenticeship program tied to a Registered Apprenticeship program will ease the transition and offer remediation in subject areas previously causing difficulty.

E. Business Services

1. *Describe how the Board coordinates and provides comprehensive and integrated workforce system services to businesses, including the development and delivery of innovative workforce services and strategies to meet the workforce needs of area employers. Explain the collaboration with Missouri Job Center Jobs Teams to facilitate recruitment and meet business demand. In addition, describe how the Board coordinates with economic development.*

The West Central Region has initiated a Nexus group patterned after the founding group in the Kansas City area. Nexus is made up of individuals involved in job development throughout the region from the Workforce Development Board; Functional Leaders, Business Services Representatives and Jobs Team members from the Job Centers; representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, The Rehabilitation Institute, Job Point, Children’s Therapy Center, and Preferred Family Healthcare; Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) providers from West Central Missouri Community Action Agency and Missouri Valley Community Action Agency; temp agencies, etc. All partners are ever mindful of seeking out and sharing information and job leads from employers. The group meets monthly at the WDB office to discuss the needs of area employers. Occasionally an employer is invited to share information regarding their employment needs and hiring practices.

Economic Development partners play a big role in many of the workforce initiatives supported in the West Central Region. Economic Development is represented via a seat on the Workforce Development Board and that individual also participates on the Planning and Operations standing committee charged with overseeing job center activities, selection of service providers, performance, professional development of staff, etc. Economic developers around the region have been thoroughly engaged in the attainment of their county’s Certified Work Ready Community Certification to improve their ability to attract new businesses to their areas. Additionally, several Economic Development representatives actively participate on the Sector Strategy Leadership Team for Advanced Manufacturing.

SEE ATTCHMENT 10 – Business Services Plan

2. *Describe the Board’s sector-strategy initiative. Missouri has partnered with the consulting firm Maher & Maher, a specialized change management and workforce development consulting firm, to provide guidance during the launch year and to establish a foundation to achieve transformative system change. Include a summary of the work the Board has conducted with Maher and Maher. Describe how the Board will be collaborating and aligning resources of all partners, public and private, toward developing a talent pipeline. Describe how that alignment will create meaningful career pathways for workers possessing skill levels serving important regional industries. Describe how system services will be framed by industry sectors that are data driven, regionally designed, and guided by employers and how these strategies will be sustained. Include the methods the Board will be using to inform and engage key public and private stakeholders in the development of sector-strategies.*

The WDB has an ongoing commitment to closely collaborate with a Sector Strategies Team which is made up of local employers, a CEO, representatives from K-12, Career and Technical Education, area community college, Adult Education and Literacy, economic development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP), and Vocational Rehabilitation.

This team first met at a Sector Strategies launch meeting in October of 2015 to help prepare the West Central Region in selecting a group of targeted sectors that are considered optimum for future regional growth. The group identified opportunities across several sectors and then selected advanced manufacturing as a place to begin their work. When looking at industry clusters where there is a competitive advantage the team discerned that many of the skillsets needed in manufacturing were also transferrable to other competitive industries.

The West Central Region defined its top three sectors to be:

- 1) Manufacturing
- 2) Healthcare
- 3) Agri-Business & Food Processing

The West Central Region team determined they will have a talent development system that supports a strong regional economy by aligning the resources of all partners, public and private, toward developing a talent pipeline that creates meaningful career pathways for a range of workers and skill levels in important local industries.

While working with Maher & Maher at the statewide launch meeting the team discussed the following model:

Service Delivery Level		© 2015 Maher & Maher
From:	To:	
Business services are localized, single-agency, and focused on labor exchange	Business services are regionalized and coordinated among partners to deliver diverse solutions	
Training investments are individualized and not aligned to growth sectors	Training is driven by industry and business needs (Demand-Driven)	
Credential attainment not connected to target sectors' needs	Credential attainment aligned to identified industry needs and targets	
Job Center organization and service delivery not tied to career opportunities and pathways in target sectors	Sector focus reflected in Job Center organization, partnerships, customer flow, and service planning and delivery	
Job placement as goal and service end point	Long-term career development along clear pathways in targeted industry sectors	

With guidance from consulting firm Maher & Maher a regional sector partnership launch meeting was developed targeting the manufacturing sector for spring 2016. The team consulted with the Maher & Maher representative, Christy Montgomery via conference call and by Skype during the event planning process. The launch event did provide a way for manufacturers to collectively identify skills gaps within the labor force, the need for soft skills training, professional recruitment and talent retention that will support regional economic growth. Community partners listened to the roundtable discussion with the advanced manufacturers then held their own breakout session. The Community Partners were able to see firsthand how regional employers could come together to discuss demand-driven solutions that could streamline the connection between employer needs and education and training programs, which would result in stronger career pathways and better prepared workers.

Next steps for the private/public Manufacturing Sector partners is to:

- 1) Identify partner workgroup members and leaders around three top priority areas.
- 2) Identify other partners in the community that need to be involved in finding solutions.
- 3) Develop an agenda framework: purpose, structure, objectives, asset mapping.
- 4) Meet to discuss possible solutions.
- 5) Reconvene with representatives from the manufacturing sector to brainstorm possible solutions and develop an action plan.

3. *Describe how the Board will identify and reach out to the Registered Apprenticeship training program sponsors within its LWDA. Boards must verify that the program is a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship. Eligible Training Provider System guidance requires that Registered Apprenticeship training programs be contained in the state's system.*

The Workforce Development Board agrees with the US Department of Labor that registered apprenticeship is an effective “earn and learn” model with a long history of industry support and involvement. The critical strategies that are called for in WIOA, such as sector strategies and career pathways, are at the heart of the apprenticeship model.

Opportunities for apprenticeships have expanded over the years from mainly construction and building trades to now include careers in healthcare, information technology, transportation, and energy. What once was viewed as a union-based activity has now grown to also include Registered Apprenticeship sponsors such as employers, community colleges and universities, workforce development boards, industry associations, and the military. There are currently 274 Registered Apprenticeship job classifications listed in twelve of the region's thirteen counties. While these job classifications do not reflect actual job openings at this time, it does represent the availability of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors for area positions. Many of the Registered Apprenticeship programs noted are located in larger population centers such as Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield and Columbia; however, there are seven training sponsors located in the West Central Region. The Department of Labor recognizes regional sponsors for the job classifications of painter, glazer, heating and air conditioning installer-service, line installer-repairer, and electrician. The Workforce Development Board has reached out to these sponsors and will continue to seek out opportunities to identify new programs and broaden the number of sponsors interested in expanding the availability of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs available in the local area.

As WIOA puts more focus on Registered Apprenticeships, the need for pre-apprenticeship training becomes more obvious. This need was validated recently at a meeting with a local Electrical Registered Apprenticeship Program trainer (a new WDB Board member) where a disappointing, but common statistic was shared. The last local Electrical Apprenticeship class started with 17 individuals but only three were able to complete the course - due mainly to difficulties with work applications involving math. For this reason the Board, the Division of Workforce Development, State Fair Community College, and labor representative(s) are currently researching the development of a pre-apprenticeship program to enhance the readiness of our job seekers to enter Registered Apprenticeship programs. Collaboration between pre-apprenticeship programs and the Job Centers of the West Central Region will play a valuable role in preparing entry-level workers for Registered Apprenticeship careers while contributing to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce.

4. *Boards shall maintain a Business Services Plan, outlining team members, including WIOA core partners, and the marketing and outreach roles and expectations of team members. The Business Services Plan also should outline the team's purpose, goals,*

*and policies and procedures to ensure seamless delivery of services, avoid **duplication**, and ensure feedback to the Board's Job centers. Include the Business Services Plan as **Attachment 10**.*

SEE ATTACHMENT 10

F. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies

1. *Describe how the Board will support the Missouri Re-entry Process ex-offender initiative. Include the services to be provided for ex-offenders and the process to be used to identify employers willing to hire ex-offenders.*

The West Central Region supports the Missouri Re-entry Process ex-offender initiative starting with an inmate when they are within six months of release from prison and staff continues to work with them through re-integration into one of our communities. We have been involved in such a process for the past 10 years.

The initial contact is made by a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) representative. At least once per month, the DVOP housed at the Missouri Job Center in Sedalia visits Tipton Correctional Center. The DVOP provides information, in a pre-release setting, to complement the Department of Corrections' Employability Program. The DVOP engages individuals including Veterans or groups of individuals in preparing resumes, practicing interview scenarios, completing applications, etc.

The DVOP also shares all the services available through the Job Center and/or through partner agencies once the incarcerated individual earns release, such as through Vocational Rehabilitation. Use of tax credits, on-the-job training, classroom skill training, support services and other community resources are discussed.

The Workforce Development Board is aware that each Probation and Parole District has a Missouri Re-entry Committee (MRP). These Committees offer the best resources and support for offenders returning to a community. Making a successful transition from incarceration to a community is essential to local, state, and national efforts to increase public safety and manage public spending. NGCC staff members attend MRP meetings to provide employment information and relate the resources and other services available through the Missouri Job Centers such as the Missouri Federal Bonding Program which is a no-cost job-incentive program intended to increase hiring of job seekers and promotion of employees considered as "at risk".

Staff at the Job Centers are ready to assist with labor market information; career exploration and counseling; assessments; workshops on resume preparation, interviewing, basic computer operation, financial literacy, etc; National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) remediation and/or testing as well as referrals to appropriate programs or partner agencies for assistance with other identified barriers to employment.

One of the key issues facing the Missouri Department of Corrections is the increasing recidivism rate of the offenders. Over 50% of ex-offenders with no employment return to prison within one year, compared to 14% recidivism for those with full time jobs. Employment has been identified as the most important factor in preventing recidivism. The Workforce Development Board and local partner agencies are working together to meet this challenge. The West Central Region has initiated a Nexus group patterned after the founding group in the Kansas City area. Nexus is made up of individuals involved in job development throughout the region from the Workforce Development Board; Functional Leaders, Business Services Representatives and Jobs Team members from the Job Centers; representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, The Rehabilitation Institute, Job Point, Children's Therapy Center, and Preferred Family Healthcare; Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) providers from West Central Missouri Community Action Agency and Missouri Valley Community Action Agency; temp agencies, etc. All partners are ever mindful of seeking out and sharing information and job leads from employers willing to offer second chance employment to the ex-offenders of the region.

2. *Describe the Board's strategies for promoting and increasing enrollments in the work-based learning programs, such as WorkReadyMissouri and Transitional Jobs, including processes to target and encourage employer participation.*

WorkReady Missouri and Transitional Jobs –The Workforce Development Board strongly supports work-based learning programs in the West Central Region. The Business Services Team and the Nexus group of job placement specialists from partner agencies work as a team in targeting and encouraging employer participation.

While WorkReady Missouri will not be available after the MO-40 National Emergency Grant ends on September 30, 2016, other work-based opportunities will continue to exist such as on-the-job- training, work experience, internships, Scholars@Work, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeship programs.

3. *Describe the Board's strategies for promoting Show-me Heroes and the OJT component for participating employers.*

The Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) have led the way in the West Central Region in supporting Governor Nixon's initiative of showing thanks to a veteran for their service by hiring him/her when they return home. The LVER, along with the members of the Business Services Team and Nexus partners assist in the marketing of this program. Employers are encouraged to "Take the Pledge" and become a Show-Me Heroes Employer. By taking the Show-Me Heroes Pledge, employers are showing Missouri's military community and their peers that their business values the experience and skills current and former members of our armed Forces can bring to the workplace. Upon hiring a veteran, each employer is eligible to be nominated for and receive a Flag of Freedom award presented by the Local Veteran Employment Representative.

NGCC team members assist in this initiative by conducting labor market research using online resources, such as the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center

(MERIC) to identify high-growth and in-demand industries. OJT outreach is then done through a mix of direct and indirect methods which may include face-to-face contacts with employers, mail-outs (introductory letters, notes of appreciation, newsletters), involvement with the Chambers of Commerce, press releases, sponsoring and participating in job/career fairs, hiring events, networking with other agencies, and speaking to civic organizations.

Employers are educated regarding how OJT can enhance their businesses, cut waste, skill up the workforce, reduce turnover, and increase profits. The expanded legislation that added an On-the-Job Training component to this initiative enhanced the reward to all concerned in this “win/win/win” scenario for the veteran, the employer, and the state of Missouri.

4. *Describe the Board’s strategies for participating in the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative. Please include, if applicable, any counties in your LWDA that plan to apply for certification and what role the Board will play in the development and implementation of the plan.*

The Workforce Development Board has supported and been an active partner in Missouri’s CWRC initiative since its inception. This voluntary effort to align workforce and education to meet the economic needs of the state and local communities is growing as evidenced by the number of counties engaged in the process. Currently, five of the counties in this 13-county region have achieved “certification” distinction (Henry, Pettis, Saline, Vernon and Chariton); four more counties are “in process” (Lafayette, Carroll, Benton and Cedar); and two more (Bates and St. Clair) are preparing applications for the next round of consideration.

Local community leaders - elected officials, economic development, business leaders, chambers of commerce, educators and workforce development have taken up the challenge to attract, retain, and develop a workforce with education and fundamental skills-Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information- to succeed in the 21st Century. The Work Ready Communities initiative is expected to result in strengthening existing businesses, attracting new businesses, growing jobs, and developing a strong talent pipeline for the region’s and the state’s future growth.

5. *Describe how the Board will coordinate with the local community colleges. This should include any coordination of training services for all customers, the participation in the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants, Certified Work Ready Communities initiatives and any other local activities. The TAACCCT grants target Trade Act-eligible workers and includes a no-wrong-door approach. Please describe in depth the referral process of participants between the Community Colleges and Job Centers, including participation in the NGCC eligibility process, and, for Trade Act-eligible participants, timely referral to the Skills Team for program requirements. Please include the MOU indicating the collaborations listed above between the Board and Community Colleges as **Attachment 11** to the Plan.*

The Workforce Development Board collaborates with the only community college in the region, State Fair Community College on several levels.

SEE ATTACHMENT 11

G. Strategies for Faith-based and Community-based Organizations

Describe those activities to be undertaken to: (1) increase the opportunities for participation of faith-based and community organizations as committed and active partners in the One-Stop Delivery System; and (2) expand the access of faith-based and community-based organizations' customers to the services offered by the One-Stops in the LWDA. Outline efforts for conducting outreach campaigns to educate faith-based and community organizations about the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce development system. Indicate how these resources can be strategically and effectively leveraged in the LWDA to help meet the objectives of WIOA. (For more information, reference DOL's tool, Making It Real: Strategies for State Agencies and Local Workforce Boards to Increase Partnerships with Faith-Based and Community Organizations.)

The Missouri Job Centers in the region are each developing resource guides for the communities they serve. Too often job seekers, in addition to needing a job, are also in need of other supportive services. Whether it is a homeless veteran, a single mom without childcare, a hungry youth, or a prisoner re-entering society there are needs to be addressed that will increase their chances of entering and retaining employment.

As faith-based and community groups are identified, they will be invited to attend and join one of the many interagency collaborations throughout the region to learn more about the resources that may be available through other partners of the One-Stop delivery system to the individuals they are trying to serve.

Together, by strategically leveraging resources, more individuals with barriers will receive the assistance they need to move them along the pipeline to self-sufficiency.

XII. Regional Planning Guidance

Describe the Regional Plan.

As previously under WIA, Missouri has designated 14 Boards and will continue with these same designations with WIOA. In accordance with WIOA sec. 106(c)(2), each of the LWDA's establish a Plan; however, collaboration must exist among the Kansas City and St. Louis Economic Regions for the creation of a Regional Plan composed of the following:

- 1) For the Kansas City Region, one Regional Plan for the local planning areas of Kansas City and Vicinity Region and the East Jackson County Region; and*

- 2) *For the St. Louis Region, one Regional Plan for the local planning areas of: The City of St. Louis Region, the County of Saint Louis Region, the County of St. Charles Region, and the Jefferson/Franklin County Consortium Region.*

While this establishes 14 Boards that are encouraged to collaborate, cooperate, and plan across common needs, they will not explicitly submit a Regional Plan. It also establishes two Boards within the Kansas City Region that must contribute to a Regional Economic Plan of for the Kansas City regional economy and four Boards within the St. Louis Region that must contribute to a Regional Economic Plan for the St. Louis regional economy. Boards within the Kansas City and St. Louis regional economic planning areas must complete a regional planning requirement by including within each original LWDB Plan a chapter, or section, that is a Regional Economic Plan that is identically shared by all Boards in each economic region. Additional local regional planning guidance may be developed and required pending the release of final implementing regulations.

As previously determined under WIA, Missouri has designated 14 Boards and will continue with these same designations with WIOA. In accordance with WIOA sec. 106(c)(2), the West Central Region has developed a regional plan for Program Years 2016-2020.

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