III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include:

A. State Strategy Implementation
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include:

1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out.

The Indiana Governor's Workforce Cabinet (i.e. state workforce development board; GWC) is comprised of leaders from business, workforce, education, and lawmakers who represent key industries and programs throughout the state. Members of the GWC are appointed by the Governor and serve two (2) year terms. The terms are staggered so that half of the members turn over each year. If necessary, the Governor will make an appointment to fill any vacancy on the cabinet, but only for the duration of the unexpired term.

The GWC meets bimonthly to discuss key workforce initiatives, strategies, opportunities, and challenges occurring in the State. The GWC intentionally convenes its meetings in communities throughout the State, hosted by a workforce partner. Not only does this shed greater visibility and transparency into the actions of the GWC, but it enables members to see the workforce efforts across the State of Indiana and to engage in coalition building with regional partners who might not otherwise be engaged.

The GWC is driven by its mission to ensure the workforce development system helps grow the State's economy. In addition to performing the duties set forth under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the GWC:

- Assists the Governor in creating a unified or combined statewide plan for workforce development that links workforce policies and education programs to the economic needs of the State and its regions in alignment with the vision and goals of the State strategic plan
- Creates policy recommendations for the Governor related to the establishment and continuous improvement of an efficient, effective, and integrated State workforce development system
- Oversees the progress of the State's implementation of the unified or combined statewide plan for workforce development and achievement of the plan's goals and strategies
- Secures accurate and current data to evaluate all goals
- Engages employers to invest in and upskill employees to strengthen the skills of the labor market
- Ensures Indiana's two-year colleges are structured and incentivized to significantly increase completion rates for the most in-demand certificates, credentials, and degrees for students
- Encourages continual communication with local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to inform them of available resources and incentivize goal achievement
- Aligns State agencies' goals and priorities

Although the Governor has primary authority in WIOA local area governance, both the GWC and Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) have approval and signatory authority on behalf of the Governor for various WIOA local area governance activities. For local area governance activities requiring Governor-level approval:

- If activities are specifically outlined within U.S. Department of Labor regulation or guidance as State Board functions, the GWC is authorized to approve/sign on behalf of the Governor (e.g., WIOA Local Plan approvals, Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas, etc.).
- If activities are operational or compliance-based, the DWD Commissioner is authorized to approve/sign on behalf of the Governor. DWD will issue guidance on, review, and make decisions regarding these activities, consulting with the GWC as appropriate (e.g., WIOA Single Entity/Multiple Role structures, local WDB certifications, submission of bi-annual Nondiscrimination Plan, etc.).
- For any activities that may overlap the above designations of signatory authority, the GWC and DWD collaborate and EITHER may approve/sign on behalf of the Governor. For example, the review process for Local Plans is conducted by DWD, with a recommendation provided to the GWC for final approval. Written approval may then be signed/issued by DWD, on behalf of the GWC, or may be issued directly from the GWC.

2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of:

A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy. Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

In alignment with the goals and strategies outlined in Section II.B., Indiana has identified specific action steps where core and partner programs play a significant role in achieving successful outcomes over the next four years.

Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC)

In 2024, the governor's office announced the launch of a statewide workforce development campaign, *One Stop to Start*, with the goal of connecting Hoosiers with existing workforce and job-related training programs and resources. It includes an online navigation system for Hoosiers and employers, offering one-on-one assistance for both through a team of dedicated navigators (https://onestoptostart.in.gov/). The overall goal of *One Stop to Start* is to ensure Hoosiers have awareness of and access to the programs that can get them on the path to realizing a high-wage career. Examples include accessing tuition-free certification in high-demand sectors, becoming an apprentice or engaged in a work-based learning programs, accessing college financial aid, supporting marginalized population groups who have been historically excluded in the labor market including English language learners, adult learners without a high school degree, individuals who are disabled, or justice-involved, those in need of earning a high school diploma or equivalency, and more. In addition, the site serves to connect employers with business services resources available through

State and Federal grant programs, WorkOne business services functions, and skilled talent recruitment from veterans, justice-involved and vocational rehabilitation programs and via the community college systems.

The campaign will be led by the GWC and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, in partnership with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE), the Indiana Department of Corrections, Ivy Tech Community College, and Vincennes University. The initiative will also connect to Indiana's *Next Level Jobs* Program (NLJ).

The GWC will continue to serve as lead convener for workforce and talent development across the State. In doing so, the GWC will engage State workforce and education partners, including representatives of business & industry and community- and faith-based organizations, etc. to identify areas for stronger coordination so that jobseekers have access to high quality, accessible training, and supportive services (food, transportation, clothing, childcare, shelter, translation services, etc.), and employers have a constant pipeline of skilled talent without barriers to employment.

Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

DWD oversees five of the six WIOA core programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education & Family Literacy, and Employment Service/Wagner Peyser. As such, DWD will have a lead role in implementing Indiana's strategic vision. In 2023, DWD established agency goals and Workforce Operations objectives that align with the Pillars and Goals set forth in this Plan. DWD will continue to fund core program required activities and will strategically design complementary activities from a variety of funding streams to carry out or support the Plan's key action steps.

DWD prioritizes alignment across partners, programs, and funding streams. DWD will continue to emphasize the importance of such alignment in the implementation of the State's workforce development strategies. The examples below exhibit this alignment, both in current projects and in projects that will be operationalized under this Plan.

As discussed in II.B.:

QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant. DWD was awarded $10.8M in Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) Dislocated Worker Grant funding in 2022. DWD has utilized this funding to support multiple initiatives, including:

- Development and implementation of the Workforce Recommendation Engine (WRE)
- Piloting an alternative funding strategy for participant enrollment to support improved outcomes related to co-enrollment between Title I and Title II programs
- Partnerships outside of WIOA Core to ensure successful outreach and marketing
- Focus on building pathways and engaging participants and employers in priority industries, such as infrastructure and the care economy

Indiana's work with the QUEST DWG demonstrates effective cross-collaboration between multiple programs and partners, including Title I, Title II, Unemployment Insurance, local workforce development areas (LWDAs), and employers. Work in this area also contributes to the State's goals and strategies related to harnessing opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (including the Broadband Equity Access & Deployment Program), the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act to increase talent

development for the care giver economy, creating career pathway models for critical need sectors, and many of the other strategies outlined in II.B.

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Expansion. Through cross-agency partnership between DWD and the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Indiana plans to expand JAG from 125 to 250 programs by the 2024-2025 school year. FSSA will invest over $23.1 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants to support the expansion. Additionally, FSSA's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services Vocational Rehabilitation program, in partnership with DWD, will continue to contribute federal funding to support JAG students with disabilities.

For several years, DWD's WIOA Youth program has operated under the flexibility afforded by the out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure waiver, which has helped strengthen drop-out prevention strategies, such as JAG, for in-school youth with significant barriers to graduation. WIOA Youth and JAG programs have significant overlap, with aligned performance goals to achieve positive outcomes with a focus on credential attainment and placement in higher education or training, employment, or military service. Indiana seeks to continue its implementation of waiver flexibility during PY24 and PY25, to support:

- Implementation of evidence-based programs and strategies
- Progress toward closing the economic inequity gap
- Placing more Hoosier youth on the path to high-wage skills
- Increasing college readiness

Alignment of DWD's WIOA Youth and JAG programming, along with FSSA's partnership, allows Indiana to proactively decrease the number of out-of-school youth, while simultaneously increasing the number of youth who enter the workforce and/or post- secondary education.

Systems Alignment and Integration. DWD will continue to analyze the structure and function of its various systems to support alignment and integration. Significant progress has been made in systems alignment across programs through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, where WIOA Titles I, II, III, and IV have common access to track employer engagements. System integrations have also occurred between DWD's Unemployment Insurance and CRM systems for targeting outreach and tracking referrals. DWD will continue to explore opportunities and projects that will support the State's strategies toward systems alignment and integration. For example, DWD anticipates utilizing QUEST DWG funds to continue progress with the WRE, as well as to fund an Application Programming Interface (API) between the Title I and III case management system and the Title II Adult Basic Education systems. The API will assist with measuring existing co-enrollment and identifying opportunities for co-enrollment. Integration will also align data sources for more efficient access and analysis.

Digital Equity. DWD will assist with various strategies to support the State's digital equity goals. Some resources are already funded and available for use across core partners, such as the WIN Career Readiness System's digital literacy course modules paid for by DWD's Title II program. WIN is currently available to DWD programs (including core programs Titles I, II, and III), and can also be utilized by the LWDAs. Title II providers are available to support jobseekers in digital skill development. WIN is available to jobseekers and includes a digital literacy assessment and curriculum that could be utilized by other partners to assess and strengthen digital literacy. DWD will explore additional tools to support the State's strategy related to standardization of digital literacy assessments. Some of Indiana's LWDAs already utilize certain other digital assessments to help

Public Comment Period Draft

identify skill deficiencies for WIOA participants, but these assessments are not required or standardized across programs. DWD will also collaborate with the GWC and CHE to support digital workforce readiness across industries through targeted use of *Next Level Jobs* (NLJ) *Employer Training Grant* (ETG) and *Workforce Ready Grant* (WRG) programming. Additionally, DWD was a member of Indiana's Digital Equity Taskforce, which created the first digital equity (DE) plan for Indiana. DWD will align work and activities to support implementation of the DE Plan's recommendations. Further, through DWD's work with the QUEST DWG and other partner collaborations, such as the Indiana Broadband Office, DWD will assist with digital equity work in the broadband space as funds come to the State.

Removing Barriers. Through coordination of funding streams, alignment in service delivery, and targeted use of funds, DWD will support the State's goals in removing barriers for workers. Indiana Adult Education, for example, now covers high school equivalency (HSE) testing fees for students enrolled in adult education programs, eliminating the barrier HSE testing fees impose on adult learners. This began as a pilot project during the pandemic in PY 2020. The response was so great that it was, and will be, continued in subsequent years using the non-match State adult education allocation, exhibiting coordination between Federal and State funding through complementary service approaches. The *Workforce Education Initiative* (WEI) is another example of continuing coordination and alignment. Many individuals who need adult education services must make the difficult choice between earning an income and returning to school. Through WEI, funding is made available to adult education providers to offer classes at employer work sites.

DWD will also target funding to remove barriers through the ETG and WRG programs (under the *Next Level Jobs* initiative). This targeted funding will support the State's goals in multiple areas, such as digital workforce readiness discussed above. Another area DWD will target is talent development in the care giver economy. For example, Indiana intends to expand ETG and WRG program options to include childcare training options. DWD, through collaboration with the GWC and FSSA, will pilot this expansion by adjusting its program offerings and preparing its systems to promote and track promotion of childcare occupations. Through alignment with WIOA core programs and the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), programs like ETG and WRG often lead to comprehensive talent strategies throughout Indiana's workforce system. The result is more aligned service delivery for both participants and employers.

Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship. DWD will continue to align initiatives to address employer talent needs and develop career pathways for workers in high growth sectors through continued ETG and WRG funding opportunities. DWD will continue to encourage the use of ETG funds toward *State Earn and Learn* (SEAL), pre-apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship (RAP) programs. These models create a training system based on employer needs that prepares a skilled workforce for career pathways in high growth sectors. The Indiana Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships (OWBLA) will also continue coordination of a partner network that supports and provides work-based learning programs, amplifying the impact of the workforce system through strategic collaboration and marketing. OWBLA manages and implements U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship funding. Through this funding, OWBLA provides resources and encourages co-enrollment and braided funding opportunities to serve more individuals as they enter strong career pathways.

Public Comment Period Draft

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR)

In partnership with DWD, FSSA will continue to enhance collaboration opportunities to improve employment outcomes for Hoosiers with disabilities. This includes increased opportunity to serve students with disabilities through the JAG program by expanding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VR and DWD, refining the role of VR WIOA Navigators in workforce regions to support individuals with disabilities more fully in accessing all workforce programs, and continuing to develop cross-training opportunities with staff. Several VR initiatives – including provider performance incentive payments implemented in July 2023 and a shift in VR Counselor roles to identify dedicated VR Counselors to work with participants enrolled in postsecondary training – align directly with strategies outlined in this plan. Several goals and strategies outlined in the VR section of the State Plan are strategically aligned with overall goals and strategies (e.g., increasing postsecondary enrollment for VR participants, providing increased opportunity for work-based learning, increased engagement of eligible individuals in the VR program, and targeted outreach to students with disabilities to enroll more students in VR services).

B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Indiana has a talent development system comprised of wide-ranging and broad workforce development and education programs spanning Federal acts, State initiatives, and private investments. This has been beneficial for Hoosiers and Indiana employers, as there are multiple resources and supports available. Indiana will leverage work being done by and between our Core, required, and optional partners to drive our initiatives and coordinate alignment of new projects among partners.

Indiana recognizes that coordinated alignment among partners and activities is vital to ensuring an effective workforce system where activities are not duplicated. As a primary convenor of Indiana's workforce system, the GWC will drive collaboration and alignment among and across the State agencies and key stakeholders involved in carrying out the activities identified in this Plan. A WIOA steering committee, comprised of core program partners, will convene regularly throughout the four-year lifespan of the plan for continuous improvement, progress tracking and implementation. DWD and FSSA (i.e., VR), as the entities administering the core programs, will assist in cascading the Plan's goals, strategies, and action steps to their own partners, including partners within the LWDAs. Alignment will be achieved through a variety of strategies requiring cross-program and cross-partner collaboration, including:

- Cross-training
- Strategic co-enrollment
- Co-location
- Data sharing
- Cohesive outreach and engagement with individuals and employers

Several of the activities listed in III.a.2.A., along with the goals and strategies identified in Section II.B., involve significant alignment across a variety of partners and key stakeholders. Some examples include:

Workforce Recommendation Engine (WRE): Coordination among workforce partners is vital for the effectiveness of the WRE. The WRE leverages data the State already collects during daily governance activity to better serve workers. The goal is to use data in an algorithm to identify training programs and career pathways that align with an individual's educational and work background and desired future state (e.g., increased wages, length of training, cost of training, distance willing to travel for training, etc.) rather than asking citizens to take an assessment to provide us with this data. By streamlining this approach, Indiana hopes to reduce duplication of services among program partners and make coordinated recommendations using technology and data from unemployment insurance administrative records.

Digital Equity: Alignment across partners and activities outside the Plan is also a necessary component for the State's digital equity goals and strategies. As noted earlier, for example, Title II already has WIN as a resource available within DWD and the LWDAs. Some LWDAs also have separate digital literacy tools to assess and assist their customers. In the space of digital literacy and readiness, it is important that Indiana's partners are mindful of current projects and efforts to determine where activities could be expanded or aligned. Additionally, various stakeholders, including DWD, were members of Indiana's Digital Equity Taskforce, which created the first digital equity (DE) plan for Indiana. DWD will align work and activities to support implementation of the DE Plan's recommendations. Further, through DWD's work with the QUEST DWG and other partner collaborations, such as the Indiana Broadband Office, DWD will assist with digital equity work in the broadband space as funds are made available to the State.

Childcare Barriers and Childcare Employment Pathways: Meeting the State's goals toward affordable and accessible childcare will involve multiple partners implementing specific segments of the work, from DWD and FSSA cross system referrals for customers with childcare barriers, to low or no cost training in childcare occupations, to supporting the development of employer-based childcare benefits.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Testing: To eliminate the barrier HSE testing fees impose on adult learners, Indiana Adult Education now covers HSE testing fees for students enrolled in adult education programs. This began as a pilot project during the pandemic in PY 20. The response was so great that it was continued in subsequent years using the non-match State adult education allocation. Efforts to remove this barrier for adult learners exhibits coordination between Federal and State funding through complementary service approaches.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Apprenticeship: Multiple partners are involved in successfully implementing WBL and apprenticeship throughout Indiana. DWD's Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships (OWBLA), for example, drives initiatives such as providing education and training to one-stop business service professionals and providing guidance and tools to assist with apprenticeship creation. Career coaches, counselors, and others involved in case management can access OWBLA training and resources to determine individual needs and offer WBL options and capture data and outcomes. Further, as DWD is the recipient of both WIOA Core Program funding and U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship funds, strategies are aligned across programs and partners

to encourage co-enrollment and provide funds for on-the-job training (OJT), related technical instruction (RTI), as well as to address supportive service needs.

Workforce Education Initiative (WEI). DWD's Title II Adult Education team continues to partner with adult education providers and employers to implement the WEI program. Additionally, Title II staff are also working with Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) to assist more individuals with disabilities to enter the workforce using our WEI program. Manufacturing employers are encouraged to upskill incumbent workers using the *Employer Training Grant* or another funding source, backfilling the vacant position with a candidate from Erskine Green. EGTI partners with Title II to offer onsite training for these new employees. Title IV services are accessed as well when needed.

One Stop to Start. The GWC launched a marketing campaign in early 2024 to build awareness of the State's programs for individuals and employers; to connect workers to training that aligns with critical need and emerging employer demand industries; and to assist employers in connecting with training resources and skilled workers. A targeted ad and marketing campaign will direct traffic to a web-based portal which will serve as the State's one-stop hub for individuals and employers to learn about workforce, education, and training programs the State offers. It will also provide real-time, personalized help via one-on-one navigators. These navigators will help individuals and employers connect to the resources that best fit their needs through direct handoffs to the appropriate workforce, higher education, family and social services, or corrections agencies, local workforce development boards, or community college systems.

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals. Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

High quality service delivery is implemented through various coordination and alignment activities among Indiana's WIOA Core and Partner programs. Through Indiana's workforce system partners, individuals have access to an array of customizable services, designed to meet them where they are according to their eligibility, needs, training, and/or employment goals.

Local Operations: A foundational component for ensuring coordination and alignment in service delivery starts at the local level. Each local workforce development area (LWDA) drives development and implementation of partner memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and infrastructure funding agreements (IFAs). MOUs are the avenue for local system partners to outline their collective vision for the one-stop system and commit to partnership under that vision. IFAs further solidify those partnerships through development of negotiated budgets describing each partner's financial share of system costs. Each comprehensive and affiliate WorkOne center (Indiana's term for 'American Job Centers') is certified every three years via a thorough review process. These center certifications provide an additional layer of assurance for successful system operations on an office-by-office basis.

Service Navigation: Although Indiana's talent development system includes a broad range of programs and partners offering resources and opportunity for Hoosiers, it is vital that the system be navigable for those it serves. Ideally, there should be no wrong door for individuals to enter the system and receive customized services. Further cross-training of staff, increased and streamlined

referrals, and co-location of partner staff, where feasible, will not only reduce potential duplication of services, but will also increase funding efficiency. Ultimately, these strategies will assist with a holistic view of individuals' needs.

When an individual connects with Indiana's workforce system, they are triaged to determine service level needs. Whether accessing self-services or seeking more in-depth assistance, and whether engaging virtually or in-person, individuals are met upfront with next steps. Veterans and eligible spouses are given service priority, and, when connecting to Title I Adult services, Adult Priority of Service provisions are implemented as appropriate.

Accessibility: Staff are trained to use multiple tools and resources to ensure accessibility to services when serving clients on-site. WorkOne offices, as well as DWD and LWDA websites and virtual service options, prioritize language, programmatic, and physical accessibility, with Equal Opportunity (EO) notices and related information prominently posted for Title I financially assisted programs and services. Indiana's WIOA State EO Officer and the twelve LWDA Local EO Officers routinely educate and train staff regarding nondiscrimination provisions. Further, DWD and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) have partnered on several occasions to cross-train staff on multiple disability-related topics. Most recently, DWD and VR, in partnership with U.S. Department of Labor, acquired a Learning Management System (LMS) to support cross agency training. Two modules have since been developed and successfully rolled out to staff focusing on workforce collaboration and integration: (1) Co-enrollment and Joint Case Management and (2) Indiana's Workforce System and WIOA Program Partners. DWD and VR have also collaborated to hire VR Navigators, who serve as liaisons between WorkOne AJCs, VR staff, and shared customers.

Cross-training: Indiana will explore additional opportunities for cross-training among partners and programs to boost awareness and familiarity with program offerings and will encourage staff co-location when feasible. These strategies will support the State's goals by removing barriers for workers through enhancing referral processes and boosting co-enrollments. One of the State's goals is to develop a cross-system referral process for individuals with barriers to employment. To do this, partners must analyze current referral processes and collaborate to determine where efficiencies can be gained while working toward a consistent, more uniform process for cross-system referrals.

Co-enrollment: Similarly, co-enrollment will be emphasized across programs. Strategic co-enrollment is customer-centered and should be driven by the individual's unique barriers to employment. With adequate cross-training, staff will have the knowledge needed to review options with individuals and offer enrollment recommendations based on any programs for which the individual is eligible. Indiana's co-enrollment approach facilitates service delivery alignment and encourages braiding of resources to address the training and employment needs of jobseekers and business customers at the local level. Expanding co-enrollment efforts will help to maximize each program's efficiency and impact. Serving individuals through the programs most appropriate for their needs can reduce duplication of services, improve outcomes, and increase the number of participants that can be served through each funding stream.

Supportive Services: As individuals are enrolled in various programs, staff assess supportive service needs, and for co-enrolled participants, identify which program will fund supportive services. To effectively serve each individual and mitigate their barriers, staff document barriers and supportive services in participant files. Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker supportive services, as an example, must include file documentation of barriers, the plan for addressing those barriers, and information

Public Comment Period Draft

demonstrating need for any supportive services rendered. LWDAs have flexibility to establish limits on supportive services amounts and timeframes, so long as the services are reasonable and necessary.

Co-location: Staff co-location, when feasible, is another opportunity to reduce barriers for those accessing State services. Strategically locating staff will facilitate referrals and increase awareness and partnership among various programs. Whether this be through physical sharing of space or from partner staff presence on certain days and times in certain locations, through mobile services, or otherwise, co-location serves to increase variety and flexibility as to where, when, and how an individual can connect with our programs. Co-location also facilitates real-time information sharing, allowing staff to better align activities, leverage existing resources, and increase opportunities for collective innovation that may lead to better service delivery approaches.

Workforce Education Initiative (WEI): Another strategy in meeting individuals where they are is the WEI. Many individuals who need adult education services must make the difficult choice between earning an income and returning to school. Through WEI, funding is made available to adult education providers to offer classes at employer work sites. Last year adult education programming was offered in partnership with 180 employers serving close to 3,000 students. These classes varied in form and included HSE prep, English Language Acquisition, and Integrated Education Training. Each curriculum was developed in partnership with and to meet employer needs. Offering classes at employer work sites also assists in reducing transportation concerns. When classes can be scheduled in alignment with an individual's work schedule, it reduces the need to arrange transportation to multiple locations.

Virtual Client Engagement: Indiana has made several tools available to virtually engage with individuals seeking services. For example, adult education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming are fully available online. Additionally, individuals interested in workforce resources can connect with a live DWD agent through a phone call or chat function. The live agent will not only connect them to available resources, but also ensure that an appropriate referral is made should the individual like to receive additional assistance from a One-Stop Center. Further, DWD utilizes a web-based application that Hoosiers can use to schedule appointments, participate in meetings, transmit and sign documents, and track their engagements. This technology allows staff to deliver services virtually without a client necessarily needing to step foot into a One-Stop center. These tools are critical to engaging Hoosiers in this new workforce climate. Indiana will continue to assess and evaluate these tools and their effectiveness with a focus on investment in tools that are maximizing engagement and connectivity with One-Stop Centers.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers. Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

To create a more robust talent development system and advance Hoosiers toward economic mobility, Indiana must continue to foster action-oriented relationships between businesses, community partners, and government agencies. Indiana will continue to attract and support businesses of all sizes to our State. Our focus, however, is on identifying and developing the skilled workforce needed to maintain these businesses and the businesses already here. To accomplish this, we engage with

businesses holistically rather than focusing solely on their current needs. We must also look for ways to diversify hiring practices, access untapped populations, and develop strategic talent pipelines.

Building better connections to employers alongside our partners is a critical component of addressing the workforce challenges facing Indiana businesses. There is a need now, more than ever, to align resources and work strategically to develop talent pipelines. The following strategies outline how Indiana will continue coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs.

One Stop to Start: The GWC launched a marketing campaign in early 2024 to promote awareness of State resources for employers, including assistance in connecting with training resources and skilled worker pipelines. A targeted ad and marketing campaign will direct employers to a web-based portal which will serve as the State's one-stop place for individuals and employers to learn about the workforce, education, and training programs the State offers. It will also provide real-time, personalized help via one-on-one navigators. These navigators will help employers and other individuals connect to the resources that best fit their needs through direct handoffs to the appropriate to the appropriate State and local workforce and economic development program managers. The initiative may evolve to include additional technical components including employer to jobseeker talent recruitment and screening.

Employer Talent Agency: Indiana's talent development system must be responsive to the needs of employers, remain innovative, and provide real-time solutions to complex and pressing problems. Indiana faces a defining moment as it contemplates the future of work and the State's economy must respond to employer demand for a technically skilled, adaptable workforce. Amid a quickly evolving digital skills landscape with changing job requirements, and a limited labor market due to shifting demographics, there will be a need for a structured, unified framework for education and workforce alignment with employers in regard skills, credentials and hiring needs. The GWC is embracing new approaches to serving Hoosier employers amid these changes in the labor market. Currently, it is determining the feasibility of a statewide Talent Agency, designed specifically as a service to employers. The inspiration for this agency reflects feedback from employers and successful outcomes from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Talent Pipeline Management business model. A feasibility analysis could include asset mapping of existing business service models located regionally through local workforce development boards, community college systems, and state and local chambers, and state agencies to determine best practices, where gaps in service may exist, as well as how to best leverage existing networks towards a statewide approach for an employer-centered workforce system.

Technical Assistance and Staff Training: Indiana will continue providing employer service-focused technical assistance and staff training through development opportunities for State staff and partners, such as LWDA staff and local workforce development board (LWDB) members. Specific board training, as an example, has been developed and is available for LWDB members and staff to enhance knowledge, duties, and understanding of their responsibilities as to how the talent development system can connect with employers.

Starting in 2024, VR will enhance *its* capacity to provide technical assistance to businesses through a pilot project with one of the largest counties in the State, Hamilton County. Through this partnership, Hamilton County will leverage its business networks to create more opportunities with local businesses to offer work-based learning and hiring opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities,

including youth. Businesses will receive support with onboarding and training to promote a successful experience for both the employer and the jobseeker.

While tremendous progress has been made in communication and coordination with partners, such as using technology to track and record employer engagements and activities, the landscape of workforce development has significantly changed in recent years. It is critical that Indiana reassess our coordinated employer service delivery approaches across core programs and partners. A better understanding of all resources – whether provided by WIOA core programs and offered within our WorkOnes, or through State funded programs such as *Next Level Jobs*, or via other services funded by Partner Programs – will allow State, partner, and local workforce staff to better connect resources and programs to the employers they serve in their communities. All workforce system staff and partners should be well-versed in the leading industry sectors in their region and the resources available to help employers develop the talent they need.

Economic and Employer Data: DWD Research and Analysis staff have developed regional dashboards for use by workforce and economic development partners, including the Management Performance Hub (MPH). MPH helps stakeholders identify and analyze data sets necessary to understand the intersection between the education, workforce development, and social service systems. These tools are designed to increase awareness of economic and employer data with the goal of reaching a united understanding of the unique needs within each region. This data can be shared with partners across the workforce system to support the alignment of strategies and initiatives to support employers.

Current labor market analysis shows that Indiana is preparing to fill more than 4 million jobs by 2031, 154,000 of which are from growth, while 1.6 million represent labor force exits and 2.3 million from transfers. To prepare to meet this upcoming demand and secure a successful future for Hoosiers, DWD plans to create more opportunities for discussions and joint presentations with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. By looking towards the future, our efforts will be focused on promoting increased dialogue and action around increasing the number of good jobs, diversifying the economy, and continuing to grow the State's global competitiveness. As a result, State and local partners will have more targeted and coordinated talent and business development strategies moving forward. The GWC, DWD, and LWDAs will collaborate in these efforts to drive awareness and identify any workforce policy changes that may be necessary.

*Infrastructure***:** Supporting the State's initiatives relative to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), will be a key focus of DWD over the next four years. Coordinating partnerships at the State and local level between BIL infrastructure programs, core partners, and one-stop partners will play a critical role in meeting the demands of these new projects and activities. To foster the development and sustainability of partnerships around infrastructure, DWD intends to dedicate staff to this work to stay abreast of the various projects, activities, and resources as they become available to our State and to ensure the appropriate core programs and one-stop partners are informed and leveraged to support a coordinated response to the needs. Implementation of the QUEST DWG has been a foundational support in this area, enabling DWD to build the framework from staff's infrastructure work can grow and expand.

Training Resources for Employers: Another key strategy for Indiana is the deployment of our *Next Level Jobs* Program, specifically the *Employer Training Grant* (ETG). Focused on businesses, the ETG

program uses a coordinated service delivery strategy that brings State and local partners together to inform areas of need for employers. Since the inception of the program in 2017, over 1,400 Hoosier businesses have accessed training dollars to upskill their new and existing workforce to keep their businesses and workers thriving in Indiana. Over $75 million has been invested into this skill advancement program that continues to result in higher wages for Hoosiers and a sustainable workforce for Hoosier businesses.

Also valuable for employers is the *Workforce Education Initiative* (WEI), as discussed throughout Section III.a.2., where adult education classes are offered at employer work sites. Each curriculum was developed in partnership with employers to meet their specific needs. Last year, adult education programming was offered in partnership with 180 employers serving close to 3,000 students.

Work-Based Learning: Work-based learning (WBL) remains a high priority strategy for Indiana as these activities allow our target populations to gain knowledge, skills, and experience as they earn an income, thus alleviating the education and life expenses tug-of-war that prevents individuals from pursuing educational opportunities. Seamlessly integrating the full WBL continuum into the Indiana talent development system will allow for both businesses and constituents to find sustainable success. Through coordinated efforts with State and local partners and employers much progress has been made on these efforts.

Hoosier workforce regions have utilized WBL models for many years. Through the VR program, for example, students receiving pre-employment transition services can access paid internships or work-experiences. Over 4,000 stipends have been issued to students in FY2023 for WBL experiences and VR recently updated written guidance and training for VR staff on opportunities to expand WBL opportunities, including paid opportunities, for VR participants.

On-the-job and customized training programs, like those mentioned, have been widely used and are very effective tools. Indiana's policies are developed to ensure that our partners continually evaluate and improve their work and learn strategies. Specifically, Indiana's workforce partners are required to review all WBL programs with each company to ensure the training received truly provides a high-quality experience for the participant and helps them either advance at that company or pursue work at another company. Additionally, Indiana's policies require a review of the employment and advancement trends at employers that utilize WBL models to ensure participants are completing training, finding employment, and then persisting in that employment.

DWD's Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships (OWBLA) continues its scalable framework for State level apprenticeship programs, *State Earn and Learn* (SEAL). As a comprehensive program, SEALs provide more flexibility than a registered apprenticeship program, while maintaining a high level of quality and consistency, and are State certified through OWBLA. The SEAL model strategically incorporates related instruction, on-the-job training, and rewards for skill gain, all leading to at least one industry recognized credential, college credit, and developing a highly trained employee to meet the talent needs of Hoosier employers. These models are easily scaled across the State and have been developed for both the youth and adult populations. The State is actively involved in continuous evaluation of its full strategy for the implementation of registered apprenticeships throughout the State.

By coordinating with local partners, employers, and sector organizations to mitigate employer challenges, the State has been able to generate employer support for broader participation in WBL statewide. The State continues to work with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship in

Indiana to coordinate information, expansion, and eligibility of apprenticeships in Indiana. Further development of registered apprenticeships will play an increasingly important role with businesses across all industries by providing a pipeline of skilled workers to help them remain competitive. Indiana has over 800 active apprenticeship programs and over 18,000 active apprentices in FY2023. Indiana is one of the largest apprenticeship states in the nation based on the size and number of programs available. Indiana is also one of the top states in terms of completions. Yet, like the rest of the nation, Indiana currently lacks much needed diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and business sector roles. DWD received the 2023 U.S. Department of Labor *State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula* (SAEF) grant and the 2022 *Apprenticeship Building America Expansion* (ABA) grant to grow the foundational apprenticeship support ecosystem and increase apprenticeships throughout the State. Through the support of these grants, the DWD has worked with Indiana's U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeships and other key stakeholders to:

- Identify ways to integrate registered apprenticeship into State education and workforce systems (i.e. WIOA)
- Engage industry and other partners to expand apprenticeship to new sectors, such as IT, healthcare, cybersecurity, and business services and to new non-traditional populations at scale, including through career and technical education programs of study design
- Conduct outreach and work with national, State, and local intermediaries, as well as employers, to design and scale quality WBL programs
- Identify ways to promote greater inclusion and diversity in apprenticeship, such as subgrants with The Indiana Plan and partnerships with organizations such as the Urban League, the Latino Institute, etc.
- Conduct research and design pathways in partnership with key stakeholders for Youth Registered Apprenticeship programs
- Incorporate Registered Apprenticeship programs onto the State's Education, Training and Provider List (ETPL)
- Expand the State's current apprenticeship model using SEAL programs and Certified Pre-Apprenticeship (Pre-RAP) programs

To provide alignment with the workforce system, the LWDBs serve as Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries to assist in the expansion and facilitation of all Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programming across the State. Indiana will continue to expand Registered Apprenticeship programs as well as the number of apprentices enrolled in these programs.

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers. Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

Indiana's strategies (as detailed in Section II.c.1 and II.c.2). require the engagement of education and training partners throughout the State. The talent developed by these partners is critical in preparing individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for success in the economy and for fulfilling personal goals.

Public Comment Period Draft

Higher Education: Indiana's Commission for Higher Education (CHE) 2023 *Hoosier Opportunities & Possibilities through Education* (HOPE) agenda establishes a foundation whereby all Hoosiers have opportunities for access to higher education, employers have access to a better-prepared workforce, and communities will be stronger (https://www.in.gov/che/strategic-plan/reaching-higher-in-a-state-of-change/). The HOPE Agenda targets three key pillars (enrollment, completion, and graduate retention) and calls for Indiana to be a top 10 state in the nation by 2030 in the following areas:

- Post-high school training and education going rates for youth and adults, across all demographics by leveraging tools such as the *Frank O'Bannon Grant*, *21st Century Scholars* program, the Indiana College Core, FAFSA completions, the *Workforce Ready Grant*, our low tuition and fees, and our continuous focus on high quality
- Postsecondary attainment for veterans, individuals with disabilities, and the justice-involved
- Utilization of credit for prior learning to honor the work, training, and education already achieved by adult learners
- The rate at which Hoosiers successfully complete their chosen areas of study
- Retaining talent once someone has graduated from a postsecondary training or education program
- Measurable distinction in economic and social mobility and prosperity outcomes
- The state for growing or starting a business based upon the strength of human capital

CHE has spearheaded efforts to increase transparency around transferable credits. They have led a Credit for Prior Learning Taskforce over the past year to catalogue the credits that various state institutions, both public and private, offer for prior learning experiences and non-credit credentials (such as industry certifications). These efforts will aid the State in the transparency needed to motivate students and jobseekers alike to stack credentials and continue along a career path. Adult learners are more apt to continue along their career paths and to extend their education if they are awarded appropriate credit for industry certifications. Full transparency regarding credit for prior learning will lead to higher educational attainment for Hoosiers.

Higher education partners are critical to Indiana's talent development system and are key stakeholders in carrying out the goals and strategies in this Plan. The need to engage with all institutions of higher education – including Indiana's community college system, training providers, and four-year colleges and universities – stems from the recognition that higher education is no longer episodic for Hoosiers, but rather it is continual. In today's economy, workers must engage in continual learning to adapt to innovations in every employment sector. The result is a higher learning system where completion is comprehensive – including everything from micro-credentials and short-term certificates to associate, bachelor, and graduate degrees – allowing learners to build, expand, stack, and show what they know throughout their careers. To attain personal and economic success requires Hoosiers to embrace lifelong learning as they navigate and advance in their careers. Higher education remains a powerful force to address income disparities, close equity gaps, provide personal prosperity, drive economic growth, promote civic engagement in our society, and enhance the quality of life in our Indiana communities.

Career and Technical Education (CTE): Indiana fully launched new secondary career and technical education courses in the 2022-2023 school year. This initiative, called *Next Level Programs of Study* (NLPS), aims to improve the consistency, quality, and intentionality of CTE instruction across Indiana. The CTE team, now part of CHE, developed the NLPS to align with Indiana's high wage/high demand sectors and to increase the attainment of dual credits and the conferring of technical certifications

which transfer directly into associate degrees. The design, structure, and dollars associated with the NLPS are intended to directly incentivize and monetize schools to enroll more students in CTE courses and to support them through completion so that they can graduate high school with significant credits toward a degree.

Eligible Training Providers: While Indiana's institutions of higher education offer a wide-variety of credit-bearing opportunities, the State also offers numerous non-credit options for individuals looking to upskill and/or earn credentials through a different route than college. Rising college costs have led many students and adult jobseekers to pursue alternatives to a four-year degree, but it is important that any alternative still leads to a quality credential that holds currency in the workforce. To promote credentials of value for shorter-term training programs, steps have been taken to ensure that programs on the ETPL lead to an approved credential, including degrees, Registered Apprenticeships, licensures, and industry recognized certifications which appear on Indiana's Promoted Industry Certification List, a list that is validated by Indiana employers. Training providers can only maintain their presence on the ETPL by meeting performance measures based on one of three criteria: completion, job placement, and median wages. One way Indiana has merged other types of education and training programs is through partnerships between apprenticeships and our community colleges. Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) partners with registered apprenticeships to provide comparable college credits and confer degrees. Vincennes University works with non-unionized organizations to provide college credits and degrees for their registered apprenticeship programs. Based on the ETPL, our LWDBs spearhead the work and partnerships with local postsecondary trainers and partners to ensure Hoosiers are gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for career advancement.

Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship: DWD's OWBLA is creating alignment of CTE, DOE, and ITCC training programs to U.S. Department of Labor skill standards creating universal alignment and training plans. OWBLA is actively expanding pre-apprenticeship and SEAL workforce solutions with Adult Education and CTE, to provide access to high-growth career pathways. In Indiana, all certified or registered WBL programs are encouraged to collaborate with *INTraining*/ETPL in demonstrating quality and consistency of comprehensive programs.

Adult Education: DWD meets regularly with ITCC to discuss adult service delivery including strategies to connect jobseekers into emerging industries. One area of focus involves workforce needs for infrastructure projects. Agency conversations include adult education, CTE, community college partners, as well as agencies receiving funding for infrastructure development. A priority has been ensuring entry level training, such as adult education Integrated Education and Training (IET), becomes credit for prior learning at post-secondary institutions. This is a priority area for CHE as well, and DWD participated in a taskforce to develop policy and procedures for Prior Learning Assessments. To encourage transition to post-secondary after completion of the secondary diploma, DWD is incentivizing adult education providers to have students complete FAFSA applications prior to graduation.

Other Education and Training Providers: The State's priorities and strategies for advancing partnerships with other education and training providers include:

- Ensuring the transferability of learning and certifications where there are gaps among training providers, institutions of higher education, and employers, as well as in career-technical education courses in the K-12 space; and between the K-12 and higher education

sectors, particularly for CTE courses. Efforts by CTE to create *the Next Level Programs of Study*, aligned with community college curriculums at ITCC and Vincennes University, are aimed to increase dual credit attainment by high schoolers in the CTE space.

- Developing a digital, easily sharable student-owned Learning Employment Record (LER) to track education and career achievements paired with Credential Engine's credential directory and encouraging widespread use of LERs to help match jobseekers to employers.
- Continuing to build upon CHE's work with institutions of higher education to develop a system for recognizing non-credit credentials and other types of prior learning as college credit that can transfer and count towards postsecondary programs. CHE currently leads a Credit for Prior Learning taskforce to assist in these efforts.
- Redesigning career and employment services offered by training providers to support learners throughout their educational experience and connect them to relevant career opportunities.
- Using predictive analytics to identify student needs and tailor individualized support to ensure student success.
- Increasing the number of employers partnering with education and training providers to develop "grow your own" programs for their employees.

Leveraging Resources. As noted in Section II.c.1, Indiana has developed strategies that the State will implement to support in-demand industry sectors, occupations, and career pathways. These strategies leverage Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to education and training partner programs.

Federal investments beyond WIOA, such as the CHIPS and Science Act, Inflation Reduction Act, and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment Act), are bringing the State's education and training partners to the table to not only re-examine existing training curriculum but also develop new training based on industry demand, especially in new and emerging sectors like semiconductor technologies. Indiana's robust partnerships allow for collaboration on leveraging federal investments. For example:

- Purdue University is the leading university partner for Indiana's *Silicon Crossroads Hub* and will leverage relationships with consortium partners to support industry's increased production of semiconductor technologies.
- Under the *Tech Hub* program, education, and training partners – including Purdue University, the University of Notre Dame, Ivy Tech Community College, and Indiana University – are leveraging strengths to drive innovation and production of bioproducts invented domestically.
- Purdue University is playing a major role in the cross-state *Midwest Hub* (i.e., MachH2) to accelerate the State's clean energy efforts around hydrogen.
- Indiana University's *Indiana Resilience Funding Hub* will be leveraged to provide communities across the State with access to federal investment funding for sustainability and climate-change mitigation focused projects.

State and local investment supported the increased awareness and access to training programs to support key populations in their career journeys. Under the Regional Economic and Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), communities leveraged existing resources via match funding to secure READI grants from the State to support regional talent development and attraction. The

Public Comment Period Draft

workforce needs varied across the State whether it was Stellantis announcing the expansion of manufacturing operations in Kokomo to build a second battery plant, or Eli Lilly breaking ground to support its manufacturing operations in Lebanon.

VR continues to facilitate a Transition Advisory Council in close partnership with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), DWD, CTE, local schools, and a wide range of other State agencies, advocacy groups and stakeholders. This council serves in an advisory capacity for statewide pre-employment transition services; however, the group also focuses heavily on sharing of resources, information, and best practices on transition from school to work services across partners. Additionally, VR maintains MOUs with IDOE and DWD to support collaboration in serving students.

F. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials. Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses, or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Indiana recognizes that the path to graduation is not a one-size-fits-all and instead, provides many pathways for students to earn a high school diploma. The *Indiana Graduation Pathways* empower students to individualize their graduation requirements to align with their postsecondary goals in one of three paths: Enrollment, Employment, and Enlistment leading to military service. No longer must students fit into the same academic mold, but rather, they can choose the high school options that best meet their postsecondary goals and aspirations. Beginning with the Class of 2023, students must meet (1) diploma requirements, (2) learn and demonstrate employability skills, and (3) at least one postsecondary-ready competency (e.g., honors diploma, SAT, ACT, ASVAB, industry certification, apprenticeship, CTE concentrator, AP/IB/Dual Credit/Cambridge International/CLEP, locally created pathway – approved by the State Board of Education, or a waiver). Indiana's "re-thinking of high school" aims to expand access to intentional college credit opportunities that allow students to earn transferable, stackable credentials before graduation, as well as high-quality work-based learning experiences. The future of our students, our communities, and our State depend on a K-12 system that helps everyone succeed, whether their post-graduation plans include employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service. Progress will continue to be tracked in the *Indiana Graduated Prepared to Succeed* dashboard (Indiana GPS: https://indianagps.doe.in.gov/).

In 2023, the Indiana General Assembly passed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1002 which, at its core, sought to implement new high school diploma requirements that are more flexible and relevant to students, employers, and communities while also improving access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities and increasing the number of postsecondary credentials earned by students before they graduate high school. From HEA 1002, the State also established *Career Scholarship Accounts* (CSA) which enable students in grades 10-12 to access funding to pay for career training beyond the classroom. This expansion of work-based learning will enable Hoosier students to earn a post-secondary credential before graduating from high school.

Indiana's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials. Through programs like the CHIPS and Science Act, Tech Hubs, and more, Indiana is poised to make strong investments in talent development to support the in-demand occupations of growing industry clusters like semiconductor manufacturing, clean energy, electric vehicle manufacturing, biolife sciences, etc. State workforce partners will continue to meet with industry leaders to determine their staffing needs in these fields and to coordinate on training, work-based learning experiences, and stackable credentials in order to meet employer demand.

Public Comment Period Draft

The additional strategies outlined below further support the State's strategies:

Establishing Shared Definitions: Indiana's Department of Education (IDOE), in coordination with Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE), Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC), has led statewide efforts in establishing shared definitions of high-quality work-based learning and credentials of value. IDOE conducted a *Graduation Landscape Analysis* in 2023, where it evaluated evolvement of graduation pathways and diploma requirements and engaged stakeholders to help focus Indiana's work into three key areas[1]:

- Diploma Requirements: making high school diploma requirements are more flexible and relevant to students, employers, and communities
- High-Quality Work-Based Learning: improving access to and the number of students completing high-quality work-based learning opportunities
- Credentials of Value: increasing access to and the number of students completing high-value postsecondary credentials *before* high school graduation

These definitions aim to ensure that students graduate with knowledge, skills, and experiences that align with the needs of employers, communities, and our State. They also help to prioritize State funding efforts. A statewide advisory group with representation from all the major partners – IDOE, CHE, DWD, and Indiana Office for Career and Technical Education (CTE) – is outlining a process to evaluate credentials and to categorize them from 'foundational' all the way to 'premium' based on the mastery of technical skills leading to the highest wages. All the industry certifications that appear on Indiana's Promoted List of Industry Certifications, for example, will be categorized as either a foundational, advanced, or premium credential. Efforts to identify Credentials of Value will allow the State to better incentivize the attainment of credentials that offer the greatest return on investment.

Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship: Indiana's strategies specific to work-based learning and apprenticeship will further support improved access to postsecondary credentials. For example, the work DWD's Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship (OWBLA) has completed to align CTE, IDOE, and Ivy Tech Community College training programs to U.S. Department of Labor skill standards creates universal alignment and training plans across multiple industries.

Led by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Workforce Excellence, *Work and Learn Indiana* helps Indiana employers and community partners develop and retain Hoosier talent through relevant work and learn experiences that drive a highly skilled and equitable workforce. The program is a free work-based learning matching marketplace connecting Indiana employers, anyone seeking a work-based learning experience, high schools, colleges, and universities. Work-based learning experiences through this program include internships (12-16 weeks), externships (a day to a week), volunteering/service learning (no specified timeline), cooperative education (multi-semester), and apprenticeship (at least one year). Some work-based learning experiences may be eligible for academic credit; however, requirements vary by school and department.

Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant (ETG): DWD's implementation of the ETG program continues to prove critical in catalyzing relationships that drive recognized post-secondary credential attainment. In 2023, over 400 employers utilized the ETG, and 3,736 employees received job-relevant training in demand occupations. Nearly 50% of employers participating in ETG were small businesses

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[1] Source: https://media.doe.in.gov/news/5.10.23-sboe_indiana-graduation-landscape-analysis-v1.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

Public Comment Period Draft

with 50 or fewer employees, and apprenticeships are proven to help these businesses grow. Employers are increasingly utilizing ETG to upskill existing employees by creating new apprenticeship opportunities in Indiana. Benefits to Hoosier businesses are abundant, a few include growing their own talent through work-based learning, improving profitability by lowering recruiting costs in creating a pipeline of skilled employees, and retention gains of 93% in employees completing training.

Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant (WRG). DWD's implementation of the WRG program has continued to support individuals who are seeking training and skills necessary to succeed in the 21st Century economy. During Program Year 2022, WRG had 740 enrollments with an 89% completion rate and an 83% credential rate. Midway through PY2023, the program has 342 enrollments, with a 91% completion rate and 68% credential rate to date.

G. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State. GWC and DWD work closely with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce to ensure the alignment of efforts and strategies spanning workforce and economic development. DWD's Workforce Solutions and Engagement Team often partners with IEDC, for example, on attraction and retention projects across the State. As federal funding is brought to Indiana, we will work to align economic development strategies with apprenticeship opportunities, which will support career pathway development in high growth sectors.

At the local level, economic development partners are members of and/or engaged in the work with the LWDBs. As discussed in III.a.2.D, to prepare for the future state of the workforce, workforce development partners such as GWC, DWD, and LWDBs will work toward creating more opportunities for discussions and joint presentations with IEDC and the Chamber. This will promote action around increasing the number of good jobs, diversifying the economy, and continuing to grow the State's global competitiveness. As a result, State and local partners will have more targeted and coordinated talent and business development strategies.

B. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in Section II Strategic Elements. This includes:

1. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies

(e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.)

DWD utilizes and/or makes available to its WorkOne constituents a variety of tools and systems to aid in service delivery to help them find or transition back into suitable employment. Some of these tools and systems include:

1. **JOBS Program**: This is a program that utilizes the ACT WorkKeys job profiling and assessment system to help employers identify the workplace skills needed for their profiled jobs. Using the WorkKeys assessments, employers ensure an applicant's skill level is an appropriate match for success in the job. Approved JOBS Program applications receive WorkKeys job profiling services and assessments at no cost.

2. **WorkKeys**: These assessments measure foundational skills required for success in the workplace. Prior to accepting application for employment, employers that participate in WorkKeys job profiling can require applicants to demonstrate or document a certain level of skill determined by the job profile. In addition, WorkOne constituents can complete select WorkKeys assessments (applied math, graphic literacy, and workplace documents) to document their skills for the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) a credential that verifies a participant's skill at bronze, silver, gold, or platinum levels.

3. **WIN Learning**: This is an online Career Readiness courseware comprised of workplace hard and soft skills. Modules focus on digital literacy, career readiness 2.0, college readiness, and supplemental skills aligned to the WorkKeys assessments. The soft skills curriculum consists of four modules that include communicating effectively, conveying professionalism, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and thinking critically and solving problems. The five digital literacy modules include computer operations, internet browsing, digital communication, digital documents, and digital security. The career readiness 2.0 modules include applied math, graphic literacy, and workplace documents and there are college readiness modules that include: pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, and reading, writing, and English. Additionally, the courseware offers supplemental skills that includes business writing, applied technology, and workplace observation. As part of the suite of WIN products, constituents have access to the Academic Skills courseware which includes work ready math, work ready reading, and work ready data. WIN courseware offers placement tests and is adaptive to align to the WorkKeys skills and provides preparation and remediation for the WorkKeys assessments.

4. **Indiana Career Connect (ICC)**: ICC is Indiana's official workforce services delivery system and database of record. ICC provides online labor exchange and case management tools available to employers, jobseekers, and case managers. Using the online labor exchange tools available in ICC, constituents can register for work, create, and send resumes, complete work-readiness assessments, access training provider resources and regional labor market information. Additionally, case managers use the system to document eligibility, activities, and notes related to participants. Activities include the required joint development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), recorded assessments, scanned documents, reports, and

copies of individual credential attainments. As the database of record, ICC contains reporting functionality for WIOA, TAA and various local programs as well as functionality that assists case managers with making referrals, connecting constituents to training and education, managing job placement and retention as well as reporting for performance management.

5. **Career Interest & Aptitude Assessments/Indiana Career Explorer**: This is an online career planning system with aptitude assessments for Indiana students (grade 6 and above), postsecondary students, and any adult resident of Indiana. By accessing *Indiana Career Explorer*, Hoosiers can complete a research-based career assessment that helps match interests with their occupational goals. Additionally, the site links resources for education planning to help individuals visualize which industry or career path, field of study, or school to pursue next in life.

6. **Hoosiers by the Numbers**: This is Indiana's primary website for Labor Market Information (LMI), which provides multiple types of data outputs, including dashboards, profiles, radius tools, and Tableau visualizations. The website allows Indiana to disseminate critical labor market information to meet Federal and State objectives. Local areas can use this dashboard to define local priorities and areas for growth. The core of *Hoosiers by the Numbers* is strong navigation geared to people looking for their county or region or a specific piece of data on a workforce related topic. The site is powered by more than 7 billion records in the joint databases of the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) and DWD and is meant to serve as a leading informational site for business developers, researchers, and the public alike.

7. **INDemand Jobs.** *INDemand Jobs* focuses on high-demand, high-wage jobs for today and tomorrow. The demand indicator (or "flames") used is based on a methodology that ranks all Indiana jobs based on future growth and wages. Individuals can access this online tool through DWD's website to determine which industries and occupations are most in-demand in their metropolitan area or county. This tool is a useful resource for individuals at any point in their career path, whether searching for their first job, changing jobs, re-entering the workforce, or planning a career change. *INDemand Jobs* determines which occupations are to be included by looking at specific categories including total openings, growth openings, percentage change, real time labor market information, and wages for both short-term and long-term outlook. An occupation within an industry cluster will be assigned between 1 and 5 flames, depending on how in-demand that occupation is in the selected geographic region in the State. The skills engine uses national skills data from employers, coupled with Indiana-based employer validation in creating data, in order to show the skills needed to be successful in an *INDemand* occupation.

8. **Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE):** TABE is primarily a web-based assessment of basic and secondary education knowledge foundational for the workplace. Constituents and case managers utilize TABE to identify potential basic skills deficits and challenges prior to enrolling individuals in an occupational training program or postsecondary education.

9. **Credential Engine**: DWD has partnered with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education in its support and utilization of *Credential Engine*, an international registry of available credentials that provides Hoosiers more transparency in the spectrum of credentials available in Indiana. This tool will be comprised all credentials from Indiana's postsecondary institutions, as well as those found on the ETPL, allowing Hoosiers to better analyze their options for potential credentials in the Indiana marketplace and select the training option that best meets their needs.

Public Comment Period Draft

10. **Workforce Recommendation Engine:** DWD launched the *Workforce Recommendation Engine* (WRE) in 2023. The WRE is an AI-based software in Uplink, Indiana's Unemployment Insurance system, that provides a list of suggested jobs that best align with the user's work history and skill set. This new tool is not a job board but serves as an additional method for filling talent needs while increasing awareness of the types of jobs employers are seeking to fill. As Hoosiers continue to use the WRE, the data collected will be shared with employers in hopes of adjusting occupations, requirements, or benefits to make listings more attractive to jobseekers. DWD continues to evaluate the WRE to determine broader applications outside the Uplink system (e.g., with WorkOne clients).

11. **Learning Management System**: In partnership with U.S. Department of Labor, DWD and Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) developed a training program to cross-train staff within the WorkOne centers (Indiana's term for American Job Centers) and VRS field offices to better coordinate and deliver services to joint customers. Two training courses were developed regarding Workforce Collaboration and Integration: (1) Co-enrollment and Joint Case Management and (2) Indiana's Workforce System and WIOA Program Partners. The training was launched to DWD and VRS field office personnel in PY22.

12. **Next Level Jobs.** *Next Level Jobs* (NLJ) is an online portal for both jobseekers and employers promoting the NLJ initiative's Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant programs, as well as connecting to other tools such as *Indiana Career Connect*, *Indiana Career Explorer*, and *INTraining*.

13. **INTraining.** I*NTraining* presents a broad and diverse selection of occupational training programs that support the employment goals of Indiana's workforce. *INTraining* is comprised of two lists: I*NTraining* list and the ETPL. The *INTraining* list contains all training provider applicants whose training programs meet the basic application standards set by DWD. The ETP list contains a subset of the *INTraining* providers whose training programs meet additional demands and performance criteria set by DWD per WIOA. These training programs are eligible for WIOA funding through the local WorkOne office.

DWD also maintains and continues to expand the Workforce Information Database (WID) with State and local data that cover at least the most recent ten-year period, as well as any federally applicable changes mandated. The WID serves as a primary source for Indiana's Labor Market Information website (www.hoosierdata.in.gov) and is supplemented by the STATS Indiana databases, which have been built and maintained by DWD's university partner, Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC), for more than 30 years. Today, both the WID and STATS databases power *Hoosiers by the Numbers* and STATS Indiana through our partnership with the IBRC. The data covers counties, metropolitan statistical areas, economic growth regions, and a balance of State areas, in addition to statewide estimates and aggregates and small area data for census tracts, zip codes, and radii. The STATS databases also include data for other states, which powers our tools for those needing bordering county/State data.

In the PY2023, the website platforms supported by DWD Research and Analysis tallied nearly half a million unique users. Nearly 1.5 million web pages were viewed during that 12-month period. The primary website for LMI is *Hoosiers by the Numbers* website, which provides multiple types of data outputs, including dashboards, profiles, radius tools, Tableau visualizations, and more.

In addition, the DWD Performance Reporting and Data Integrity unit builds upon data made available through Research and Analysis Data Warehouse (RADW, formerly Indiana Workforce Intelligence

System or IWIS) and our case management system to deliver enhanced, customized performance metrics and to provide research request responses related to Title I and Title III, as well as additional State and Federally funded workforce programs. Examples of this work using UI wage record data for Federal performance metrics can be found here: https://www.in.gov/dwd/performance/. Additional programmatic evaluations are performed upon request. Regional Analysts work in conjunction with locals to provide and analyze labor market information. The level of collaboration between State and local staff does vary by region. Business Intelligence State staff funnels information through the local business services reps as opposed to working directly with employers. One area of opportunity Indiana will explore through this Unified Plan is to develop a more coordinated approach with other agencies and our local workforce development boards to serving and sharing information with employers to avoid employer fatigue.

RADW (formerly IWIS) was developed as the State's longitudinal data system in 2007 as a joint project of DWD, Indiana Business Research Center of Indiana University (IBRC), Indiana Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Except for Career and Technical Education data, the database currently does not have other IDOE data, but the system has continued to serve both as DWD's data warehouse as a means of connecting higher education and workforce records for ROI reporting and to deepen understanding of the education-to-workforce continuum. In 2014 the decision was made to request proposals to conduct an analysis of the current system and its capabilities to design a production-level system to augment or replace it as the State's student (P-20W) longitudinal database. IWIS was renamed the Indiana Network of Knowledge (INK) by legislative action and a broader governance committee (including the Commissioners of DWD, CHE, and IDOE) headed by the Governor was established. As of July 1, 2017, INK underwent yet another change and was renamed the Education and Workforce Data (EWD) warehouse now housed under the Management and Performance Hub (MPH) reporting to the governor's office. However, to sustain continuity of available data, DWD continues to maintain its workforce warehouse (RADW) of existing data series and seeks to expand and enhance it with data series useful for labor market and training research, in collaboration with, and potentially outside the scope of MPH. The RADW currently houses over 725 million records.

Many data requests continue to be fulfilled through the, using data from BLS programs, unemployment claims, Indiana Career Connect, and the case management systems, as well as reports combining wage data and higher education data. The data stored in RADW has been used in different studies ranging from post-graduation employment and wage outcomes, effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic and health status of the population, etc. Several outreach programs have been developed in conjunction with the governor's office and MPH as well as the Region 12 service provider. These programs reach out to the unemployed who have filed for unemployment benefits to offer further services upon qualification. Additionally, DWD has provided data to various higher education institutions and for a data hack with Purdue University.

In the past, DWD has provided data to inform improving of veteran services, apprenticeship programs at a community college, and KPIs for the governor's office. Staff are in constant communication with MPH, which displays the final KPIs created by DWD and is available for data alterations and verification as required. Additionally, the RADW staff has continued to develop skills in data visualization tools such as Tableau and open-source coding languages (Python and R). Dashboards are in progress to provide further information to stakeholders as available. The RADW continues to

operate in a secure environment called the "protected zone", a semi-virtual machine environment with SQL Server installed.

A data hub has been created by MPH for users to access public facing data sets and is currently published on MPH's website. Datasets are also available through a request process at MPH. Data from DWD are also available in dashboard format on DWD's website and include Occupational Employment Estimates (OES), Occupational Projections, Funded Eligible Training Programs, and data for the Indiana Composite Education Score, which provides the most common education attainment level needed for an occupation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, O*NET, American Community Survey, Current Population Survey data, and job postings by county. Data sets for this hub have been contributed by other agencies and partners, such as IBRC, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, CHE, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and several other agencies.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies

(e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.

Several State policies have been issued or updated to ensure successful implementation of WIOA, and others will be developed to support the strategies identified in this Plan. A sampling of such policies is listed below. Current DWD policies and guidance referenced below can be accessed via DWD's active policy webpage at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/.

- **Co-enrollment**: Based upon an individual's eligibility criteria and services for which they qualify, WorkOne offices offer Hoosiers a package of potential programs and services. Frontline staff work with the individual's aspirations to determine which programs meet the individual's needs, which may include more than one or two programs. Co-enrollment can range from being a reportable individual in a specific program up to and including full activation as a participant in the program. DWD has developed policy regarding Indiana's co-enrollment and common exit strategies. While co-enrollment is not mandated for most programs, it is highly encouraged. See DWD Policy 2021-08.
- **Partner Shared Costs**: DWD issued guidance and technical assistance in the development of partnership and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and infrastructure funding agreements (IFAs) between local workforce development areas (LWDAs) and partners of the one-stop delivery system. This guidance promotes a locally driven, locally negotiated process for partnering and sharing costs within each LWDA. MOUs must be completed at least every three years and budgets for IFAs must be completed on or before July 1st of each program year unless an extension is granted for additional time to reach agreement. See DWD Policy 2018-04, Change 1.
- **WIOA Adult Priority of Service**: DWD's WIOA Adult Priority of Service guidance emphasizes that, if a participant is a public assistance recipient, a low-income individual, or a basic skills deficient individual, then the participant must be categorized under the applicable priority population in addition to any locally established priority groups. This guidance also provides information on U.S. Department of Labor priority of service benchmarks and includes a form through which local areas may submit requests to create locally established priority groups. LWDAs must have written policies that delineate how they will give priority of service and must adhere to these policies. DWD will review data and local policies to ensure priority is

being carried out appropriately and will provide technical assistance as needed. See Policy 2019-04, Change 2.

- **Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning Experiences:** Expanding access to apprenticeships and work-based learning experiences is a key focus for Indiana. DWD developed guidance to assist with the implementation of any federal apprenticeship grants the State may receive. DWD Policy 2022-09, Change 1, provides local workforce development boards and other stakeholders with an overview of grant requirements and basic grantee responsibilities for U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship grants. The policy is designed to provide high-level, general information that applies to all U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship grants (key definitions, eligibility, co-enrollment, grant performance management, etc.). This policy was issued with technical assistance discussing how apprenticeship data is recorded in Indiana's case management system (DWD TA 2022-10, Change 1). Additionally, DWD often develops technical assistance specific to each grant that Indiana may receive. For example, DWD issued technical assistance regarding the Apprenticeship Building America Grant (DWD TA 2022-17).

- **Training Programs:** Related to Indiana's goal to prepare future skilled workers and connect them with employers, DWD policy outlines the criteria to qualify for Indiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as well as *INTraining*. See DWD Policy 2020-16, Change 1, and DWD TA 2020-17, Change 1. Training programs on Indiana's Eligible Training Provider List may be funded through Individual Training Accounts, which are described in DWD Policy 2017-09, Change 1. This policy creates a uniform process for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs), identifies the parameters for development of a local area ITA policy, and standardizes the delivery of ITAs in order to allow local areas to consistently provide training opportunities to participants leading to employment for an in-demand occupation. On-the-job training also offers opportunities for Hoosiers to upskill for in-demand jobs. DWD Policy 2022-02, Change 1, provides guidance on the implementation and operation of regional on-the-job training programs funded by the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

- **Growing Good Jobs:** Indiana understands the need to connect Hoosiers to high-wage jobs that lead to upward economic mobility. DWD has considered the provisions in TEGL 07-22 and anticipates further discussion and strategy development to emphasize the importance of job quality and how Indiana's workforce system can integrate good job strategies into its employer partnerships and workforce training. Many DWD programs already reflect the importance of connecting individuals with good jobs. For example, the *Employer Training Grant* requires funded training to result in a minimum 3% wage gain for any participant in the program, and all training must focus on job skills tied to an in-demand occupation. By enhancing strategy and developing tools and guidance on good jobs, Indiana can provide a framework for our workforce system to prepare skilled workers and connect them with employers seeking talent.

- **Customer Experience:** To improve the quality of training and career coaching, it is vital for our workforce system to be responsive to customer feedback. DWD Policy 2023-04 outlines guidance regarding the use of the automated check-in system, VOSGreeter®, in WorkOne offices. Statewide implementation of this tool allows Indiana to collect data on what motivates Hoosiers to visit a WorkOne. DWD also anticipates developing guidance to ensure uniform administration of the Customer Satisfaction Survey to support 34 CFR 463.800(a)(2). Both VOSGreeter® and the Customer Satisfaction Survey collect important data that can help Indiana provide high-quality, transparent service that meets Hoosiers' needs.

- **Equal Opportunity:** In accordance with 29 CFR Part 38 and Indiana's strategic initiatives to ensure high-quality service for protected populations, DWD Policy 2016-09 provides initial guidance regarding the observance and enforcement of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, specifically WIOA Section 188 and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR 38. In addition to DWD Policy 2016-09, DWD has issued DWD TA 2021-07, which describes the complaint procedures for Equal Opportunity and nondiscrimination violations. Equal Opportunity provisions are also embedded in other program guidance such as DWD Policy 2020-09, Change 1, which covers the one-stop certification process and requires that center certifications include reviews of programmatic and physical accessibility. DWD anticipates the development of language accessibility guidance to further enhance tools and resources available for partners and programs.
- **Supportive Services:** Ensuring access to supportive services is a crucial step in mitigating the barriers that prevent Hoosiers from participating in training programs or finding employment. From assistance with child and dependent care to assistance with transportation, supportive services give participants the tools to overcome obstacles and achieve upward mobility. In alignment with 20 CFR 680.900, DWD Policy 2021-02 includes guidance and context regarding supportive services for WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Workers including individuals participating through Dislocated Worker Grants.
- **Migrant and Season Farmworkers (MSFWs):** In support of Indiana's strategy to ensure service to protected populations, DWD Policy 2022-19, Change 1, provides guidance to Indiana's workforce system regarding the mandated requirements for the Monitor Advocate System and the provision of services to MSFWs. DWD has also issued a desk guide to assist WorkOne offices as they serve MSFWs, which is available through 2022-19, Change 1, Attachment B.
- **Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses:** To ensure Veterans and Eligible spouses receive service in alignment with federal regulations, Title 38 U.S.C., VPL 07-09, and TEGL 10-09, DWD Policy 2015-08 addresses Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses under WIOA. With respect to any qualified job training program, a covered person (Veterans and Eligible Spouses) shall be given priority over a non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under that program, notwithstanding any other provisions of the law. This policy supports Indiana's strategy to mitigate barriers for protected populations and provide high-quality service.

3. State Program and State Board Overview

A. State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet agency (GWC) reports to the Governor's Office. The GWC helps inform policy and advises the Governor on workforce initiatives. It serves as a cross-agency convener and works collaboratively with key agency partners towards a statewide vision to connect education, workforce, social services, corrections, and economic development initiatives. The GWC also sets policy for workforce activities managed regionally by the local workforce development boards (LWDBs). The GWC agency and its cabinet members have a mission to address current and future education and employment needs of both individuals and employers, strengthen Indiana's economy by integrating and aligning State and Federal resources, ensure a talent-driven education and workforce system, and complete other duties as directed by the Governor or legislature. The GWC

works with all agencies in the workforce ecosystem to drive policy recommendations through regular cabinet meetings or through the Unified Plan.

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is the state agency responsible for administering and overseeing all WIOA programs under Titles I, II, and III. DWD oversees operations managed regionally by the LWDBs. The Family and Social Services Administration, through its Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of WIOA programs under Title IV.

The GWC operates as the state advisory body for the programs contained in this Unified State Plan (see IC 4-3-27). On behalf of the Governor and in collaboration with the GWC, DWD operates as the designated administrative entity for WIOA Titles I, II, and III, the Unemployment Insurance system, and other federal and state programs. As such, DWD is named the sole agency to plan, coordinate, implement, monitor, and make recommendations regarding initiatives designed to prepare Indiana's workforce for effective participation in the competitive and global economy (see IC 22-4.1).

Indiana has a total of twelve (12) designated local workforce developments areas with a LWDB in each. LWDBs are responsible for the oversight of funds and activities, delivering career assessments, job search, and education and training related services through WorkOne offices (Indiana's term for American Job Centers) established by the local board. Indiana has identified regions 5 and 12 as a planning region in the state.

Indiana, along with Kentucky, created the first Bi-State Planning Region by resolution of the Cabinet and Kentucky Workforce and Innovation Board. Indiana's Region 10 Workforce Board created the Bi-State Plan with Kentuckiana Works to advance the regional workforce. This Plan is the first of its kind to merge interstate regions into one designated workforce hub. This significant collaboration exists between local areas Indiana Region 10 and Kentuckiana Works in order to develop the regional plan around the Louisville metropolitan area, which includes urban and rural sprawl in southern Indiana. The Bi-State Regional Plan creates an innovative picture of the region's economy and workforce environment through joint Indiana-Kentucky strategies to attain regional goals and objections.

Workforce, education opportunities, and other needed individual services and resources are delivered on a local level through a WorkOne established by the LWDBs and managed by Executive Directors and One-Stop Operators. The WorkOne operations are engaged and reviewed by both the GWC and the coordinating LWDB. Local boards and Wagner-Peyser staff assist DWD with the administration of the workforce system. Other crucial partners in the workforce system include employers, our public and private institutions for higher education, school districts, CTE districts, community action centers, and local organizations providing adult education and other services. Indiana is driving a focused effort on technical assistance, training, and coordination for services leading to a comprehensive system that is better equipped to serve Hoosiers effectively.

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet Executive team can be found at: https://www.in.gov/gwc/2332.htm.

- Executive Director, Whitney Ertel
- Chief Business Intelligence Officer, Fran Valentine

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development Executive Team can be found at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/about-dwd/leadership. DWD's Executive Team consists of:

- Commissioner, Richard Paulk
- Chief of Staff, Josh Richardson
- General Counsel, Beth Green
- Chief Information Officer, Chris Henderson
- Chief Financial Officer, Mike Smith
- Chief Unemployment Insurance Officer, Noah Shelton
- Chief Workforce Officer, Katie Rounds

DWD's Organizational Chart showing additional leadership staff structure is below:
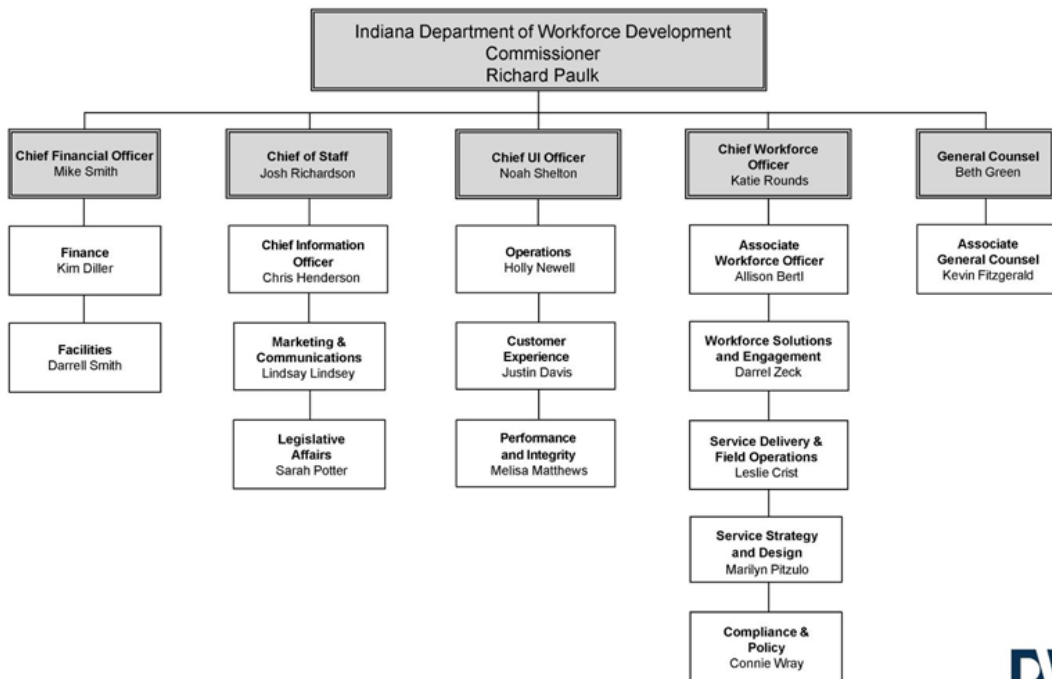
The Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), through its Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of WIOA programs under Title IV. An organizational chart of FSSA leadership can be viewed at: http://www.in.gov/fssa/4829.htm.

B. State Board. Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

During the 2018 Legislative Session, the Indiana General Assembly created the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC or Cabinet) and designated it with the responsibilities of the state workforce board in addition to assigning the authority to direct the state agencies required to strategically address current and future workforce and education needs. The Cabinet brings together key partners, determines strategy and drives change for individuals and employers. The Cabinet is comprised of 34

Public Comment Period Draft

total members with 29 voting members representing different geographic areas of the state, and includes business and community leaders, K-12 and Career and Technical Education representatives, appointees from postsecondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers and experts from state agencies. This unique structure allows for a comprehensive view of the workforce from early childhood, K-12, post-secondary, and adult education to the world of work. During PY22, seven board members were appointed to address term limits or vacancies. Per DOL's request, two individuals were appointed to represent Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. With additional Cabinet appointments, industry/employer representatives continue to remain a majority.

The 2023 GWC roster is provided below and those with an asterisk (*) by their name indicates non-voting members.

GWC: Member Positions	Name
Chair	Ryan Kitchell
Career Connections & Talent (Nonvoting)	Vacant
Department of Workforce Development	Commissioner Richard Paulk
Commerce (Nonvoting)	Secretary David Rosenburg
Commission for Higher Education	Commissioner Chris Lowery
Secretary of Education	Secretary Katie Jenner
Ivy Tech Community College	President Sue Ellspermann
Vincennes University	President Chuck Johnson
Research University (Governor's)	Todd Richardson (Indiana University)
Other College/University Unit (Governor's)	President Robert Coons (Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology)
Apprenticeship (Governor's)	Mark Kara (Local 150 Operating Engineers)
CTE School Program (Governor's)	Dr. Steve Rogers (Walker Career Center)
IMA or Industry (Governor's)	Dan Peterson (Cook Group)
Minority Business (Governor's)	Amish Shah (Kem Krest)
Women's Business (Governor')	Jaqueline Barton (Specialized Staffing)
Veteran Business (Governor's)	Tony Vespa (Vespa Group)
Builders or Contractors	Steve Schreckengast
In conjunction with Indiana Chamber	Paul Perkins (Amatrol)
National Federation of Independent Business	Loren King (Trinitas Ventures)
Community Organization (Governor's)	Fred Payne (United Way)
At-Large Business Owners (3 by Governor) (one <50 employees; one representing technology)	Rebecca Schroeder (Whiteshire Harmoc)
	Dave Shane (Lacy Diversified Industries)
	Megan Glover (120WaterAudit; technology)
School Principal (Governor's)	Jody French (Perry Central Jr/Sr High School)
Local School Corporation Superintendent (Governor's)	Paul Ketcham (Batesville Community School Corp.)
Department of Corrections (Nonvoting)	Commissioner Christina Reagle (designating Sherm Johnson/DOC Workforce Dir.)
FSSA (Nonvoting)	Secretary Dan Rusyniak, MD (designating Courtney Penn/FSSA Early Childhood)
House of Representatives (Nonvoting)	Representative Bob Behning
Senate (Nonvoting)	Senator Jeff Raatz
Additional At-Large Appointees (by Governor)	Joyce Irwin (Community Health Network Foundation)
	Becca McCuaig (Accelerate Indiana Municipalities)
	Chris LaMothe (Ascendanci Ventures)
	David Adams (Adams Advisors)
Adult Education (DWD)	Marilyn Pitzulo
Vocational Rehabilitation (FSSA)	Theresa Koleszar

Public Comment Period Draft

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs. Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. State assessments should consider local and regional planning goals.

DWD utilizes a variety of processes and reporting tools for regular monitoring of program performance to drive quality improvement and effectiveness. Some of the methods utilized are outlined below:

Federal Performance Metrics. DWD currently follows the six primary indicators of performance described under section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. For the PY22/PY23 local performance negotiation cycle, DWD issued Local Performance Negotiations Guidance (Memorandum 2021-25, available at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/). DWD utilized the average of PY21 actuals and PY21 negotiated goals as the basis for conducting local area negotiations. DWD is currently developing a local Statistical Adjustment Model (LSAM) and intends to utilize this model for future negotiation and adjustment cycles. Additionally, DWD also developed and maintains a Federal Performance Measures dashboard that enables staff and workforce partners to efficiently analyze years' worth of Local Area Reports in one location. This information is available on the DWD Performance Portal at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/performance/federal/.

In addition to negotiations, DWD also conducts a year end assessment following each program year where an adjustment is made based on the negotiated rates of performance and what actually took place over the program year. Each local area is provided with a local area performance assessment and is required to meet a 50% threshold for each individual WIOA measure and a 90% threshold for each overall program measure. In the event a local area fails to meet these required thresholds once the adjustment has been applied, DWD will take steps to provide formalized technical assistance that could include or require the development of a performance improvement plan or reorganization of the local board.

Programmatic and Fiscal Compliance Monitoring. DWD conducts regular monitoring of each local workforce development area (LWDA) to examine compliance with statutory, regulatory, and policy-driven requirements, as well as identify areas in need of administrative, financial management, programmatic, and/or systemic improvement. WIOA Title I programs are monitored on an annual basis and formal reports are issued identifying compliance findings, areas of concern, and best practices.

Additional information regarding the DWD monitoring process is available at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/monitoring/. In 2021, DWD developed an *Oversight and Monitoring Strategic Plan* (OMSP) to assist in streamlining and modernizing workforce program and grant oversight activities. The OMSP communicates a consistent vision and approach for oversight and monitoring across all workforce program areas, while remaining agile as structure and priorities evolve. The OMSP highlights four priority areas:

- Priority 1: Adequate monitoring and oversight of workforce programs
- Priority 2: Culture of continuous improvement through oversight and monitoring

- Priority 3: Manage performance and grantee support
- Priority 4: Strengthen fiscal efficiency across all workforce programs

To carry out the strategies and focus areas of the OMSP, DWD established a standing Quality Workgroup consisting of staff responsible for program monitoring in various workforce areas. The Quality Workgroup is tasked with ensuring continuous improvement through sharing of best practices and identification of technical assistance and training needs. For example, following compliance monitoring conducted in PY2021 and PY2022, DWD developed the *Year-In-Review* (YIR) with aggregated WIOA compliance review outcomes, including noteworthy practices, from across the twelve LWDAs. The purpose of the YIR was to help regions identify their performance relative to their peers, and to provide focus areas for training staff and to support their own monitoring activities. Aggregated monitoring information has helped inform new and updated DWD policies/technical assistance as well as impact DOL-DWD technical assistance roundtable topics. DWD anticipates continued expansion and utilization of the YIR in future years.

DWD continues to work toward a more unified, consistent approach to monitoring across all of its workforce programs. Many workforce programs now participate in concurrent reviews during the Title I review process. DWD works with the LWDAs to develop a comprehensive schedule of review activities for the week with each program conducting their own interviews with LWDA staff. The full team of DWD monitors participates in entrance and exit conferences with LWDA leadership and programs use a consistent framework for sharing results of their monitoring activities.

Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs. Many partner programs are reviewed at the local level through DWD's routine annual compliance reviews in each of the twelve LWDAs (see above), or through program-specific grant oversight, assessment, and monitoring conducted by individual programs. Over the past few program years, DWD's Compliance Team has incorporated concurrent monitoring of several Federal and State programs into its annual review process. As an example, during PY2023-2024, several programs are included in the LWDA review process, such as Title I, Equal Opportunity, RESEA, Apprenticeship grants, Performance Support Grants, QUEST DWG, MSFW, *Employer Training Grants*, and *Workforce Ready Grants*. DWD utilizes available performance data along with detailed monitoring activities to comprehensively assess these programs. Each LWDA monitoring review includes analysis of local-level strategy and progress against the State and Local Plans. Comprehensive reports and corrective action plans, as applicable, are issued for each LWDA.

Partner programs such as Unemployment Insurance, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Trade Act Programs, and Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) are housed within DWD and conduct independent oversight, assessments, and monitoring.

DWD conducts ongoing assessments through a program dashboard tool designed to monitor the volume of ongoing activities in our various workforce programs. This dashboard provides a look at both quarter-by-quarter data, as well as a historical year-over-year perspective. The historical perspective is critical and provides long term insight into patterns and trends in activities, and the quarter over quarter perspective supports our efforts to impact activities throughout the year. A sample of this dashboard is included in 4.B.

Indiana's Legislative Services Agency (LSA) also conducts an annual review, analysis, and evaluation of Indiana's workforce-related programs to provide the general assembly with the information it needs to make informed policy choices about the efficacy workforce related programs. Specifically, IC

2-5-42.4-3 requires the LSA to conduct a systematic and comprehensive review, analysis, and evaluation of workforce related programs that includes information about each program that is necessary to determine if the goals of the program are being achieved. The annual review is to be conducted over a five-year cycle during which each program will be reviewed at least once on a schedule determined by the Office of Fiscal and Management Analysis, Legislative Services Agency (LSA). Additional evaluation requirements for the evaluation are outlined in IC 2-5-42.4-3(b). The 2023 Workforce Program Review includes information about JVSG, *Next Level Jobs WRG and ETG*, and other workforce programs outside of DWD.

Adult Education Assessment Strategies: To monitor and evaluate the quality of adult education activities, program management, fiscal management, data management, and performance measures are continuously assessed. Informal and formal monitoring, desk audits, data checks, and program visits are conducted by state central office staff, adult education coordinators, and the InTERS data team. Low performing programs are identified, in part, based on the accountability results described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Visits are made to low performing programs by a state team. Local programs develop professional development plans, target measurable skill gains to increase academic gains, and develop strategies to reduce student separations. Technical assistance and professional development are provided to further increase student success. Likewise, a comprehensive risk assessment is performed on all successful grantees from the Multi-Year Adult Education Competitive Grant Application (Request for Application) and the Multi-Year Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education Competitive Grant Application (Request for Application).

Based on these results, a number of adult education programs are selected for formal monitoring each year by a state monitoring team. Virtual and on-site monitoring visits are made to view records and classes, and to interview personnel. Formal reports are forwarded to local providers after site visits, and programs out of compliance are placed on corrective action plans. Programs are not released from corrective action plans until compliance is achieved and satisfactory progress is reached. Technical assistance is provided, and professional development is customized for programs identified as low performing.

States negotiate yearly performance targets with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education with respect to the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an adult education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward a credential or employment. Indiana requires providers of adult education to meet similar state negotiated WIOA metrics. Additionally, the state reviews the percentage of adults who are post-tested; the percentage of adults who exit the program without measurable skill gains; the percentage of adults who achieve measurable skill gains in distance education; and the percentage of adults who attain a high school diploma or equivalency.

At a minimum, State staff reviews program performance monthly and communicates to area providers efforts toward meeting local, regional, and State performance targets. The goal is continuous improvement. Performance is also monitored daily by the InTERS data team. Each provider and region see how they perform compared to the State and to the same time a year ago. To provide further transparency, the State broadcasts a monthly webinar that extensively covers these metrics and related performance standards. A coordinated series of professional development and technical assistance opportunities are offered to support these efforts. Funded programs employ professional development facilitators (lead teachers) who support and promote these targets. Lead

teachers are required to monitor goals and provide quarterly reports to the professional development state team who analyze Indiana's strategies to meet these objectives.

In grant renewal years, funding is determined by past performance. A yearly performance scheduled is released at the start of each program year. The schedule outlines state priorities and performance accountability standards for future grant awards. Recent performance metrics included enrollment; measurable skill gains; high school diploma or equivalency; and certifications as core areas. Additionally, a companion schedule included Integrated Education and Training performance as a metric with focus on enrollments, completions, and certifications.

B. Previous Assessment Results. For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e., the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

As discussed in 4(A), DWD utilizes a variety of assessment methods. Results of some of those assessments are discussed below:

Performance Assessments*. Following the close of each program year, a performance assessment is completed to compare the estimated performance outcomes to the actual performance results for core programs. For the previous two years, the model that has been used to conduct this assessment is an average of the negotiated performance measure with the actual performance of the performance measure.

As we continue to refine our performance assessment processes, the implementation of the LSAM for the PY24/25 performance cycle will provide for a more real-time understanding of how performance estimates compare to actuals, using variables such as economic conditions and participant characteristics. In partnership with our local university partner, the Indiana Business Research Center, a model has been developed using a combination of economic and participant data sets that will help shape more realistic targets for local areas and understand where the impacts in performance may come from.

Monitoring Year-in-Review (YIR). The results of the PY21-22 and PY22-23 YIRs indicated several trending outcomes, both in opportunities for improvement and in noteworthy practices across the state. The YIRs provide a snapshot of aggregated data collectively for all twelve LWDAs for various review areas, such as participant file integrity, case management practices, financial accounting, local WIOA governance, and equal opportunity. DWD agency and program leadership utilize the results of the YIR to assess areas in need of targeted technical assistance, policy development, or internal program improvement. LWDAs are expected to utilize the YIR to assess the same in local area practices, along with learning from other LWDAs and sharing best practices.

Federal Performance Assessment. The Federal Performance Measures are made available on the DWD Performance Portal at https://www.in.gov/dwd/performance/. The results of these performance measures drive conversations and collaboration among state and local partners to identify areas for improvement, to prioritize technical assistance, and to inform funding (e.g., funding to target specific metrics or state priority areas). The State met all its negotiated performance measures for PY22 and saw overall improved performance from the previous two years. While there

were local regions that did not meet the negotiated metrics, DWD will work with local boards to identify areas for improvement.

As the State moves forward with its Unified WIOA Plan, it will continue to look for opportunities to address performance across partner programs. Below is a depiction of how our local areas can see their performance as compared to others and as compared to our statewide performance.
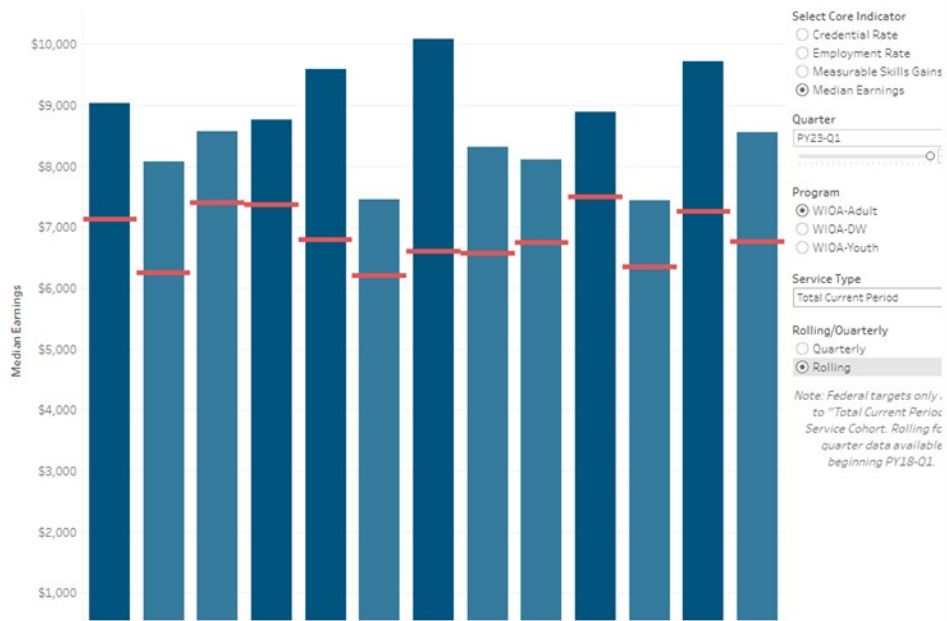
In addition to evaluating these core programs, the state assesses performance across various programs. This is done by looking at a four-year snapshot that assesses participants served and services provided. The quarterly dashboard discussed in 4.A. identifies trends in participants and service delivery both by region and statewide. A snapshot of this dashboard can be seen below, depicting an assessment of several programs and areas. The efforts here will provide details on how services can be tailored to areas where improvement may be needed.

Public Comment Period Draft

STATE EVALUATION PROJECTS

LSA Reviews: As discussed in 4.A., Indiana's LSA conducts an annual review of workforce programs on a rotating five-year cycle. Although the 2023 report focused on non-core programs, the LSA reviews cover each WIOA core program at least once every five years. For example, Wagner Peyser and WIOA Youth were reviewed in 2021; Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Vocational Rehabilitation were reviewed in 2020; and Adult Education reviewed in 2019. These reviews offer insight into each workforce program that can be utilized by all stakeholders to ensure success of each program and can be accessed at: https://iga.in.gov/publications/2023/agency-reports.

DWD EVALUATION PROJECTS

Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort: In 2023, Indiana was selected to participate in the 2023-2024 U.S. Department of Labor Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). Through this initiative, Indiana learned from peer states, experienced evaluators, and state and national subject matter experts. Indiana's participation focused on capacity and foundation building for conducting formal evaluations of workforce programs. Indiana's EvalPLC project team was designed to include a specific group of cross-divisional DWD and LWDA representatives with broad ranging WIOA experience touching all WIOA core programs. Individually, these representatives hold subject matter expertise in state and local strategy, policy, program operations, service delivery, data science, performance and quality, and partner collaboration. Experience with this project will allow DWD to build and solidify a framework for continued collaboration in these areas, better positioning DWD to design, initiate, and complete formal evaluation projects.

Title I Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Data Analysis: Indiana's State Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer participates in DWD's WIOA Title I annual compliance reviews. The State EO Officer conducts annual compliance monitoring of each LWDA's progress in implementing and administering WIOA's Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination provisions, part of which includes an analysis of data and subsequent investigation, as necessary, of significant differences in populations receiving services. DWD conducts analysis of the standard deviation of U.S. Census workforce data compared to the population of WIOA enrolled participants the LWDA served in the prior program year.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify if the LWDA is serving protected groups in its population to the level expected given the demographics of the communities it serves. The expectation is that the LWDA will investigate if the analysis identifies a large difference between numbers of people accessing WIOA Individualized Career Services (ICS) or Training Services (TS) in the LWDA's WorkOne offices, and numbers in the community.

The formula used to conduct this EO data analysis identifies the standard deviation (SD) which is a measurement for how likely an outcome is due to random chance. The State EO Officer would expect the breakdown of individuals the LWDA serves to be representative of the breakdown of individuals in their communities. For the formula, a zero indicates the expected outcome. We can assume that

Public Comment Period Draft

small changes (or a small SD) are due to random chance and that large changes are due to outside factors, such as potential discrimination. For this analysis, if the SD is greater than +2.0, we can assume that there is something influencing this difference because there is a less than 5% probability that this difference is due to random chance.

The State EO Officer's data analysis process includes review, discussion, and comparison with each LWDA as to the results of both state analysis and any analysis conducted locally. The following information and table below show an example of DWD's analysis for PY22 on a single local area. This LWDA's local results showed a high standard deviation, or the older population (55+) potentially being underserved in WIOA services. Similarly, the State EO Officer's analysis also showed the same category as having a high standard deviation or potentially being underserved.

The left side of the chart provides the standard deviation between the region's PY2022 WIOA participants with the region's overall labor force as indicated by census estimates of employed and unemployed individuals. The right side of the chart compares the region's PY2022 WIOA participants with census estimates of numbers of unemployed individuals in the region. For this analysis, if the SD is greater than +2.0, we can assume that there is something influencing this difference because there is a less than 5% probability that the difference is due to random chance. For more information on how this analysis was conducted and what standard deviation is, refer to the appendix.

EO Data Analysis (LWDA Sample)				
PY22 Labor Force Data		Category	PY22 Unemployment Data	
Deviation	Probability of Potential Discrimination		Deviation	Probability of Potential Discrimination
-15.81	No	Race: Black/African American	-11.08	No
-0.32	No	Race: Asian	-1.78	No
-0.14	No	Race: Other	0.45	No
1.63	No	Ethnicity	-0.47	No
2.45	Yes	Age	4.46	Yes
-9.10	No	Disability	-2.61	No
-2.23	No	Gender	-3.84	No
-0.74	No	LEP*	-0.74	No

*Census data provided by the 2021 American Community Survey 5 Year estimates; Census data does not break down this population into labor force and unemployment and so this is the entire population 18+

Key takeaways from the above chart:

1. Black/African Americans participated in WIOA at a higher rate than expected when compared to both labor force and unemployment census data.
2. Older populations (55+) participated in WIOA at a lesser rate than expected when compared to both labor force and unemployment census data.
3. Individuals with disabilities participated in WIOA at a higher rate than expected when compared to both labor force and unemployment census data.

Federal Measures Dashboard. As discussed throughout this section, DWD also maintains a Federal Quarterly Performance Measures dashboard that enables staff and workforce partners to quickly

Public Comment Period Draft

analyze years' worth of Local Area Reports in one location. This can also be viewed on the DWD Performance Portal at https://www.in.gov/dwd/performance/. This dashboard provides support to DWD's assessment and evaluation efforts.

5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I Programs: provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for:

i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State follows section 128(b)(2)(A)(i) and TEGL 15-22 to formula allocate funding for youth activities. DWD communicates formula allocations on an annual basis. The most recent allocations memo (DWD Memo 2022-15), along with prior allocations memos, can be found at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/. The data used in computing allotments includes:

- The number of unemployed for Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) averages for 12-month period immediately preceding new program year as provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- The number of excess unemployed individuals or the ASU excess (depending on which is higher), averages for the same 12-month period as used for the ASU unemployed data; and
- The number of economically disadvantaged youth (age 16-21, excluding college students in the workforce and military) from special tabulation data available from the American Community Survey (ACS).

The State applies the 90% hold harmless provision contained in WIOA, Section 128(b)(2)(A)(ii).

ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State follows section 133(b)(2)(A)(i) and TEGL 15-22 to formula allocate funding for adult activities. DWD communicates formula allocations on an annual basis. The most recent allocations memo (DWD Memo 2022-15), along with prior allocations memos, can be found at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/. The data used in computing allotments includes:

- The number of unemployed for Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU's) averages for the 12-month period immediately preceding new program year, as provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- The number of excess unemployed individuals or the ASU excess (depending on which is higher), averages for the same 12-month period as used for the ASU unemployed data; and
- The number of economically disadvantaged adults (age 22-72, excluding college students in the workforce and military) from special tabulations of data available from the American Community Survey (ACS).

The State applies the 90% hold harmless provision contained in WIOA, section 133(b)(2)(A)(ii).

iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

Public Comment Period Draft

The State follows section 133(b)(2)(A)(i) and TEGL 15-22 to formula allocate funding for Dislocated Worker activities. DWD communicates formula allocations on an annual basis. The most recent allocations memo (DWD Memo 2022-15), along with prior allocations memos, can be found at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/. The following data is used in computing these allotments:

- Insured Unemployment Data for the preceding Calendar Year (30% weight);
- Unemployed Concentration Data for the preceding Program Year (30% weight);
- Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data for the preceding Calendar Year (15% weight);
- Declining Industries Data for the preceding Calendar Year (10% weight);
- Farmer/Rancher Economic Hardship Data for the preceding Calendar Year (2% weight);
- Long-term Unemployment Data for the preceding Calendar Year (13% weight).

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet will examine how this weighting impacts local distribution and if adjustments are needed. The State applies the 90% hold harmless provision contained in WIOA, section 132(b)(2)B)(iii).

B. For Title II Programs:
   i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) solicits applications and proposals from entities eligible to receive WIOA Title II funds. Applicants can apply for funding in several areas that include adult education and literacy activities – WIOA Title II (per 29 USC §3272); adult high school credit program/competency-based high school diploma program/adult secondary credit (ASC); corrections education and education for institutionalized individuals; integrated education and training activities (IETs); workforce education initiative (WEI); professional development facilitator network; and/or Indiana online only distance education.

Eligible Title II Adult Education and Literacy activities described within the grant solicitation are programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.

Two of the adult education programs are described below in more detail.

1. **Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE)** is defined as education services provided to English Language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enable adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States.

English language acquisition is a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Additionally, integrated English literacy and civics education services include instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

Public Comment Period Draft

Section 243 covers eligible providers receiving funds through the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program, which must provide services that include: (a) instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation; and (b) designed to: 1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and 2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. The IET curriculum requires a single set of learning objectives for education and literacy, workforce prep, and training.

Training services must include at least one of the following: 1) occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment; 2) on-the-job training; 3) incumbent worker training; 4) programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs; 5) training programs operated by the private sector; 6) skill upgrading and retraining; 7) entrepreneurial training; 8) transitional jobs; 9) job readiness training provided in combination with the services above; 10) adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with the services above; and 11) customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Industry-recognized training credentials include but are not limited to: 1) locally approved certificates eligible for inclusion on the Employment Training Provider List; 2) Career development and College Preparation (CDCP) CTE certificates with more than 48 contact hours; 3) certificates that meet the minimum threshold for inclusion under Perkins; and 4) certificates that meet the threshold for Title IV Federal Student Aid.

Students in an IELCE program must have the opportunity to be enrolled in both an adult education and literacy program and a workforce training program. Co-enrollment in the IELCE program may include one or more of the following options: 1) ELLs are co-enrolled in a workforce training program provided through DWD; 2) ELLs are co-enrolled in the adult education provider's workforce training program; 3) ELLs are co-enrolled in a series of workforce training courses within a career pathway offered by multiple providers designed to lead to employment; and 4) ELLs are working directly with an employer through apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, or on-the-job training.

2. The **Workforce Education Initiative (WEI**) is a partnership between Indiana Adult Education and Hoosier employers to help employees retain jobs, improve performance, and advance in their professions. Employers desire a better-skilled workforce in order to optimize safety, increase productivity, and improve quality in the workplace. Meanwhile, employees who possess basic skill deficiencies must have access to quality workforce programs that build their abilities, attain industry-recognized credentials, and qualify for additional training. Funding will be provided to programs that offer remediation services that support these objectives.

An eligible individual is an individual who is 16 years of age or older; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; who is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

To be awarded WIOA Title II funds in Indiana, applicant organizations must be an eligible provider as defined by WIOA (per 29USC §3272). An applicant must be able to demonstrate past effectiveness in

providing adult education and literacy activities before the applicant can be considered an eligible applicant. Data which demonstrate the applicant's effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services include evidence of eligible individuals' academic gains (reading, writing, mathematics, or English language acquisition), employment outcomes, family literacy, attainment of secondary credentials, transitions to postsecondary education, and workforce training.

Application materials include a separate data collection tool to ensure how past effectiveness is determined so that all eligible providers are treated fairly in grant competitions. Applicants that do not have performance data under WIOA section 116 may demonstrate previous effectiveness in servicing basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of success in achieving the outcomes listed above. In the case of applicants applying as a consortium, each member of a consortium must provide performance data to demonstrate effectiveness. Application materials clearly identify how many years of demonstrated effectiveness data an applicant must submit in the application.

Indiana conducts its review of applicant eligibility to determine if an application is from an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness by utilizing a "yes" or "no" determination. The State screens each application to determine if it is from an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness and only applications that are determined to be from eligible providers of demonstrated effectiveness are forwarded for review, scoring, and consideration for funding. Similarly, all sub-recipient members must be determined to be an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness in order for the consortium application to be forwarded for review, scoring, and consideration for funding.

Applicants that are determined to be ineligible for funding because they were not determined to be eligible providers of demonstrated effectiveness are notified.

In the State's multi-year adult education competitive grant application (request for application), all applicant organizations should complete all questions listed under each consideration (I-XIII, XIV) regardless of the type(s) of funding the applicant is seeking. All applicant organizations should address Consideration XIV [General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)]. Considerations I-XIII represent the thirteen statutory considerations DWD must consider when awarding WIOA Title II funds, while Consideration XIV is used to meet the statutory GEPA plan required for all AEFLA funded sub-recipients. The State may also require additional State considerations to be completed. Failure to provide answers for the narrative portion of the application is grounds for non-consideration.

To fund eligible providers, a rubric is utilized to score the narrative section for the thirteen considerations. Review teams utilize a 0–5-point Likert Scale to score the quality of each response. Reviewers provide notes or commentary to justify the score, provide brief details of what the applicant omitted or missed, and brief descriptions of anything "positive" about the application.

> 5 – Excellent; Applicant's response clearly demonstrates an understanding of the question, the consideration, and the challenges and expectations of an adult education provider.

> 4 – Good; Applicant's answer does a good job of generally providing support for its claims and demonstrates what would be expected out of a good adult education provider.

> 3 – Adequate; Applicant's response demonstrates some understanding, though this understanding may have to be inferred, of the question, consideration, and the challenges and expectations of an adult education provider.

2 – Poor; Answer is not well supported and does not demonstrate what would be expected out of an adult education provider.

1 – Bad; Answer lacks any context or support, and in no way demonstrates what would be expected out of an adult education provider.

0 – Incomplete; Applicant made no attempt to answer the question.

DWD utilizes overall scores, quality of grant submissions, and responses to the thirteen considerations and any State considerations to fund eligible providers. Additionally, the State reviews funding requests and proposed service delivery areas to ensure that every county in the State is covered.

DWD awards multi-year adult education grants on a competitive basis, beginning with program year 2024 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025), and ending PY2029 (July 1, 2029, through June 30, 2030). After the initial year of this multi-year adult education grant award (PY2024), DWD requires sub-recipients apply for the renewal of funding through a non-competitive grant continuation for the following program years: PY2025; PY2026; PY2027; PY2028; PY2029.

In making initial award determinations to applicants, DWD will evaluate: 1) accomplishments and progress toward goals; 2) capacity and efficiency in service delivery; 3) gaps and barriers that limit participation; and 4) employment and labor market demands.

Renewals will be made on a program-by-program basis and will be contingent on the sub-recipient's ability to 1) successfully implement the terms of the grant; 2) meet both State and federal performance expectations; and 3) provide demonstrated value to the community the sub-recipient serves. Funding for future grant continuations will be based on program performance. DWD reserves the right to hold a new competitive grant competition.

DWD allows funding to be passed through a sub-recipient to subcontracted service provider(s). No more than 5% of the total amount awarded to grantees shall be used for administrative and non-instructional purposes. For DWD to maintain the federally required Maintenance of Effort (MOE), Indiana requires that WIOA-funded Adult Education providers contribute a local match.

Other Requirements: Increased collaboration between Indiana Adult Education grant recipients and the local workforce development boards (LWDBs) is encouraged. The grant requires that LWDBs be given an opportunity to review all applications submitted to DWD that propose to offer services within the LWDB's workforce development area.

Any recipient of funds awarded must provide reasonable accommodations to all qualified individuals (both employees and students) with disabilities unless that accommodation would represent an undue burden in the exercising of the responsibilities of the sub-recipient to deliver adult education and literacy activities. Accepting an award is an acknowledgement that the grant recipient is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Applicants are also required to acknowledge compliance with the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

> **ii.** Describe 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.

DWD ensures equitable access to apply for grants or contracts to all eligible providers in Indiana. The processes used for announcing the availability of federal funds under Section 231, 225, and 243, and is designed in such a way that no distinction is made in the type of eligible provider.

Announcements about the grant process are posted to DWD's website and email notifications are sent to current providers and a mailing list of interested contacts, including entities requesting further information. Announcements are made about the competitive grant Request for Applications (RFA) on monthly statewide webinars and posted on DWD's website for further review. Town hall meetings take place regionally to inform potential applicants of the grant process and timelines. The PowerPoint from town hall meetings is posted along with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). FAQs ensure that all parties have equitable access to view questions and responses. FAQs are further highlighted in a statewide webinar and posted to DWD's website.

Within the grant application, eligible agencies must submit metrics regarding their ability to effectively serve the Title II target population. For current Title II providers, this must be WIOA metrics. For eligible providers not currently WIOA Title II providers, metrics must be submitted that align as closely as possible to WIOA performance outcomes. Levels for demonstrated effectiveness are set by Title II staff and are set as a percentage of current performance expectations. The application process used to award funds for comprehensive adult education providers is the same for all eligible applicants.

Non-adult education staff are included in the scoring process as grants are reviewed. Where possible, other adult education staff from other states may serve as evaluators as well. LWDBs review eligible providers' application materials to determine whether the applications are consistent with local plans. Upon completing this review, the LWDB submits a recommendation to DWD to promote alignment with the local plan. Prior to awarding contracts, DWD may require applicants to revise the sub-recipient proposals, including changes that better align services provided by the sub-recipient with LWDBs.

C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

N/A

6. Program Data

A. Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date. Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

The Education & Workforce Development (EWD) database, housed within Indiana's Management Performance Hub (MPH) creates enhanced opportunities to combine workforce and education data (K-12 and higher education) to examine employment outcomes, retention of graduates, differential outcomes based on degree type and area of study and a wide range of other research to better understand the linkages between education and the workforce. This longitudinal dataset, supported by the NCES State Longitudinal Data Systems Grant, is combined to answer key questions about the education and workforce pipeline. It allows stakeholders such as education professionals, employers, policymakers, students, community leaders, and the public to use data and information previously not available. Partner agencies include the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE), the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). EWD does not replace agency data collection and administration responsibilities; rather, it serves as a clearinghouse where specific data elements are linked across the four agencies. With the solid foundation of Indiana's EWD system resting on the collaboration of multiple State agencies, the mandate for cross-agency data management and analysis that is part of MPH's charter, MPH's human capital and expertise, and a system that has been refined over the last few years, Indiana is in a good position to take its P-20 data system to the next level.

An example of this work involves a collaborative project where the GWC, the Indiana Charter School Board (ICSB), and DWD are working to develop a secondary shared data template to have longitudinal reporting on adult secondary providers. This will involve MPH EWD reporting for Workforce Diploma and Adult High Schools.

In 2023, the Indiana Department of Education launched the Graduates Prepared to Succeed Dashboard[2]. The dashboard includes metrics from Pre-K to high school graduation and beyond. Education and workforce data housed within the dashboard use data powered by the EWD to provide increased transparency with the goal of empowering Indiana's educators, families, communities, and employers. The Indiana GPS dashboard seeks to: provide educators with a variety of essential data points to support continuous improvement of student learning across the K-12 continuum, support families and community stakeholders by providing meaningful, relevant, and transparent information about school progress and performance, and elevate the highest-performing schools as models of excellence and identify other schools for additional support.

As evidenced by its use from policy makers and researchers, the MPH EWD has achieved a critical mass of linked data that can be usefully mined for insights regarding trends and outcomes to support assessment and evaluation of core programs. The secondary shared data template will provide leadership the ability to apply performance measures that align across agencies and programs, providing the State the ability to track outcomes not currently reported like completion of employability skills curriculum or levels of credential attainment.

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

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[2] https://indianagps.doe.in.gov/

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE CABINET

It is Indiana's goal to continue to evaluate service delivery systems, seeking opportunities to streamline intake and track participation where possible to improve the overall experience and efficiency with which Hoosiers receive workforce services. While there are benefits to a unified system for intake and tracking of participation, at current state there are complex systems already in place across core partners to process, track and report participate level data. As opposed to a fully unified system for intake and tracking of participation, we are rather exploring a series of systems that are built with integrations designed to share the appropriate data, at the appropriate time, to enhance referrals, opportunities for co-enrollment and ultimately program outcomes.

As evidence of this forward progress, Indiana is pursuing a system integration between our Title I & III Case Management System and our Title II Adult Basic Education System. This integration is being designed to send participant level data from our Title II Adult Basic Education System to our Title I & III Case Management System. This will help us to identify where co-enrollment is already present as well as where there may be opportunities for co-enrollment where there are not. In addition to co-enrollment, this integration also aligns the data sources for quicker access and analysis.

Indiana has already taken significant steps toward system alignment in our services to employers. Core partners across Title I, II, III, and IV have a single source of access to a system that tracks engagement with employers. This approach ensures that a unified approach to serving employers across programs can be taken. Additionally, it supports a historical view on activities with employers and their engagement with WIOA programs. The single source of access for reporting and tracking engagement allows for greater efficiency in accessing and analyzing data across programs. As we look ahead to the next four years, our goals will be focused on enhancements to policies and procedures across programs that support data entry and service delivery.

In addition to the above examples, Indiana has also done system integrations between our UI systems and our Customer Relationship Management System that are designed to target outreach and track referrals for programs such as VETS and TAA. These integrations foster greater connectivity and allow us to deploy strategies that might traditionally be more manual processes. With these integrations in place, we are also able to track elements like success of referral.

While system integrations have been a priority for Indiana to better align data sources and conduct analysis, we are also focused on a learning management system designed to house training modules that support the transfer of knowledge among the core WIOA programs. All WIOA core programs have access to this platform where content can be shared and accessed.

> **iii.** Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

The GWC will continue to support ongoing work surrounding the comprehensive longitudinal data system within MPH's Education & Workforce Development (EWD) database. Indiana will continue to make improvements on the data elements that are a part of the EWD and more broadly within MPH with the long-term goal for comprehensive reporting with streamlined data governance and accessibility through one State agency rather than through multiple partner agencies and programs. Intake processes and systems are being reviewed to ensure that Hoosiers are being served in the most advantageous way utilizing the strategies in the plan to ensure alignment of activity and resources while meeting information privacy standards where applicable.

Public Comment Period Draft

iv. Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

The State's current infrastructure is positioned to meet WIOA reporting requirements. Through collaboration with the vendor of Indiana's case management system, necessary data files are configured on a quarterly basis for federal reporting and submitted to DOL's Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS). Prior to submission, files are analyzed for data consistency and vetted using internal queries and tracking reports. All reports are approved by DWD for certification and reviewed by DWD staff.

Indiana core partners continue to work toward improving the process via modified data sharing mechanisms and reporting protocols. There are multiple State agencies in Indiana that have administrative responsibility for the WIOA core programs. These include both the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). While each of these entities maintains separate participant and financial information systems, the agencies continue to work collaboratively to integrate data across Indiana's workforce development system.

Indiana's CMS is based on federal requirements to collect the data for reporting for Title I and III programs. Each week, the PIRL files are produced. On a quarterly basis, DWD reviews the data in the files and checks for data issues. A list of issues or missing data is sent to the respective regions to be corrected in the CMS. The State publishes final reports online to provide multiple years of historical performance data. DWD submits the Employer Indicators for both IDOE and DWD to WIPS. IDOE provides the required information to DWD which is combined with DWD's data and then submitted through WIPS.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how 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. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs: All program participants receive follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months after exit, as follow-up services may continue to be provided beyond that time at the State or local Board's discretion. Follow-up allows staff to continue the relationship with the participant by offering additional services and collecting valuable information related to the participant's progress after exiting the program, including employment status, educational progress, need for additional services, and problems and challenges occurring, and assistance needed to address them. The details from these follow up engagements are captured in the case management system and can be extracted and analyzed to better understand post program success of participants.

Youth Program Follow Up: All youth program participants receive follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months after exit, as follow-up services may continue to be provided beyond that time at the State or LWDB's discretion. Follow-up allows staff to continue the relationship with the youth by offering additional services and collecting valuable information related to the participant's progress after exiting the program, including employment status, educational progress, need for additional services, and problems and challenges occurring, and assistance needed to address them.

Adult Education: The State's adult education coordinators host regional consortium meetings to discuss goals toward meeting performance accountability standards and 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.

Consortium meetings bring together partners, including LWDBs, WorkOnes, training providers, and adult educators, to establish goals, review progress, and follow-up on items as needed. The State is required to report employment in the second and fourth quarter after exit for all providers, as well as postsecondary credential and/or degree attainment. In addition to local program reports, the State data match employment from wage records from DWD and postsecondary attainment from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to determine and evaluate success.

The State requires that adult education applicants employ one or more academic and career coaches who hold at least a bachelor's degree. Adults often enter programs with multiple barriers and student persistence can be erratic. Academic and career coaches help students overcome their barriers by offering a greater chance that their experience in adult education and beyond is successful. While career pathways should offer multiple on and off ramps, students have greater opportunities within this framework to improve skills in reading, mathematics, and language; attain a high school or equivalency diploma; earn an occupational certificate for employment; and prepare for college and further training.

In adult education, Integrated Education and Training provides opportunities for short-term training and certifications in in-demand industries for employment. Indiana reviews and approves each application separately to ensure it meets these priorities. Integrated Education and Training is defined as a service approach which provides adult education and literacy activities simultaneously and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupational cluster. Additionally, Indiana will require adult education providers applying for funds to address whether and to what extent a program plans to provide access to pre-apprenticeship programs and how the program plans to connect students exiting adult education with access to apprenticeship programs.

Meanwhile, the Workforce Education Initiative targets employers with workers who possess basic skill deficiencies and desire to maintain their jobs or improve performance. Indiana and local adult education programs will continue to frame a coordinated workforce basic skills system that is worker-centered, customized, and provided at the workplace or off-site. This project continues to support employers in hiring and retaining workers who will be able to meet demands for productivity, safety, and advancement, as well as serve as an additional assessment of participants' post-program success.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Indiana's Research and Analysis Data Warehouse and longitudinal data systems currently integrate and match UI wage records for employment outcomes and performance accountability reporting. This same system (RADW) has been used for additional labor market information analysis supporting the Bureau of Labor Statistics programs and to inform the labor market information website, tools, and ad hoc research questions. The DWD Performance Reporting and Data Integrity unit also uses UI Wage Record Data for Federal Performance Metrics and other programmatic evaluations and analyses upon request.

Only individuals within the allowed categories are allowed to see individual confidential UI data and only aggregate UI data is shared with anyone not allowed by UI Confidentiality laws to access. This is accomplished in part by use of SWIS Agreement in allowing access and the sharing of UI data.

Public Comment Period Draft

D. Privacy Safeguards. Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Indiana recognizes that a key element to utilizing data across agencies for either improved customer service or improved measurement and tracking of outcomes is ensuring the integrity of all data. This is accomplished with various technical safeguards and ensuring personnel handling this data are properly trained in all relevant regulations and the fundamentals of handling personal and confidential data. Technical safeguards include:

- Approved processes that limit access to the data to only those personnel who require access to carry out their daily job functions;
- Network security, monitoring, firewalls, etc. to prevent unauthorized access to data from entities outside of State government;
- Encryption technology; and
- Secure data transport mechanisms.

All State personnel undergo annual training on the proper handling of confidential data. This training is updated to reflect the most current statutes and interpretations of confidentiality statutes and regulations. Those specifically involved in reporting are trained regarding the various de-identification and aggregation rules that apply. All individuals with access to protected information must also follow agency guidance on appropriate sharing and storage of data.

7. Priority of Service for Veterans

A. Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor.

Indiana's WorkOne offices are required to ensure that Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses is observed. DWD's policies and guidance support federal requirements, including but not limited to those outlined in federal regulations, Title 38 U.S.C., VPL 07-09, and TEGL 10-09. DWD's current policies can be found at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/. DWD Policies 2019-03, 2019-04 Change 2, and 2015-08 provide additional definitions of the populations of eligible veterans to be served by the one-stop delivery system partners.

It is important to note that the definition of a veteran in the Jobs For Veterans Act (JVA), the Priority of Service regulations and TEGL 10-09 differs from the definition of veteran that applies to reporting of Wagner-Peyser services and to eligibility to receive services from a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. The veteran definition that requires the individual to have over 180 days of active service still applies to Wagner-Peyser reporting and to eligibility for DVOP but does not apply to priority of service. It is the responsibility of the program operator to ensure that policies and procedures and staff training reflect the correct eligibility definition.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

Monthly and quarterly monitoring will be conducted by the State Veteran Program Director and Veteran Program Support Specialist (VPSS) managers, through data reported in Indiana Career Connect and files case managed by the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist staff. Monitoring will include data accuracy, record completeness, and specific data entries on elements identifying the Veteran or eligible persons on their eligibility to have received DVOP services. Veterans' priority of service is also discussed in LWDA compliance reviews as part of the routine

Public Comment Period Draft

annual WIOA review process. DWD's Compliance Team monitors how veterans are identified and made aware of their priority of service status. LWDA program staff are interviewed and asked about how service delivery and individuals' service plans may look different than non-veterans.

The Department of Labor Veteran Employment Training Services (DOL VETS) will audit the JVSG program at the State Workforce Agency (SWA) level, to include a sample of WorkOne where DVOP specialists or the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff are assigned.

The State's Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) is responsible for conducting JVSG Staff Roles and Responsibilities Audits on a triennial audit cycle. The audit cycle incorporates Technical Assistance (TA) in the years between audits as a means of preventing and remediating deficiencies. The audit process is detailed in the SWA Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) for the Audit of the DVOP and LVER Duties under the JVSG program, referred to as the JVSG Audit SWA TAG. In accordance with 38 USC §4103A(a) and §4104(b), JVSG-funded staff fulfill roles and responsibilities described in law, regulation, or policy guidance exclusively to benefit eligible veterans. Services to veterans and eligible persons, as defined in current annual appropriation, is an absolute standard according to existing statutes. However, VETS allows up to three percent of services to ineligible persons, for system anomalies and honest errors, to be considered in compliance. VETS has determined that rates of noncompliance greater than 3 percent and less than 10 percent are an Area of Concern and require the SWA to examine the issue(s) to determine the factors contributing to the rate. A rate above 10 percent will result in a Finding and requires action by the State to identify why the issue exists and what steps are necessary to correct it. If the rate over 10 percent is due to services to eligible persons not captured in the ETA-9173 Program Performance Report (e.g., eligible transitioning service members [TSMs], spouses, and caregivers per VPL 03-19), then TA may be appropriate to improve data reporting. Otherwise, the Finding may result in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

DVOP specialists will provide services only to eligible veterans and eligible persons who meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) as defined in VPL 03-14, as amended. If a review of the participant files indicates that more than 10 percent of the individuals served by the DVOP specialist do not have an SBE or belong to a special population, as defined in VPL 03-19 or most current guidance, it will result in a Finding and a CAP, unless resolved prior to the issuance of the Final Audit Report.

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

The intake staff member serving as a "greeter" at a WorkOne is usually the first person who interacts with a covered person (veteran or eligible spouse) entering the office. Their primary role is to determine the reason for an individual's visit to the WorkOne office and provide the initial determination of whether an individual meets the definition of a covered person as prescribed by law. The intake staff member will conduct an assessment using State Form 56716 Veteran Self-Attestation to determine whether a veteran has significant barriers to employment (SBEs). Veterans with SBEs are referred to a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. If the veteran doesn't have any SBEs, they may be referred to an employment services interviewer (ESI) to assist them with receiving basic career services that are available at a WorkOne office.

The employment services interviewer (ESI) is a role that is designated specifically for jobseekers. The ESI provides services that may include resume writing, computer skills, and interviewing techniques. If they need more specialized training, they will work with another service provider within an AJC. An ESI may also work with veterans who have been identified as having an SBE.

As described under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the WIOA staff focuses on serving individuals identified as facing adversity with obtaining employment. The exact job title of these staff members may vary depending on the region they work in. Should a veteran need their services, they would assist individuals with services that prepare them with the skills needed on the job, such as providing skills gap training for individuals needing certification or licensure. Local colleges or businesses may reach out with potential training ideas and if they are approved, WIOA staff will match veterans to any approved training that best fits their needs/wants.

The DVOP specialist works directly with veterans and eligible persons who SBEs, as identified in 38 USC 4103A(a)(1). The services provided by a DVOP specialist are referred to as individualized career services but were once called intensive services. These services include, but are not limited to comprehensive assessment interviews, objective assessment summary, career guidance services, individual employment plans (IEPs), staff-assisted job search activities, labor market information (LMI), and basic staff-assisted career services.

Other responsibilities of DVOP specialists include case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. It is important that a DVOP specialist establish a strong rapport and relationship with the veterans they serve, to provide them with the best services possible to help them reach their employment goals.

The United States Code (USC) that is relevant to U.S. Department of Labor/VETS' authority under the JVSG Program is Title 38, Chapters 41 and 42. Chapter 41, Section 4103A discusses the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program. Chapter 42, Sections 4211-4215 provides detailed descriptions for many of the terms relevant to DOL/VETS under the JVSG Program. The relevant appropriation law is Public Law 115-31, volume 131, page 513 which provides JVSG the authority to serve eligible Transitioning Service Members and their spouses or caregivers.

For the purposes of DVOP, the definition of eligible veteran follows that outlined in United States Code Title 38, Chapter 4211, paragraph (4), subparagraph (A) (B): an individual who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and who received a discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable and who was discharged or released from active duty (or a reserve component while on active duty status during wartime) because of a service-connected disability. For POS, a veteran is a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service (including reserve and National Guard components) and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in United States Code Title 38.

A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(1) and (3); Special disabled and disabled veterans are those:

- Who are entitled to compensation (or those who would be entitled to compensation, yet are not receiving it due to the receipt of military retired pay) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or
- Who were discharged or released from active duty because of service-connected disability;

- A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b)), as amended
- A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months;
- An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration;
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate;
- A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36);
- A veteran between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who possess limited civilian work history;
- A Vietnam-era veteran. Vietnam-era veterans are those:
  - For which any part of their active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam era (the period beginning February 28, 1961, and ending May 7, 1975, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period, and the period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending May 7, 1975, in all other cases)
- Eligible Transitioning Service Members, Spouses and Caregivers.

In annual appropriations bills since the consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Congress authorized JVSG grants to support services described in VPL 07-14 to:

- Transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of individualized career services;
- Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) or Warrior Transition Units (WTUs); and
- The spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members.

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Indiana's WIOA State-level Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer, appointed by the Governor, works within DWD's Compliance and Policy Division with 100%-time commitment to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in workforce programs. One of the primary duties of the State EO Officer is to develop and implement the federally mandated Nondiscrimination Plan (NDP). The NDP is a statewide plan for ensuring equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in the availability, access, and service delivery of WIOA Title I funded programs and services. The NDP must be updated and resubmitted to the U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center (CRC) every two years, with Indiana's latest submission in September 2022. Indiana's NDP provides detail on physical and programmatic accessibility and can be found at: https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/State_of_Indiana_Nondiscrimination_Plan_2020.pdf. The next NDP updates are due to the U.S. Department of Labor CRC in September 2024.

Annually, the State EO Officer conducts subrecipient monitoring and data analysis regarding race, disability status, age, ethnicity, gender, and limited English proficiency. The data analysis compares

Public Comment Period Draft

participants to population data to evaluate potential under-service of a group. This process has promoted discussions between DWD and the LWDAs on how to increase services and outreach to under-served populations, including individuals with disabilities. As a result, new partnerships are targeted for the LWDAs to connect wrap around services. Further, the data analysis process has assisted the LWDAs in evaluating internal processes that may be prohibiting certain groups, such as those with disabilities, from participating in programs provided at the WorkOne Centers.

The State EO Officer ensures Indiana's LWDAs, sub-recipients, and workforce system partners are aware of, and in compliance with, the NDP and all section 188 responsibilities. Similarly, each LWDA has designated a LWDA EO Officer (Local EO Officer) to carry out these duties at the local level. All Local EO Officers also functionally report to the DWD State EO Officer on matters pertaining to Section 188.

Together, the State and Local EO Officers implement the NDP and continually review policies and practices. DWD Policy 2016-09, *Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Guidance Letter* (see https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/activepolicies/2016-09-P_EO_Nondiscrimination_Guidance.pdf) outlines the major provisions of section 188 and 29 CFR 38. The agency has designed several training modules for Local EO Officers and staff, which can be found at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/equal-opportunity/training-resources/. Training modules relevant to physical and programmatic accessibility include, for example, the *EO 101* and *Compliance with Disability Nondiscrimination Requirements* modules. In addition, training and resources are provided through Workforce GPS, an online technical assistance website sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor. Resources and training on disability, employment, accessible technology, and inclusion provide workforce development professionals (i.e., front-line staff) information and training on serving people with disabilities.

In August 2023, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) and DWD, along with several other agencies, participated in the first Indiana Employment First Cross-Council Summitt. DDRS is currently undertaking a significant employment systems transformation effort with the goal of increasing competitive employment outcomes for Hoosiers with disabilities served by the division from 22% in 2022 to 37% in 2027. This represents a 60% increase in competitive integrated employment outcomes over the 5-year period. The goal also supports Indiana's First policy, passed in 2017, which in part mandated State agencies collaborate to support employment as the first and preferred outcome for individuals with disabilities. The goal will require collaboration and coordination between relevant State agencies, community rehabilitation providers, key advocacy groups, the business community, self-advocates, and families.

In late 2022 and continuing throughout 2023, DDRS's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) hired VRS Navigators. These Navigators serve as a liaison between WorkOne centers (i.e., American Job Centers), VRS staff, and shared customers to deliver employment and training services. Through referral processes between the two agencies and connecting customers with partner agency services, customers will have the resources available to assist and build their pathway to entering the labor force. Early in 2024, VRS and DWD will evaluate the VRS and DWD field offices' continuation of training services to determine and share best practices of the DWD regions that have VRS navigator staff.

Also in 2022, DWD acquired a Learning Management System (LMS) to support cross agency training with VRS. DWD and VRS, in partnership with U.S. Department of Labor, developed a training program to cross-train staff within the WorkOne centers and VRS field offices to better coordinate and deliver services to joint customers. There were two training courses developed and successfully rolled out to staff:

- Workforce Collaboration and Integration: Co-enrollment and Joint Case Management.
- Workforce Collaboration and Integration: Indiana's Workforce System and WIOA Program Partners.

Programmatic Accessibility: Cross-training sessions have also occurred between DWD and VR covering topics such as disability etiquette, Order of Selection, and service coordination. Accessibility workstations are in place in WorkOne offices throughout the State. Title II pays for one-on-one interpreters for visual and hard of hearing individuals attending adult education programming. Testing accommodations are available for assessments as well.

The Equal Opportunity tagline is included on all external marketing and communication materials to allow people who are deaf and hard of hearing to make calls to each other, and with the assistance of the relay systems, users can communicate with people who do not have TTY systems. DWD and partner staff are knowledgeable on more advanced systems such as Video Relay Services and Video Remote Interpreting. The following sample tagline is below, and when necessary is translated into other languages:

> *The WorkOne System is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in the programs and services offered. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The TDD/TTY number is 1-800-743-3333.*

> *El Programa de Financiamiento asistido de acuerdo con el Titulo 1 de WIOA es un programa de Igualdad de Oportunidades de Empleo. Ayuda y servicios auxiliares están disponibles a solicitud para personas con discapacidad. El numero de TDD/TTY es 1-800-743-3333.*

Additionally, DWD will continue to enhance the Jobseekers with Disabilities website (https://www.in.gov/dwd/job-seekers/job-seekers-with-disabilities/) to include resources for both jobseekers and employers. DWD intends to issue technical guidance to facilitate the creation of accessible. This guidance explains the importance of meeting the standards set in the American with Disability Act, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and WIOA Section 188. The guidance encourages DWD employees and partners to use alternative text, check the accessibility of their fonts and colors, as well as implement Adobe and Microsoft's built-in accessibility checkers. Adhering to the best practices listed in the technical assistance as well as continuing to research new strategies for creating accessible documents will help ensure that all agency generated documents are accessible to every user, regardless of background. The DWD Communications team regularly updates content to be more accessible on the website and works to ensure that State staff are creating content that is more accessible. The team reviews older content for any accessibility updates. This includes educating and providing training on document accessibility on an as needed basis. for LWDA staff.

Within the WorkOne centers, staff have been, and will be further, trained to follow established procedures to ensure inclusion and compliance. Starting with intake, staff are trained to ask every customer if accommodations are needed. Customer and WorkOne office staff orientations include a

discussion of Equal Opportunity (EO) and the right to file a complaint. Following orientation, services should be reviewed with the customer by determining the client's eligibility and need for services in an integrated setting. Ongoing training will need to occur to educate staff on the services, funding, and the resources available to determine when it is appropriate to refer to partner agencies and co-enroll individuals in multiple programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, to access a greater service array to meet the individual's needs. Agency partners will seek to coordinate efforts and leverage funding between partner agencies to meet the employment and training needs of the customer.

Staff will also be trained to use multiple resources and tools to ensure accessibility to services. One such resource is the *Guidepost for Success*, which is a set of key educational and intervention strategies for youth, including those with disabilities, developed by the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment (CAPE) for Youth. Additionally, one-stop assessments, Individual Education Program (IEPs), and Academic and Career Planning (ACPs) tools will continue to be utilized to identify career paths, barriers to employment, training or service needs, and employability skills. These assessments will also assist with identifying hidden disabilities and the potential need for accommodations.

All Comprehensive and Affiliate WorkOne offices undergo One-Stop Center Certifications every three years, with the next certification cycle due to be completed in the Spring of 2024. Certifications are conducted in accordance with DWD's One-Stop American Job Center Certification policy, which can be found on DWD's policy website at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/. Local EO Officers conduct accessibility compliance reviews of WorkOne operations and offices, including programmatic accessibility. Further, programmatic accessibility is evaluated on an annual basis by the State EO Officer and DWD's Compliance Team during routine WIOA monitoring.

Physical Accessibility: The One-Stop Center Certification process also includes evaluation of physical accessibility. Local EO Officers conduct accessibility compliance surveys of WorkOne offices checking the accessibility of various areas, such as parking, accessible routes, ramps, entrances and doors, signage, and restrooms. Accessibility compliance surveys are also conducted upon new office openings/moves and physical accessibility is a regular component of annual monitoring by the State EO Officer and DWD's Compliance staff.

WorkOne offices have some features to increase accessibility and availability of resources. WorkOnes have accessibility workstations with ergonomics, braille keyboards, and enlarging document capabilities (Ultra Magnifier) for the visually impaired. Workers also have capabilities with Microsoft Accessibility software for speech, hearing, and vision on all DWD computers, including read screens with a text- to-speech or braille displays. UI handbooks are accessible via computer on the DWD website and can be accessed with Microsoft's speech recognition and Magnifier. DWD is currently examining all of the regions' websites to ensure capabilities for Browse Aloud services. Additionally, the State EO Officer conducts quarterly meetings with all Local EO officers providing training, technical support, and best practices.

For further details regarding physical and programmatic accessibility, please refer to the NDP and DWD Policy referenced above.

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners
Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other

To help all clients better understand how to receive benefits and interact with the WorkOne system, DWD and its partners work to provide meaningful access to programs and activities by continually reviewing policy and practices to support limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. DWD Policy 2016-09, *Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Guidance Letter* (see https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/activepolicies/2016-09-P_EO_Nondiscrimination_Guidance.pdf) outlines the major provisions of section 188 and 29 CFR 38. The agency has designed several training modules for Local EO Officers and staff, which can be found at https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/equal-opportunity/training-resources/. Training modules relevant to EL services include, for example, the *Notice and Communication* and *Affirmative Outreach* modules. Indiana's Nondiscrimination Plan (NDP) also covers EL service efforts (see https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/State_of_Indiana_Nondiscrimination_Plan_2022.pdf).

English Language Learners are made aware of free interpreting services upon entry into the WorkOne/AJC. Free interpreting service posters are posted at all entry points of the WorkOne locations in 35 languages for all core WIOA programs. Interpreting services are also made available in information sessions such as Rapid Response, Unemployment Insurance, RESEA, and WIOA Orientations. Job Postings are provided in English and Spanish and can be made available in all other languages.

Annually, the State EO Officer conducts subrecipient monitoring and data analysis regarding race, disability status, age, ethnicity, gender, and limited English proficiency. The data analysis compares participants to population data to evaluate potential under-service of a group. This process has promoted discussions between DWD and the LWDAs on how to increase services and outreach to under-served populations, including LEP individuals. As a result, new partnerships are targeted for the LWDAs to connect wrap around services. Further, the data analysis process has assisted the LWDAs in evaluating internal processes that may be prohibiting certain groups, such as those with limited English proficiency, from participating in programs provided at the WorkOne Centers.

WorkOne customers have access to interpreter services through an Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) contracted language interpretation provider. The contract allows for in-person interpretation of dozens of the primary languages spoken in Indiana. The contract also allows for phone interpretation services for additional languages not provided by in-person interpretation. In addition, Google Translate is now on the DWD website and on the Indiana Career Connect system.

The required "Equal Opportunity is the Law" notice (the EO Notice) is available in both English and Spanish, as Spanish is the most prominent non-English language throughout the State. In addition, copies of the EO Notice in both languages are typically posted in all WorkOne offices. Other languages available are Vietnamese, Burmese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Hakha Chin, Marshallese, Swahili, Arabic, Bosnian, Cambodian, French, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Russian and Braille. The EO tagline, as well as copies of the EO Notice and additional State and federal posters, such as the Unemployment Insurance and Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection, are provided in English and Spanish on DWD's website. Additionally, DWD has the Unemployment Insurance handbook available in Spanish, Burmese, and Arabic. This handbook is a great resource which explains the process for applying for Unemployment Insurance and what to expect when filing.

Additional EL services are provided at the LWDA level. Examples include, but are not limited to, bilingual staff, hand-held translators, English as a Second Language classes (offered through Title II), Google Translate, and specialized software such as Rosetta Stone. To help EL Hoosiers better understand how to receive benefits and interact with the one-stop system, Babel notices are provided along with communication of vital documents. Section 188 requires that a Babel notice be given when a client encounters a vital document, whether hard copy or electronic. A Babel notice is a short notice included in a document or electronic medium in multiple languages informing the reader that the communication contains vital information and explains how to access language services to have the contents of the communication provided in other languages. The Babel notice is now on the ICC system along with Google Translate.

Sample language for the Babel notice is below in English:

> *IMPORTANT! This document or application contains important information about your rights, responsibilities and/or benefits. It is critical that you understand the information in this document and/or application, and we will provide the information in your preferred language at no cost to you. Please contact your local Indiana WorkOne Office near you for assistance in the translation and understanding of the information in this document and/or application.*

Other opportunities for EL services include classes offered through Title II Adult Education providers to help address language goals. One-stop partners are able to refer and co-enroll these constituents in the local Adult Education program for assistance.

DWD anticipates issuing a Language Access Policy and developing an agency-level Language Access Plan that will provide guidance to each Program within DWD and any DWD sub-recipients (partners) to ensure compliance with all relevant federal requirements involving LEP applicants/recipients of Program information, benefits, and services. All programs and partners are required to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to programs and activities within the WorkOne system and its partners.

In 2023, DWD established an Access Workgroup, with membership spanning across the agency in areas such as: Equal Opportunity, Legal, Adult Education, Unemployment Insurance, Marketing and Communications, and Workforce Compliance and Policy. This workgroup will look at ways to enhance and improve agency wide access.

In efforts to continually enhance access to programs and services, DWD created a specialized Access Coordinator position. The position will coordinate all language and disability accessibility service requests for Workforce Services and Unemployment. This position will also provide input, guidance, and recommendations to DWD and its partners on ways to improve access and success for individuals with disabilities, Limited English proficiency, and/or other barriers to access programs and services.

For further details regarding EL services, including Babel notice information, please refer to the NDP referenced above.