I. Overview/Executive Summary

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, or WIA, to foster better alignment of federal investments in job training, integrate service delivery across programs, improve efficiency in service delivery, and ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. Under WIOA, the State Plan communicates the State’s vision for the New Mexico workforce system and serves as a vehicle for aligning and integrating this system across federal programs. This strategic plan accomplishes one of WIOA’s principal areas of reform which is to plan across core programs. As such, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions submits this Combined State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to the U.S. Secretary of Labor outlining a four-year workforce development strategy for New Mexico’s workforce development system. The Combined Plan includes the six core programs plus one Combined Plan partner program, as listed below.

- Adult Program (WIOA Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA Title I)
- Youth Program (WIOA Title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)

Susana Martinez, Governor of the State of New Mexico, has created a vision for the state workforce development system which incorporates the critical need for integrating workforce development and economic development activities.

“Transform New Mexico into the nation’s leader as a state of employability, where the workforce system supports both the needs of private, public, and non-profit employers by providing a trained and employable workforce needed for businesses to grow and profit when appropriate, and allow all employers to become more effective and efficient. This vision will meet the needs of New Mexico citizens by delivering education and training programs which will result in meaningful employment, an increased quality of life and per capita income.”

The workforce system in New Mexico is a network of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment, secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

New Mexico’s workforce service delivery system provides services to jobseeker and business customers throughout thirty-three counties covering 121,298.2 square mile radius, fifth largest land mass in the nation, where an estimated 2,085,572 people call New Mexico home.1 The designated four regional Workforce Development Areas in New Mexico include Central, Eastern, Western, and Southern.

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1 Website: [http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html)
Northern and Southwestern. Each Workforce Development Area has a Local Workforce Development Board that administers employment and training programs through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (NMWCCs), or one-stops.

The four local workforce development boards are as follows:
- Central Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Eastern Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Southwestern Area Local Workforce Development Board

Each local board develops and implements an integrated services and functional management plan. Service integration involves co-location of partners, where appropriate; collaborative partnerships in which service integration eliminates duplication and improves efficiency; functional alignment where staff are organized by function not funding stream for seamless service delivery within each center. These centers serve as the central point for WIOA partners, and their unique programs and cross training of employees in many programs enhances customer service and provides both job seekers and employers with easy access to information.

Through this Combined State Plan, New Mexico aims to share understanding of the workforce needs across the state and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches for addressing the needs of businesses and workers, including individuals with barriers to employment. Focused on meeting the objectives and priorities for the development of a competitive workforce, core partners and various stakeholders came together to prioritize, strategize and assemble a plan for meeting federal and state goals for creating a business driven workforce investment system. In addition, the State Workforce Board will work to convene several advisory committees to guide ongoing strategic planning in the areas of workforce and education planning, data and performance, youth, workforce system service delivery, and business engagement. As such, this plan reflects an enhancement in coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery to the state’s various populations.

The strategies in this WIOA Combined State Plan are based on an analysis of the economic, workforce, and workforce development for New Mexico and its substate regions, included in the WIOA Combined State Plan. Topics discussed include: Projected Employment Growth in New Mexico’s Industries; Projected Employment Growth in New Mexico’s Substate Areas; Projected Occupational Employment Growth; Occupations by region; Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations; Employers Employment Needs; Employment and Unemployment; Labor Market Trends; Employment by Occupation; Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce; and Skills Gap Analysis. Analysis of the current workforce includes sections on People with Disabilities; Long-Term Unemployed; Veteran Status; Native Americans; Older Individuals; Low Income; and English Language Learners.

The Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan, submitted by the State Monitor Advocate in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser program, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program’s State Plan, submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department, are included in the WIOA Combined State Plan.
In an effort to solicit public response to the plan, the plan was posted on the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions’ website and distributed electronically to the State and Local Workforce Development Boards for review and comment. Comments and suggestions received were considered and incorporated into the plan as appropriate. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, housed within the Public Education Department, and the Commission for the Blind, both solicited input from their respective State Rehabilitation Councils, as well as from a series of public hearings they hosted. The Adult Education and Senior Community Service Employment programs’ portions of this plan also include input from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including those involved in local service delivery.

II. Strategic Planning Elements

*See APPENDIX II for the Economic and Workforce Analysis upon which this plan is based.*

**Workforce Development Activities**

To address the strengths and weaknesses of New Mexico’s economy and workforce conditions, the State’s workforce system partners serve a broad spectrum of the state’s population, providing training and services to adults and youth, including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency, and individuals with disabilities. Workforce system partners are responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services focused on education, workforce education and training for this diverse pool of participants. Core and required partners agree through Memoranda of Understanding to make their core services available and seamless as directed by the operator of the Workforce Connection Center. These partners will also participate in cross-training, and establish with the local board areas, shared success indicators, operating strategies and procedures, and customer flow, where appropriate, for effective seamless service delivery.

The State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, the Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, as well as other key one-stop delivery system partner programs, are briefly described below. Other sections of this plan provide more detail about how these partners will coordinate to deliver services in accordance with WIOA.

- **WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth** – WIOA provides for career and training services at the State’s 21 Workforce Connection Centers, also called one-stops. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, and the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career and training services to meet the diverse needs of participants. WIOA made some significant reforms to how services are delivered in the one-stop delivery system to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, providing for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training. Training is supported through a robust Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), comprised of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Other types of career and training services offered include comprehensive and specialized skill assessments, literacy activities, career planning, and
labor market information. More information on the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

- **Wagner-Peyser Employment Services** – A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards and Workforce Connection Centers to provide universal access to an integrated array to workers, jobseekers, and employers, such as entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS), specialized assessment and testing of applicants, job search assistance, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, labor market information, evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and referral to training and support services. The program's service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources. More information on the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program, including the Agricultural Outreach Plan can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

- **Adult Education** – The Adult Education Program supports the development of the workforce by providing foundational education necessary for such employment, and can benefit from better connections to the State's one-stop center resources. Adult Education programs provide opportunities for learning basic literacy skills; placement and retention in employment and workplace programs; obtaining a High School Equivalency (HSE); enrolling in post-secondary education programs; and English Learning Acquisition (ELA) and civics instruction. The Adult Education program resides in the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and includes 27 programs that provide adult literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, family literacy instruction, English language acquisition instruction, integrated English literacy and civics education and activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. As appropriate, these services are also provided in classes at local provider locations, in one-to-one tutoring, and in classes at employer workplaces. Increasingly, local programs are providing hybrid face-to-face/distance classes using various technology platforms. Most local providers are housed at community colleges and branch campuses; one is at Alamo Navajo school district; and four are at community-based organizations.

Education is an essential foundation for building New Mexico's economy and preparing New Mexico workers to fill the middle skill jobs of the future. Adult educators help adult students to design individual learning plans that correspond to their personal needs and goals such as: getting a job, obtaining an HSE, enrolling in post-secondary education or other training, learning the English language, understanding U.S. culture and participating in society, helping their children achieve success in school, and leaving public assistance and earning a family-sustaining income. All Adult Education programs provide services free of charge to the community, and all books and necessary materials are provided. Adult Education serves adults who are unemployed and employed adults, on public assistance, have disabilities, or are incarcerated adults.

Annually, Adult Education serves between 16,000 and 23,000 learners aged 16 and over, not enrolled in high school, and basic skills deficient, as follows.

- English Language Acquisition (ELA) ~35-40%
- Low literacy (grades 0-4) ~15-18%
- Mid level (grades 5-8) ~35-40%
- High literacy (grades 9+) ~6-10%

Participant barriers can include education and training deficits, language issues, child care and transportation problems, as well as isolation and geography. The Adult Education program is also challenged to serve students ranging from low-to-no literacy (“most in need”) to those almost college ready. While one-third of participants come to the program already employed, their job and family situations are not always conducive to furthering their education. More information on the Adult Education Program can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation** – New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which is housed within the New Mexico Public Education Department, serves individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission. These programs provide guidance and counseling, transition services, job search and placement, assistive technology and equipment, as well as other services tailored to the specific needs of their respective clients. DVR and the Commission very occasionally provide service to mutual participants, and work together to avoid duplication of services. An MOU between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves New Mexicans with disabilities toward suitable employment. To be eligible for services an applicant must have a physical or mental impairment, which constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, and can benefit from DVR services in terms of an employment outcome. Services to participants are individualized and are based on a comprehensive evaluation of the person’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Some of the types of services available include the following:

- Medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations
- Counseling and guidance
- Medical and psychological treatment
- Help with expenses due to participation in rehabilitation
- Job search and placement services
- Transition-to-work services for disabled high school students
- Supported employment persons with severe disabilities
- Rehabilitation technology
- Vocational and other training
- Disability and employment assessment
- Occupational licenses, tools, and other equipment
- Assistance with small-business plan development
- Interpreter services
- Help to maintain work
- Post-employment Services
- Special modifications to vehicles

Vocational counseling and guidance by vocational rehabilitation counselors is the primary service to participants. An Individualized Plan for Employment is developed in partnership with the participant, and legal guardian, when appropriate. This plan is the basis for what services will be provided, how the services will be provided, the timeline for services and how progress will be measured toward achieving the employment outcome. Any addition or change to planned services, the vocational goal, service providers or timeframes is accomplished by amendment to the service plan, which is again developed and approved by the participant and the VR counselor. Because each participant's needs and goals are individualized, services provided vary significantly between participants and plans. Some services are available to all participants, if needed to participate in services and achieve employment, such as assessment to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs, referral to services offered by other agencies that can aid in accomplishing vocational goals, interpreter services, rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility services, reader services, job search, placement and retention services and post-employment services.

The barriers to employment that DVR's participants face are as varied as the participants themselves. Each individual has unique challenges depending on impediments caused by a disability or disabilities; lack of available resources, supports, services and accommodations; socioeconomic factors; lack of family and other natural supports; limited or no access to transportation; a limited job market; attitudinal barriers; cultural barriers; structural barriers and other factors.

**Commission for the Blind**

The Commission for the Blind's customers fall in to one of two basic population groups, the first being individuals seeking to be employed and receiving vocational rehabilitation services, and the second being persons seeking to live independently in their homes and communities and receiving independent living services. While the Commission serves children, youth, adult, and older individuals, strategies in the WIOA state plan focus on the population of persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services who want to remain or become employed. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides the following services:

- guidance and counseling,
- transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program called STEP,
- assistive equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers or other rehabilitation technology,
- assistive technology and other supports to become or remain employed in a specific job,
- six to nine months of intensive blindness skills training at the Commission's Orientation Center,
- six to nine months of training at a blindness training program in a different state,
- independent living training,
- assistive technology training,
- support attending college or graduate school,
- job placement services, and
- support in starting a self-employment business.

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided to individuals who need and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services as it relates to an employment outcome. The services are provided through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The Commission for the Blind provides services through eight vocational rehabilitation counselors dispersed throughout the state. These counselors are required to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related field and certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling. The Commission also operates a residential training program with eight highly qualified teachers in Alamogordo where individuals who are blind receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts.

The Commission’s challenges include the need to provide intensive services to overcome blindness, particularly for clients needing to overcome the inability to read and access printed materials, live independently, use technology, travel safely and independently, or access transportation, as well as the lack of public transportation in rural areas. Other significant challenges for the Commission include having to serve a rapidly growing population of children with a condition called Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, which is now the leading cause of blindness in children and which has increased by 600 percent in the last 30 years, as well as a growing number of persons with diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, and a growing population of seniors with age-related macular degeneration, but who are wanting to continue to work. Additionally, the Commission is seeing a population of blind transition students who are graduating from public schools without adequate Braille and other blindness skills, requiring the agency to provide more intensive training.

More information on the VR programs can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** – The Combined Plan incorporates the state plan of one of the WIOA required partner, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department. More information on the SCSEP can
be found in the Program-Specific Requirements, included in the New Mexico Senior Employment Plan.

- **Other Required Partner Programs** – WIOA designates a number of required partners in the one-stop system. If these partners carry out their activities in a given local area, they are required to make their core services available at one-stop centers, provide funding for one-stop administration, if co-located, and provide representation on the local boards, where applicable. Each local area has 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 and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, the following partner programs provide access through the Workforce Connection Centers for individuals with multiple needs to access the services: Community Service Block Grant Employment and Training, Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training, Job Corps, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program, Native American programs, Postsecondary Vocational Education/Perkins Act programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp Employment and Training programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act programs, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans Title 38 Workforce programs.

**Governor’s Key Workforce System Goals**
- The workforce system will become an employer-driven system, and is not driven by government agencies, public education systems, or program providers.
- The workforce system will continuously strive to maintain the maximum allowed flexibility to approve programs, allocate funding, measure outcomes and refine programs and funding as needed to drive business growth through an effective model for achieving employability.
- The workforce system will exist to serve two customer groups:
  - Employers who can grow the state’s economy and revenue through a prospering and expanding business which relies, in a large part, on a trained, competent, and employable workforce.
  - New Mexico citizens who must strive to remain employable and skilled for current and future jobs.
- The workforce system will continuously work toward the alignment of resources, policies, and metrics to ensure the workforce system meets the employability requirements of business.

**New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions’ Strategic Vision, Mission, and Goals**
NMDWS aims to deliver job-driven training and opportunities and business services for New Mexico citizens and employers, through its locally administered, integrated service delivery system of Workforce Connection Centers, throughout the state. NMDWS accomplishes its goals by focusing on the priorities set by the Governor of the State of New Mexico, Susana Martinez.

**VISION STATEMENT:** The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will be a leader in and a facilitator of a competitive workforce for the benefit of all New Mexicans.

Governor’s vision for youth “Leverage resources and eliminate duplication which calls for the alignment of community, regional and state organizations and agencies in order to provide youth the support they need to achieve education and employment success.”

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Educate, Empower, and Employ.
GOALS:
- To be a business-driven department, understanding the needs of all employers with a focus on the employability of all New Mexicans;
- To be an integral part of all economic development and education initiatives;
- To be efficient and responsive to the diverse needs of New Mexico’s employers and workforce; and
- To be a "GATEWAY" to employment.

Performance Goals
Appendix I, Performance Goals for the Core Programs, includes the New Mexico’s expected levels of performance based on primary indicators of performance for core programs, as described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. The State has also reached agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan. As such, Appendix I also includes the the core programs' negotiated performance targets for all measures not considered “baseline.” “Baseline” indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. New Mexico is expected to collect and report on all indicators, including those that that have been designated as “baseline”. The actual performance data reported by States for indicators designated as “baseline” in the first two years of the Combined Plan will serve as baseline data in future years.

Assessment of the New Mexico Workforce System
The State will continue to assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in New Mexico in relation to the strategic vision and goals and use results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements. The State Workforce Development Board, which is appointed by the Governor to provide vision and direction for the workforce system, is required to develop and improve the statewide WIOA-funded activities and the one-stop delivery system, including development of linkages to ensure coordination and prevent duplication among the programs and activities. The Board fulfills this function by providing direction for the development of the WIOA Strategic Plan and developing comprehensive state performance measures to assess the effectiveness of workforce investment activities. To assist the board in fulfilling its duties, it establishes committees to provide oversight and direction in the following areas.

- To promote and support business engagement.
- To coordinate program data to evaluate the return on investment of workforce programs and services.
- To design systems and programs that coordinate and leverage WIOA resources.
- To coordinate state agency efforts to progress toward comprehensive, customer-driven one-stop centers.

The Board also reviews, evaluates and reports annually on the performance of all workforce development activities administered by state agencies involved with workforce development. Key areas of focus include developing linkages with the public education and higher education agencies to ensure coordination of vocational education, apprenticeship, adult education and literacy, employment training programs and vocational rehabilitation programs with other workforce development and training programs. Any problems identified by the State Board will be included in the annual report on strategic plan implementation and the measures that will be taken to address those problems.
New Mexico Workforce System Strategies

The state's workforce system is made up of numerous programs, services, and initiatives administered by multiple governmental entities, including state agencies, educational institutions, and education and training providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement. This interrelated system of programs and agencies often serve common customers and are charged with achieving similar employment and education outcomes for their targeted customer groups.

Because meeting the challenge of preparing our workforce requires setting ambitious goals, clear direction, a comprehensive framework and a statewide commitment to their accomplishment, the strategic planning process was designed to identify and focus on issues that affect multiple system programs and agencies or address broader workforce issues. Several key issues were identified that will be addressed by system partners during the strategic plan period. The following discusses the State's specific strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals, which also take into account the state of New Mexico's economy and workforce, the State's workforce development and education and training activities, and activities to address the needs of target and special populations previously discussed. The Operational Elements section of this report provides more detail about the activities to be conducted to achieve these strategic priorities.

Strengthen workforce development and education linkages.

This strategy reflects continued focus on aligning adult education and literacy, occupational training, and postsecondary education in support of workforce development needs. Having a common vision among state partners and local providers for how adult education aligns with core programs and one-stop partners is critical to establishing strong partnerships with core programs and other necessary community partners to successfully serve adult learners. This strategy involves:

- improving alignment between workforce training and education and promote cross-agency planning, communication, and goal setting between the Adult Education Program and workforce system partners through State Board and State Administrative Entity partnerships; and

- working to improve developmental education programs and curricula by:
  - collaborating with employers and industry organizations to ensure postsecondary and adult education curricula are relevant to the needs of growing industry sectors and credentials validated by employers;
  - integrating remedial material directly into occupational skills training to ensure postsecondary and adult education remedial course work and curricula are relevant to the job market;
  - improving adult education and postsecondary collaboration and curriculum alignment to provide better remediation for matriculated postsecondary students; and
  - leveraging resources across workforce development and the Adult Education Program, when possible.
**Emphasize work-based experiences for target populations.**

WIOA places a keen emphasis on work-based experiences across target groups, particularly youth, individuals with barriers to employment, and individuals with disabilities, as a means to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or reenter competitive employment. WIOA also provides enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job (OJT), customized, and incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and internships. Registered Apprenticeship should be used more often as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. OJT continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers, and states and local areas have the flexibility under WIOA to increase the reimbursement level to up to 75 percent. Incumbent worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted. Transitional jobs are a new type of work-based training allowed under WIOA that allows local boards to use up to 10 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide subsidized time-limited work experiences for individuals with barriers to employment. In addition, by offering internship opportunities to college students, companies can improve the workforce pipeline and identify talented individuals who they can hire and keep in New Mexico after they graduate. As such, workforce system partners together will work to engage businesses more effectively as partners in shaping and implementing this workforce solution by:

- promoting the value of occupational learning through paid work experience on the job, such as through the development of apprenticeships, paid internships, incumbent worker or customized training, and transitional jobs;
- encouraging *public/private partnerships* among business, education, community and civic organizations, and economic development to create work-based training opportunities that both feed career pathways for job seekers and satisfy job-driven strategies of employers and industries;
- using skills assessments and credentialing to promote the value of job ready individuals to potential employers in developing work-based experiences; and
- exploring the offerings of other related programs, outside of the state plan, that offer opportunities to help individuals gain increased skills and experience that can lead to potential future job opportunities and employment.

**Emphasize broader participation in career pathways and sector strategies.**

Improving the skills, knowledge, and credentials of American workers is critical to economic stability and growth. WIOA emphasizes career pathways and sector strategies as effective strategies for increasing the employability, employment, earnings, and other outcomes for job seekers. The new law requires states and localities to collaborate with adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners to establish career pathways systems that make it easier for individuals to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in their regional economy, as well as to develop effective sector partnerships. Effective sector strategies tend to be occupationally focused and driven by employers organized within a sector. Effective career
pathway efforts may be developed and operate mainly within community and technical colleges, but need to have considerable input from employers in growth sectors. In addition, the selection of training services should always be conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, informed by training provider performance, and coordinated, to the extent possible with other sources of assistance. As such, workforce system partners will work towards developing and sustaining innovative approaches to sector strategies and career pathways by:

- coordinating strategic planning efforts around high-demand sectors with local industries, community colleges, adult education and literacy programs, and workforce boards as a means to building and leveraging those partnerships;

- incentivizing collaboration between local boards, and education and training providers to explore career pathway models that begin in community colleges and combine classroom instruction and academic credential attainment with paid work experience, including such models that integrate basic skills instruction with postsecondary courses; and

- supporting the needs of regional economies by using and relying on labor market analysis and other information, such as job vacancy postings:
  - to identify and capitalize on areas with growth opportunity and gaps in service where workforce development activities can be strengthened;
  - to educate businesses on the types of customized solutions that can be developed to meet their needs; and
  - to inform regional strategies and local decision making and policies.

Increase coordination efforts between employment and training activities and partner programs to improve the quality of participants’ experiences and interactions with the workforce system.

WIOA emphasizes the need for states and local boards, workforce center operators and partners to increase coordination of programs and resources to support a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services that are accessible to all jobseekers, workers and businesses. In an effort to govern the core programs as one system, the core partners have come together to mutually assess the strategic needs of each program and identify areas where service strategies can be aligned. This strategy is particularly critical as it relates to activities carried out in the local area for target populations, including recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as well as for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities. Reassessing the one-stop delivery system and what is needed to achieve seamless service delivery models that put the customer first is particularly critical as it relates to activities carried out in the local area for the target populations. As such, to ensure the workforce system meets the employment and skill needs of all workers and employers, system partners will:

- work to align resources to support integrated service delivery to ensure that interested partners and agencies – whether focused on education, workforce development, or human
and social services – are aware of a joint commitment for improved collaboration and coordination across programs and funding sources;

- formalize points of contact within partner programs to provide for more seamless referral processes and more robust follow-up activities to ensure positive outcomes of participants referred to other partner programs;

- improve ability of staff in the workforce centers to assist all individuals, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment by providing coordinated technical assistance and staff training and development for one-stop centers, partners, and eligible training providers on the provision of services to individuals with barriers to employment;

- identify and coordinate outreach efforts to shared customers, as well as the provision of information and customized solutions to shared employers, where appropriate;

- support universal accessibility to services and products for all customers, including special and targeted populations, i.e. dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency and/or basic skills deficiency, and individuals with disabilities; and

- work to continuously improve quality of services by periodically and collectively assessing common performance outcomes, customer service experiences, and the strength of collaborative efforts across partners, as a means to identify and expand the most effective workforce activities within New Mexico’s workforce development system.
III. Operations Planning Elements

This section identifies New Mexico’s efforts to support the State’s strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section of this State Plan, including discussion of the State’s infrastructure, policies, and activities designed to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination.

State Board Overview

The State Workforce Development Board is appointed by the Governor to provide vision and direction for the workforce system and make recommendations to the Governor regarding the workforce system and its overall effectiveness. The State Workforce Development Board and the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions work in collaboration to ensure the Governor’s vision for workforce development is implemented successfully.

The State Workforce Development Board is comprised of the following positions in accordance with WIOA:

- The Governor
- Representatives of State Legislature:
  - One member from the State House of Representatives
  - One member from the State Senate
- Representatives of Business:
  - Owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of business and other employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. At a minimum, business representatives must comprise 51% of the board membership.
- Representatives of Workforce:
  - Two or more representatives of labor organizations
  - One or more members of a labor organization or Registered Apprenticeship program
- Representatives of Government
  - Lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs*
  - Two or more chief elected officials representing cities or counties
- Other Representatives Governor May Appoint:
  - State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners
  - State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs
  - Individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization
  - State agency officials responsible for education programs, including chief executive officers of institutions of higher education

*The lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs in New Mexico will include, the cabinet secretaries for the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, New Mexico Public Education Department, and Commission for the Blind.

State Workforce Development Board Membership Roster*

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<tr>
<th>The Governor (WIOA Section)</th>
<th>The Governor</th>
<th>Governor Susana Martinez Designee</th>
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### Representatives of State Legislature (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(B))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State legislature</th>
<th>Appointment Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber.</td>
<td>Senator John Arthur Smith Representative Monica Youngblood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Representatives of Business (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(i))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The majority of the board must consist of representatives of business who:</th>
<th>Bryn Davis – Sapphire Energy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy-making or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a Local Board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i);</td>
<td>Justin Winfield – Bubba’s Fireworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• represent businesses (including at least one representative of small business), or organizations representing businesses and provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated.</td>
<td>Dale Dekker – Dekker/Perich/Sabatini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ella Leeper – Desert Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joan Schlueter – On-Site Hiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Rockwell – Sierra Peaks/Marpac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Julia Vasquez – Christus St. Vincent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kari Mitchell – Las Cruces Machine, Mfg. &amp; Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment) – Vacated by Kirby Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment) – Vacated by Michael Kozeliski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant (pending reappointment) - Vacated by Dave Sepich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Sharon Rogers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Representatives of Workforce
(WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(ii))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vacated by Drew Dolan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Quillen – Ernest Health, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Rabon – Mesa Verde Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Grassberger – SRD Economic Consulting LLC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vince Alvarado – SMU 495</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karla Kuglar – Associated Builders and Contractors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Meyer – Iron Workers 495</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene Lowden- Job Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vacated by Chris Sanchez, YDI, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment)</td>
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**Not less than 20 percent** shall be representatives of the workforce within the State, who must include:

- **Two or more** representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations;

- **One or more** representative, who must be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management registered apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the State, such a representative of a registered apprenticeship program in the State;

In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the **Governor may appoint one or more representatives** of the following organizations to contribute to the 20 percent requirement:

- representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.
The balance of State Board membership **must include:** the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and two or more chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate).

**In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Governor may appoint** such other representatives such as:

- the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any);
- State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State;
- individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and
- State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education.

* Governor Martinez’s office is working diligently to fill the current vacancies on the board, as well as finalize decisions regarding the non-mandatory/additional members of the board.

**Board Activities**

The State Workforce Development Board establishes overarching strategies and framework for the local boards to follow in developing local plans that are consistent with the State Plan; establishes

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**Representatives of Government** ([WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(iii)])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Name and Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Secretary Celina Bussey-DWS (WP/WIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Secretary Barbara Damron - HED (ABE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Secretary Hanna Skandera - PED (DVR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Scott Eckstein - Mayor of Bloomfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Vacant (Pending reappointment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Secretary Jon Barela - EDD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Dr. Kathie Winograd - President, CNM CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Dr. Becky Rowley - President, Clovis CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Secretary Brent Earnest - HSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Greg Trapp - NM Commission of the Blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Doug Calderwood - Aging &amp; Long Term Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term Services**

- Secretary Brent Earnest - President, HED
- Secretary Barbara Damron - HED (ABE)
- Secretary Hanna Skandera - PED (DVR)
- Secretary Jon Barela - EDD
- Scott Eckstein - Mayor of Bloomfield
- Vacant (Pending reappointment)

**NM Commission of the Blind**

- Secretary Brent Earnest - HSD
- Greg Trapp - NM Commission of the Blind

**Aging & Long Term Services**

- Doug Calderwood - Aging & Long Term Services
accountability measures and expectations for the implementation of the local board plans; conducts annual (or more frequent) review of local boards plans and progress; ensures compliance with criteria for membership on a local boards; receives and communicates public comments regarding the activities of the local boards to ensure accountability and transparency; recommends action consistent with state rule and policy if local board outcomes are not achieved and are not consistent with the principles, strategies, and vision described in this State Plan.

The workforce and community-related expertise of committees is essential to the mission and administration of WIOA, as well as the workforce system’s services and programs. The following provides information about the proposed State Board committee designations.

**Proposed State Workforce Development Board Committee Designations**

**Business Engagement Committee:**
This committee will support the development and execution of statewide employer engagement to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and employability of the New Mexico workforce. They will review and analyze data to be used as the basis for a more comprehensive plan of action for enhancing the employability of job seekers through relevant training and education.

**Data and Performance Committee:**
This committee will spearhead the acquisition and coordination of data across agencies to develop state performance measures to evaluate the overall effectiveness and return on investment of workforce/training programs and services. While recognizing the need for appropriate privacy safeguards, this committee will work to establish the necessary data sharing agreements to enable an integrated tracking process to better assess how well the state’s investment in individuals receiving career services yield successful outcomes. These efforts will provide a basis for setting priorities, goals, and benchmarks across agencies based on solid data.

**Workforce/Education Coordination Committee:**
This committee will work to engage and challenge stakeholders to design systems and programs that coordinate and leverage WIOA resources; improve consistent and standardized assessment of basic skills; and increase the attainment of relevant credentials validated by employers. The committee will promote a strong partnership between community colleges and the public workforce system and explore options to more effectively target resources to support and sustain successful projects and demonstrated effectiveness.

**Workforce System and Performance Committee:**
This committee will promote engagement between the State Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Boards. It will communicate State Workforce Development Board vision, goals, and expectations for the workforce system; provide guidance in establishing a process for one-stop certification.

**Youth Committee:**
This committee will engage stakeholders and develop an ongoing, collaborative strategy for delivering comprehensive youth services, particularly as WIOA emphasizes 75% of youth funds are to be spent on out-of-school youth.
State Strategy Implementation

Core Program Activities to Implement the State’s Strategies
This section describes the implementation of the State’s strategies as it relates to organization, delivery systems, funding flow, state policies, and activities of the lead State agencies responsible for the administration of the core programs.

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS). NMDWS is designated as the State Administrative Entity for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and supports the State Workforce Development Board, which provides leadership, vision and strategy for New Mexico’s workforce system, as discussed earlier. In this role, the Department strives to promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. Specifically, NMDWS is the lead agency responsible for the fiscal and program administration of the following core programs as specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Adult Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Youth Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions provides oversight of WIOA programs by contracting with four Local Workforce Development Boards to provide a variety of services, such as job training and employment services. The boards represent a wide variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the local area who work to:

- promote and broker effective relationships between the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), economic development, education, and workforce partners throughout the local area;
- develop a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs to promote economic growth;
- participate and collaborate closely with the required and other partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations; and
- integrate and align a more effective, job-driven workforce development system.

The CEOs in each local area serve as the local grant recipients for WIOA funds allocated to the local area. The State Administrative Entity allocates WIOA funds for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers based on the U.S. Department of Labor-mandated formulas. Availability of WIOA funds is predicated upon receipt of federal allocations, and subject to required formula disbursements and rescission. Funds the local boards do not expend within the specified period are subject to reversion to the State pursuant to applicable law. Upon receipt of a fully executed grant agreement and all required attachments, the funds are made available to the local boards. Allocation letters, notices of increases and/or decreases in funding, or reallocation must be incorporated as modifications to this agreement.

WIOA provisions related to local governance of the workforce system took effect on July 1, 2015. As such, the State requires Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards to
constitute WIOA-compliant boards through the appropriate local board appointments. For each local area the members of local boards must be selected by the CEOs consistent with criteria established pursuant to WIOA section 107(b)(1) and must meet the composition requirements of WIOA section 107(b)(2). Local boards must comply with New Mexico Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act. Additionally, local board must elect chairpersons from among the business representatives on the boards.

The Local Workforce Development Boards integrate service delivery within a framework of one-stop partners that work to support the needs of jobseekers, workers, and employers. This structural framework is referred to as the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers, and participating entities are called workforce system partners. While there are 21 Workforce Connections Centers, each of the four local board areas has at least one comprehensive center. Each board area adopts local policies based on state-level policy and guidance to govern the activities of the Workforce Centers, as the local boards are charged with enhancing the range and quality of workforce development services available to job seekers and businesses through a coordinated approach among partner agencies.

**Adult and Dislocated Worker Services.** WIOA authorizes “career services” for adults and dislocated workers, rather than “core” and “intensive” services, as authorized by WIA. There are three types of “career services”: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer. The three categories of career services are defined as follows:

**Basic Career Services**
Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
- outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system;
- initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- provision of information on nontraditional employment;
- provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas;
- information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed;
- information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
○ provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
○ provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system;
○ provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
○ assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
○ provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

**Individualized Career Services**

If Workforce Connection Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual at the one-stop centers. Workforce center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include:

- comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- career planning (e.g. case management);
- short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
- financial literacy services;
- out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
Follow-up Services
Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up.

Youth Services. The Governor’s vision for youth includes ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training. Youth services should be business driven consistent with all other services within a region and state with the goal of building the workforce of the future. Activities should include but are not limited to:

- career awareness regarding targeted industry and demand occupations;
- quality educational employment opportunities consistent with local and state goals and priorities; and
- strategies that help prepare youth for success in a range of postsecondary education and career opportunities specifically those defined as high growth and high demand.

WIOA funds provided to the states provide local workforce development areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting low-income youth with one or more barriers to employment prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. Services must include tutoring, alternative secondary school offerings, summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, mentoring, follow-up services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

State-level WIOA Program Policies
The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has state-level policies and technical assistance guides that support the implementation of the State’s strategies, including co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes. Two State Technical Assistance Guides exist regarding WIOA programs that govern eligibility for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and other programmatic processes. Also, the following policies were developed to support the State vision for a business-driven, skill based, and integrated workforce system under the Workforce Investment Act and will be revised as necessary to comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act once federal regulations have been finalized.

Governance and Delivery of Workforce Services

- Local Governance policy provides guidance on the appointment of local boards and outlines the roles, responsibilities and authority of the chief elected officials and the local boards in regard to the local workforce system.

- One Stop Delivery System policy provides local boards and other workforce system sub-recipients with instruction and guidance on the New Mexico one-stop delivery system and emphasizes, encourages and supports the continued development of a seamless statewide one-stop delivery system that is business-driven, skills-based, and accessible. This policy envisions a statewide system focused on quality and seamless service to business and job seekers through coordination among the programs and activities carried out by workforce system partners.
• **Memorandum of Understanding** policy provides guidance and direction to the local workforce development boards on the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between local boards and workforce system partners. A memorandum of understanding is mandated by federal law as the mechanism that serves as the blueprint from which the system operates. The MOU is the agreement between one stop partners and the local workforce development boards to establish a process to maintain and govern the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local areas.

• **Service Integration** policy communicates the goal of universal access to basic career services is to be achieved through close integration of Wagner-Peyser, WIA (now WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker and other partners in the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers. This policy is intended to improve customer access to service through the creation of a seamless system of workforce services. Service integration requires partners to work collaboratively in the delivery of services available under multiple programs.

• **Co-Enrollment** policy provides instruction and guidance regarding co-enrollments across funding streams and serves to encourage coordination and leveraging of resources among workforce system partners. In this policy, the State Administrative Entity (NMDWS) outlines its expectations on co-enrollment and the framework for case management; file management and documentation requirements to support co-enrollment.

**Business Driven Services**
- **Individual Training Accounts** policy provides instruction and guidance on the use and administration of individual training accounts. It is the responsibility of the local board and local service provider to assist customers in making informed choices regarding career paths and training through the dissemination of information on state and local targeted industries and occupations in demand. Customer choice shall be exercised within designated targeted industry and demand occupations.

**Strong Youth Programs**
- **Youth Activities** policy emphasizes the broad range of youth activities and coordinated services to include opportunities for assistance in both academic and occupational learning, developing leadership skills, and preparing for further education and training and eventual employment. The varied services may be provided in combination or alone during a youth's participation. Strong connections are to exist between youth program activities and the Workforce Connection Centers so that youth learn early how to access the services and continue to use those services throughout their working lives.

**Ensuring Priority of Services for Targeted Populations**
- **Priority of Service** policy prioritizes use of WIOA Adult formula funds for services to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals and individuals that are basic skills deficient, in addition to priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses of veterans.

**Commitment to Accountability**
- **Oversight and Monitoring** policy ensures monitoring activities have been standardized to accomplish the following: ensure resources are efficiently and effectively used for
authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; ensure reliable and timely information is captured and reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting.

- **Incentives, Sanctions and Technical Assistance** policy establishes the framework for implementing sanctions and corrective actions, and providing technical assistance to local boards and other sub-recipients. This will ensure accountability of local boards and other sub-recipients in meeting the needs of employers and job seekers; ensure performance in reaching outcome measures; ensure adequate returns on New Mexico investments; and support New Mexico in achieving its goals.

- **Grievance and Complaint Resolution Procedures** policy was developed to ensure that no individual will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with, any such program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief or, for any beneficiary, because of the beneficiary’s citizenship status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or for participation in any Title I financially assisted program or activity. The policy establishes procedures for processing complaints and grievances, which apply to all levels of the New Mexico workforce system. This policy covers equal opportunity requirements, discrimination grievances, local and state complaints; and criminal fraud and abuse complaints.

**Wagner-Peyser Employment Services.** The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions also administers Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, which it does from the state level through its Employment Services Division, along with the administration of Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Rapid Response, and Veterans programs. NMDWS receives funding from USDOL to hire and oversee state merit staff responsible for direct delivery of the Wagner Peyser employment services and the other related services to jobseekers and employers. Merit staff is located throughout 18 field offices and the programs are co-located with the WIOA programs in every local board area.

Employment Services are provided as part of the one-stop delivery system. Currently, each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive workforce development center that includes, at a minimum, three partners: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and access to Unemployment Insurance services. Each Employment Services field office is assigned a site manager who ensures the workforce centers are universally accessible, customer centered, and training is job-driven. This includes providing easy access to and assistance with workforce related activities, such as looking for a job, exploring work preparation and career development services, as well as seamless referral to WIOA employment, on-the-job-training, and occupational training programs. Employment Services staff follow required guidelines regarding referral and placement.

All of the Basic Career Services offered by the WIOA programs must be made available by Wagner-Peyser staff in coordination with other one-stop center partners. Employment Services staff may also make available the Individualized Career Services, particularly for those individuals with barriers. Wagner-Peyser services are free of charge for individuals. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards, site
managers and operators, and other workforce partners, to effectively serve both employers and jobseekers. A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. The program’s service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources as follows.

**Worker and Jobseeker Services**
- Job search assistance
- Reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants
- Labor market information
- Evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Referral to training and support services
- Veterans priority of service

**Employer Services**
- Outreach to promote the use of Workforce Connection Center facilities and services
- Entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS)
- Filling job listings
- Specialized assessment and testing of applicants
- Workforce Connection Online System technical assistance
- Recruitment assistance, i.e. job fairs
- Training services
- Response to layoffs and business closures

**NM Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS)**
NMWCOS gives employers access to a database of job seekers in NM. Employers can enter, update, and archive job listings securely. The New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System is available free of charge to employers and jobseekers. Employers can post their own jobs or provide job listing information to Workforce Connection Center staff for the matching and referral of qualified job seekers. Workforce Connection Center staff can access both employer job listings and job seeker accounts entered into the system. The job listing information allows Workforce Connection Center staff to evaluate the hiring requirements of the employer, as well as the qualifications of the job seeker.

In addition to assistance with job listings, recruitment assistance can be provided to employers, including provision of interview rooms, job fair assistance, specialized testing, on-site staff assistance, and labor market information.

**NMCOS Services for Jobseekers** include:
- online self-registration,
- resume creation,
- online job matching,
- ability to browse jobs and contact employers immediately,
- e-mail notification of matches, if requested,
- current labor market information,
- access to career tools and training resources,
- access to job notices from external job listings, and
access labor market information.

**NMCOS Services for Employers** include:
- online self-registration,
- online job listing and job matching in real time,
- ability to view résumés and contact job seekers immediately,
- e-mail notification of matches, if requested,
- current labor market information, and
- other recruiting tools and information.

**Other Employer Services**
The workforce system also supports employers by providing customized screening and referral of qualified participants in career and training services to employers; customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations on a fee-for-service basis that are in addition to labor exchange services available to employers under Wagner-Peyser; and, activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce investment needs of area employers, as determined by the local boards and consistent with their local plans.

In addition, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit administered at the state level that is available to employers that hire workers in designated target groups that have barriers to employment. Employers can potentially get a tax credit ranging from $1,200 to $9,600 depending on the target group. The tax credit is designed to help job seekers gain on-the-job experience, move towards economic self-sufficiency, and at the same time help reduce employers’ federal tax liability. WOTC target groups include qualified TANF recipients, qualified veterans, qualified ex-felons, designated community residents, vocational rehabilitation referrals, qualified food stamp recipients, qualified social security income recipients, and long-term family assistance recipients.

**Wagner-Peyser Policies**
The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions maintains an Employment Services Manual, a handbook providing processes and procedures for the administration of Wagner Peyser Employment Services and to highlight how these services support the primary mission of the State’s workforce system. The guide, which establishes a comprehensive resource for Employment Service information and operational guidance, communicates expectations for program design and service deliver, and ensures a consistent level of service. The guide will be revised to reflect the changes imposed by the passage of WIOA.

**Adult Education.** Adult Education in New Mexico is administered by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, which provides leadership, services, support, and technical expertise to Adult Education program personnel, students, partners and communities. At the State level, the Director of the Adult Education Division reports to the Secretary of New Mexico Higher Education Department. The Division oversees a Fiscal Office, a Program Improvement Office, and Operations Research for Adult Education, High School Equivalency Testing, and a Volunteer Literacy Tutoring program. The last two functions are funded by state legislative appropriation and are not governed by WIOA. The remainder of the Adult Education Division is funded through WIOA and a state legislative appropriation to the Higher Education Department to fulfill WIOA Maintenance of Effort requirements.
The program has 27 education providers. At the local level, each provider is attached to a fiscal agent. Four of the 27 providers are attached to a community based non-profit organization; one is attached to the Alamo Consolidated School Board; and the remainder are attached to public postsecondary institutions. Each local provider has a program manager and a data technician, as well as instructional and administrative staff. Each local program provides instructional services using a curriculum aligned with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education’s College and Career Readiness Standards, including literacy, high school equivalency preparation, workplace readiness training, basic technology skills, and English Language acquisition. Six programs have English Language/Civics grants through WIOA. In addition, eleven programs work in collaboration with college career and technical education departments to teach integrated basic education and skills training leading to an industry-recognized certification. In addition to instructional services, each program provides student assessment services, transition advising, and a variety of student support services, including referral to other entities for needed non-educational services.

The Adult Education program has policies that govern allowable activities; student assessment; local provider monitoring; performance measures; the local provider funding process; target populations; and evaluation of need of Title II activities.

Multi-year grants or contracts
The following is a description of how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the State’s eligible agency for administering Adult Education and Literacy programs under WIOA. NMHED will award multi-year grants on a competitive basis to eligible providers within the state to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities under WIOA. The subgrant Request for Proposals (RFP) process will follow state procurement rules and federal guidelines under WIOA and will take place in spring, 2017. The New Mexico Higher Education Department will award funding to local providers beginning July 1, 2017 for a four year cycle which applies to all local grant recipients, with the requirement that each year the local provider submit and extension application to be considered for funding. The RFP process for the next multi-year grant cycle will occur in spring of 2021 for funding to begin July 1, 2021.

Funding will be used to provide services in all four workforce board regions. The amount of funding allocated to each provider will be determined by a formula which takes into account the literacy needs of the local service area, the number of participants served, and core performance indicators under WIOA.

The RFP process for program year 2017-18 will follow these steps:

- February 2017: NMHED publishes NOFA and RFP aligned with New Mexico Combined State Plan
- February-March 2017: NMHED provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible potential providers. NMHED recruits candidates for reviewing committee to score AEFLA grant proposals.
- March 2017: AEFLA grant proposals due at NMHED.
March-April 2017: Review committee reviews and scores grant proposals.
April 2017: NMHED reviews budgets and other grant requirements to rank RFP responses according to scores.
April-May 2017: NMHED announces eligible providers that will receive funding.
July 1 2017: AEFLA providers begin 4-year grant cycle of programming and funding.

NMHED will not distribute any new federal funds for a funding cycle without a statewide public Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) and RFP. The NOFA will be advertised statewide and sent to all known eligible service providers. The NOFA announcement and the RFP will cover all funding categories and programs available for current year distribution. Any announcement will be contingent upon State Plan approval by U. S. Departments of Labor and Education. The NOFA and RFP will be sent to all requesting parties. All eligible recipients for WIOA sections 225, 231, and/or 243 will be allowed the same opportunity to apply for funds regardless of the priorities they address and will follow the same RFP process.

The funding set aside for Integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics) will be distributed in a separate RFP process. The process will be the same, and the program-specific content and criteria for evaluation will be specific to the WIOA requirements for IEL/Civics education programs.

Demonstrated effectiveness of eligible providers’ proposals will be determined by performance data related to the provider’s record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's RFP for grants to eligible providers. To demonstrate effectiveness, eligible providers will include in their proposal at least two years of credible data recording outcomes serving the goals under Title II of WIOA; at least two years of the provider's annual independent audits for fiscal responsibility; and cost-benefit analyses for the two years preceding grant proposal.

Ensuring Direct and Equitable Access
The following is a description of how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

NMHED will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds, and it will ensure that it is using the same grant announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers by using this process:

- Using the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process described under “multi-year grants and contracts”;
- Issuing public notice through these venues:
  - Publication of the NOFA, including instructions for receiving a copy of the RFP, in the Albuquerque Journal, a newspaper with statewide circulation;
Mailing a copy of the NOFA to all existing adult education and family literacy services; and
Publication of the NOFA and RFP on the NMHED website;

- Sending a copy of the RFP to all who request it;
- Following the State’s procurement process as it is applicable to grants. Should additional funding become available in the case of the withdrawal of a provider during the term of a grant, the same process will be used to provide services in the applicable service area and it will be open to all eligible agencies throughout the state; and
- Using the same process for EL/Civics grant competitions.

All applicants eligible under Sections 225, 231, and 243 of WIOA will submit applications directly to NMHED, the eligible agency. They will not be required to apply through another agency or agencies in a multi-tiered process. The application process is designed so that direct application to NMHED is clearly evident and nonnegotiable. Direct application is the norm, regardless of whether an applicant would be considered a grantee or a contractor.

NMHED requires all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. NMHED ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts NMHED with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. NMHED believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access.

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).** New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), situated within the Public Education Department, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission for the Blind. A memorandum of understanding between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board. The State funding allotment is distributed by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) between the two agencies. When the VR agencies receive funding from RSA for caseloads, they each distribute this money by operational region, which is further distributed down to individual employee caseloads. Vocational rehabilitation counselors manage caseload budgets to provide services for the individuals assigned to their caseload.

The **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** helps individuals with disabilities find or retain suitable employment by providing vocational guidance, assistance, and services on an individualized basis. DVR is broken up into nine regions across the state, with each region having two to four field
offices. Each region is managed by an area Program Manager and three Field Operation directors currently oversee each area. Also, one Administrative Field Operations Director oversees the administrative needs, i.e. facilities and fleet, of all the areas.

DVR contributes to the development of the workforce through the provision of individualized assessments, vocational counseling, planning and services necessary to address barriers to employment faced by individuals with disabilities. This also includes relationships with other state agencies, community providers, secondary and post-secondary schools, businesses, government employers and others as part of coordinating services to participants. DVR takes a customized approach to finding suitable employment for individuals with disabilities. Ideally employment goals meet the criteria for demand occupations, but occasionally the Division will need to seek specific employment situations for people with disabilities.

Employers are supported by a professional team that specializes in preparing DVR consumers for employment through pre-employment training, college and technical education, and working to match the best talent with the right jobs. DVR helps employers identify possible accommodations for people with disabilities who require such accommodations to perform a job, or can direct employers to other beneficial resources. DVR partners with other state and private agencies to host job fairs and in-office hiring events. DVR works collaboratively with employers to coordinate services for retention and promotion of their current staff who are eligible for DVR services through job coaching. Consultative services provide guidance on matters related to job retention for a person with a disability, job analysis, and adaptive technology guidance. Staff also offer employers information on financial incentives for hiring and training DVR clients.

The Commission for the Blind provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, who need and can benefit from these services as it relates to an employment outcome. The Commission has eight vocational rehabilitation counselors located throughout the state, including four in Albuquerque, one in Las Vegas, one in Farmington, one in Roswell, and one in Las Cruces. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides services through an Individualized Plan for Employment. As discussed earlier, examples of the types of services provided include guidance and counseling; transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program or STEP; the provision of technological equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers, or other rehabilitative technology; support attending college or graduate school; job placement services; support in starting a self-employment business; or provision of needed assistive technology to become or remain employed in a specific job.

The Commission also operates a residential training program in Alamogordo, New Mexico where individuals who are blind can receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts. The training is provided by eight highly qualified teachers. The Orientation Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and certified by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board.

Vocational Rehabilitation Policies
Both VR agencies have policies that support implementation of the State's strategies. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DVR and the Commission has existed for many
years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to persons who are deaf-blind. The MOU was revised in fiscal year 2013 to update provisions for the coordination of services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board.

The VR agencies have the ability to enter into “cooperative agreements” with partner entities, and are required to have cooperative agreements with specific entities such as higher education. As such, the VR agencies have MOUs with the New Mexico Department of Public Education regarding consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services; transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs; roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Both VR agencies maintain a Manual of Operating Procedures which will be updated to reflect WIOA and other changes, as appropriate. The manuals provide guidance for assessment, determination of eligibility, order of selection, if necessary, service provision, documentation, case closure and other topics having to do with direct service provision. In addition, the VR agencies have policies that govern interaction with core partners, such as referrals and transfers to and from the agencies. In addition, the VR agencies provide services that are customized to the unique needs and “informed choice” of the individual consumer who has the right to challenge decisions that they do not agree with, which includes an impartial due process hearing.

Vocational Rehabilitation and the One-stop Delivery System

The one-stop delivery system in New Mexico offers assessment and development tools, strong relationships with business and specialized programs that benefit New Mexicans looking for work. Under the combined state plan, the VR agencies will work to strengthen their relationships with NMDWS and the Local Workforce Development Boards to make referral and coordination of service to participants as seamless as possible. WIOA places greater emphasis on providing work experiences to VR participants, especially students transitioning from school to work. DVR, in particular, can particularly benefit from the expertise and established business relationships that the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions offers to expand work experience opportunities for participants. As such, DVR staff will work with the workforce development centers to arrange for VR-focused presentations when needed and assist with special events such as job fairs and training workshops. Workforce centers will also assist with presentations and trainings at VR offices. DVR also plans to ramp up its efforts to support the transition of students and youth with disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

The following section describes the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State’s strategies. These activities address coordination, alignment and provision of services to individuals and employers, partner engagement with educational institutions, and alignment with activities outside the Plan.

**Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals**

The Workforce Connection Centers provide universal access to an integrated array of services to workers, jobseekers, and employers.
**Functional Organization and Alignment of One-Stop**s. The one-stop delivery system brings together a series of partner programs and entities responsible for workforce development, educational, and other human resource programs to collaborate in the creation of a seamless customer-focused delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services. Partners, programs, and providers collocate, coordinate, and integrate activities so that individuals seeking assistance will have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes for individuals seeking services. Workforce Connection Centers have MOUs with their business and career center partners that require services to be integrated and delivered according to customer need rather than program focus. The following functional alignment elements are incorporated into each comprehensive and affiliate center through their respective workforce system operator and functional management structure.

- **Welcome function** – Services associated with the welcome function include activities such as registration, orientation to services, provision of labor market information, resource room access, and initial assessment.
- **Skill and career development function** – This function assists customers that require more than informational self-directed services, and includes training and supportive services.
- **Business services function** – This function is responsible for building relationships with employers through regional initiatives including sector partnerships and business alliances, and includes business outreach, recruitment and referral for job vacancies, job development and job candidate qualification review.

Local boards designate an operator to ensure seamless service delivery within each center, whose duties include organizing and co-locating partner staff by function in accordance with state policy and guidance; establishing a service delivery model that is customizable to the needs of individual customers; and developing operational procedures and protocols that promote effective and seamless service delivery. Each comprehensive center is required to use a customer flow model that identifies customer needs upon entry and provides immediate engagement and connectivity to services during the customer’s first visit. Customers are served jointly by WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other partner staff, specifically at basic service levels. Parties to the MOU have jointly developed and mutually implemented processes for common intake and referral and agree to cross-train staff on services of each participating workforce center partner.

**Priority Populations.** Section 134(c) (3) (E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals when states and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority will be provided regardless of the level of funds.

**Youth.** WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY). Under WIOA, the goal is to fund high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, culminating with a good job along a career...
pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship. Under WIOA, work experience becomes the most important of the program elements. Local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to them to provide ISY and OSY with paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component. Types of youth work experiences can include summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. Notably, WIOA shifts the primary program focus of Title I Youth formula programs to support the educational and career success of OSY. A minimum of 75 percent of WIOA youth funds is required to be spent on OSY, which is an increase from the minimum of 30 percent under WIA. WIOA Youth programs will provide a needed continuum of services to help disconnected youth navigate between the educational and workforce systems. Local boards should encourage more effective program design to keep youth, age 14 to 24, engaged through the following activities and services:

- tutoring and study skills training.
- alternative ways to obtain a secondary diploma.
- paid and unpaid work experience.
- occupational skills training.
- leadership development opportunities.
- financial literacy training.
- comprehensive guidance and counseling.

The Eastern Area Workforce Development Board has a successful partnership with Adult Education in most of its workforce centers as the program has been a good source of referrals to both the WIOA Youth and Adult programs but it has been infinitely more effective in locations where the programs are housed together. For instance, in Ruidoso, Adult Education is located in the one stop center, and in Roswell the Youth staff are housed with Adult Education at the area college which enables Youth staff to meet with their customers at the completion of their training for the day, which keeps the youth from having to go to another location to check in or turn in attendance records. Also when a student is scheduled to attend class but does not, the on-site staff is notified immediately in order to address why they are not in training. The coordination of services between the programs has increased attendance, increased the rate of completion for High School Equivalency (HSE) and decreased the amount of time the youth spends in the Adult Education program working toward their HSE.

Local boards and youth providers are encouraged to consider the use of other promising practices and program partnerships to continuously engage youth, such as the following.

- Recruit youth in pairs by asking, "Who else do you know?," and tap social media outlets.
- Develop a peer recruitment team as a paid work experience.
- Partner with or co-enroll youth with WIOA Adult, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, or TANF.
- Ensure appropriate links to entities that will encourage youth participation, i.e. local education agencies, housing authorities, law enforcement, Job Corp representatives, YouthBuild initiatives, etc.

*Individuals with Disabilities.* Title IV of WIOA amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by significantly revising requirements for state vocational rehabilitation services programs, particularly with
regard to their role as core partners in the workforce development system. WIOA fosters new opportunities for innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and employers. The law authorizes increased access to employment, education, training, and support services to assist individuals with disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to succeed in the competitive labor market. The VR programs are critical components in the workforce development system and New Mexico seeks to create and maintain strong partnerships with them.

While individuals with disabilities are a vital and integral part of our society, some individuals with disabilities face particular barriers to high-quality employment. RSA envisions the state VR programs as working with other workforce development system partners to assist workers with disabilities by providing them with the necessary services and supports so that they can acquire the skills and credentials that they need to have the opportunity to pursue in-demand jobs and careers. In so doing, the State’s VR programs leadership in the one-stop system is critical to growing our economy, ensuring that everyone who works hard is rewarded, and building a strong middle class. Embedded throughout WIOA, including the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, is the principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving competitive integrated employment when provided the necessary skills and supports. WIOA strengthens the foundation for the establishment of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system that serves all individuals in need of education and employment services, including individuals with disabilities, and employers in a manner that is customer-focused and that supports an integrated service delivery model. Workforce Connection Centers and partners will provide job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages. Additionally, these one-stop centers will work with employers to identify, recruit, and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

VR agencies will coordinate the delivery of services to youth with disabilities, especially youth with the most significant disabilities, with other providers in the state who serve this population to ensure they receive the necessary services and supports to achieve competitive integrated employment. While the VR program has always provided transition services to eligible students with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, expands the population eligible to receive certain services and permits a wider range of services to students who are transitioning from school to post-school activities. Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to reserve at least 15 percent of their funding allotment to coordinate with local educational agencies in providing or arranging for the provision of, pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services and in need of such services. Because of these amendments, VR agencies now have an opportunity to provide VR services to a broader population of students and youth with disabilities to assist them in preparing for and obtaining competitive integrated employment. VR agencies will work with State and local educational agencies to ensure that the services provided are coordinated and seamless across the various programs that support transition for students and youth with disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

Veterans. The Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans’ Employment Representative (LVER) will continue to provide job search assistance and information to veterans and eligible persons they serve at workforce centers, and on the New Mexico Workforce Connection
Online System to assist them in finding suitable employment. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions ensures that the New Mexico Jobs for Veterans' State Grant staff are properly integrated at the local Workforce Connection Center's. NMDWS also makes optimal use of the services and linkages to other veteran service providers in the state to enhance the employability and placement of veterans seeking employment and training related services. The methods of delivery of these services include partnerships with other veterans’ service providers by co-facilitation with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves, state rehabilitation programs, college's veterans’ resource centers when possible, or by maintaining close working relationships when location differences make co-facilitation impractical. The State Veterans’ Coordinator facilitates workshops with statewide organizations and professional groups on topics of veterans and disabled veterans' employment; the value of hiring veterans, GI Bill benefits for apprenticeships, on-the-job training and work-study programs.

Veteran’s staff works closely with WIOA partners, institutions of higher learning, other governmental, non-profit agencies and private sector partners who provide training or education benefits to prepare veterans with job opportunities. The DVOP positions provide outreach assistance to veterans, particularly those who have a disability and need intensive services to remove barriers to employment. A full range of available employment and training services to veterans include job search, job development, resume writing, dress for success, and interviewing skills. LVER staff conduct outreach to employers to encourage job development for all veterans and to establish a network of employers and service providers for veterans seeking assistance through the workforce system; make referrals to vocational and training institutions; and work to capitalize on resources, such as the WIOA training dollars with veterans’ preference. LVERs are also team members in the Business Services sections of the Workforce Connection Centers, meeting with and assisting employers with posting job orders, organization of job fairs, and identifying job vacancies and skills needed for in-demand, high-demand or high-wage careers.

An example of a successful local partnership on behalf of veterans involves the Northern Area Workforce Development Board. Board staff are encouraged to “think outside the box” in the provision of innovative practical methods of meeting the training needs of their communities. In an effort to reach the dislocated worker population, the Sante Fe New Mexico Workforce Connection began to work with the Army National Guard in Santa Fe County to recruit eligible veterans. Many military service personnel operate large vehicles and heavy equipment while in active duty but when they return home are unable to work in these occupations because they do not have the required licensure. A project was developed in conjunction with the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board and the National Guard that enables veterans who had driven large trucks and heavy equipment during active duty to obtain their Commercial Driver's License (CDL). National Guard employees were selected to take a course that upon completion enabled them to become certified CDL instructors. The CDL course took place onsite at the National Guard Compound using their trucks. The Board was able to provide financial assistance for the instructor training and the National Guard absorbed equipment costs, staff salaries, room, and board. This is the first project of its kind in the country.

In addition, the State expects workforce partners to advocate for the viability of the State’s military installations. This can be done through collaborations with the New Mexico’s Office of Military Base Planning and Support, which is administratively attached to the Economic Development Department, and is responsible for:
• informing the Governor and the Governor’s Homeland Security Adviser about issues impacting the military bases in the state, including infrastructure requirements, environmental needs, military force structure possibilities, tax implications, property considerations and issues requiring coordination and support from other state agencies;

• serving as a liaison with the community organizations whose purpose is to support the long-term viability of the military bases;

• communicating with the staff of the State’s congressional delegation; and

• identifying issues, preparing information, and providing presentations necessary for the Military Base Planning Commission to carry out its duties.

The Office supports Military Base Planning Commission, whose duties include the following:

• obtaining and evaluating information about the federal government’s considerations, plans, policies and initiatives relating to military base realignment and closure;

• obtaining and evaluating information relating to the impact of federal military base realignment and closure plans on the state’s economy and the military base area’s local economy;

• working with and providing assistance to established community organizations that have as their purpose the support of the long-term viability of the military bases in their local area;

• ensuring collaboration among the community organizations and an understanding of the joint efforts between the military bases in the state;

• working with and providing assistance to the State’s congressional delegation on matters relating to federal base realignment and closure plans; and

• advising the governor on measures necessary to ensure the continued presence of military bases in the state.

**Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Employers must be engaged more effectively as partners in shaping and implementing workforce solutions. Core partners should work collectively to make businesses aware of all the public workforce system programs and services available and to educate businesses on how partner agencies work together to integrate service delivery to customers. A uniform single point of contact for all the programs would minimize the service calls made by the multiple programs. Training must be administered to job seekers based on input from the companies that need and eventually will employ these job seekers. Employers define a skilled worker by their job requirements and determine the skills and skill levels required of workers to be successful in the workplace. To ensure the workforce system works, employers must be engaged as partners to manage their demand for workers in a way that ensures the workforce system knows and understands their needs and expectations. This approach optimizes investments by targeting training resources to local and regional employer skill needs and employers will use a system that provides them with a clear point of entry, matches skills training with real world job requirements, and delivers reliable, skilled workers in a timely manner.
The Central Area Workforce Development Board emphasizes that subsidizing the work experience wages is perhaps the biggest plus in engaging employers, along with the upfront training and consistent support throughout the program. The Board’s Youth provider, YDI, Inc., has learned that providing that initial training, consistent visits to the worksite, and offering hands-on support throughout the program, will more than likely retain that employer for a long time. Relationship building lends to a successful placement and work experience, and has resulted in an increase in retention of the Board’s youth participants at their worksite following completion of subsidized hours.

Local boards should continue to facilitate communication with business, education, community and civic organizations, and economic development partners in an effort to address local and regional workforce development issues and to identify joint solutions for addressing industry-based skill shortages, aid employers in upgrading skills of workers, and prepare the unemployed for entry-level positions. This includes continuing to offer services, such as the following, to employers in priority industries.

- developing job descriptions;
- recruiting applicants and coordinating employer interviews;
- providing online access for posting job vacancies and searching qualified applicants;
- organizing hiring events and providing pre-employment screening;
- providing labor market data and analyses;
- administering employer incentive programs and identifying tax credits; and
- providing a full range of job seeker skill set assessments.

**Educational Institutions: Partner Engagement, Resources, and Postsecondary Credentials**

In general, educational programs must result in credentials that are aligned with the requirements of business or the economy. Training services are needed to significantly improve the employment and earnings potential of WIOA participants, especially the target groups discussed earlier. Training should be strategically targeted towards demand occupations based on economic and labor market data by targeting resources, and goals must be established for industry-recognized credential attainment. In New Mexico, many Registered Apprenticeship programs have articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions by which apprentices receive related instruction and also acquire post-secondary credentials leading to an Associate’s Degree. Local boards should continue to collaborate with education and training providers to develop and implement innovative training programs that increase credential attainment to include Registered Apprenticeships, as well as integrated education and training programs that combine adult education and occupational skills instruction. Boards should also work toward developing and measuring regional and statewide outcomes for credential attainment.

Expanding the availability and effectiveness of education and OJL programs that are aligned to critical competencies in dynamic fields requires both innovations and new pathways for training in in-demand and labor-gapped occupations. This also requires employers and institutions of higher education to rethink workforce development. Specifically, employers must rely less on degree attainment and more on industry certifications as a hiring qualification for IT jobs. Post-secondary institutions need to move beyond traditional classroom- and time-based course structures. As such, New Mexico is participating in several state and local initiatives that will work to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates, as follows.
American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant. The State was recently awarded an American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant through the Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in the amount of $2.9 million for the performance period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2020. This grant will enable The New Mexico Information Technology Apprenticeship Program (NM ITAP) to offer On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and Job-Related Technical Instruction (RTI) in New Mexico within the Albuquerque metropolitan area. NM ITAP will include five career paths: IT Developer, IT Security, IT Systems, IT User Support, and Health IT. This new program will be spearheaded by lead partner, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), which is the largest post-secondary institution in the state by enrollment. Apprenticeship employer partners include the largest employer, the State of New Mexico; the largest municipality, the City of Albuquerque; the largest healthcare employer, Presbyterian Healthcare Services; the area’s lead private-public research institution, Sandia National Laboratories (a subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation) and three Albuquerque-based national IT managed services providers.

The program will provide training and apprenticeships in high-growth, high-quality careers to incumbent and new hires with a focus on recruiting persons of color, women, veterans, and the un- and under-employed. NM ITAP will create pipelines to H-1B-industries, serving 300+ participants (18+ years old), all of whom will participate in both OJL and RTI. Examples of the types of innovations and training to be implemented with grant funds include:

- Utilizing demonstrated competencies and national IT certifications to align workers’ skills - CNM IT training is based on credentials, certification content, and competencies, and employers determine desired certifications/credentials for apprenticeship occupations.
- Recruiting low-skill and entry-level workers to fill quality middle-skill jobs - CNM and employer partners will move individuals from un- and under-employment to careers with salaries above median wages. NM ITAP will include WorkKeys testing to map various aptitude and knowledge areas against apprenticeships, then provide coaching and support. For those without baseline skills, CNM has remedial and IT on-ramp classes.
- Providing wrap-around support - Each participant will have ongoing support with academic planning, apprenticeship support, and other needs from an Achievement Coach.
- Creating shareable systems - CNM training will include a sharable outcome tracking system, course dissemination, and articulation agreements, to raise participation and reduce duplication.

This grant also involves policy work with the Department of Workforce Solutions to lay the foundation for future IT apprenticeships, as these innovations and training structures support the State’s strategies to increase workforce development and education linkages, develop skill-based workforce systems, and create economic development and workforce partnerships.

USDOL Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant. New Mexico was also awarded a $14,999,863 U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants for the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2018 to implement Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH). Through partnerships and data exchanges among the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, including its Adult Education Division, four-year colleges, state and local boards, and community organizations, the SUNPATH program addresses gaps in access to and consistency in program delivery for health career pathways, infrastructure and support for accelerating students through credential
completion and into the workforce, and alignment and accountability across institutions and systems. SUNPATH goals include expanding capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs; increasing attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and creating strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings. Over the four-year period of the grant, the SUNPATH program is projected to result in the attainment of 2,665 credentials and the new or retained employment of 3,129 participants.

Other Local Initiatives. An example of another successful partnership involves the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board, which established a program called PRO-TEC in conjunction with Santa Fe Community College and its adult service provider, SER Jobs for Progress, Inc. that was funded by Santa Fe County. This program enabled 20 individuals to participate, at no cost, in a program that prepared them for entry-level administrative and professional positions. PRO-TEC was designed as the first step in the attainment of stackable skills in the realm of Microsoft certifications. It also prepared individuals to enter the labor market through a class on workplace expectations and behaviors, resume writing, and general pre-employment skills. The successful completers were then provided with an 80-hour internship with local employers to try out their new skills and in some cases, it enabled the employer to try out a potential employee. Several of the individuals who participated in the PRO-TEC program either secured employment or continued with their education toward particular employment sectors.

At the Central Area Workforce Development Board, the Youth provider is always searching for grants in career pathways that will supplement the services of WIOA and provide additional resources and/or staff for WIOA participants. For instance, the Youth provider has been able to secure four programs/grants in which the collaborative work is still in place or has been sustained past the grant period including the following.

- Argus Program - developed an entry career pathway into green building by collaborating with Central New Mexico Community College’s Workforce Training Center on a weatherization class and certification.
- YouthBuild Program - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Home Builders Institute in the home building and construction industry.
- National Council of La Raza Career Pathways - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Quality Health Management in the healthcare industry for dental assistants; and developed an entry career pathway into the financial services industry by providing bank teller certification training.

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies
Alignment with economic development is a critical component of workforce development programs and clearly workforce development must be a critical component of states’ future economic growth strategies. In the past, recruiting new companies was the backbone of economic development and often worked on the assumption that jobs were in short supply, not job seekers. New Mexico must position workforce development to coexist with economic development in a number of ways including coordinating strategic planning between workforce and economic development agencies; using economic data to drive workforce development decisions; and recognizing workforce development programs contribute to the pipeline of skilled workers for business and industry.
The Eastern Area Workforce Development Board’s youth contractor and one-stop operator manager are both part of the South Central New Mexico Economic Development Association. The initial meeting included 125 employers and the group has performed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for three counties including, Mescalero, Lincoln, and Otero. The group is aggressively pursuing several projects for a regional economic development initiative to expand the economic base for the region. Additionally, The Southwestern Workforce Development Board has strong and effective partnerships with over 15 training providers in the region. It works with economic development offices and chambers of commerce to disseminate information about the services offered at the New Mexico Workforce Connection centers. In addition, the Southwestern area has a strong agricultural industry where there are over a dozen federal, state, educational, and community based organizations that collaborate with the NM Workforce Connection Centers to serve the needs of agricultural workers and employers.

Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

Registered Apprenticeship. WIOA emphasizes the importance of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship through many new statutory provisions (e.g. required representation on State and Local Boards, programs stay on the Eligible Training Provider List as long as they remain registered and pre-apprenticeship as a youth program service). WIOA also provides for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options and encourages the use of Registered Apprenticeships as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

The Department of Workforce Solutions is the State Apprenticeship Agency for New Mexico responsible for apprenticeship within the state. There are currently 38 registered apprenticeship programs in New Mexico with approximately 1,300 apprentices; the majority of registered apprenticeship programs are in the building and construction trades. A nine-member council, called the State Apprenticeship Council, provides advice and guidance to the State Apprenticeship Agency on the operation of the state’s apprenticeship system. The Registered Apprenticeship program works to ensure quality training by combining on-the-job training with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to prepare exceptional workers for industry. Employers work with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to create program standards in written agreements that specify the length of a participant’s training, the related technical instruction, an outline of the skills that person will need to learn, and the wages the participant will earn.

Examples of steps workforce partners in New Mexico are currently taking to expand apprenticeship and other work experiences that lead to higher earnings include:

- pursuing grant opportunities (see grant descriptions below) to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and other work experiences in the state, described below;
- working to ensure core partner programs have a meaningful place on the local workforce boards, to strengthen relationships with local one-stops and local businesses through these board interactions;
- integrating Registered Apprenticeship into workforce planning and policy;
- promoting work-based learning and identifying ways to use WIOA resources to support Registered Apprenticeship; and
- exploring ways to serve through apprenticeships target populations, such as individuals with disabilities, with low income, low literacy levels;
**Apprenticeship Grants.**

*Apprenticeship USA Accelerator Grant* - New Mexico was recently awarded a $200,000 Apprenticeship USA Accelerator Grant for the performance period of June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2018. The purpose of the grant is to work to assess the State’s goals for apprenticeship expansion, how those goals align with the State’s overall education, workforce and economic development objectives, and to develop a comprehensive strategy to achieve those goals. As a part of the grant, the State will work to leverage resources from federally supported programs, particularly the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) funds to support Registered Apprenticeships through job training, classroom instruction (using Individual Training Accounts), and supportive services, including child care, transportation, etc. NMDWS is in the process of action planning to assess the following.

- The status of the State’s readiness to leverage resources and co-investment for Registered Apprenticeship expansion based on leveraged resources from federally supported programs, particularly the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to be used to support Registered Apprentices through on-the-job training, classroom instruction (using Individual Training Accounts), case management, and supportive services, including child care, transportation, and other services.

- The status of the State’s readiness to demonstrate stronger integration with the WIOA system through performance goal setting based on:
  - Percentage of Registered Apprentices co-enrolled in WIOA;
  - Total number of Registered Apprentices receiving WIOA services;
  - Total number of Sponsors utilizing WIOA services;
  - Total number of Registered Apprentices receiving on-the-job training, supportive services, and classroom training through Individual Training Accounts.

These grant funds will enable the Registered Apprenticeship program in New Mexico to strengthen partnerships with local workforce development boards to encourage and expand the use of apprenticeships. Part of this effort will include training of local board, one-stop center, and partner program staff on the importance of apprenticeships as a work-based experience for jobseekers, as well as the appropriate ways to braid Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA funding to support and coordinate apprenticeships across all core partner programs.

The following is a description of a U.S. Department of Labor’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, called SUNPATH, which was recently awarded to the state. This particular grant focuses on technology and healthcare career pathways. This grant can provide a direct linkage to another recently awarded grant, called the American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant (which is described in the section on “Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.”) Such a linkage could ideally lead to apprenticeships in IT Health, as both grants share similar courses of study, occupation goals, and industry credentials.

*SUNPATH Grant.* New Mexico was awarded a $14,999,863 U.S. Department of Labor’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants for the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2018 to implement Pathways Acceleration in
Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH). Through partnerships and data exchanges among the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, including its Adult Education Division, four-year colleges, state and local boards, and community organizations, the SUNPATH program addresses gaps in access to and consistency in program delivery for health career pathways, infrastructure and support for accelerating students through credential completion and into the workforce, and alignment and accountability across institutions and systems. SUNPATH goals include expanding capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs; increasing attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and creating strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings. Over the four-year period of the grant, the SUNPATH program is projected to result in the attainment of 2,665 credentials and the new or retained employment of 3,129 participants.

**Apprenticeship and Low Literacy Levels.** Workforce partners will pursue the help of local adult education programs in designing and implementing apprenticeship programs that can integrate basic skills training into apprenticeship programs specific to individual businesses or industries. Adult education programs serve people both with and without high school credentials. As such, apprenticeship programs may even be able to be attached to some basic education and skills training taking place with the adult education programs in collaboration with postsecondary institutions.

**Apprenticeship and Individuals with Disabilities.** Under WIOA, VR programs must spend 15 percent of funding on students with disabilities. As such, some specific work is already being done in New Mexico to explore and expand the use of apprenticeships as a service strategy for improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. For instance, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist has been working with a one-stop youth provider on finalizing an MOU to serve youth with disabilities. Additionally, a DVR Business Specialist has been working on the development of partnerships with the Workforce Training Center and Road Runner Food Bank to increase vocational readiness training programs which will be provided to students and youth with disabilities.

Additionally, core partners have begun to have conversations about how the state can further expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired. While individuals who are blind or visually impaired have often faced significant obstacles in participating in apprenticeship programs, the Commission for the Blind plans to increase efforts to consider and identify Registered Apprenticeships for consumers who might be appropriate candidates for such apprenticeship. Ultimately VR programs are optimistic about improved accessibility to the RA programs for the clients they serve. Examples of ideas of how this can be accomplished in New Mexico include pursuing:

- the facilitation of a working group made up of the State Apprenticeship Agency, the vocational rehabilitation programs, and the adult education program to determine and target which industries, occupations, and employers are best suited for expanding Registered Apprenticeship programs in New Mexico;
- case management services and the development of “how-to” aids to assist staff in getting clients registered as WIOA Title I participants, as appropriate, to assist staff in navigating
interactions with potential apprenticeship sites with the goal of facilitating formal agreements and assurances around that braiding of funds across programs and employers;
- regular technical assistance and best practices sharing across all partner programs to increase awareness of RA and opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- coordinated marketing and outreach strategies as a means of identifying participants across all programs who are appropriate candidates for RA;
- ways the VR programs can assist disabled veterans with guidance and services to maintain their employment through RA programs;
- training initiatives such as Tech to Hire, and NM Career Solutions and internships, as New Mexico has a portal for getting out-of-school youth engaged in searching for job opportunities; and
- agreements through MOUs with partners and contracts with service providers to guide and govern resources for youth with disabilities, such as vocational training and initiatives to obtain high school equivalency.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).** The Workforce Connection Centers receive referrals from TANF that have resulted in some positive achievements for the WIOA programs, particularly the Youth program. This has allowed youth to participate in training and employability development services while receiving child care and other support services from this partner program. The Workforce Connection Centers work with local business to identify job openings and determine the level of skill needed to perform job functions. TANF participants are then tested through WorkKeys for their occupational skill level and scores are matched against the employer’s job criteria to find suitable employment. If the participant does not meet the WorkKeys skill level required for the position they are interested in, an online skills remediation program called KeyTrain is utilized to help the participant get to the level they need to qualify for the position. The goal of this interagency collaboration is to help individuals find meaningful employment and end their dependence on public assistance. In addition, the TANF program is working with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to provide TANF staff with access to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to improve the ability to appropriately match TANF clients with online job vacancies.

**Internships.** Governor Susana Martinez directed state agencies to create an online “Students Work” internship portal that will connect New Mexico college students with employers through a wide range of internship offerings. By encouraging more students to gain professional work experience with New Mexico companies while in college, the goal is to build a more skilled and talented workforce pipeline for New Mexico businesses and keep more of the State’s students in New Mexico after they graduate. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will collaborate with the Higher Education Department to establish the online portal, cultivate internship postings from New Mexico companies, and generate robust participation by college students and higher education institutions across the state. The “Students Work” internship portal will build upon and complement other initiatives designed to improve the degree to which the state’s education system meets the needs of the state’s workforce, including the expanded use of early college high schools, the mapping of workforce needs against degrees produced, and the targeted use of loan repayment programs to keep key talent working in New Mexico. Mission: Graduate, a cradle-to-career education initiative with the goal of 60,000 graduates with certificates and degrees by 2020, is also working with the NM Department of Workforce Solutions to leverage the department’s online jobs
database as a tool for employers to post internship positions and recruit students, to help match students and employers.

**College and Career Readiness.** The New Mexico Public Education Department has a College and Career Readiness Bureau that is dedicated to providing students with seamless education from secondary through post-secondary studies, and offers integration of academic foundations and occupational skills. College and career readiness is the unifying force that propels students from a solid foundation in primary and secondary learning into rigorous career and technical education programs and college completion goals. The Bureau has begun a Career Readiness Initiative that identifies employer engagement as one of several goals, which aims to identify and deploy scalable career pathways that advance priority industry sectors through proactive and ongoing engagement of employers. Through this initiative, the Public Education Department has engaged the Department of Workforce Solutions’ support to help close the gap between career pathways and workforce opportunities through the sharing of data analyses of New Mexico’s workforce and economy.

The Department of Workforce Solutions’ Economic Research & Analysis Bureau is the principal source of labor market information for the state, collecting and analyzing data in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment and Training Administration. The Bureau also conducts surveys and data analysis in addition to drawing from additional economic measures to assess the health of the economy and forecast future economic trends. As such, the Department of Workforce Solutions is committed to supporting the Career Readiness Initiative in the following ways.  

- Maintaining an MOU with the Public Education Department to cover the data exchange and analyses needed for this initiative.  
- Sharing the results of the Job Vacancy Survey of employers which focuses on current workforce needs and the experience, certification, and educational requirements associated with vacant jobs opportunities.  
- Publishing the State of the Workforce Report, is an overview of our state’s population, labor force participation, current and future workforce demands, occupational and wage data, and industry employment.  
- Publishing the Annual Social and Economic Indicators, a helpful statistical abstract, and the New Mexico Employment Projections which projects the long-term growth trends of New Mexico’s industries and occupations for a ten-year period.

**Job Corps.** Job Corps, a U.S. DOL vocational training program for disadvantaged youth and young adults, is one of seven programs authorized under Title I of WIOA and a required partner in the local one-stop systems. In some areas of the state Job Corps shares workspace as a part of a Resource Sharing Agreement. Job Corps participants receive social, academic, career and technical education, and service-learning opportunities, primarily in a residential setting. Program objectives focus on participants obtaining secondary school diplomas or recognized credentials leading to careers in high-demand industries or occupations. Job Corps representatives sit on local boards, the boards outreach to potential program participants through their Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth providers, and referrals are received from one-stop partner programs.
**AmeriCorps.** The AmeriCorp program, which is administratively housed within the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, is guided by a bipartisan board of Commissioners, appointed by the Governor, that provide oversight and accountability for grants that lead to volunteer initiatives throughout the state. The funding provides for opportunities for adult individuals with a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate to make an intensive commitment to volunteer service. Per a report published by the Corporation for National and Community Service, volunteering helps individuals gain increased social connections, and increased skills and experience that lead to potential future job opportunities and employment. For instance, volunteers have a 27 percent higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers. If volunteers are gaining or updating skills that are needed in the workplace through their volunteer activities, those skills may make them more attractive to and productive for employers and increase their chances of becoming employed. Four things workforce system partners can do to promote volunteering are:

- learn more about how volunteering can be helpful to jobseekers;
- promote volunteering as a strategy for finding work on state and local board websites, newsletters, and other materials provided through Workforce Connection Centers;
- help clients emphasize their volunteer service in terms of work experience; and
- explore ways to use and work with the AmeriCorps program to connect people to job opportunities.

In addition, most AmeriCorps members receive student loan deferment, and training, and may receive a living allowance and health insurance. Program completers can receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans. Finally, U.S. DOL acknowledges in state guidance to states, Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 16-12 issued April 19, 2012, that volunteerism can be a viable and successful strategy that supports reemployment and does not need to interfere with unemployment compensation recipients’ responsibilities to be able and available for work and actively seeking work.

**Native American Programs.** As allowed under WIA, now WIOA, the Navajo Nation was designated as an interstate region directly under the United States Department of Labor. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed between Arizona, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation to separate administration of the WIA, now WIOA, program and placed it directly under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Labor. The agreement required each state to identify appropriate funding stream allocations based upon the funding formula. The allocations were reverted back to the United States Department of Labor whereupon United States Department of Labor directly negotiated program terms and conditions, submittal of plans, allocation of funding oversight and monitoring requirements, and negotiation of performance measures accountability with the Navajo Nation. Within the MOA, WIA, and now WIOA, performance requirements should remain the sole responsibility of the Navajo Nation exempting the partner States from this accountability. This approach continues to enable the Navajo Nation to implement and administer a streamlined, consistent and efficient workforce delivery system in the various states and report to only one authority, the Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP). The agreement consolidated WIA, now WIOA, funds from New Mexico and Arizona and Utah at the federal level into one funding stream which flows from DINAP directly to the Navajo Nation. The agreement also ensures that performance measures accountability tied to these funds will continue to be
automatically negotiated and overseen by the DINAP, removing New Mexico, Arizona and Utah from accountability.

**Coordination with the Combined State Plan Partner**

The Combined Plan incorporates the plan of one of the WIOA required partners, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all available training offered by SCSEP providers, the WIOA programs, the Workforce Connection Centers, and other training sources. Trainees are placed in community service positions within governmental entities or private, not-for-profit organizations. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department.

**State Operating Systems and Data**

The following State operating systems include labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, and job banks, that together support implementation of State strategies, including the data collection and reporting processes of core programs and activities.

*NMDWS.* NMDWS administers a common management information system, called the Workforce Connection On-Line System, described earlier. The Workforce Connection Centers use the system not only for registering job applicants, housing resumes, and job postings for job matching purposes, but also for the purposes of data entry, case management, and state and federal performance reporting. The Workforce Connection On-Line System integrates data collection, participant demographics, case management, and performance reporting for not only Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser, but also Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, Trade programs. The system is also used for data collection and reporting for all partners located in comprehensive and affiliate centers. NMDWS has established both user access and data sharing agreements to support access to information and information sharing between the partners as allowed by authorizing law and regulation. The system also provides access to labor market information to support business and job seekers in need of training or employment assistance.

The Economic Research and Analysis (ER&A) Bureau within NMDWS supports workforce development and planning by providing labor market information to assist businesses and job seekers in their decision making. Policy makers rely upon labor market information for informed policy development and to identify solutions that are appropriate for the state of New Mexico and the local communities served by local boards. Through customized reports ER&A supports local communities in their economic development initiatives aimed at attracting employers into a local area. Ultimately the objective is to provide accurate and timely labor market information in a usable format to assist in matching workforce needs with those of job seekers. Local boards rely on this labor market information in a number of ways. For instance, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board indicates it uses the information to establish their occupations in demand for an individual training account contract. The information also assists them in determining the
workforce needs of employers in their local area and the state, and allows them to make quantitative decisions about the types of trainings programs needed in the area. This information also helps them assist employers who want to know the average wage for a specific position, the type of credential needed for an occupation, the number of jobs available in a certain area, or whether there will be a decline in the need the occupations.

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data**

NMDWS staff leverages the Workforce Connection On-Line system as data consolidation point for access to quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) wage records from the UI data base for participants that exit following receipt of services. This wage data is uploaded to the Workforce Connection On-Line System to meet federal reporting requirements. The Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) are used to obtain wages received from outside the state of New Mexico. This wage data is also uploaded into the Workforce Connection On-Line system and is used to calculate performance outcomes.

Access to wage records has been an important issue for many years and is an even greater priority under WIOA. Use of wage records for WIOA core program performance and eligible training provider performance reporting purposes, and disclosure of wage records for certain federal evaluations are mandatory under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)(4)). State workforce, training, and education programs are required to use quarterly wage records to measure the progress of the State on the State and local performance accountability measures, and for obtaining the information required in the Eligible Training Provider List (WIOA Sections 116(i) and 121(d)). Quarterly wage records are the employer-provided wage reports collected under authority in Section 1137 of the SSA (42 USC 1320b-7). These are the reports state UI agencies obtain for UI tax liability and benefit eligibility determination purposes, and also use to detect improper payments. Confidentiality and disclosure of wage records are governed by the regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.

Like other state UI agencies, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions coordinates disclosure of wage records for the mandated purposes for the state to be in compliance with WIOA requirements. To facilitate access to wage records for these purposes, DOL (ETA, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Chief Evaluation Office) is undertaking a number of activities in partnership with other Federal agencies to enable efficient and secure access to confidential wage data as envisioned under WIOA. As such, New Mexico awaits additional guidance and extensive technical assistance in this area from U.S. DOL, which expects to issue specific guidance about wage record access issues in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, including issues related to cross matching wage records with educational data, which is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Wage information, defined in 20 CFR Part 603.2(k), includes the three data categories or elements that states must use for WIOA performance reporting purposes: wages, Social Security Number(s), and employer information. Federal regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.5(e) permit states to disclose confidential unemployment compensation (UC) information “to a public official for use in the performance of his or her official duties.” Performance of official duties means “administration or enforcement of law or the execution of the official responsibilities of a Federal, State, or local elected official.” Generally, under these regulations, disclosures of confidential UC information that WIOA requires are already permissible. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will work collaboratively with one-stop partners to meet the requirements for use of wage records under WIOA.
Adult Education. Adult Education uses a web-based system, called Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES) to track student progress through educational functioning levels, through high school equivalency attainment, through transition to employment, and to postsecondary education and training. Program providers use LACES to collect and enter student data, including demographic information, employment and income status, and education completed at entry. The local providers also track student program participation, including attendance, test scores, and comprehensive information regarding teachers and class enrollment. The Adult Education Division monitors data quality and provides quarterly data matches with the DiplomaSender database for high school equivalency attainment, NMDWS for employment entry and wage information, and Higher Education Department’s database, called DEAR, for entry into state public postsecondary institutions. Data match information is then imported into LACES. Local providers report to the State office semiannually. Adult Education reports annual performance to the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the U.S. Department of Education. The program year is from July 1 through June 30, and the annual report to OCTAE is due December 31 following the end of the program year.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind. The vocational rehabilitation programs use a case management system called Accessible Web-based Activity Reporting Environment (AWARE) that is specifically designed for vocational rehabilitation programs. This system enables counselors to manage cases, managers to monitor cases, and the agency to prepare and submit required reports to RSA in a timely manner. All client data is captured and maintained in the AWARE case management system, such as information on client employment outcomes, including position title, employer, wages, hours, benefits, etc., and is provided to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U. S. Department of Education through quarterly and annual reports. The company that programs the software will revise the system to produce any WIOA required data. Due to the especially strict confidentiality requirements imposed by the Rehabilitation Act and the sensitive nature of information about disabilities and medical conditions, the case management system is a closed system, accessible only by authorized employees. NMDWS has established a data sharing agreement to provide necessary wage data to support the programs' activities.

Program Data Alignment and Integration
State Level Efforts. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has established a standardized agreement process for external entities seeking to meet WIOA compliance. The Department strongly encourages program providers to utilize the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to conduct case management where appropriate. The Department makes adjustments to the system configuration to accommodate this expanded use and provide direct user access for these entities to serve their participants. For entities that have established case management systems, NMDWS provides a mechanism to request and receive wage data electronically within the constraint of existing rules and regulations.

NMDWS is currently working to upgrade the Workforce Connection Online System to establish appropriate performance reporting tools. In addition, the Department is working to modify the base data set available within the system to more effectively produce the Eligible Training Provider List. NMDWS has expanded its relationships with several educational institutions to create a tie to educational program data and enable these institutions to perform the necessary advanced analytics to determine more advance program outcome tracking.
Upcoming collaborations include supporting the NM Higher Education Department and specifically Santa Fe Community College TACCT grant efforts. In addition, NMDWS is also working with several state agencies to standardize eligibility verification as it relates to employment or wage confirmation. The Department is working directly with the State’s Human Services Department to establish an integrated workforce system that will provide for real time secured data sharing for both internal staff program support and individual participant servicing.

While recognizing the need for appropriate privacy safeguards, data sharing will be established among the partner agencies to enable more efficient use of all resources being applied to the benefit of each customer. Additionally this data will be assessed with the guidance of the State Workforce Development Board to allow aggregation of data and assessment of the services provided. NMDWS and the State Workforce Development Board will continue to coordinate agreements with its partner agencies to establish an integrated tracking and accounting process to enable tracking of services provided to all individuals receiving career services so that actual performance outcomes can be correlated to the investments being made in this area. These efforts will allow the Board to determine where opportunities for improvement exist and identify which practices and programs are yielding the best outcomes. The existing agreements will continue to be refined and implemented in order to facilitate this activity while maintaining compliance with existing regulations established to safeguard the privacy of the individual customer.

Local Level Efforts. Local board grant agreements require the local boards to develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers through the following:

- facilitating connections among the intake and case management information systems of the one-stop partner programs to support a comprehensive workforce development system in the local area;
- facilitating access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including access in remote areas;
- identifying strategies for better meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including strategies that augment traditional service delivery, and increase access to services and programs of the one-stop delivery system, such as improving digital literacy skills; and leveraging resources and capacity within the local workforce development system, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment.

WIOA identifies the one-stop system as the service delivery system for programs funded under the Act and its partner programs. New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers have been designated as New Mexico's one-stop delivery system. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be developed with the agreement of the CEOs of the local workforce development region and entered into between the local board areas and the workforce system partners in the Workforce Connection Centers, to establish a process to govern and maintain the operation of each of the comprehensive and affiliate workforce connection center.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners share a common database to promote the efficient delivery of services to jobseekers and employers. Partners to the MOUs agree, subject to State and local policies governing confidentiality and other restrictions, to share information where possible. Strategies to improve resource sharing and streamlined referral between partners has the
potential to greatly increase effective outreach and service to businesses with whom Workforce Solutions already has a strong relationship.

**Assessment and Reporting: Core Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

The core programs are currently assessed each year based on a mix of federal and state performance accountability measures. New Mexico is aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. We look forward to Departments of Labor and Education working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems.

The following information provides the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs based on performance accountability measures during the preceding two-year period.

**WIOA Programs.** We expect performance under WIOA to be tracked against the six primary indicators of performance, related to employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and effectiveness in serving employers.

Performance under WIA was tracked against six common performance measures, including entered employment, retention, average earnings, placement in employment or education, attainment of degree or certificate, and literacy or numeracy gains. The collective performance of each of the four local boards against these measures is what makes up the state’s overall performance. Performance outcomes from plan year 2014 indicate that New Mexico met all the negotiated performance levels by meeting or exceeding all six measures, and met or exceeded negotiated performance levels for all, but one measure in plan year 2013, as average earnings for the Adult program came in just short of the negotiated performance level.

Additionally, program and fiscal monitoring activities are in place to ensure programs achieve intended results; to ensure federal and state resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; to ensure reliable and timely information is captured and reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting; and to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the workforce system. Some of the monitoring activities include reviews of accounting and monitoring systems, budget methodologies, cash management practices, cost allocation plans, purchasing and procurement procedures, internal controls, programs results or outcomes, reporting accuracy, and recordkeeping.

**Wagner-Peyser.** Employment Services performance is tracked against three measures, including entered employment, employment retention, and average earnings. Performance outcomes from both plan years 2013 and 2014 indicate that New Mexico met or exceeded all the negotiated performance levels of the Wagner-Peyser program. Oversight of the Wagner Peyser program involves program performance tracking, federal reporting, monitoring of field office operations, technical assistance, and corrective action plans, if needed.

**Adult Education.** Adult Education is assessed by OCTAE annually based on a standard of continuous program improvement, as well a rigorous comparison of performance measures among states. Annual evaluations form the basis of negotiating annual state performance targets with OCTAE.
Targets are negotiated annually with U.S. Department of Education based on past performance and comparative performance across states. Periodically OCTAE conducts weeklong site monitoring visits to evaluate State practices, which includes intensive visits to samples of local provider programs. In addition to continuous fiscal and data desk monitoring, the Adult Education Division conducts program monitoring visits to all local providers every two years, which includes administrative, instructional, fiscal, and data process evaluations. A written report includes recognition of promising practices, recommendations for improvement, and, if necessary, a corrective action plan to be further monitored by the State office. Besides these regular visits, the state office reviews each program's annual single audit prior to awarding funding and places programs on corrective action plans if the audit indicates that is necessary. Local program effectiveness, quality, and improvement are also taken into account in determining the amount of funding allocated each year to each program.

The core performance measures tracked by the Adult Education program include the following.

- Entered Employment – number entering employment / number unemployed at program entry.
- Retained Employment – number retaining employment / number employed at program entry.
- High School Equivalency (HSE) – number attaining high school equivalency / number taking HSE tests.
- Postsecondary Education or Training (Current Year) – number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential.
- Postsecondary Education or Training (Prior Program Year) – number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential in prior year.

In fiscal year 2014, the Adult Education program exceeded its targets for retained employment and high school equivalency, but was not able to meet targets for other core measures. In fiscal year 2015, the program further improved its performance against its retained employment target, exceeded its target for entered employment, and came close to meeting its target for postsecondary education or training in the current year. The Adult Education program also tracks the educational functioning level of its participants to determine the percentage of students who have completed each literacy level based on Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English Language Acquisition standards.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The two vocational rehabilitation programs are measured by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which has established Standards and Indicators, which the agencies must report on to the legislature each year. The Indicators are:

1.1 Number of Case Closures with an Employment Outcome.
1.2 Percentage of Case Closures that Received Services with an Employment Outcome.
1.3 Percentage of Case Closures with a Competitive Employment Outcome. *(Note: Competitive Employment also includes self-employment, Business Enterprises Program participation, or supported employment in an integrated setting.)*

1.4 Percentage of Case Closures with Significant Disabilities with a Competitive Employment Outcome.

1.5 Ratio of Average Closure Wage to Average State Wage

1.6 Difference Between the Percentage of Case Closures with Employment Outcomes that are Self Support at Application versus Self Support at Closure. *(Note: Self Support means the individual reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support.)*

2.1 Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate.

The VR agencies are required to submit reports to RSA that include data used to track trends of persons applying for VR services, and determinations of eligibility made by the state VR agency. Also, identification of persons with significant disabilities, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, service implementation and program outcomes are key program measurements that provide a general assessment of state VR programs and their accomplishments.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**  
The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation exceeded over half of the Standards and Indicators for VR performance consistently over the past seven years. The last four years starting in 2012 have been particularly strong in the Division exceeding at least five of the seven Indicators. In 2015 the Division exceeded Indicators for 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 2.1.

**Commission for the Blind**  
The Commission has historically rated at or near the top in the nation on the three "primary Indicators. The Rehabilitation Services Administration did not report on a new set of Standard and Indicators for the federal fiscal year that ended on September 30, 2014. As a result, the last two set of available performance measures are for federal 2012 and federal 2013. According to the last set of Standards and Indicators, for 2013, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator 1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and eighth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranks first on indicator 1.6. The Commission has in the past ranked first on all three Primary Indicators, and would have come close to ranking first on all three Primary Indicators had the Standards and Indicators been issued this year. According to the Standards and Indicators issued for federal fiscal year 2012, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator 1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and ninth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranked first on indicator 1.6.

**Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success**  
Lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. This may include choosing to set additional indicators of performance. New Mexico awaits additional federal guidance on the integration of performance reporting.
Each of the one-stop partners will strive to achieve the locally-negotiated performance standards of quality service for its customers, employees, and partners. Each is committed to meeting or exceeding the various performance measures laid out in their grants or programs. Each partner will work cooperatively with other partners to achieve performance measures of the four core programs.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners are committed to the performance indicators of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act placing participants into unsubsidized employment, increasing job retention, removing barriers to employment, providing meaningful education and training activities leading to jobs with self-sufficiency. The partners are equally committed to meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers. Customer surveys will be utilized to gauge progress and to gather information for continuous improvement.

**Distribution of Funds for Core Programs**

The following is the State’s fiscal policy for the determination of annual WIOA allotments to local areas for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs for PY 2016, effective July 1, 2016.

**Scope:**
NMDWS is the statewide administrative entity charged with oversight of federal funds which flow through to local boards for payment of federal dollars under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

**Procedures:**
Each year, DWS WIOA Fiscal Section will calculate Local Area’s formula distribution of WIOA funds using the following procedures:

- Staff will review U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Training & Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL17-15) used by USDOL to provide States with Program Year (PY16) and (FY17) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) annual allotments. The TEGL provides the PY16 and FY17 distributions by funding stream: Adult and Dislocated Worker and the PY16 allotment for Youth.

- Staff will develop New Mexico’s preliminary WIOA allotment from TEGL 17-15. Compare to prior year’s allotment to determine overall funding increases or decreases in funding. Calculate state reservation of funds (5% State Administration, 10% Statewide Activities, and 15% State Rapid Response) to arrive at amount of funds available for distribution to local areas including the Navajo Nation.

- Staff will obtain LMI data from DWS ER&A and enter into a spreadsheet that calculates the fair share allocation utilizing the 6-part formula for Dislocated Worker and the 3-Part Formulas for Adult and Youth. This spreadsheet is designed to calculate the following local area funding stream allocations:

**Dislocated Worker Funding**
Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Six-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following six data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Insured Unemployed
2. Unemployed Concentrations
3. MLS Data
4. Declining Industry
5. Farmer/Rancher
6. Long term Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop six-part formula Average Index of Need, and the Average Index of Need will be used to calculate Fair Share Allocations (20% to each part, except Farmer/Rancher due to a decline in BEA Agricultural Employment average from 2004 to 2014).

**Adult Funding**
Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged (2000 Census) Adults 22-72
2. Number of Excess Unemployed
3. Number of Substantial Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

**Youth Funding**
Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged, Youth 16-21
2. Average Number of Excess Unemployed for the 12 month period, July 2014-June 2015
3. Average Number of Substantial Unemployed for 12 month period, July 2014-June 2015

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Spreadsheets break out calculations by:
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of State Set asides (5% and 10%).
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Administrative Dollars
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Program Dollars

Spreadsheets reflect calculations by:

- Program Year (PY16) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.
- Fiscal Year (FY17) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.

Note: Navajo Nation is a Local Area for the purpose of fair share allocation based on raw data.

Using a spreadsheet designed to calculate the 90% Hold Harmless amounts, staff will enter the prior two years’ Actual Local Area Allocations to arrive at the 2-year average allocation for each area. Staff will multiply the 2-year average by 90% to arrive at the 90% amount of the prior 2-year average. This is the minimum amount of funding that local areas should receive if the 90% hold harmless amounts are used as a minimum allocation amount. This spreadsheet will calculate the ratable increases and decreases and adjust the final allocation accordingly.

**Priority of Service for Veterans**

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, as is the case with WIOA priority described earlier, priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA’s priority groups.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Veterans’ staff works closely with WIOA partners, institutions of higher learning, other governmental, non-profit agencies and private sector partners who provide training or education benefits to prepare veterans with job opportunities. New Mexico has a process for the referral of veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. DVOPs provide assistance and information to the veterans and eligible persons they serve at workforce centers, and the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System also assists these veterans in finding suitable employment. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions ensures that the New Mexico Jobs for Veterans’ State Grant staff are properly integrated with other
the local Workforce Connection Center staff. Local boards have partnerships with other veterans' service providers by co-facilitation with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves, state rehabilitation programs, colleges' veteran's resource centers when possible, and/or by maintaining close working relationships when location differences make co-facilitation impractical. The DVOP positions provide outreach assistance to veterans, particularly those who have a disability and need intensive services to remove barriers to employment. The full range of available employment and training services are made available to veterans, including job search, job development, resume writing, dress for success, and interviewing skills.

Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

New Mexico envisions a workforce development system with one-stop centers, programs, and services that are accessible for all customers, and fully compliant with accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities, as follows.

- **One-stop centers will reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the centers.** This means LWDBs must ensure one-stop center staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and be prepared to provide necessary accommodations. These staff should be trained and equipped with the knowledge of accommodation policies, procedures and resources, skills in serving special populations, and motivation to provide superior service to customers with disabilities.

- **One-stop centers must reflect innovative and effective service design to ensure meaningful access to all customers.** LWDBs should ensure one-stop centers are physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. In so doing, one-stop centers should use principles of universal design and human-centered design, such as:
  - considering flexibility in space usage;
  - ensuring physical building access;
  - using pictorial, written, verbal, and tactile modes to present information to customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency;
  - providing clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users;
  - providing computer station accessibility;
  - providing adaptive technologies, such as accessible computer software;
  - supporting and sustaining availability of customer information and service access through the Internet; and
  - providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants.

- **One-stop centers should be assessed for physical and programmatic accessibility.** LWDBs must evaluate accessibility of one-stops to ensure the aforementioned accessibility categories are in place, and that front-line staff members are trained to adequately assist individuals with disabilities, and trained in the use assistive technologies, to ensure American Job Centers meet or surpass federal, state, and local accessibility standards. LWDBs should also explore ways through the sharing of best practices to promote and develop employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities, including the provision of career guidance and placement services.
• **One-stops must adhere to federal and state privacy laws in serving customers.** In the sharing of information within and one-stop centers and among partner programs, such as for referrals, LWDBs must ensure one-stop center staff properly secure customer information in accordance with personally identifiable information guidelines, and facilitated as appropriate, with the necessary memoranda of understanding or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements, consistent with federal and state privacy laws and regulations. Data should only be shared with other programs, for those programs’ purposes, only after an informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.

• **One-stop centers must commit to continuous improvement in service delivery.** LWDBs should ensure one-stop centers develop and maintain policies and procedures to evaluate effectiveness of accessibility and overall customer satisfaction, as well as for making improvements based on data and feedback, such as customer accommodation requests.

• **One-stop centers must leverage relationships with other programs to more effectively serve customers with barriers.** This means LWDBs must develop collaborative relationships with agencies and programs that have customers facing economic challenges, culture differences, language difficulties, stigmas, and disabilities to support long-range planning and design of universally accessible services. This also includes working with local partner agencies and organizations who also serve individuals with disabilities in the community to coordinate outreach efforts, and to more effectively provide supportive services, such as transportation services and health and human resources.

• **One-stop centers should explore opportunities to expand capacity for serving customers with barriers.** The State and LWDBs can work to support and expand the capacity of existing workforce center services to better serve individuals with disabilities and other barriers through staff development, translation services, special equipment, and other accommodations.

**State Guidance to Locals**

Through WIOA grant agreements, Local Workforce Development Boards assure and certify that in administering programs under the contract, they will fully comply with WIOA and all other applicable laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Local board MOUs with one-stop partners specify that parties to the MOU will assure that Workforce Connection Center facilities are both programmatically and architecturally accessible; programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities; and methods exist by which costs will be handled for reasonable accommodations.

**Highlights of Current Local Activities**

Below are some examples of how the LWDBs are trying to make the one-stop centers more assessable to individuals with disabilities.

• Installation of automatic, push button doors;
• Assistive devices, such as TTY machines;
• Lift tables and other products for people with disabilities;
• Computers with enhanced keyboard for clients that have visual problems;
• Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) provides interpreter services;
• Local policies regarding Reasonable Accommodation, Disability Related Non-Discrimination and EEOC complaints; and
• One-stop staff are active in the School to Work Transition Alliance (SWTA) helping to develop better ways to reach out and accommodate individuals.

Certification Policy

New Mexico has developed criteria for one-stop certification that embodies the WIOA vision overall and provides a clear framework for consistency of service delivery state-wide. In accordance with Section 121(g) of WIOA, Local Workforce Development Boards must certify the one-stop center every three years. The certification process is important to setting a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in one-stop centers across the state. The certification criteria allow states to set standard expectations for customer-focused seamless services from a network of employment, training, and related services that help individuals overcome barriers to becoming and staying employed.

The State Workforce Development Board has the authority and responsibility for recommendations to the Office of the Governor who will certify workforce development systems and centers within the state. The State Board must establish criteria and procedures for certification, and allow local boards to use additional certification factors in order to respond to labor market, economic, and demographic conditions and trends in the local area. The criteria must assess the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery systems. Examples of the types of criteria to be used in the certification process will include:

• determination of whether individuals are eligible to receive assistance;
• initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
• labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and career counseling;
• recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers;
• referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services; and
• performance and program cost information on eligible providers of training services.

The state policy will also include a requirement for local boards to conduct self-assessments of the one-stop based on the certification standards and measures. Self-assessment is one of the most important and productive components of the certification process, as it affords partners the opportunity to fully map system services and resources and identify areas of duplication and inefficiency to address. Self-assessment results will also serve as the basis for the system's “corrective action” and continuous improvement planning. At the State level, system self-assessment results could be aggregated to identify common and widespread areas of need, allowing the State to prioritize statewide technical assistance support accordingly.

Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners
The State works to ensure one-stop centers meet the needs of English Language Learners in the following ways.

- Bilingual staff in the Workforce Connection Centers are involved in providing all services offered in the centers, including assisting non-English speakers during job fairs, with interviewing, and employer engagement. Most of these staff are Spanish-English bilingual, and some staff are also Navajo-English bilingual. LWDBs will continue to recruit and hire bilingual staff across the state.

- Every Workforce Connection Center will continue to have and use the LanguageLine phone interpretation services.

- NMDWS has an inventory of all publications produced and printed for the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers and has begun to translate publications including pamphlets, brochures, and guides regarding various programs and services available to job seekers, students, and employers.

- NMDWS will inventory all signage, including New Mexico Workforce Connection outside signs, posters in the resource rooms, access signage, etc. and work to translate signage into Spanish and any other additional/requested languages, as appropriate.

**Privacy Safeguards**

Local Board grant agreements require the boards to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act (CMPPA) Agreement, which is part of the Information Exchange Agreement (IEA) between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. The boards will not duplicate, disseminate, or disclose such data without first obtaining through the Department, SSA’s prior written approval. The boards understand that access, use, or disclosure of social security data in a manner or purpose not authorized by the CMPPA may be subject to civil and criminal sanctions pursuant to applicable federal statutes. Information technology resources must not be used to reveal confidential or sensitive information, client data, or any other information covered by existing state or federal privacy or confidentiality laws, regulations, rules, policies, procedures, or contract terms. Users who engage in the unauthorized release of confidential information via the state’s information technology resources, including but not limited to newsgroups or chat rooms, will be subject to sanctions in existing policies and procedures associated with unauthorized release of such information. Sensitive or confidential data passing over an external network connection must be encrypted to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the information.

**VI. Program-Specific Requirement for Core Programs (See Appendices III-VII)**

- APPENDIX III – WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program-Specific Requirements
- APPENDIX IV – Wagner-Peyser Act Program-Specific Requirements and Agricultural Outreach Plan
- APPENDIX V – Adult Education and Family Literacy Program-Specific Requirements
- APPENDIX VI – Vocational Rehabilitation (General) Program-Specific Requirements
- APPENDIX VII – Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind) Program-Specific Requirements