



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local
Workforce Plan
Two-Year Modification
January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

Local Workforce Development Area 17

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INTRODUCTION

July 22, 2014, marked the strong bipartisan passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This long-awaited, yet critical legislative reform is the first reform of the public workforce system in over 15 years. The Act took effect on July 1, 2015, charging local workforce development systems to “increase employment, retention and earnings of participants and to increase industry-recognized postsecondary credential attainment to improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers, and enhance productivity and competitiveness of the nation.”

This robust challenge of the WIOA for Polk County is a welcome refresher for the work that has already been done. In a local area where the county is larger than the state of Rhode Island and equal in size to Delaware, there is an ever-increasing need to address the labor market changes and workforce challenges of an increasingly diverse population. Every year, the Polk County workforce system engages thousands of residents who enter the doors of our career centers seeking new employment opportunities, increased wages, enhanced skills, and more promising prospects for a better future.

Just as important as a labor force desirous of better career opportunities, businesses are concurrently seeking qualified workers who can sustain the company’s global competitiveness in an ever-changing economy. The workforce system is the crucial component that strategically fosters the critical connection between businesses and workforce talent to address immediate and future workforce needs. The fostering of strong collaborative partnerships has been at the core of what the local workforce development board does to ensure successful outcomes for both the jobseeker and the employer. CareerSource Polk remains poised to respond to the changing demands of the workforce, brought about by technological advances that lead to declining occupations, talent shortages because of the mass exodus of the largest working population from the workforce, and the increasing needs of new skills sets that address the innovations of a globally competitive business climate.

As the entire workforce system undergoes necessary changes to keep pace with new federal laws and the changing economy, CareerSource Polk will keep a close watch on

the pulse of Polk to ensure that our residents' needs are met through employment, skill development, transportation, affordable workforce housing and education. Decreasing, but still higher unemployment rates among our youth, veterans, long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities and those who are justice involved continue to be a challenge for the region. CareerSource Polk will continue to form partnerships that will ensure service to these underserved populations so that we may enable members of these special populations to gain and retain full and sustainable employment.

We will continue to stay abreast of the legislative changes to maintain the status of Florida's Workforce System and remain competitive and business driven.

Our focus remains the same: to ensure accountability for the work we do and the services we provide, while monitoring progress and performance, operating with integrity, and implementing service delivery strategies that ensure the success of our workforce.

Forging ahead, CareerSource Polk will continue to focus on developing and enhancing the skills and education of our labor force to meet the ever-increasing needs of our primary customer – the employer. Our #1 goal continues to center around expanding our business partnerships and increasing employer market penetration in a concerted effort to ensure that more businesses become aware of and collaboratively engage in the services offered through our local workforce system.

KEY DATES

Task	Deadline
Public Comment: Post Draft Plan on CSP Website and send notice to stakeholders/partners/Board/LEOs	September 19, 2022
Board Approval: CSP Board of Directors Approve Two-Year Plan Update	September 27, 2022
LEO Approval: Board of County Commissioners Approve Plan	October 4, 2022
Plan Submission: Submit Plan to CareerSource Florida	October 6, 2022 Deadline extended to 10/11/2022 due to Hurricane Ian

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Prior to the date on which the local board submits a local plan, the local board shall:

- A. Make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media (WIOA §108(d)(1)).

An electronic copy of the updated plan was posted on CareerSource Polk’s website on September 19, 2022. Notice was also sent to stakeholders, partners, CareerSource Polk’s Board of Directors, and local elected officials.

- B. Provide a 14-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to CareerSource Florida, Inc., beginning on the date on which the proposed plan is made available, prior to its submission to the Governor (WIOA §108(d)(2)).

The plan was made available for public comment on CareerSource Polk’s website beginning September 19, 2022, and will remained on the website until October 10, 2022 the day prior to final submission via the CareerSource Florida website.

- C. Provide a description of the process used by the board to obtain input and comment by representatives of businesses and labor organizations for the development of the plan (WIOA §108(d)(2)).

In addition to the Plan being available on CareerSource Polk’s website beginning, September 19, 2022, an email notification was sent to all of CareerSource Polk business and community partners notifying them of the Plan’s availability for public comment. CareerSource Polk also implemented the following process:

Local elected officials

The Plan was on the agenda for the Polk County Board of County Commissioners meeting on October 4, 2022, for approval.

Workforce Investment Board

The CareerSource Polk Board of Directors was notified on September 19, 2022, that the plan would be available on CareerSource Polk's website from September 19, 2022, through October 3, 2022, and was on the agenda for approval by the Full Board of Directors at a Special Board of Directors meeting on September 27, 2022.

Members of the Public

The public was able to view the Plan online at www.careersourcepolk.com and make submit comments. The public was made aware of the Plan's availability for comment via CareerSource Polk social media platforms and via email distribution to CSP's business and community member database.

- D. Describe efforts to coordinate with other workforce partners to obtain input into the development of the plan.

Partners

Partners were notified via e-mail on September 19, 2022, of the availability and location of the plan for review and comment for a 30-day period. Announcements regarding the plan were posted at the reception desks of the One-Stop career centers, posted on Facebook and LinkedIn and Twitter.

- E. Include, as an attachment with the plan to the Governor, any comments expressing disagreement or offering recommendations for continuous improvement, the LWDB's response to those comments, and a copy of the published notice (WIOA §108(d)(3)).

Comment page attached

A. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The local plan must describe the organizational structure in place in the local area, including:

(1) Chief Elected Official(s)

- (a) Identify the chief local elected official(s) by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address.

Name: Martha Santiago
Title: Commissioner and Chairman
Company: Polk County Board of County Commissioners
Mailing Address: 330 W Church St, Drawer BC01, P.O. Box 9005
Bartow FL, 33891-9005
Email: marthasantiago@polk-county.net
Phone: (863) 534-6422

- (b) Describe how the chief local elected official(s) was involved in the development, review, and approval of the local plan.

CareerSource Polk maintains a partnership with the local elected officials to jointly carry out the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This Plan was approved by CareerSource Polk's Board of Directors and submitted to the local elected officials for review and approval according to the established timeline.

(2) Local Workforce Development Board

- (a) Identify the chairperson of the LWDB by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address. Identify the business that the chairperson represents.

Name: David McCraw, Board Chair
Title: Training Director
Company: Tampa Area Electrical JACT
Mailing Address: 5625 Harney Rd. Tampa, FL 33610
Email: david.mccraw@tampajatc.org
Phone: (813) 621-3002

- (b) If applicable, identify the vice-chairperson of the LWDB by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address. Identify the business or organization the vice- chairperson represents.

Name: Gary Clark, Chair-Elect
Title: Financial Advisor
Company: CPS Investment Advisors
Mailing Address: 205 East Orange Street, Lakeland, FL, 33801
Email: gary@CPSinvest.com
Phone: (863) 688-1725

- (c) Describe how the LWDB members were involved in the development, review, and approval of the local plan.

The Local Workforce Development Board worked cohesively with local workforce stakeholders, local elected officials, local workforce development board members, and partners. Board members were engaged in detailed discussion during the month of February Council meetings. The Local Workforce Development Board followed these steps to develop the plan.

- (d) Describe how the LWDB convened local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan.

Partners, including required partners as identified by WIOA and local stakeholders such as our economic development partners, were given an opportunity to provide input during the development of our local plan. This input has been collected and considered through interactions with local chamber and business partners.

(3) Local Grant Subrecipient (local fiscal agent or administrative entity)

- (a) Provide the name of the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent) if other than the chief local elected official (WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 20 CFR 679.420).

Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc. dba CareerSource Polk.

- (b) Provide the name of the entity selected to staff the LWDB (commonly referred to as the administrative entity) and assist the LWDB in carrying out its responsibilities as a board organized under WIOA (20 CFR 679.430). (May be the same as the fiscal agent).

The administrative entity and fiscal agent are Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc., dba CareerSource Polk.

(4) One-Stop Operator and One-Stop Career Centers

- (a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected through a competitive process to serve as the one-stop operator and the effective date of the current agreement in place between the LWDB and the one-stop operator.

Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc., dba CareerSource Polk serves as the One-Stop Operator. On July 1, 2020, CareerSource Polk was authorized to fulfill the duties of the One-Stop Operator for the workforce system of Polk County, Region 17. The CareerSource Polk Board of Directors executed an agreement with the Polk County Board of County Commissioners outlining the responsibilities each party would assume to ensure accountability while serving in each capacity. This agreement remains in effect until June 30, 2023.

- (b) Describe the steps taken to ensure a competitive process for selecting the one-stop operator(s) (WIOA § 121(d)(2)(A)).

The selection of the One-Stop Operator is procured in accordance with CareerSource Polk's adopted Procurement Policies and Procedures, which incorporates the methods of procurement provided for under 2 CFR 215. The One-Stop Operator facilitates services for workforce program, including; WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, RESEA REA, UI, RES-EUC, PREP.

The policy states:

Competitive Proposals – the determination to seek competitive proposals may be made by the President & CEO or by the Board. The President & CEO or the Board will direct Board staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to detail the goods or services being sought, the amount the Board intends to spend, the proposal content instructions and the proposal review and award criteria. In determining the amount anticipated to spend, the staff person responsible for preparing the RFP will prepare a cost estimate. This cost estimate will take into consideration such things as:

- What other workforce regions are paying for similar services

- What the Polk County Workforce Development Board is paying for similar services
- Historical data as to what has been paid in the past for similar services, adjusted for inflation and local conditions

Each RFP shall make clear to potential offerors that the issuance of the RFP does not commit the Board to award a contract, pay any costs associated with the preparation of a proposal, or to actually procure the requested service. Each RFP shall also reserve the right of the Board to accept and/or reject all proposals received and to negotiate with all qualified sources.

Once the RFP is fully developed, a legal notice detailing the scope of the RFP, how and when to propose, a contact person at the Board, and other pertinent information will be prepared and published, using the Purchase Order process described above. RFP's will also be advertised in Florida Administrative Weekly and posted at the Board's website, www.careersourcepolk.com.

Prior to the release of each RFP, the President & CEO will appoint a team of at least three (3) Board members and/or staff to review the proposals received. Staff and Board members will be selected based on their expertise in the services being sought and/or the procurement process. These staff will be provided with copies of the RFP and any related documents.

The Board also maintains a current listing of all agencies and organizations that may be potential providers of goods or services solicited. Agencies and organizations on that list will be direct mailed a memorandum announcing the availability of the RFP and a general description of goods or services being sought. The announcement will direct them to call the Board or visit the Board's website to access the full RFP.

A proposer's conference will be held in conjunction with each RFP issued. The conduct of that conference is the responsibility of the staff person who developed the RFP. This responsibility includes a requirement for the production and distribution of conference minutes. Conference minutes made available to all attendees and any

other interested parties through the Board's website and copied to the three (3) staff proposal reviewers.

Once an RFP is issued, designated Board staff will be available to answer technical questions only. All potential bidders are required to attend the proposer's conference as the primary venue to have questions addressed.

As proposals are received, they will be date and time stamped on the outside of the envelope/box in which they are received to ensure timely submission. On the specified date at the specified time and location, the Board will open the proposals received. Each proposal's receipt will be recorded on a log that provides the name of the RFP at the top and the name, address and contact person for each proposal opened. Originals will be filed with the Vice President of Operation's office. Copies will be distributed to each member of the review committee.

All proposals meeting the following criteria will be reviewed:

- Submittal on or before the deadline specified
- Submittal in the format specified
- Proposal is responsive to the RFP

Staff reviewers will read and rate each proposal independent of one another, using the objective rating criteria contained in the RFP. Rating criteria may include, but will not necessarily be limited to:

- Past performance of the proposer in the services solicited
- Fiscal accountability of the proposer
- Ability of the proposer to meet performance objectives
- Reasonableness of the proposed costs
- Quality of the services proposed
- Qualifications of staff to deliver the proposed services
- Proposer's demonstrated ability to serve targeted populations, if any

Once reviewers complete their independent scoring of the proposals, they will meet and finalize the proposal rating process. Based on their independent rating of each

proposal, the team will formulate written recommendations to the President & CEO for presentation to the Board. The President & CEO will schedule the recommendations for consideration to the appropriate committee of the Board in a timely manner.

The Board Committee may elect to accept, accept with modifications or reject the staff recommendations. Where a recommendation to fund is made, the Committee Chair will request that the Executive Committee place the recommendation on the agenda of the next Board meeting. The Full Board then either accepts, or accepts with modifications, or rejects the committee recommendation. Board approval constitutes staff authorization to proceed with contract negotiations.

Actual funding of any proposal is contingent upon:

- Successful negotiation with the service provider
- Acceptance by the service provider of the Board's contract terms and conditions
- Reference checks, as required

In addition, prior to the execution of each contract, Board staff must determine that each service provider meets the following requirements:

- Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such
- Has the ability to meet the performance goals, program specifications and conditions and to do so at a reasonable cost
- Has a satisfactory record of past performance
- Has a satisfactory record of business ethics and fiscal accountability
- Has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, as well as the technical skills to perform the contracted work

The Board's Vice President of Operations or other designated staff person will proceed with contract negotiations as directed by the Board. Negotiations will include the establishment of performance standards and the conduct of a full price analysis. Where profit is allowable, it will be negotiated separately from the line-item budget. The amount of profit allowed will be associated with contractor risk and reasonableness considering the work being performed.

The final agreed-upon contract document will be presented to the President & CEO for review and approval. The President & CEO has signatory authority for all contracts. Once fully executed (signed and dated by both parties), the Vice President of Operations will issue an Authorization to Proceed memorandum to the contractor.

Competitive procurements will be fully documented. Procurement files will be established and maintained by the Planning and Contracting Office and will include, at a minimum:

- Solicitation (cost/price estimates, the RFP, legal advertisements and other announcements, bidder's list and proposer's conference minutes);
- Proposals submitted (full submission of each proposal, whether selected for funding or not, along with transmittal attachments, staff summaries of proposals, if any);
- Evaluation of Proposals (completed rating sheets – in ink and signed by each rater – summaries and tabulations of ratings and staff recommendations)
- Board actions (record of committee and/or full board actions, copies of letters sent to each proposer announcing Board actions; and
- Contract negotiations (documentation of the significant history of the negotiations, documentation of the cost/price analysis conducted).

The Board will maintain, for three (3) years, those written records specified above. This extension period will be extended until such time as all audits, claims and litigation, if any, have been fully resolved.

- (c) If the LWDB serves as the one-stop operator, provide the last date the state board granted approval to the LWDB to serve in this capacity and the approved duration.

June 4, 2020: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023

- (d) Describe the roles and responsibilities the LWDB has identified and assigned to the one- stop operator.

One-stop operator:

- Comprehensive and specialized skills assessment and service needs

- Job search, placement assistance, workshops, and referrals
- Provision of labor market information, in-demand industry sectors and occupations, on nontraditional employment
- Referrals and coordination of activities with other programs/services
- Individual Employment Plan to identify goals, achievement objectives and services needed
- Short term pre-vocational services
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Case Management for those seeking training
- Entrepreneurship training

The Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Coordinator is responsible for veterans' service delivery to those veterans with significant barriers and where feasible, will support one-stop delivery system staff in the provision of priority services for veteran customers.

The Board assures that One-Stop career center system operators will coordinate with local Rapid Response staff related to outreach, intake and registration of workers covered by a certification under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act.

- (e) Provide the location (address) and type of each access point, indicating whether it is a comprehensive center³, affiliate site or specialized center, as described in [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements](#).

CareerSource Polk operates career centers located at:

500 Lake Howard Drive, Winter Haven, FL 33880 (Comprehensive Center)

309 Ingraham Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33801 (Comprehensive Center)

- (f) Identify the days and times when each access point is open to customers. Comprehensive career centers must be open to the general public for walk-in

- (g) service a minimum of eight hours per day during regular business days, Monday through Friday.

CareerSource Polk operates two (2) full-service career centers: one located in Lakeland and one in Winter Haven. Each of these centers are in the two largest municipalities in Polk. There are 17 municipalities in Polk County, Florida. that are accessible on the following schedule:

Lakeland Career Center Hours of Operation:

Monday – Thursday: 7:30a - 4:00p (walk-ins) & 4:00p – 5:00p (phone only)

Fridays: 7:30a – 12:30p – by phone or virtual means only (no walk-ins)

Winter Haven Career Center (Comprehensive) Hours of Operation:

Monday – Thursday: 7:30a - 4:00p (walk-ins) & 4:00p – 5:00p (phone only)

Fridays: 7:30am to 3:30pm (walk-ins).

- (h) For each access point, identify how each local area provides customers with access to each required (and any approved optional) one-stop career center partners' programs, services, and activities (physical co-location, electronic methods, and/or referrals).

Access to our required partners through our comprehensive center may be provided in person, virtually or electronically as needed to assist customers in the most efficient and effective manner. CareerSource Polk's required partners include:

Required Program Partners	Organization	Customer Access Methods
Department of Labor (DOL)		
Adult/DW, Youth Formula	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center
State Unemployment Compensation Programs	Department of Economic Opportunity	CSP provides support to these programs, services, and activities in each career center, electronic methods, and referrals
Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center
Job Corps	Odle Management	Co-located in Lakeland career center
Youth Build	Lakeland Housing Authority	Electronic methods and referrals
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	AARP Foundation	Co-located in Winter Haven career center
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) activities	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) programs	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center
Department of Education (DOE)		
Adult Education & Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	Polk County Public Schools	Electronic methods and referrals
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program (Title I of Rehabilitation Act of 1973)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	Co-located, electronic methods and referrals
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program (Title I of Rehabilitation Act of 1973)	Division of Blind Services	Electronic methods and referrals
Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)		
Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	Winter Haven Housing Authority	Electronic methods and referrals
Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	Lake Wales Housing Authority	Electronic methods and referrals
Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)		
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Employment & Training Programs	The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc.	Electronic methods and referrals
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center
Additional Partners		
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	CareerSource Polk	CSP directly provides these programs, services, and activities in each center

It is vital to the community to provide services under the Opportunity Act comprehensive model. The Winter Haven Career Center is the comprehensive Career Center for the region. CareerSource Polk's comprehensive center meets the certification requirements.

Each year as part of the Florida DEO Monitoring a Certification for Program Year Credentialing Checklist is completed and submitted to DEO monitoring staff. The checklist includes the Career Center Credentialing that requires staff to certify:

- The minimum resource room requirements are met.
 - The required Federal and State Law and Guidance posters are posted.
 - The posted operating hours are accurate.
 - That all staff have the met the minimum skills standards and certifications and have completed the required amount of continuing education credits; and
 - The minimum required Career Center activities are provided.
- (i) Describe any additional criteria (or higher levels of service coordination than required in [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One- Stop Career Center Certification Requirements](#)) relating to service coordination achieved by the one-stop delivery system, to respond to education/training needs, labor market, economic, and demographic conditions and trends in the local area (WIOA § 121(g)(3)).

In TEGL 26-15, continuous improvement is expanded to increase additional efforts to deliver different types of services to different types of participants. The Opportunity Act emphasizes serving those individuals with barriers to employment and individuals more at-risk of not connecting to the labor market.

CareerSource Polk places an emphasis on serving those re-entering the workforce (ex-offenders), individuals with disabilities, low-income, long-term unemployed, homeless, veterans and individuals over the age of 50. These characteristics are given weights in determining OJT and CT reimbursement up to 75 percent for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training as well as the other factors listed in CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy #009, On-the-Job Training.

CareerSource Polk conducts outreach to these individuals and provides specialized services. Service coordination occurs with multiple stakeholders in our community. These stakeholders include, and not limited to:

- Economic development practitioners
- Counties' department of corrections
- Department of Children & Families
- Multiple providers of homelessness services
- Faith and community-based organizations

CareerSource Polk, as a Social Security Administration's Employer Network, imparts to strengthen services to individuals with disabilities. CareerSource Polk has embraced continuous improvement through training for staff. Quality is not one person's job; it is an expectation of all members of the team from the President & CEO to the phone operator. Trainings on how to serve those *most-in-need* will continue to be provided to front-line staff on an ongoing basis, including motivational interviewing, customer service and trauma informed care. Training has been provided to the Business Services Team on how to have conversations with businesses on hiring individuals with barriers to employment who have the talent and skills businesses need.

CareerSource Polk will comply with all continuous improvement criteria and procedures authored by the Department of Labor, CareerSource Florida, and the State of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity.

(5) Provider of Workforce Services

- (a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected to provide workforce services (except training services) within the local one-stop delivery system.

Workforce services within the local one-stop delivery system are provided by Polk County Workforce Board, Inc., dba CareerSource Polk.

- (b) Identify and describe what workforce services (except training services) are provided by the selected one-stop operator, if any.

CareerSource Polk provides career services through the One-Stop career center

delivery system by fully integrating all programs covered under this local plan into the full range of available workforce development services. CareerSource Polk supports the use of career pathways to provide individuals with barriers workforce activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.

Starting with determination of eligibility for assistance and orientation of all the services available through the one-stop delivery system, the region does a detailed assessment, regardless of entry point into the One-Stop delivery system, which allows the staff to best gauge the level and types of assistance the participants will need. This assessment allows the case managers to customize and personalize a plan of action to remove as many barriers as possible the participant may have. The region firmly believes that each customer and situation is unique and when possible individualized attention and services are best delivered. Aside from the basic assistance available to our “global” participants such as, résumé preparation assistance, job search and referrals, job readiness workshops, access to internet, fax, and copiers; there are specific options available to hard to serve populations.

(c) Identify and describe what career services are provided by the designated provider of workforce services (except training services).

CareerSource Polk provides all career services where eligibility is required in addition to business services, including rapid response. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Program and case management for the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act Adult and Dislocated Worker, Welfare Transition Program and SNAP’s employment and training.
- Eligibility, assessment and individualized career plans and services.
- Wrap around services for educational training
- Work-based learning activities
- Business services

(d) If the LWDB serves as the direct provider of workforce services (except training

services), provide the last date the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors granted approval to the LWDB to serve in this capacity and the approved duration.

April 17, 2022

(6) Youth Service Provider

- (a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected to provide youth workforce investment activities (youth program services) and, if the entity was competitively procured, the term through which the entity is contracted to provide these services.

Youth Services are provided by CareerSource Polk.

- (b) Describe the steps taken to ensure a competitive process for the selection of the youth service provider(s) in the local area, if the LWDB does not provide these services.

N/A

- (c) Describe any additional criteria⁴ the LWDB has established to ensure providers best positioned to deliver required youth program elements resulting in strong outcomes for youth participants are used, if applicable.

N/A

- (d) Identify and describe the youth program element(s) provided by each provider.

Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies

These are services that lead to the completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities), or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

Paid Work Experience

Eligible participants may enroll in paid experience. The wage of the position is determined by and approved by the CareerSource Polk Board of Directors and is determined by the current cost of living data and other economic and budgetary factors. Hours of participation do not exceed 30 hours weekly. Participants can

complete mock interviews, receive resume assistance and other employment activities that may lead to incentives.

Occupational skills training

This organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Local areas must give priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.

Industry recognized credentials that target the Food service (ServSafe), Technology (Google Certificates/CompTIA) are available to eligible participants.

Support services that enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities

CareerSource Polk offers provide transportation assistance, childcare referrals to the Early Learning Coalition, and assistance with any needs related to employment.

Follow up Services

Follow-up services are critical services provided following a youth's exit from the program. The goal of follow-up services is to help ensure that youth are successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services may include regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise. All youth are offered follow-up services for 12 months after exit. These include transportation and employment assistance to ensure success in both education and employment goals.

Financial literacy education

Financial literacy is offered in conjunction with local banks and financial experts provides youth with the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve long-term financial stability. Financial literacy education encompasses information and activities on a range of topics, such as creating budgets; setting up checking and

saving accounts; managing spending, credit, and debt; understanding credit reports and credit scores; and protecting against identify theft.

Labor Market Information and Job exploration

Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area and includes career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services. Labor market information also identities employment opportunities, and provides knowledge of job market expectations, including education and skill requirements and potential earnings. Numerous tools and applications are available that are user-friendly and can be used to provide labor market and career information to youth. These tools can be used to help youth make appropriate decisions about education and careers.

Career exploration is provided to each participant based on LMI. If post-secondary education is needed for an identified career, the youth is provided with the costs and how will it be paid for versus the long-term income earned upon attainment of the degree.

Postsecondary career counseling and coaching

Postsecondary career counseling services are provided to assist in the youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. These services include helping youth explore postsecondary education options, including technical training schools, community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities.

B. ANALYSIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

(1) A regional analysis:

- (a) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupation (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i))

Nestled between Hillsborough County to the west and Osceola County to the east, Polk County is the 4th largest county in the state, spanning 2,011 sq miles and is home to 753, 520 residents. According to statistics from Central Florida Development Council, Polk is ranked as the fastest growing county in Florida and the 2nd fastest growing metro area in the U.S. (Data retrieved from <https://www.cfdc.org/resources/data-research/>)

Polk County's population grew 3.35% adding 24, 287 people between July 2020 and July 2021. As a result of such population growth, economic activities especially in terms of having a ready workforce are critical. In February 2022, Polk's labor force grew by 2.3% increasing the work force to 332, 457. Additionally, non-agricultural employment was 262, 100, an increase of 9,900 jobs, up 3.9% over the year.

Polk County's current unemployment rate is 3.6%, slightly higher than the state of Florida at 2.8%, but lower than the national average of 3.8%. It is projected that Polk County will need 65, 866 new jobs in the next 10 years to keep up with the population growth.

The strongest industry in the county is manufacturing and logistics. Polk's central location to highways, airports, seaports, and rail is ideal for emerging employers in these growing industries.

Existing Demand Occupation

The majority of the top 15 existing demand occupations in our county are low-income skills occupations characterized by relatively low wages and high rate of worker turnover.

The top five existing demand occupations are related to customer service and hospitality or involve manual work.

Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand is the leading occupation with the most jobs, with 10,614 projected total job openings between 2021 and 2029.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (3), Health and Personal Care Aides (8) Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators (11), Home and Medical Assistants (13) Construction Laborers (15), Carpenters (18) are the few occupations within the demand occupations that require technical skills or credentialing. The other occupations emphasize customer service or manual/clerical work.

The emergence of Heavy and Tractor- Trailer Truck Drivers in the top five existing occupations will continue to experience employment growth because of the increasing demand for Commercial Truck Drivers, driven by population growth and the increase of manufacturing and logistics companies within the county.

OCCUPATIONS GAINING THE MOST NEW JOBS										
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY										
Rank	SOC Code	SOC Title	Employment				Total Job Openings	2020 Median Hourly Wage (\$)*	Education	
			2021	2029	Growth	Percent Growth			FL**	BLS**
1	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	9,124	10,614	1,490	16.3	11,021	14.93	NR	NR
2	35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	6,413	7,594	1,181	18.4	11,403	9.90	NR	NR
3	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,511	9,442	931	10.9	8,170	20.09	PS	PS
4	53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	7,058	7,823	765	10.8	7,800	15.14	HS	HS
5	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	7,223	7,780	557	7.7	8,413	11.79	HS	NR
6	37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	3,362	3,883	521	15.5	3,933	13.43	NR	NR
7	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	7,889	8,385	496	6.3	8,250	14.84	PS	HS
8	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,780	2,249	469	26.3	2,285	11.51	PS	HS
9	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,454	1,875	421	29.0	2,143	12.36	PS	NR
10	35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	3,553	3,973	420	11.8	5,688	9.56	NR	NR
11	53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,826	3,245	419	14.8	2,780	17.84	PS	NR
12	53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	2,349	2,746	397	16.9	2,451	24.20	PS	HS
13	31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,571	1,965	394	25.1	1,798	14.82	PS	PS
14	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,377	3,756	379	11.2	2,498	41.47	A	B
15	47-2061	Construction Laborers	3,249	3,627	378	11.6	2,936	15.01	NR	NR

Emerging Industries

Retail, Warehousing, Rental and Leasing Services, Accommodation and

Construction of Buildings are the top five emerging industries in Polk County. These industries tend to employ a higher percentage in professional occupations, however, there has been a tremendous growth in Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores in the region during recent years.

FASTEST-GROWING INDUSTRIES						
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY						
Rank	NAICS Code	NAICS Title	Employment			Percent Growth
			2021	2029	Growth	
1	448	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,375	1,737	362	26.3
2	493	Warehousing and Storage	14,295	17,793	3,498	24.5
3	532	Rental and Leasing Services	721	874	153	21.2
4	721	Accommodation	1,317	1,585	268	20.3
5	236	Construction of Buildings	2,253	2,702	449	19.9
6	541	Professional and Technical Services	8,656	10,321	1,665	19.2
7	621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	13,241	15,731	2,490	18.8
8	442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	758	890	132	17.4
9	611	Educational Services	5,263	6,148	885	16.8
10	812	Personal and Laundry Services	1,302	1,507	205	15.7
11	327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg	1,122	1,297	175	15.6
12	713	Amusement, Gambling & Recreation Ind	2,908	3,336	428	14.7
13	321	Wood Product Manufacturing	1,920	2,197	277	14.4
14	722	Food Services and Drinking Places	17,982	20,553	2,571	14.3
15	523	Financial Investment & Related Activity	458	520	62	13.5
16	441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	4,886	5,544	658	13.5
17	484	Truck Transportation	6,499	7,341	842	13.0
18	811	Repair and Maintenance	2,886	3,226	340	11.8
19	562	Waste Management and Remediation Service	812	907	95	11.7
20	561	Administrative and Support Services	16,014	17,844	1,830	11.4

Emerging Occupations

Knowing which occupations within industries are gaining the most new jobs and those that are the fastest growing helps workforce officials stay focused on training residents for jobs that will not only be available but will assist economic developers in supporting growing businesses. If area employers cannot find the trained people needed to fuel their growth, there could be an adverse effect on the area economy. At the same time, occupational analysis assists CareerSource Polk and its educational partners in planning for the types of programs needed.

The majority of the top emerging occupations are in the healthcare field, which follows the overall Florida statewide distribution of emerging occupations.

In 2019, one of the healthcare industry sector top emerging occupations was Nurse Practitioners, who can prescribe medication, examine patients, diagnose

illnesses, and provide treatment, much like physicians do. Over the course of two years (2021), this occupation has remained in the top position of emerging occupations within the region. Physician Assistants has increased in rank as the top second emerging occupation, which in 2019, it was not even ranked in the top 15.

FASTEST-GROWING OCCUPATIONS										
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 17 - POLK COUNTY										
Rank	SOC Code	SOC Title	Employment				Total Job Openings	2020 Median Hourly Wage (\$)*	Education	
			2021	2029	Growth	Percent Growth			FL**	BLS**
1	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	189	279	90	47.6	183	48.61	M+	M
2	29-1071	Physician Assistants	179	249	70	39.1	159	48.25	B	M
3	31-9097	Phlebotomists	260	343	83	31.9	310	16.56	PS	PS
4	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	417	546	129	30.9	394	44.78	B	B
5	29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	343	447	104	30.3	338	16.70	A	A
6	29-1131	Veterinarians	149	193	44	29.5	88	-	M+	D
7	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,454	1,875	421	29.0	2,143	12.36	PS	NR
8	15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	1,110	1,407	297	26.8	974	23.02	PS	SC
9	15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	651	825	174	26.7	536	41.51	B	B
10	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,780	2,249	469	26.3	2,285	11.51	PS	HS
11	31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,571	1,965	394	25.1	1,798	14.82	PS	PS
12	43-5111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	240	299	59	24.6	267	18.64	HS	HS
13	13-1161	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	705	871	166	23.5	724	26.58	B	B
14	25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	138	170	32	23.2	124	-	B	D
15	51-6011	Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	259	316	57	22.0	329	10.73	HS	NR

- (b) The employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations (WIOA §108(b)(1)(A)).

Of the fastest growing occupations and the occupations gaining the most new jobs, more than 50% of the occupations require education beyond a high school diploma. CareerSource Polk uses a variety of methods to identify needed job skills. We work with employers and industry related organizations to identify worker shortages in specific occupations as well as identifying challenges facing businesses in filling jobs. Work readiness skills are the number one concern for area businesses. To address those concerns, the information is communicated to our education and training partners to aid them in crafting curriculum and developing programs that meet the current and future business needs.

Workforce needs of the businesses are also identified through staff and Board involvement on various committees and taskforces throughout the county. Through this engagement, board members are encouraged to utilize workforce

services and provide constructive feedback regarding any opportunities for improvement needed in our system delivery.

Using the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL), employers, local economic development and educational partners, and other industry representatives have the opportunity to review, comment and make recommendations for changes at any time. Requested changes are then presented to the Workforce Performance Council (WPC) for review, including local and state economic development priorities and linkage to local job opportunities. Additionally, the WPC considers the region's projected employment and earnings outcomes. The WPC then generates its' recommendations for the final RTOL.

Priority for training is given to occupations in the regionally identified Targeted Industry Sectors: Healthcare and Life Sciences, Logistics and Distribution, Biofuels and Renewable Energy, Niche Manufacturing [Aviation, Food and Beverage, Plastics, and Building Component Design, Agriculture and Information Technology. Florida's targeted and infrastructure industries area also considered.

- (2)** Please provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (WIOA §108(b)(1)(B)).

Of the fastest growing occupations and the occupations gaining the most new jobs, more than 50% of the occupations require education beyond a high school diploma. Per labor Census data, in 2020, the educational attainment level of Polk County workforce participants from 25 years and older with a high school diploma or higher was at 85.4%.

However, we are still seeing a trend of employers in healthcare and education which are extending their recruitment efforts outside of the County, looking for specific skills, education, and experience not available in Polk.

CareerSource Polk partners with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain self-sustaining employment and to offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills.

Some of the skills needed in the Healthcare industry are:

- Writing technical health or medical documents
- Reading and comprehension of medical data, patient records, etc.
- Knowledge of medical terminology
- Understanding properties or composition of drugs
- Maintaining records of medication or equipment dispensed to patient
- Ability to follow institutional procedures
- Geriatrics
- Critical Care

Some of the skills needed in the Educational Area

- Reading and comprehension
- Writing skills
- Ability to assess educational potential or need of students
- Ability to adapt activities to meet participant needs
- Advise/intervention families with household problems
- Knowledge of other languages (other than English)
- Quality Assurance
- Customer Relationship Management
- Technical Support
- Food Preparation
- Structured Query Language (SQL)
- Preventative Maintenance
- Java

- (3)** Please provide an analysis of the workforce in the local area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the local area, including individuals with barriers to employment (WIOA §108(b)(1)(C)).

Labor Force and Unemployment

The unemployment rate in the CareerSource Polk region (Polk County) was 3.6 percent in July 2022. This rate was 2.2 percentage points lower than the region's year ago rate of 5.8 percent. The region's July 2022 unemployment rate was 0.8 percentage point above the state rate of 2.8 percent. The labor force was 338,715, up 11,064 (+3.4 percent) over the year. There were 12,095 unemployed residents in the region.

Mining, Logging, and Construction

In July 2022, the employment was 14,800. The over the year change in July 2021 (-700, -4.5 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been slightly trending downward over the past year.

Manufacturing

In July 2022, the employment was 18,100. The over the year change in July 2021 (+100, +0.6 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

In July 2022, the employment was 78,400. The over the year change in July 2021 (+4000, +5.4 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Information

In July 2022, the employment was 2,100. The over the year change in July 2021 (+200, +10.5 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Financial Activities

In July 2022, the employment was 14,800. The over the year change in July 2021 (+400, +2.8 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Professional and Business Services

In July 2022, the employment was 37,200. The over the year change in July 2021 (+2600, +7.5 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Education and Health Services

In July 2022, the employment was 36,800. The over the year change in July 2021 (+2,100, +6.1 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Leisure and Hospitality

In July 2022, the employment was 26,200. The over the year change in July 2021 (+1,800, +7.4 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Other Services

In July 2022, the employment was 7,400. The over the year change in July 2021 (+500, +7.2 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

In July 2022, the employment was 25,500. The over the year change in July 2021 (+300, 1.2 percent) The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past four years.

Education of the Workforce

in 2020, the educational attainment level of Polk County workforce participants from 25 years and older with a high school diploma or higher was at 85.4%, followed by

those with a bachelor's degree or higher at 20.6 percent. Only 14.5 percent of workforce participants had attained less than a high school diploma or equivalent.

Overall, the county faces a skills mismatch. High skill/high wage positions are difficult to fill, while the county unemployment continues to go down. With only 14.5% of the population without a high school diploma, employment opportunities are greater than they have been in the past but still limited for those and meeting pre-requisites for educational/training programs can continue to seem unattainable.

Individuals with criminal backgrounds have found it harder than most other sub-groups in finding employment, even when their qualifications meet the employers' needs. Because a prison record or felony greatly reduces prospects in the job market, even individuals with in-demand skills seem to have fewer opportunities to interview with a prospective employer whether the charges legally or illegally make them ineligible for a job opening.

Persons with Barriers to Employment

The most recent information on unemployment rates for persons with barriers to employment is for 2020. Polk County 2020 unemployment rate was 33.7 percent for disabled persons, 0.3 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 0.0 percent for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, and 12.3 percent for persons 55 and older.

- (4) Please provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the local area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and employment needs of employers in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(1)(D) and (20 CFR679.560(a)(4)).

The implementation of WIOA provided a new opportunity to fully evaluate the workforce development system, policies, procedures, and strategies to better meet

the skill needs of the workforce and the talent needs of employers. The evaluation also allowed for the identification of strengths and weaknesses as listed below:

Identified areas of strengths include:

- Strong relationships among board executive leadership allowing for collaboration on numerous initiatives and grant applications and frequent sharing of information and best practices.
- Diverse secondary and postsecondary training opportunities in the State.
- Logistically, Polk County is the only Southeast location which offers two international airports within an hour's drive – Orlando and Tampa. It is intersected by Interstate 4, the Polk County Parkway, State Road 60 and Highway 27, and has easy access to Interstate 75 on the west and 95 on the east. Metropolitan Orlando-Kissimmee has a cost of living of 98.7 and Tampa-St. Petersburg, Clearwater has a cost of living of 102.9, while metropolitan Lakeland has a cost-of-living index of 90.2. Our region has a 338,715 in the labor force, up 11,064 (+3.4 percent) over the year and is supported by world-class educational institutions like Florida Polytechnic University and the Polk State Clear Springs Advanced Technology Center. Both institutions offer rigorous, industry-focused courses of study that leave students fully prepped for career success before their graduation caps hit the ground.
- Two fully integrated one-stop career centers to serve a wide variety of customers including specific populations and programs (WIOA, WT, SNAP, MSFW, Veterans, TAA, Wagner-Peyser, RESEA). A service model to ensure a true seamless service that allows for staff to serve any customer who walks through the door in a more effective, comprehensive, and efficient manner.
- CareerSource Polk encourages and promotes the attainment of high skill/high wage jobs through the Individual Training Account System, designed to equip eligible individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. The use of the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) serves as the catalyst for establishing

approved occupational training programs in the County, emphasizing “in demand” occupations.

Opportunities for improvement include:

- Polk County’s high school graduation rate is 85.3% Polk County has the eleventh highest single-year dropout rate in Florida, 6.3%. Those holding a bachelor’s degree or higher comprise only 13.9% of the region’s population versus the state average of 20%.
- Increasing the share of working-age adults who have postsecondary education or industry-recognized credentials.
- Development and utilization of contextualized literacy programs are crucial to helping TANF/SNAP Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) clients and will be a component of alignment of educational services.
- Population is growing older. The number of Polk County residents ages 65 and over was 77,946 in 2020 (11.4%).
- Workers from the front-end of the baby-boom generation are moving into their 60s and are expected to continue retiring in large numbers. Due to the recent economic conditions, other factors such as health heavily influenced the decision of many in the workforce to prematurely retire. Inevitably, baby-boomers will leave the workforce in large numbers very soon, taking with them knowledge and experience that kept industries growing and prosperous.
- Growing immigrant population with language barriers.

Workforce strategies must also consider the skills and abilities of individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and those who do not speak English well or at all, to meet present workforce needs and future demand.

Workforce development activities include:

Activity	Description	Strength(s)	Weaknesses
Orientation/Intake	Information about all the services available through the One-Stop career center for all service seekers	Assist in determining need for supportive services including childcare and transportation available in Polk and referral to such services. Allows staff to establish eligibility and determination for all programs and provide follow up services for individuals as applicable.	Multi-step process, may frustrate customer
Resume Assistance/Quality Job Referral	Review or assistance to create a resume to be posted on Employ Florida	Ensure resume is professional and reflects the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities of the customer. Facilitates job matching and quality referrals	Time consuming, depends on customer having all information immediately available
Assessment of skill levels and service needs	Testing for skills levels, interest, aptitudes	Assists in the determination of customer's job readiness	May frustrate customer
Job Readiness Preparation	Intensive workshop with the latest techniques in resume writing, Dress for success, interviewing techniques, Mock interviews	Intensive coaching to assist customers stand out from other candidates. Customers are more confident upon completion of training.	Long training, Face-to-face, only offered at the career centers. Requires individual to travel to the career centers.
Labor Market Information	Statistical information related to occupations in demand, earnings, and skill requirements.	Information readily available on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described in the statistics and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations.	
Individual Employment Plan	Establishes customer's employment goals, achievement objectives, combination of services.	Developed with customer, provides guidance on how to achieve their goals and the list of available services to assist them with their goals.	Requires face-to-face meetings with Case Manager, multiple steps required for program participation.
Case Management	Provides customers with counseling, assistance, follow up	Case Manager provides on-going support through the process. Removes barriers to employment	Difficult to keep contact information.
Individual Training Accounts	Provides eligible customers scholarship account to access training programs through approved training providers in a demand occupation.	Encourage and promote attainment of high skill/high wages. Based on customer choice.	Issued only for qualified programs at qualified schools
Employer services	Assist with job posting, recruiting events, job referrals, grants, labor market information	On-going support with job postings, referrals, and recruiting. Wage reimbursement while training employees	Cumbersome process to obtain placement results in a timely manner.
Supportive Services	Transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, etc. Services to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under the Act.	Assists individuals with necessary services while participating in a program.	Limited funds.

C. LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

- (1) Describe the LWDB's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in WIOA § 116(b)(2)(A) (20 CFR 679.560(a)(5)).

CareerSource Polk's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce seek to engage not only our business, education, and economic development partners, but to also recognize value and necessity recruiting and retaining a qualified team of workforce professionals who are willing and capable of carrying out our mission. Our primary mission and vision at CareerSource Polk is to be the innovative leader to ensure and sustain a quality workforce for today and the future. The realization of this mission begins with the level and caliber of staff we employ. With that mission in mind, our strategic goals include the following:

Staff Engagement Goal:

To recruit, effectively train, and retain a team of workforce professionals who are aware of, clearly understand and are motivated to embrace our mission by demonstrating a commitment to such. To accomplish this mission, training and development is our number one priority. A critical component of staff development and training includes not only understanding the importance of meeting the negotiated performance measures, but also recognizing the importance of quality performance as it relates to servicing each and every customer we encounter and helping them to meet their individual employment goals.

We place a significant amount of emphasis on assessing staff needs, training to address any gaps, evaluating the effectiveness of training, and conducting quality assurance reviews that include the review of every single customer's case to ensure quality touch points and service levels that seek to get each customer to their destination of self-sufficient employment.

We believe that a well-qualified and appropriately trained workforce for our very own workforce system has a direct impact on (1) the types of goals set by and with our clients and, (2) each client's motivation to achieve a greater level of education and/or

training that will result in higher wage jobs. Helping clients reach their full potential through education and training will also strengthen employability skills, increase placement rates, and yield higher levels of job retention.

Board Engagement Goal:

To recruit, educate, and engage board members who are willing to invest the time necessary to understand the workforce system and clearly envision the alignment of workforce, education, and economic development for the sole purpose of ensuring a qualified workforce. Board members engage by bringing their expertise to the table to develop strategies and policies that are designed to aid workforce clients in meeting their full potential regarding career pathways, education, and training opportunities to realize those pathways, and career guidance that supports their efforts to obtain and retain employment that will ensure job satisfaction, retention, and self-sufficiency.

Economic Development Partners Engagement Goal:

Our primary focus regarding engaging and being engaged with our economic development partners is to ensure that expanding and new businesses are fully aware of the talent pool within our region and the surrounding areas so that they can make well informed choices about their recruitment needs and the labor market variables that impact their recruitment and retention efforts.

As a single county region with 17 municipalities, our goal is to be involved with all our chambers of commerce and economic development organizations via our workforce system leadership staff and/or board members so that we know firsthand the skills and talent needed to fulfill our businesses workforce needs and convey those needs to appropriate partners so that our missions are aligned.

Education & Training Partners Engagement Goal:

Our education and training partners are essential to the success of our mission. The Board is fully aware of the value of our education partners and the need to ensure that training and education are closely aligned with the workforce needs of our business partners. As stated in our mission, one of our primary goals is to ensure an educated (qualified) workforce. Our board works diligently with our education partners to

increase the level of graduates who obtain their high school diploma or GED to expand workforce and training opportunities.

We partner with both education and economic development partners to enhance placement efforts of our local college graduates into careers that align with their education and goals, all the while, fulfilling the talent needs for our business community. The board works to ensure ongoing planning, communication, and strategic alliances with our education and training partners that will result in the successful placement of job seekers into jobs that are a good match for the business needs, thereby yielding greater levels of employer and employee satisfaction and retention.

Business Partners Engagement Goal:

Our goal to fully engage business partners in our planning and training efforts seeks to ensure that our business’ needs are being met. Through the ongoing surveillance of business needs, we continuously align our programs and service delivery strategies and policies to ensure that our system is business-friendly and demand-driven.

Current challenges and strategies include:

CHALLENGE	STRATEGY
The Business Services Division must maintain knowledgeable staff to communicate the value of CareerSource Polk’s workforce services to businesses and community organizations.	Business Services staff will receive ongoing training in business services related topics and will further identify and develop relationships with business and community organizations.
Using technology effectively to advance sector strategies.	Business Services staff will receive ongoing training on the use of customer relationship management databases, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.salesforce.com • Florida Occupational Supply Demand System • www.employflorida.com • Infogroup Employer Database
The perception that the Business Services Division primarily provides services related to entry level and lower-wage occupations.	Through the use of databases and customer relationship management, further develop the relationship with high skill/high wage employers and those whose employment opportunities are on the career path to high skill/high wage jobs.

We will continue to identify and address any challenges employers note in accessing workforce services; work to enhance employer satisfaction, and measure effectiveness of employer outreach programs.

CareerSource Polk staff, in collaboration with the Board of Directors and its Councils, service providers and partners, will work together to analyze and interpret Labor Market Information in developing programs and opportunities that will align the best interests of job seekers and employers with the economic future of the county.

The Workforce Performance Council will continue to recommend policies and strategies to improve the quality of jobs filled by the underemployed, including researching, addressing, and improving the types of training and delivery systems available to incumbent workers. The Council will continue to review the Labor Market Information and other pertinent information in the process of designing strategies to address training related to high skill/high wage issues.

The Youth Development Council will continue to design and recommend the delivery of service strategies that prepare young people and others new to the workforce for employment or transition to additional education beyond high school.

CareerSource Polk partners with Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and refers individuals with disabilities that otherwise cannot be assisted at the career center.

- (2) Taking into account the analyses described in (1) through (4) in **Section B. Analysis of Need and Available Resources** above, describe the local area's strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described above (20 CFR 679.560(a)(5)).

CareerSource Polk has engaged in a comprehensive accountability model that aims to ensure a service delivery strategy that positions the customer at the forefront of all we do. We will continue to seek innovative approaches to service delivery that align with the rapid growth, generational and technological changes in our workforce.

A monitoring plan is in place to review Board policies, practices, and fiscal and programmatic operations, which is conducted by a third party on a quarterly basis every fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

Once each program year, we are also monitored by the DEO which conducts a fiscal and programmatic review. Results are shared with the Board of Directors through the appropriate Councils for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

A Financial Audit is performed by a third-party audit firm annually, which is shared with the Board of Directors.

CareerSource Polk's Workforce Performance Council reviews, on quarterly basis, all customer concerns and addresses those concerns with the One-Stop Operator. The goal of this process is to ensure that customer concerns are being addressed timely and effectively and to determine if any workforce policy or procedure is impeding staff's ability to deliver quality customer service to our customers.

CareerSource Polk career centers strive to be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. All of CareerSource Polk's facilities are ADA compliant providing necessary accommodations, adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants, allowing individuals to participate in the full range of programs.

CareerSource Polk supports individuals with limited English proficiency, employing bilingual staff and providing printed material in several languages. We will continue collaborating with partners to provide services, resources, and referrals to limited English speaking jobseekers. Local Adult Education programs offer Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction for adults to improve their English speaking and writing skills but also to improve their academic skills so they can earn a high school credential and enter postsecondary education to improve their career options.

Equal Opportunity evaluates each CareerSource Polk facility at least every three years to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

CareerSource Polk staff members receive training on disability awareness, sensitivity, and etiquette; and outreach for employers and federal contractors that are required to comply with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. In addition, select staff is trained to

enroll SSA beneficiaries in the Ticket to Work program. Individuals requiring additional services may be referred by staff to other agencies.

CareerSource Polk offers a variety of resources and information on services available to persons with disabilities including: information on training opportunities and links to online training; technology guides for using screen enlargement software, screen reading software, Windows Accessibility features, American Sign Language interpreters, referral to the Abilities work portal on www.employflorida.com, and the Text Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY); information on the ADA and accessibility; links to service providers and resources to assist persons with disabilities in removing barriers to employment; and links to information for employers interested in hiring a person with a disability including tax benefits, the ADA and accommodations.

The CareerSource Polk Board of Directors in collaboration with the CEO established the vision and goals through ongoing dialogue about the critical components needed to meet customer needs through collaborative partnerships. Each council of the Board contributed to the discussion during council meetings based on the analysis of changing markets, prior performance, and the necessity for emphasized accountability to ensure customer success.

CareerSource Polk's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce seek to engage not only our business, education, and economic development partners, but to also recognize value and necessity recruiting and retaining a qualified team of workforce professionals who are willing and capable of carrying out our mission. The LWDB's goals are consistent with the State goals. LWDB will follow the lead of the State in negotiating performance for the performance accountability measures for the Region based on previous performance, local economic indicators, and labor market data for the area.

D. DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES AND PROGRAM SERVICES

(1) Workforce Development System Description: Describe the local workforce development system, including;

(a) All the programs that are included in the system:

Employment and training activities available for adult and dislocated worker customers include but are not limited to:

- Orientation to the services available through the One-Stop career center for all service seekers;
- Outreach, recruitment and intake;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities in order to determine job readiness;
- Matching of employer job requirements and screening for supportive service needs;
- Job search and placement assistance, including job workshops, job referrals and job development;
- Job preparation class: our free workshops on interview techniques, resume writing, dressing for success and other topics that will help customers stand out from other candidates;
- Provision of employment statistics information which includes job vacancy listings in the local, regional and national labor market areas;
- Information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described in the statistics and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations;
- Provision of accurate information relating to the availability of supportive services, including childcare and transportation available in Polk County, and referral to such services, as appropriate;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility and determination for all programs and provide follow up services for individuals as applicable;
- Referral to other services – customer may be referred for other services as needed, i.e. Welfare Transition, Ticket-To-Work, SNAP, Veterans, Youth Services, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker;

- Development of an Individual Employment Plan via Employ Florida System to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services;
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Assistance with filing for financial aid;
- Individual, group and career counseling;
- Individual training accounts for up to \$15,000: workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for tuition assistance up to \$15,000 including instructional costs, books, materials, fees (such as application costs, registration, and laboratory fees) and academic supportive services. The primary focus is on the attainment of certificates or degrees of value in the labor market leading to a job in high demand occupations, and emerging industries;
- On-the-job-training (OJT) – training for customers that are new employees may receive paid training and their employers are reimbursed a percentage of the new employee wages while in training if their business is located in Polk County and meets all federal guidelines;
- Employed Worker Training – training for an existing employee who is given industry wide training by the employer who is then reimbursed a percentage of the training cost.
- Internships – paid work experience to bridge the gap between the educational and professional worlds, making it easier to transition from academic life into a career.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Training services are designed to equip eligible individuals with the skills to enter the workforce and retain employment. These services will be provided by Board approved providers or other special grant programs and includes:

- Services provided to individuals who meet eligibility requirements are unemployed, unable to obtain employment; or are employed, but are determined in need of additional services in order to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Customers are interviewed; evaluated and assessed by the case manager who determines customer is in need of training services and has the qualifications to successfully participate (appropriate TABE scores, interest and aptitude) in the selected program or training services.
- Selection of programs for training services that are directly linked to Polk County high skill/high wage employment opportunities or similar opportunities in other geographic areas for which the individual is willing to relocate.

Once customer eligibility is established, the ITA will be used as the primary funding source.

- Customer must apply for financial aid from the Pell Grant and other available financial sources, to use as the secondary funding source for other training related costs not covered through the ITA
- Customers are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system or are determined to be a candidate directed to other special programs.

(b) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities (WIOA §108(b)(9)).

The Local Board provides high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational

attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. Services are provided to youth ages 16 to 24 who reside in Polk County. We qualify and assist youth in gaining academic and employability skills needed to become successful as they transition into adulthood.

CareerSource Polk will conduct training for youth staff, to better understand the different types of disabilities, how to handle issues of disclosure and disability identification with sensitivity at program intake, and how to determine the most effective mix of services and referrals to make when a disability is identified. These trainings will be presented by subject matter experts and include such topics as: federal, state, and local disability policies; identifying barriers/hidden disabilities; disability awareness and etiquette; website accessibility; providing reasonable accommodations; assistive technology accommodations and resources; Section 503 for federal contractors; and simulation training. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Mental Health Centers, and the Department of Correction will also be invited to attend these events and asked to present on relevant topics.

Within the youth facilities, staff will be trained to follow established procedures to ensure inclusion and compliance. Starting with intake, customers should be asked if any assistance is needed and if they have a disability, once they are assured that their response is voluntary and will be kept confidential. Customer orientations should include a discussion of Equal Opportunity (EO) and the right to file a complaint. Following orientation, services should be reviewed with the client by determining the client's eligibility and need of services in an integrated setting. For example, not all customers should be automatically referred to VR; only those that appear to be eligible and in need of VR services. 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 possibly blend funding. Agency partners will seek to coordinate efforts and leverage funding between partner agencies to meet the employment and training needs of the

customer. Memorandums of Understanding may be developed or reviewed, as necessary, to outline the responsibilities of each partner.

Workforce Development Boards, through the IN-DEI grant, may continue to operate as Employment Networks (EN) and either offer benefits counseling in-house or work with their local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) representative to provide benefits counseling to Social Security beneficiaries receiving SSI/SSDI. WDBs not currently operating as an EN will receive information and training about the benefits of the Ticket to Work Program and how to become an active EN.

Staff will also be trained to use multiple resources and tools to ensure accessibility to services. One such resource that staff will be encouraged to use is the Guidepost for Success, which is a set of key educational and intervention strategies for youth, including those with disabilities. Additionally, One-stop assessments, Individual Service Strategy (ISS), 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.

CareerSource Polk will implement policies to support accessibility to services throughout the state. Development of a Reasonable Accommodation Policy will be explored that requires the WDBs to formally track when a reasonable accommodation is requested and whether it is approved or denied. This policy may include but will not be limited to the process for handling and tracking reasonable accommodation requests; examples of reasonable accommodations (i.e., frequent breaks, ensuring a quiet testing environment, reading the test aloud); providing training and information regarding One-stop procedures; and a process for notifying the state regarding the approval/denial of the request(s). The state will track both informal and formal complaints received in the One-stop offices through

the State's Quarterly Customer Service Record Log, this will help the state identify any patterns for alleged discrimination of individuals with disabilities.

- (c) How the LWDB supports the strategy identified in the state plan under 20 CFR 676.105 and works with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under [The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act \(Perkins V\)](#) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment (WIOA § 108(b)(2) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(1)).

CareerSource Polk's delivery of services is carried out through its comprehensive One-Stop delivery system, which integrates the provision of services for unemployed, underemployed, and employed workers including WT/TANF and SNAP customers. For WT/TANF customers and others who may require additional education and training, including job readiness, and adult basic education skills training, etc., referrals are made to other partners including, school districts, community-based programs, and faith-based organizations.

CareerSource Polk operates two full service one-stop career centers. Both centers provide WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, MSFW and RESEA services. Upon entering a full-service career center, job seekers find integrated case management approach to assist these individuals to become competitive for employment. Partners co-located at the one-stop career center include: AARP, ALPI, Job Corp, Rebuild Florida, and Polk County Public Schools. Vocational Rehabilitation is in the same facility, on the third floor.

Services provided include:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The WIOA program provides individualized services intended to help job seekers return to the workforce by utilizing general, individual, and if determined eligible, training services. WIOA provides for one-on-one assistance with resumes, interviewing, job search, and career planning. Workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for supportive services while seeking

employment, interviewing or attending training. The primary focus of training is to obtain a certificate or degree of value to the labor market, leading to a job in high demand occupations and emerging industries. As funding allows, participants may be eligible to receive tuition assistance which may include instructional costs, books, materials, and fees (such as application costs, registration, and laboratory fees).

The target population for WIOA services consist of workers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own (dislocated workers); Homemakers who have lost their financial support from a family member; recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals when funds are limited; employed workers that need skills upgrading or retraining.

WIOA Youth:

The Youth program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. Youth services allows for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The ultimate goal for program participants is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and youth with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser provides labor exchange bringing together individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. Through Wagner-Peyser labor exchange system, we have the capacity to assist job seekers to find employment; assist employers in filling jobs and facilitate the match between job seekers and employers.

Welfare Transition/TANF

The Welfare Transition Program (WTP) provides emphasis on work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility; as well as opportunities for welfare recipients to move from welfare to work. The support structure includes the programs and services such as: employment programs, job training, childcare and transportation assistance; diversion programs to reduce domestic violence and child abuse; diversions to prevent families from going on welfare and relocation assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program emphasizes work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility. Program participants gain valuable skills, training, and work experience to reach total self-sufficiency.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The program provides re-employment services to pre-selected UC claimants that are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. The services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation and Assessment
- Labor market information unique to area of work experience
- Developing an employability development plan
- Job and additional services referrals
- Follow-up to further assist in their employment efforts

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW)

CareerSource Polk is committed to serving farmworkers who work in the Polk County service area. The MSFW Outreach Specialist assigned to our Region is bi-lingual and is accustomed to serving the farmworker population and employers located within Polk County. Our MSFW Outreach Specialist works jointly with the agricultural employers and directly with the farmworkers to deliver available employment services and knowledge of services available in our One-Stop career

center and other agencies available to the farmworkers to promote quality of the labor exchange and quality of life for farmworkers in our service area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps workers who are adversely affected by foreign imports or job shifts to a foreign country. Assistance is provided to eligible workers in the form of reemployment services, training, job search, relocation, and support benefits in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and/or Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA) for older workers.

DEO Merit Staff maintain familiarity with TAA requirements, screening, and determination applicability. As part of the TAA Information Meeting, and in any subsequent contact, the local TAA Coordinator will emphasize the importance of receiving an assessment prior to their enrollment in training deadline. Any affected workers requesting TAA assistance that may be coming from outside the region are referred to the local designated TAA staff.

Veteran Services

Our region utilizes an electronic tracking system for all customers that enter the One-Stop Career Center. Veterans are identified in a prominent manner on this system which allows all Wagner-Peyser staff to see the next available customer. Those identified by the VET status will be provided service before non-VETs by Wagner Peyser staff.

Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service in the Resource Room and for all programs operated by the Region and are seen immediately. Veterans are offered the full range of One-Stop services to include job counseling, job search/referral, resume services, as well as specialized assistance on Veterans rights and benefits as well as assistance and interface with the Veteran's Administration (VA) programs.

(2) Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities:

Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(7) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(6)). This must include a description of local policies and procedures for individualized career and training services in the Adult program to give priority to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

CareerSource Polk has a robust menu of workforce services to offer to both businesses and the workforce throughout the region. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is designed to assist job seekers with high quality career services, education and training and the support services needed to obtain good jobs and retain their employment. Additionally, it is designed to match businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the local and global economy. Training activities will be targeted to:

- Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with sustaining wages.
- Provide access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as persons with disabilities, low income or disadvantaged, homeless, ex-offenders, basic skills deficient or those with limited English.
- Enable businesses to identify with ease and hire qualified, skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.
- Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of the local workforce system by identifying which strategies work better for various populations.
- Ensure that high-quality integrated data inform decisions by local policy makers, board members, local area management, businesses and job seekers across core and optional partners.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act authorizes career services for adults and dislocated workers. There are two types of Career Services available within

CareerSource Polk workforce system: Basic and Individualized Career Services. These services may be provided in any order and with no required sequence allowing staff to provide tailored services to each customer to target the needs of the customer.

Basic Career Services

Basic career services will be available to all individuals seeking services in the CareerSource Polk workforce system, and include:

- Determination of an individual's eligibility to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or young adult programs;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the CareerSource Polk's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) and/or the state's unemployment insurance (UI) for claimants likely to exhaust benefits, and orientation to information and other services available through the career centers;
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), transferrable skills and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance and, when needed by an individual, career counseling.
- Information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of the Opportunity Act);
- Information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3(37) of the Opportunity Act);
- Referrals to, and coordination of, activities with other programs and services, including those within the CareerSource Polk region and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs within larger regional planning areas;
- Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas; information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and information relating to

local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;

- Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
- Information about how the local area is performing on accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's workforce system;
- Information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Florida's KidCare Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ; assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and
- Information regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking to file a claim.

Individualized Career Services

If Career Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, then these services are made available through CareerSource Polk Career Center resources, or partners. Career Center staff may use recent or previous assessments by partner programs (TANF-OSST assessment) to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include: diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and, if appropriate, the combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g. case management);
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills; including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment;
- Financial literacy services;
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

All customers of the Career Centers may avail themselves of the Career Center Assessment Labs which have a variety of tools including, but not limited to:

- Interest Inventory Assessment
- Florida Ready to Work

Any customer considered for an Individualized Training Account (ITA) or other educational or training services must have the need for such services documented in

the assessment process. Assessment updates may be made as the customers' circumstances change, and as new barriers to success are identified. Additionally, assessments will ensure ITA or other educational candidates meet Section 134 (c) (3)(A)(I)(cc) which states that an eligible trainee must "have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services" in addition to meeting the other eligibility criteria.

Comprehensive assessments of customer needs are essential if sound decisions are to be made by the customers and staff regarding the services needed by the customer. Such assessments are especially important for lower-skilled or less-experienced potential workers, and for those seeking to enter a new field due to layoff.

The CareerSource Polk Business Services Division provides employer services based on the needs of the employer.

Our Business Services Team is made up of three Business Service Consultants each covering a specific geographic area based on population density. The assigned areas include the Northeast quadrant of Polk County, the Lakeland area in the western quadrant and the entire southern area of the county. Our Business Service Consultants schedule visits to new and existing employers to educate them on the full range of services available to them including training grants.

The Business Services staff will assist the employer in identifying the appropriate grant for which to apply and assist the employer in the application process. Availability of training grants will be expanded in as much as the budget allows.

Customized Training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Employed Worker Training (EWT) are provided on a case-by-case basis as requested by employers. The Workforce Performance Council must approve all training grants valued over \$50,000.

Employed Worker Training opportunities will be offered to eligible WIOA participants and promoted to employers through the Business Services Division. Individuals

selected for training opportunities may be full-time or part-time workers, or underemployed participants. Individual career plans are developed to guide the participant toward employment and career goals. CareerSource Polk routinely seeks other funding sources to assist employers in meeting the needs of the workforce including assisting them with CareerSource Florida grant applications.

For customized employed worker the individual must be at or below the wage of 200% of poverty for a family of three as shown by USDOL LLSIL and must demonstrate a need for training to avoid lay-off to upgrade his/her skill level to increase their wage within the company. The Case Manager will contact the potential employee and/or employer to arrange an eligibility intake and inform him/her of the necessary documentation he/she will need to provide. After the intake process is completed the Case Manager will notify the Business Services Division that the customer has been determined eligible and data entered into the MIS system.

The Board has no other providers of WIOA services beyond OJT and customized training.

(3) Training Services: Describe how training services outlined in WIOA section 134 are provided, including:

(a) A description of the process and criteria for issuing ITAs, including a description of any ITA limitations established by the LWDB and a description of any exceptions to the use of ITAs;

Authorized staff at the one-stop delivery system or youth programs to issue ITAs, must follow the criteria and process described below:

Establish customer's ITA eligibility as indicated below. ITA recipients must be:

- WIOA customers who are eligible to work in the United States;
- WIOA Adult or WIOA Older Youth customers who are residents of Polk County;
- TANF or SNAP service eligible customers served by Polk County;
- Unable to find suitable employment with existing skills and/or academic credentials as evidenced through unsuccessful placement while actively participating in career services offered through CareerSource Polk centers

- service system. Suitable employment is defined as an occupation which pays at least the state's Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) per hour for Adults or 80% layoff wage replacement for Dislocated Workers;
- Determined through assessment that training is appropriate for the recipient unless the recipient proves to have completed a higher education degree;
 - Select a training program that is linked to a demand occupation in the Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) and make a commitment to seek employment in the field once trained;
 - Select a training provider from the approved CareerSource Polk Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
 - Provide evidence that they have the financial resources to cover all other living expenses while completing the training period

For training education that are Pell eligible programs:

- Agree to apply for and bring proof of Pell grant application eligibility determination to the case manager as soon as possible; but not later than the beginning of the next term.
- If ITA approved, the customer must acknowledge and agree to the use of Pell Grant funds to pay for other training related costs not covered through the ITA, such as rent, utilities, fuel, etc.
- If Pell ineligible, the customer must provide proof of ineligibility to the case manager prior to being considered for ITA for the next term.

Note: If the customer is a late enrollee and Pell is not possible for the first term, the ITA will pay during that period while Pell is pending. The customer must still apply for and bring to the career center staff the proof of Pell application eligibility as soon as possible but not later than the beginning of the next term.

ITA limitations established by the board.

The maximum CareerSource Polk approved cost for an ITA (CAP) is \$15,000. All ITAs will be categorized using a fair market value based on potential earnings upon entering employment. Training programs with the potential of higher

earnings will have a larger amount of allowable investment than those earning less. The thresholds for allowable investment will be as follows:

Tiers	Average Entry Wage	Maximum Investment
Entry Tier	\$12.75 or less	\$6,500
Bridge Tier	\$12.76 - \$15.62	\$10,000
High Wage Tier	\$15.62 and up	\$15,000

ITA exceptions established by the board

The customer is expected to complete training within the amount of funding approved at the beginning of training; however, CareerSource Polk recognizes that this may not always be possible due to acts of nature, i.e., hurricanes, or uncontrollable circumstances, i.e., major illness of self or immediate family, suffered loss due to fire, death of immediate family. In extraordinary circumstances, the customer prepares a written justification fully detailing the circumstances that made it impossible to complete training under the initial approved funding and submits for LWDB's CEO review and/or approval through the appropriate line of communication.

- (b) If contracts for training services are used, how the use of such contracts are coordinated with the use of ITAs; and

CareerSource Polk does not use contracted training for Adults nor Dislocated Workers. However, CareerSource Polk will work with DEO, CareerSource Florida and the REACH office to implement performance-based tuition to ensure the successful placement of students when they complete their education supported through an ITA.

- (c) How the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (WIOA §108(b)(19) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(18)).

Our policy emphasizes that all training services will be provided in a manner that

maximizes customer choice. Eligible customers receiving an ITA will be provided with a link to an online list of all eligible training providers locally and in the State, which may provide instruction in the occupational areas that he/she has chosen to pursue. The list will include the provider's name, information including cost, and other appropriate information for each program. After this process, the customer will select the training provider.

- (d) How the LWDB ensures training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate (WIOA §134(c)(3)(G)(iii)). Include strategic or other policies that align training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to sector strategies and demand occupations (WIOA §134(d)(1)(A)(ix)(II)(aa)).

CareerSource Polk will provide customers with data not limited local labor market information about higher-paying employment opportunities, showing them current job openings and guiding them to the training resources that will prepare them for better jobs. CareerSource Polk utilizes assessment tools that help customers determine their strengths and what careers would suit them best. This information, paired with current information about what local businesses need, will enable the customer to make an educated choice as they consider their career options.

- (e) How the LWDB incorporates/includes work-based training activities in the local area's service delivery model.

CareerSource supports multiple work-based initiatives, including on-the-job training, customized training, employed/incumbent worker training, apprenticeship, and paid work experience.

Work-based trainings are business driven to ensure the activities are business-valued. Rather than a one size fits all approach, solutions are created with the business to meet their unique hiring, retention, and development of their workforce.

(4) Youth Workforce Investment Activities: Describe and assess the type and

availability of youth workforce investment activities (services) in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must:

- (a) Identify successful models of such youth workforce investment activities (WIOA§108(b)(9) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(8)).

The Local Board provides high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. Services are provided to youth ages 16 to 24 who reside in Polk County. We qualify and assist youth in gaining academic and employability skills needed to become successful as they transition into adulthood.

Career Source Polk will conduct training for youth staff, to better understand the different types of disabilities, how to handle issues of disclosure and disability identification with sensitivity at program intake, and how to determine the most effective mix of services and referrals to make when a disability is identified.

These trainings will be presented by subject matter experts and include such topics as: federal, state, and local disability policies; identifying barriers/hidden disabilities; disability awareness and etiquette; website accessibility; providing reasonable accommodations; assistive technology accommodations and resources; Section 503 for federal contractors; and simulation training.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Mental Health Centers, and the Department of Correction will also be invited to attend these events and asked to present on relevant topics.

Within the youth facilities, staff will be trained to follow established procedures to ensure inclusion and compliance. Starting with intake, customers should be asked if any assistance is needed and if they have a disability, once they are assured that their response is voluntary and will be kept confidential. Customer orientations should include a discussion of Equal Opportunity (EO) and the right to file a complaint. Following orientation, services should be reviewed with the client by determining the client's eligibility and need of services in an integrated

setting. For example, not all customers should be automatically referred to VR; only those that appear to be eligible and in need of VR services. 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 possibly blend funding. Agency partners will seek to coordinate efforts and leverage funding between partner agencies to meet the employment and training needs of the customer. Memorandums of Understanding may be developed or reviewed, as necessary, to outline the responsibilities of each partner.

Workforce Development Boards, through the IN-DEI grant, may continue to operate as Employment Networks (EN) and either offer benefits counseling in-house or work with their local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) representative to provide benefits counseling to Social Security beneficiaries receiving SSI/SSDI. WDBs not currently operating as an EN will receive information and training about the benefits of the Ticket to Work Program and how to become an active EN.

Staff will also be trained to use multiple resources and tools to ensure accessibility to services. One such resource that staff will be encouraged to use is the Guidepost for Success, which is a set of key educational and intervention strategies for youth, including those with disabilities. Additionally, One-stop assessments, Individual Service Strategy (ISS), 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.

CareerSource Polk will implement policies to support accessibility to services throughout the state. Development of a Reasonable Accommodation Policy will be explored that requires the WDBs to formally track when a reasonable accommodation is requested and whether it is approved or denied. This policy may include but will not be limited to the process for handling and tracking reasonable accommodation requests; examples of reasonable accommodations

(i.e., frequent breaks, ensuring a quiet testing environment, reading the test aloud); providing training and information regarding One-stop procedures; and a process for notifying the state regarding the approval/denial of the request(s).

The state will track both informal and formal complaints received in the One-stop offices through the State's Quarterly Customer Service Record Log, this will help the state identify any patterns for alleged discrimination of individuals with disabilities.

- (b) Include the local area's design framework for the local youth program and how the 14 program elements required in 20 CFR 681.460 are made available within that framework (WIOA § 129(c)(1)).
- (c) Describe the LWDB's policy regarding how the local area will determine when an individual meets the definition of basic skills deficient contained in [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 095 – WIOA Youth Program Eligibility](#)

CareerSource Polk's Young Leaders Program design is structured to ensure effective service delivery to maximize the level and participation of as many eligible young adults as possible, with a primary focus on service delivery strategies that increase participation of out-of-school as well as those young adults who are most at risk of not acquiring the necessary skills and abilities to attain meaningful employment.

The success of a solid youth program that fulfills the intent of WIOA largely depends on the compliance of program requirements which include:

- ✓ the expenditure of a minimum of 75 percent of funding on services to out-of-school youth;
- ✓ the expenditure of 20 percent of funding on the provision of work experiences for youth, including those with significant barriers to employment;
- ✓ the development of strong career pathways for youth;
- ✓ the co-enrollment of eligible youth into appropriate partner programs and activities, including TANF;
- ✓ the provision of the 14 required youth program design elements;

- ✓ the provider's past record of success with the retention of youth participants in education, training activities, or unsubsidized employment during the second and fourth quarters after program exit; and
- ✓ a detailed description of the local board's negotiated performance goals for which the provider has a role in meeting and/or exceeding

The Young Leaders program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. The services of the Young Leaders program allow for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The goal for the participating young adults is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. The Young Leaders program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and young adults with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

At the beginning of program year 2013-2014, the Local Workforce Development Board was authorized by DEO to provide direct services to the young adults in Polk County. The framework of our Young Leaders program follows the 14 program elements required on §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations.

The funds allocated to our local area are allocated to serve eligible in-school and out-of-school youth. Now that we have completely transitioned to WIOA, our primary goal is to serve out-of-school youth. Understanding that the work experience is a critical WIOA youth program element, the Local Area has placed significant emphasis in providing work experience for OSY, in addition to the Summer Youth Employment Program.

In-house services provided through state waiver include:

- Recruitment and Outreach. Conduct activities, including outreach to local government facilities, non-profit and faith-based organizations that provide support services to disconnected youth and young adults, including the use of word-of-mouth referrals, and social media platforms. Other suggested recruitment strategies may include visiting low-income communities and neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and speaking to friends, families, and young adults about available services and opportunities.
- Designing a program application process that is easy to complete by removing as many of the administrative hurdles as possible.
- Creating an online youth friendly orientation that is accessible through CareerSource Polk website.

Objective assessment of academic level, skills level, and service needs of each participant would include:

- Test of Adult Basic Education – is designed to effectively assess both the knowledge and skills of the young adult.
- CareerScope – is a web-based career assessment reporting system which measures both aptitude and career interest to help young adults begin the career or educational planning process.

Development of an individual service strategy for each young adult includes:

- Customized career pathway plan
- Addressing barriers
- Setting goals and activities
- Documenting achievements / credentials
- Notating academic progress
- Identifying supportive service needs

Engagement: Many disconnected young adults face challenges and life obstacles that result in the cycling in and out of program services. Such challenges may include periods of homelessness, issues with the criminal justice system,

pressures to provide for their families, and substance abuse, among others.

- Recognizing the unique hardships of each individual and working to establish trust between participants and staff, we must create an atmosphere where participants feel staff is invested in their success.
- Once a participant is enrolled staff must communicate regularly and effectively. Explain the program's available services and activities, the expectations of the participant, and any available support services that may be necessary.
- Set achievable goals with the participant early in the process and communicate the status of progress towards meeting those goals often.
- Placing young adults in cohorts allows individuals to move through the program and receive services with others. Participants often become friends and gain a sense of togetherness and accountability within the cohort. Such engagement may also open the door for young adults to take a leadership role, such as tutoring other participants, giving presentations, etc.
- Ensure that supportive services are made available to participants to help remove barriers that would prevent them from continuing with the program.
- If a young adult leaves the program, the Career Development Specialist will remain in contact with that individual and encourage re-engagement through phone calls, texts, social media, or in-person visits at their hangouts or homes.

Participants will have an opportunity to take advantage of work experience or community service activities which will encourage the following:

- practical experience
- workplace skills
- increase self confidence
- increase understanding of the work involved in a particular field
- develop a greater understanding of work life issues.

CareerSource Polk's Youth program ensures compliance with the 14 program elements through partnerships with qualified organizations and agencies whose

missions align with our own. The table below outlines each program element and how our program is structured to ensure the provision of services are acquired to deliver each element successfully and efficiently:

Program Element	CareerSource Polk	Services Outsourced (MOUs)
Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies.		East & West Area Adult Schools Ridge & Traviss Technical Colleges Fresh Start Community Schools Polk County Public Schools
Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate		Ridge Technical College Traviss Technical College Fresh Start Community Schools
Paid and unpaid work experiences directly linked to academic and occupational learning	Youth Employment Programs	
Occupational skills training, leading to recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors		Ridge & Traviss Technical Colleges Eligible Training Providers (through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs))
Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster		Opportunities to earn a credential are encouraged. On-the-Job Training Paid Work Experience
Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours, as appropriate.		Talbot House Planned Parenthood Peace River Center The Dream Center Healthy Start Coalition Lighthouse Ministries
Supportive services	Polk County Transit (Bus passes)	
Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months		Boys & Girls Club, Risk Club Lakeland Police Athletic League (PAL), Made Mentors
Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Career Development Specialist	
Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.	Career Development Specialist	Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance, Healthy Start Coalition Peace River Center Florida Department of Health (tobacco free initiative) Homeless Youth Task Force
Financial Literacy education		Wells Fargo Fifth Third Bank Mulberry Community Service Center
Entrepreneurial skills training		Polk State College and Tampa Area Electrical JATC
Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area (career awareness, career counseling, career exploration)	Career Development Specialist and Wagner-Peyser Staff	
Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.	Career Development Specialist	

- (d) Define the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society” and describe how the LWDB defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills sufficiently to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination (20 CFR 681.290).

CSP’s WIOA Youth Program defines “A youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family or in society” by having TABE test scores below or at an 8.0 for either reading or total math.

As part of the program eligibility, students are assessed through TABE tests to determine level of knowledge and comprehension of the English language. Through this assessment, a student is considered basic skills deficient if he/she scores at or below the 8th grade level on the math, reading and language arts.

Nearly one-fifth of Polk County’s population speaks a language other than English in the home. To assist individuals with limited English proficiency, bi-lingual staff is available, partnerships are developed with organizations which provide multi-lingual services and staff receives training in cultural awareness. Program materials printed in multiple languages are also available for distribution.

The region partners with organizations such as Heart to Heart Community Enrichment (Creole) and Farmworkers Program (Spanish) that have staff that can assist in translating or providing services. Also, the region is currently translating program FACT sheets in Spanish and Creole.

The region will also take into consideration the recommendation to seek for an interpreter to provide services to customers that speaks a language other than Spanish or Creole.

Define the term “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to obtain or retain employment” and describe the circumstance(s) or other criteria the LWDB will use to qualify a youth under this eligibility barrier (20

CFR 681.300).

CareerSource Polk has identified the following definition for youth needing additional assistance:

- as defined by USDOL to include juvenile offender, pregnant or parenting teen, high school dropout, youth currently out of school, homeless; and/or
- is disabled; and/or
- An individual who has no work experience or limited work experience; or
- Is at risk of dropping out of high school (school districts recommends placing this youth into dropout prevention programs conducted within their schools).

Based upon a youth's age, he/she should be at a certain grade or grade level. As an example, if the youth is not in the 11th grade based upon his age, but is in the 9th grade, he/she could be deemed as "at-risk of dropping out of high school". If the youth is not at a reading or math grade level consistent with his actual grade enrollment, then he/she could be in need of "additional assistance" and at-risk of dropping out of school.

Not more than five percent of the ISY newly enrolled in a given program year may be deemed eligible based on the "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment" criterion.

Documentation may include, but are not limited to, legal records (for the offender), medical records (for the pregnant teen and the disabled), and school records (for the high school dropout and the disabled). For homeless youth, documentation could include written verification from an individual or agency providing temporary assistance, written statement from Social Security Agency, or an applicant statement/self-attestation, in limited cases.

(5) Self-Sufficiency Definition: Under WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A) training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who need training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

Describe the definition of “self-sufficiency” used by your local area for:

- (a) Adults (distinguish if there are different definitions for unemployed individuals or employed workers); and
- (b) Dislocated Workers (WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A)(xii)).

LWDB’s self-sufficiency definition is based on whether the individual at the time of application is employed. The LWDB provides a separate self-sufficiency definition for dislocated workers. The Region also uses the self-sufficient wage to measure performance outcomes.

- The definition of self-sufficiency for adult-employed workers is the local LLSIL as annually published by the Department of Economic Opportunity for eligible adults.
- The self-sufficient wage for dislocated workers is the LLSIL as annually published by the Department of Economic Opportunity or 80% of the layoff wage, whichever is greater.

Self Sufficiency for recipients of public assistance, and people with disabilities and other barriers to employment:

WT/TANF programs are defined as follows:

For WT/TANF – 69% of the LLSIL

For SNAP – 67% of the LLSIL

- (6) Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments:** Describe the types of supportive services offered in the local area to include any applicable limits and levels. The supportive services offered by the LWDB in the local area must align with the supportive services outlined in [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 109 – Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments](#).

CareerSource Polk provides funded support services to those who are eligible under governing rules and regulations for the type of funding deemed appropriate and allowable. Limitations on funds will not affect the amount that we provide as the limit

is already relatively low. Therefore, CareerSource Polk funded support services will be provided to those who are eligible until funds are exhausted.

Supportive Services may be provided for Welfare Transition, WIOA Youth, Adults, and Dislocated customers who are participating in authorized program activities and who otherwise are unable to obtain such supportive services.

The Local Board will consider payment for customer support needs that will remove barriers, enable the customer to attend and/or to remain in training, prepare for and actively participate in work related activities that will allow them to attain and remain in full-time permanent employment, including but not limited to job search, post placement employment and community work experience.

Services are coordinated for customers to receive, based on need, support services in an amount up to \$1650 for transportation needs, inclusive of fuel cards, bus passes and limited vehicle repairs. Other supportive services may include ABE/GED classes, clothing, medical services and childcare referral services.

CareerSource Polk is actively engaged with Polk County Transportation Disadvantage Local Coordinating Board, which addresses issues related to transportation for the disable, elderly, disadvantaged and blind services.

- (7) Individuals with Disabilities:** Describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups protected under Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38.

CareerSource Polk career centers strive to be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. All of CareerSource Polk's facilities are ADA compliant providing necessary accommodations, adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants, allowing individuals to participate in the full range of programs.

CareerSource Polk supports individuals with limited English proficiency, employing bilingual staff and providing printed material in several languages. We will continue collaborating with partners to provide services, resources and referrals to limited English speaking jobseekers. Local Adult Education programs offer Adult English for

Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction for adults to improve their English speaking and writing skills but also to improve their academic skills so they can earn a high school credential and enter postsecondary education to improve their career options.

Equal Opportunity evaluates each CareerSource Polk facility at least every three years to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

CareerSource Polk staff members receive training on disability awareness, sensitivity and etiquette; and outreach for employers and federal contractors that are required to comply with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. In addition, select staff is trained to enroll SSA beneficiaries in the Ticket to Work program. Individuals requiring additional services may be referred by staff to other agencies. In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located in our one-stop service delivery system.

CareerSource Polk offers a variety of resources and information on services available to persons with disabilities including: information on training opportunities and links to online training; technology guides for using screen enlargement software, screen reading software, Windows Accessibility features, American Sign Language interpreters, referral to the Abilities work portal on www.employflorida.com, and the Text Telephone or Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY); information on the ADA and accessibility; links to service providers and resources to assist persons with disabilities in removing barriers to employment; and links to information for employers interested in hiring a person with a disability including tax benefits, the ADA and accommodations.

- (8) Linkage with Unemployment Insurance (referred to as Reemployment Assistance in Florida) programs:** Describe strategies and services used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the Reemployment Assistance program (WIOA § 134(d)(1)(A)(vi)(III) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iv)).

DEO jointly managed staff are in the Career Centers and, among other tasks, assist customers as they file Unemployment Insurance Claims. CareerSource Polk recognizes that being unemployed is very overwhelming to customers. There are dedicated computers in each of the Career Centers to facilitate filing claims, job

search, and updating resumes. DEO staff are cross trained to answer basic questions and assist with issues like address changes, 1099's, etc. DEO staff ensure customers are assisted with filing their unemployment claim and can answer questions regarding the initial claims process as well as any questions about rights and responsibilities.

CareerSource Polk RESEA staff conducts the reemployment services and eligibility assessment for referred customers. In 2010, the Florida Legislature passed a law (Chapter 443.091, F.S.) requiring Reemployment Assistance (RA) claimants to register with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) using the state's management information system, Employ Florida (EF), and report to the Career Center as directed by CareerSource Polk for reemployment services. The goal is to ensure RA claimants have access to the full array of employment and training services through the CareerSource Polk delivery system while ensuring that claimants comply with the State's requirements to actively engage in seeking work as a condition of receiving benefits.

- (9) Highest Quality of Services to Veterans and Covered Persons:** Describe the LWDB's strategies and policies for providing veterans and covered persons with the highest quality of service at every phase of services offered.

CareerSource Polk is highly dedicated to providing outstanding service to veterans/eligible spouses and have integrated the veteran services within our career centers. Our Community Involvement and Outreach partnerships are intertwined in that we both work together in coordination for supportive services to veterans and their families throughout the year, assisting with seasonal events, hiring and local events that address the specific needs of veterans within our community. The DVOP specialist conduct outreach activities in the local area to build capacity with community resources, engage with current participants, and actively recruit eligible veterans to increase their case load

The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) is integrated within the Business Service Unit and is involved in all hiring/recruiting and job fairs to ensure and support the hiring of local veterans. The LVER and Business Service Unit work cohesively to assist staff with job-ready veterans for job matching, job development

and possible job placement.

- (10) **Entities Carrying Out Core Programs:** Describe how the LWDB works with entities carrying out core programs to:
- (a) Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
 - (b) Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and
 - (c) Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a portable and stackable credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification) (WIOA § 108(b)(3) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(iii) to include credentials contained on Florida’s Master Credentials List.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act fosters new opportunities for innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and businesses. The shift in VR, Division of Blind Services, CTE, CSBG, SECEP and Adult Education’s roles as core partners in the workforce development system will enhance service options and job choices for those we serve. CareerSource Polk will continue to work with our core partners to:

- Implement the Opportunity Act with other core programs, including the design of the One-Stop Career Center System and the integrated performance accountability system
- Efficiently provide services
- Implement universal design principles into the workforce development system’s facilities and operations
- Establish partnerships with community rehabilitation service providers and businesses
- Review services, programs and partnerships of core Opportunity Act programs to reduce duplication of efforts, as well as gaps between programs
- Work collaboratively to ensure that disability navigators are cross trained with core partner processes
- Partner to communicate, strategize and execute agreed upon methods of meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities

- Identify opportunities to expand services/programs to meet ongoing needs of individuals with disabilities

Eligible customers service will be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA as appropriate, and there is an increased emphasis in all CareerSource Polk service provider contracts on industry-recognized credentials.

Through new and continued partnerships CareerSource Polk will promote efforts to economic self-sufficiency that is attainable through recognized post-secondary credentials and certification.

(11) Employer Engagement: Describe strategies and services used in the local area to:

- (a) Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations

The Business Services Division utilizes the Regional Demand Occupations List, its relationships attained through business related organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Society for Human Resources Management, EDCs, etc.) and lists of employers as the basis for identifying and initiating contact with small and large employers throughout the region. The Business Services Division works directly with employers in identifying and addressing their employment and training needs. This is done through monthly newsletters, e-mail blasts, social media, online surveys, employer-site visits, job fairs, recruiting events, human resources roundtables and an Annual State of the Workforce Summit.

Customer Relationship Management is conducted through employflorida.com as well as Salesforce.com. Activities and case notes in EF provide required documentation of the services provided, while Salesforce.com interfaces with the employer registrations and provides an opportunity to improve feedback on the services provided through employer surveys.

- (b) Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

Meeting the needs of businesses in the local area can be evaluated through the Salesforce-based Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Following some of the events and services, employers are provided with an electronic survey. Since employers can only complete one survey per quarter, they may also be provided with hard copy surveys at some of the events, such as job fairs, recruitment events, and the Workforce Summit.

Business Service Division staffs are members of local, regional or statewide business forums and attend meetings to stay abreast of current and emerging workforce needs. These include Chamber of Commerce, Mid-Florida Society for Human Resources Management, Economic Development Organizations, the Polk Manufacturer's Association, Career Academies, etc.

- (12) Enhancing Apprenticeships:** Describe how the LWDB enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the local economy. Describe how the LWDB works with industry representatives and local businesses to develop registered apprenticeships, in collaboration with apprenticeship training representatives from the Florida Department of Education and other partners. Describe how job seekers are made aware of apprenticeship opportunities.

CSP encourages career seekers to utilize apprenticeship programs as a career pathway to high demand, high wage occupations that are needed in the LWDA. CSP has identified the critical need for skilled labor in the areas of manufacturing and recognizes that apprenticeship programs are a key job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

CSP makes job seekers aware of apprenticeship opportunities through orientations, outreach/community events, flyers, presentations, and partnership meetings.

CareerSource Polk is constantly working with the educational partners to ensure apprenticeship programs are included as part of our extensive offering of training programs. Apprenticeship programs are included on our Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), which is available to all customers emphasizing customer choice. The list is available on our website, and a copy is also offered to the customers when working with the case managers in the ITA process.

CSP is working with industry representatives and local businesses to develop registered apprenticeships in collaboration with apprenticeship training representatives from DEO and other partners, including educational partners

E. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

(1) **General System Description:** Describe the one-stop delivery system in your local area, including the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners (WIOA §108(b)(6)).

(a) Describe how required WIOA partners contribute to the LWDB's planning and implementation efforts. If any core or required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

CareerSource Polk's delivery of services is carried out through its comprehensive One-Stop delivery system, which integrates the provision of services for unemployed, underemployed, and employed workers including WT/TANF and SNAP customers. For WT/TANF customers and others who may require additional education and training, including job readiness, and adult basic education skills training, etc., referrals are made to other partners including, school districts, community-based programs, and faith-based organizations.

CareerSource Polk operates two full service one-stop career centers. Both centers provide WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, MSFW and RESEA services. Upon entering a full-service career center, job seekers find integrated case management approach to assist these individuals to become competitive for employment. Partners co-located at the one-stop career center include: AARP, ALPI, Job Corp, and Polk County Public Schools. Vocational Rehabilitation is in the same facility, on the third floor.

Services provided include:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The WIOA program provides individualized services intended to help job seekers return to the workforce by utilizing general, individual, and if determined eligible, training services. WIOA provides for one-on-one assistance with resumes, interviewing, job search, and career planning. Workers who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs may be eligible for supportive services while seeking

employment, interviewing, or attending training. The primary focus of training is to obtain a certificate or degree of value to the labor market, leading to a job in high demand occupations and emerging industries. As funding allows, participants may be eligible to receive tuition assistance which may include instructional costs, books, materials, and fees (such as application costs, registration, and laboratory fees).

The target population for WIOA services consist of workers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own (dislocated workers); Homemakers who have lost their financial support from a family member; recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals when funds are limited; employed workers that need skills upgrading or retraining.

WIOA Youth:

The Youth program is designed to guide eligible young adults, through high-quality case management, toward educational attainment which includes career guidance and exploration. Youth services allows for the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, including supportive services. The ultimate goal for program participants is either advancement into post-secondary education or the attainment of employment with a family-sustaining or self-sustaining wage. Youth program services are prioritized for out-of-school youth (OSY) and youth with significant barriers, including disabilities, pregnant or parenting, or those subjected to the juvenile/adult justice system.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser provides labor exchange bringing together individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. Through Wagner-Peyser labor exchange system, we have the capacity to assist job seekers to find employment; assist employers in filling jobs, and facilitate the match

between job seekers and employers.

Welfare Transition/TANF

The Welfare Transition Program (WTP) provides emphasis on work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility; as well as opportunities for welfare recipients to move from welfare to work. The support structure includes the programs and services such as: employment programs, job training, child care and transportation assistance; diversion programs to reduce domestic violence and child abuse; diversions to prevent families from going on welfare and relocation assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program emphasizes work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility. Program participants gain valuable skills, training, and work experience in an effort to reach total self-sufficiency.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The program provides re-employment services to pre-selected UC claimants that are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. The services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Orientation and Assessment
- Labor market information unique to area of work experience
- Developing an employability development plan
- Job and additional services referrals
- Follow-up to further assist in their employment efforts

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW)

CareerSource Polk is committed to serving farmworkers who work in the Polk

County service area. The MSFW Outreach Specialist assigned to our Region is bi-lingual and is accustomed to serving the farmworker population and employers located within Polk County. Our MSFW Outreach Specialist works jointly with the agricultural employers and directly with the farmworkers to deliver available employment services and knowledge of services available in our One-Stop career center and other agencies available to the farmworkers to promote quality of the labor exchange and quality of life for famworkers in our service area.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps workers who are adversely affected by foreign imports or job shifts to a foreign country. Assistance is provided to eligible workers in the form of reemployment services, training, job search, relocation, and support benefits in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA) and/or Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA) for older workers.

DEO Merit Staff maintain familiarity with TAA requirements, screening and determination applicability. As part of the TAA Information Meeting, and in any subsequent contact, the local TAA Coordinator will emphasize the importance of receiving an assessment prior to their enrollment in training deadline. Any affected workers requesting TAA assistance that may be coming from outside the region are referred to the local designated TAA staff.

Veteran Services

Our region utilizes an electronic tracking system for all customers that enter the One-Stop Career Center. Veterans are identified in a prominent manner on this system which allows all Wagner-Peyser staff to see the next available customer. Those identified by the VET status will be provided service before non-VETs by Wagner Peyser staff.

Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service in the Resource Room and

for all programs operated by the Region and are seen immediately. Veterans are offered the full range of One-Stop services to include job counseling, job search/referral, resume services, as well as specialized assistance on Veterans rights and benefits as well as assistance and interface with the Veteran's Administration (VA) programs.

- (a) Describe how required WIOA partners contribute to your planning and implementation efforts. If any required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

CareerSource Polk enjoys strong partnerships with required and non-required One-Stop partners. Through these partnerships, attempts are made to minimize duplication of services and leverage resources to ensure efficient use of funds in our region. All partners are allowed, encouraged and applauded for participation in our quarterly Partner Management Team meetings which allow full disclosure of each agency's services, successes and concerns. Discussions at meetings include full engagement of partners with various agency plans, participation on task forces and/or committees and collaboration on grant opportunities that will benefit the region.

All partners are allowed and encouraged to become Tier 1 certified, providing access to Employ Florida and allowing partner agencies to make job referrals.

Vocational Rehabilitation, Polk County Public Schools GED Program, ALPI and Job Corps provide services at the One-Stop career centers. All other partners are located at their own facilities. CareerSource Polk also provides the rural community with services on the Mobile One-Stop Unit as needed.

Several of our strategic partners serve on the CareerSource Polk Board and/or the Youth Development Council.

CareerSource Polk maintains an electronic distribution list of partners and uses it regularly to inform partners of workforce activities, including job fairs, grant opportunities, recruitment events, equipment availability through our disposal

process, etc.

Partners are essential to CareerSource Polk's planning and implementation efforts, as they contribute to our goal of providing seamless and integrated employment services for our customers through the One-Stop delivery system.

- (b) Identify any optional/additional partners included in the local one-stop delivery system.

N/A

(2) Customer Access: Describe actions taken by the LWDB to promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and job seekers.

- (1) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe how the LWDB incorporates feedback received during consultations with local Independent Living Centers on compliance with Section 188 of WIOA (WIOA §108(b)(6)(C)).

CareerSource Polk utilizes the EEO monitoring tool to inspect site operations and services and ensure ADA compliance. Hearing impaired customers are assisted through American Sign Language interpreters, the TTY system, and a current staff member with conversational sign language skills. Individuals with visual impairments are assisted using Job Assess with Speech (JAWS) in the resource room and assessment labs, large print copies and electronic copies of documents. In addition, assistance and referrals may be made through Lighthouse for the Blind or the Division of Blind Services. Individuals with disabilities are referred to the Florida Abilities Work portal on www.employflorida.com. The Disability Program Navigator facilitates staff training on providing services, and resources available to, individuals with disabilities.

- (2) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system use principles of universal design in their operation.

The Board assures that the local career center delivery system provides services to all customers consistent with the principles of universal access and in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations, state policies and procedures. The Board also assures that applicable career services will be provided in at least one physical career center in the workforce area. In the event a facility requires changes to its lay-out, equipment or furniture, a designer may be contracted to ensure the facility remains ADA compliant and is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

Universal access principles include:

Equitable use

Flexibility in use

Simple and intuitive use

Perceptible information

Tolerance for Error

Low physical effort

Size and space for approach and use

- (3)** Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and other means (WIOA§108(b)(6)(B)).

Our local delivery system provides ADA compliant facilities in our Winter Haven and Lakeland career centers. Annual reviews by the CareerSource Polk Facilities Manager and the EEO ensure ADA compliance and access to services.

Remote areas are served through our website and social media, the mobile unit, a partnership with members of the Polk County Library Cooperative and other organizations, and co-locating staff at select sites throughout the county. CareerSourcePolk.com and social media (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) provide information on the services available to employers and job seekers. The mobile unit travels to municipalities, libraries, non-profit organizations, and

correctional probation offices throughout the county providing job seekers with access to computers with internet service, printers, copiers and fax machines and Career Specialists. CareerSource Polk staff has provided training to Polk County library staff and agency partners, and provide updates on new job postings, programs, recruiting events, job fairs and other activities via email.

Services are currently provided by stationing staff at different partner locations, i.e., Libraries, Traviss and Ridge Career Centers, Housing Authorities and Community Centers. Staff continues to develop agreements to co-locate staff at additional partner locations as necessary.

- (3) Integration of Services:** Describe how one-stop career centers implemented and transitioned to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners (WIOA §108(b)(21)).

CareerSource Polk facilitates a paperless system that enables workforce system staff to operate more efficiently with greater accountability and allows customer to submit documentation via electronic means without having to present at our physical locations. Customers can complete various program orientations online to avoid long lines and long waits at the career centers.

- (4) Sub-grants and Contracts:** Describe the competitive process used by the LWDB to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities (WIOA §108(b)(16)).

CareerSource Polk (CSP) competitive procurement process used to award subgrants and contracts is described below:

The extent of competition will be consistent with the dollar amount but, in general, procurements will be conducted in an open manner, available to the public for response and all procurement decisions will be documented.

Competitive procurement process must be used for purchases of \$250,000.01 and above. Each process shall be publicly advertised and a formal request for bids, proposals, or quotes shall be issued. Where the services are for the purpose of implementing grant activities, and not for the day-to-day operations of the agency except as provided herein for On-the-Job Training, GED Training and Employed/Incumbent Worker Training, the decision to let an RFP or a bid shall be made by the governing board, which is, the Polk County Workforce Development Board, Inc., for their approval.

CareerSource Polk will maintain a list of previous and prospective proposers who have asked to be included on the proposer/bid list for various types of goods and services. CareerSource Polk will ensure all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used are current and potential bidders will not be precluded from qualifying during the solicitation period. When CareerSource Polk issues a formal solicitation, these proposers will, if practicable, be notified that CareerSource Polk is seeking goods or services.

Legal notices will be posted on the Board's website and shall appear in at least one newspaper of general circulation for three (3) consecutive days whenever a formal bid/proposal is let. Potential bidders will be given at least ten (10) working days to respond to the advertisement if time permits.

Solicitations will provide for all the following:

Clear and accurate descriptions of the services being procured. The description must not contain features that restrict competition.

All requirements that must be fulfilled and all other factors used in evaluation of bids or proposals.

Technical requirements described in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including a range of acceptable or minimum acceptable standards.

Specific features of--brand name or equal descriptions, if included in the solicitation. If procuring goods or certain types of services, the acceptability of metric measurements.

Preference for ecologically sound and energy-efficient products.

The Board will accept proposals based upon the terms and conditions of the RFP.

Proposals / bids submitted are received by the Board staff and stamped with date and time of receipt.

Proposal/bid evaluation criteria are published with the RFP or bid. The rating criteria include but are not limited to the following elements:

Proposer's financial capability. Proposer's books and records are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Reasonableness of the cost.

Proposer's ability to meet performance goals.

Proposer's record of past performance in the delivery of services.

Proposer's experience.

The Board may conduct pre-award surveys where indicated.

RFPs and bids shall be reviewed by staff for responsiveness. Nonresponsive proposers are notified in accordance with the RFP or bid.

The President/CEO shall assemble review committees to rate and rank proposals and bids. Generally, review committees consist of board members and/or staff members who volunteer to serve in that capacity. They may on occasion consist of members of the community with a special applicable expertise.

Proposals to serve Youth must be presented to the Youth Development Council which shall make recommendations as to funding in some cases to the Board of Directors.

Other proposals/bids for program services must generally be presented to the appropriate Committee/Council who provides oversight for that good or service. The committee then makes recommendations for funding and in some cases selection to the Board's Executive Committee for selection and approval.

Recommendations from the Board's committees are submitted for consideration to the Full Board of Directors which makes the final selection and approval determinations.

All procurement contracts and other transactions between local workforce boards and units of state or local governments using WIOA funds must be conducted only on a cost reimbursement basis. No provision for profit is allowed.

Any excess of revenue over costs incurred for services provided by a governmental or non-profit entity must be included in program income.

The type of agreement entered into by the local workforce board may be fixed price or cost reimbursement, depending on the method of procurement and services being procured. The "cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost" or "percentage of construction cost" methods of contracting shall not be used.

CareerSource Polk will negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts are negotiated using the Federal cost principles.

When possible, CareerSource Polk may enter into state and local intergovernmental agreements where appropriate for procurement or use of common or shared goods and services and may use Federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property.

For fixed amount sub-awards prior approval from DEO will be obtained. Payments will be based on meeting specific requirements of the Federal award and accountability is based on performance and results. The award amount will be negotiated using the cost principles as the guide. CareerSource Polk will use cost, historical cost, or unit pricing data to establish the fixed amount award with assurance the sub-recipient will realize no increment above actual cost. If the award is terminated before the completion of the project, the award amount will be adjusted. The sub-recipient will certify in writing to CareerSource Polk at the end of the award that the project or activity was completed or the level of effort was expended. Prior written approval is required by the sub-recipient for changes in project leader or scope of effort.

Positive efforts shall be made by recipients to utilize small businesses, minority-owned firms, labor surplus area firms and women's business enterprises, whenever possible. Recipients of Federal awards shall take all of the steps outlined in xvii to further this goal.

Contracts shall be made only with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, or accessibility to other necessary resources. In certain circumstances, contracts with certain parties are restricted by agencies' implementation of E.O.s 12549 and 12689, "Debarment and Suspension."

Awards will not be made to a debarred or suspended party. This is required to be verified for all sub-recipient contracts and for vendor contracts greater than or equal to \$25,000, or procurements of Federally required audit services in any amount.

(5) Service Provider Continuous Improvement: Describe how the LWDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers (WIOA §108(b)(6)(A) and 20 CFR 679.560(5)(i)).

To ensure the continuous improvement of contracted service providers and other eligible providers of services, we will continue to monitor and assess the services provided to determine areas of opportunity to improve our service delivery. With the implementation of WIOA, it presents a great opportunity to review the services, programs, and policies and procedures to align resources, correct deficiencies and ensure compliance with the new law.

We continue to enhance system-wide accountability and continuous improvement for the workforce system in general, including training providers. Several methods are currently being implemented at the state level to monitor and assess performance on a quarterly and annual basis through the core partners' submission of data to Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) for data validation and compliance with WIOA requirements and subsequent reporting to USDOL and USDOE.

The state and local boards' Eligible Training Providers List" and the related eligibility procedures ensure the accountability, quality and labor-market-relevance of the training services programs that receive funds through WIOA Title I-B. Training providers will be subject to the initial eligibility pursuant to WIOA, which grants eligibility for only one full fiscal year, after which they make seek continued eligibility, based on performance and compliance with other requirements as established by the local board.

To ensure the continuous improvement of the services provided by CareerSource Polk who is responsible for providing direct oversight and technical support for the execution of workforce programs. CareerSource Polk's as the One-Stop Operator

monitors performance through the appropriate MIS systems (i.e. EF, OSST) as well as monthly meetings with the career center management. Quarterly performance meetings are conducted with the Project Manager and Career Center management to discuss successes, concerns and questions that have surfaced during the quarter.

The CareerSource Polk Board is also structured to provide oversight of program activities. The top management of each Department (One-Stop Career Center, Youth Services, and Business Services) is required to attend the appropriate Board Council/Committee and report on performance over the quarter. The Youth Development Council receives and reviews the quarterly performance report of the Youth Leaders program. The Workforce Performance Council receives and reviews the quarterly performance report of the One-Stop Operator and reviews the quarterly performance report of the Business Services.

CareerSource Polk contracts with a third-party qualified firm that provides programmatic and fiscal monitoring of workforce programs. The contracted monitors conduct monitoring visits at least 4 times during the fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff and Service Provider staff on a quarterly basis.

The continuous improvement of the eligible training providers must include:

- Information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the number of individuals engaging in the program of study. The total number of individuals exiting from the program of study
- The total number of participants who received training services through each of the adult programs and the dislocated worker program
- Average cost per participant for the participants who received training services
- The number of individuals with barriers to employment served by each of the adult programs and dislocated workers.

F. COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- (1) **Coordination of Programs/Partners:** Describe how services are coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop career centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SNAP E&T, and Adult Education and Literacy activities. Specify how the local area coordinates with these programs to prevent duplication of activities and improve services to customers.

Partnerships provide the framework necessary to carry out the strategic imperatives. CareerSource Polk will continue to work with core and partner programs to leverage resources by developing and maintaining key partnerships with the Polk County Public Schools – Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Health Department offices, Department of Juvenile Justice, representatives of targeted industries, chambers of commerce, trade associations; and economic development entities, public and private educational institutions, community and faith based organizations; organized labor; the area’s local elected officials; and state agencies, including Department of Children and Families.

We work with partners through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which sets forth the terms for cooperation and consultation between the partner and the Board with regard to the workforce program services to be delivered by staff in a coordinated, seamless and customer friendly manner within the local one-stop career centers.

A partner’s work group is established and meets on a regular basis to consider ideas, discuss agency initiatives and goals and how partner agencies can help in achieving them. The group’s focus will be to maximize the quality of supported employment service delivery, ensure a comprehensive, efficient and effective referral process and the coordination of intensive vocational services. We will continue to work to ensure career centers are available to serve all job seekers regardless of obstacles to employment, level of need or degree of career development.

CareerSource Polk provides a common service flow for customers starting when a

jobseeker visits our website, utilizes the Mobile Unit, or enters one of the sites. Each location, physical and virtual, provides information on the various services offered, delivers an orientation, and gives the jobseeker an opportunity to take advantage of services through registration. Once a jobseeker visits CareerSource Polk's website or a physical location, they start benefiting from our services including those provided by our local staff and partner staff (DEO, School Board, AARP, Job Corps, Agricultural and Labor Program Inc., etc.) Orientations and intake services can begin online or at the center or mobile unit. On occasion, we bring WIOA services to our training providers to save customers an additional stop at one of our centers.

A jobseeker may fall into one or more categories (e.g., WIOA, WT, Veteran, MSFW, Dislocated Worker, etc.). Regardless of how the jobseeker is classified in terms of service or funding needs, our fully integrated staff is available to assist the customer with all the services. A staff member is assigned to work with the customer throughout the process, including referral to a one-stop partner if needed. The staff member is responsible for delivery of career services and the coordination of trainings, OJT, paid and unpaid work experience, etc., through programs like WT and WIOA. They are also responsible for job placement and retention. Our customers rely on this integrated model to create a seamless, easy-to-use experience that delivers on its promise to ensure and sustain a quality workforce for today and in the future.

We coordinate with Local Education Agencies (LEAs), adult education agencies, county human service offices, juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, Vocational Rehabilitation, economic development entities and other community and faith-based organizations to ensure all customers have access to all the services they need to be successful in training activities and find employment.

- (2) Coordination with Economic Development Activities:** Describe the strategies and services that are used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iii)).

Include an examination of how the LWDB will coordinate local workforce investment activities with local economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the LWDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (WIOA §108(b)(5) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(4)).

CareerSource Polk works closely with all of the various economic development organizations in the region including, the Central Florida Development Council, Lakeland Economic Development Council, Bartow Committee of 100, Winter Haven Economic Development Council, Polk Vision, and Chambers of Commerce located throughout the county.

The Business Services Division and economic development organizations meet with businesses that want to move to or expand their operations in Polk County, and work collaboratively to increase the diversity of job opportunities in the region. Staff regularly attend chamber of commerce functions, and are guest speakers as a means of publicizing our services and activities. The Region also provides entrepreneurship training and works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida and other private and public partners. Staff from the SBDC has provided training to Business Services Division staff, Business Services Division staff refers employers to the SBDC office for assistance, and the SBDC staff has been guest speakers and exhibitors at CareerSource Polk events. In addition, all Individual Work Plans developed for Social Security Ticket to Work participants include information on how to contact the SBDC for assistance in starting a business.

- (3) Coordination with Rapid Response:** Describe how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities (WIOA §108(b)(8) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(7). The description must include how the LWDB implements the requirements in [CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.06.09.A.2. – Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion System](#) and [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 114 – Rapid Response Program Administration](#).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 requires that each state establish a Rapid Response dislocated worker unit to implement statewide Rapid Response activities. In response to this requirement, the state of Florida created the Rapid Response service component for the regional workforce boards within the state, which provides assistance for area employers and workers affected by temporary or permanent business layoffs. The Business Services Unit provides Rapid Response services with our DEO jointly managed staff to area employers that are planning to close their facility or layoff a significant portion of their workforce. Staff will follow the requirements outlined in CareerSource Florida and DEO's policies.

Following the lead of CareerSource Florida, CSP will be seek to expand its outreach efforts to our build layoff aversion strategies. Through ongoing engagement, partnership and relationship-building activities with our Chambers of Commerce, economic development partners as well as education partners and community-based organizations.

- (4) Industry Partnerships:** Describe how the LWDB identifies and collaborates with existing key industry partners in the local area. Describe how the LWDB coordinates and invests in partnership infrastructure where key industry partnerships are not yet developed (WIOA§108(b)(4)A)). The local area must describe how the following elements are incorporated into its local strategy and operational sector strategy policy:

CareerSource Polk identifies key industry partnership opportunities through inquiries and feedback from professional organizations, such as the Society for Human Resources Management, and serves on several local Boards charged with policy development for workforce and education programs.

The key industry sectors our local area has identified include Healthcare, Manufacturing, Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing and Hunting, Transportation and Warehousing, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. To ensure that education and training opportunities stay aligned with the needs of the labor market, CSP uses a similar framework for identifying in-demand occupations. We are

currently working with our state college and manufacturing businesses to identify training candidates, provide training and placement of the participants into manufacturing jobs. CSP has excellent relationships with business partners across several industry sectors.

The President & CEO and her designees engage with nearly all of the economic development organizations throughout the county (i.e. Central Florida Development Council, the Lakeland Economic Development Council, local Chambers of Commerce, etc.) enabling CareerSource Polk to strategically assist with business development and retention efforts.

A. Describe how selected industries or sectors are selected based on, and driven by, high quality data (cite data source used).

CSP regularly reviews and analyzes high quality, labor market information by industry and occupation to sector strategy efforts. Specific data sources include:

- Employment projections Data (both by industry and occupation) produced by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics.
- Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages (OES) program. Information is a result of an occupational employment and wage survey conducted by Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Employ Florida and Help Wanted Online reports to determine real time labor demand through online ads and job postings.
- Direct feedback from employers collected through surveys, roundtables, community meetings and professional trade groups.

B. Describe how sector strategies are founded on a shared/regional vision.

CSP leadership maintains close relationship with nearly all of the economic development organizations throughout the county (i.e. Central Florida Development Council, the Lakeland Economic Development Council, local

Chambers of Commerce, etc.) enabling CareerSource Polk to strategically assist with business development and retention efforts. These relationships have guided the development of the area's sector strategies. All partners agreed and supported the target sectors in alignment with Enterprise Florida's identified sectors.

C. Describe how the local area ensures the sector strategies are driven by industry:

CSP ensures that sector strategies are driven by industry by inclusion; they are part of the process. Representatives from targeted industries serve/participate in different regional economic development organizations. The Business Services team continuously provides feedback from employers in targeted industry sectors.

D. Describe how the local area ensures that sector strategies lead to strategic alignment of service delivery systems.

CSP's Management Team has great partnerships with economic development organizations throughout the county, institutions of higher learning, and other community organizations. CSP also meets with these partners to ensure alignment of service delivery systems.

E. Describe how the local area transforms services delivered to job seekers/workers and employers through sector strategies.

CSP recognizes the importance of good relationships with employers and strives to be flexible to meet their employment and training needs working closely with state and training partners to meet their needs. We continuously assist by conducting different assessments, pre-employment training and screening as per the employer's requirements for hiring as well as onsite recruitment events.

F. Describe how the local area measures, improves and sustains sector strategies.

The sector strategies initiative is still new in our county. Measurement is conducted based on employer satisfaction through Salesforce, job seeker placements and training completions.

(5) Coordination with Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Educations:

Describe how the LWDB coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies enhance services and avoid duplication of services (WIOA §108(b)(10) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(9)).

Coordination of education and workforce investment activities must be linked to employment opportunities in the local area. The local area contracts with education and training providers whose measurable performance qualifies them to receive WIOA funds to offer a wide variety of training programs and occupational choices to eligible customers. The Regional Targeted Occupations List (RTOL) is the document that determines the occupations for which training may be sponsored. The targeted occupations list identifies the labor market needs of Florida's business community and encourages job training based on those needs, with emphasis on jobs that are both high demand and high skill/high wages.

CareerSource Polk's workforce development strategy is intricately tied to education, starting with the secondary school system to include career and technical schools, and continuing through postsecondary education to include our local state college, and public and private colleges and universities. All core programs have a history of engaging with the education system, in particular the career and technical schools and local colleges and will continue to develop those relationships.

CareerSource Polk partners with Polk County Public Schools in providing services to individuals enrolled in the GED program. Our mobile unit travels to specific locations, as requested, removing the transportation barrier for some while providing immediate access to technology to other customers. We also host GED classes our Winter Haven career center and assist with funding GED tests.

CareerSource Polk partners with post-secondary educational institutions allowing them to make presentations to our customers about their various training programs.

Upon request or the need is evident staff will visit the various post-secondary educational institutions, which allows students for immediate access to program and services information provided by CareerSource Polk.

There has also been significant collaboration between CareerSource Polk and Polk State College which has been the recipient of two Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) grants. The grant was used to develop curriculum and customize programs to re-train dislocated workers in Advanced Manufacturing. The grant helped prepare dislocated workers and other unemployed individuals for careers in advanced manufacturing. CareerSource Polk will analyze the results of the projects and utilize best practices and lessons learned to help improve the broader workforce development system.

In serving individuals with disabilities, CareerSource Polk will continue to work collaboratively with local community/state colleges, career and technical schools to explore the development of training programs that are implemented with universal design to train individuals with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment in jobs that meet local labor market demand.

- (6) Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services:** Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation assistance, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(11) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(10)).

CareerSource Polk provides funded support services to those who are eligible under governing rules and regulations for the type of funding deemed appropriate and allowable. Limitations on funds will not affect the amount that we provide as the limit is already relatively low. Therefore, CareerSource Polk funded support services will be provided to those who are eligible until funds are exhausted.

Supportive Services may be provided for Welfare Transition, WIOA Youth, Adults, and Dislocated customers who are participating in authorized program activities and who otherwise are unable to obtain such supportive services.

The Local Board will consider payment for customer support needs that will remove barriers, enable the customer to attend and/or to remain in training, prepare for and actively participate in work related activities that will allow them to attain and remain in full-time permanent employment, including but not limited to job search, post placement employment and community work experience.

Services are coordinated for customers to receive, based on need, support services in an amount up to \$650 for transportation needs, inclusive of fuel cards, bus passes and limited vehicle repairs. Other supportive services may include ABE/GED classes, clothing, medical services and childcare referral services.

CareerSource Polk is actively engaged with Polk County Transportation Disadvantage Local Coordinating Board, which addresses issues related to transportation for the disable, elderly, disadvantaged and blind services.

- (7) Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services:** Describe plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C 49 et seq.) services and other services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system (WIOA §108(b)(12) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(11)).

CareerSource Polk maximizes the labor exchange services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff in many ways, starting as the initial point of contact with individuals who are seeking employment and employers who are seeking employees. We present the delivery of services as a seamless system to all individuals. In striving to provide the best services to customers, we train our staff to assist customers and make their participation experience an effective one, meeting their needs and providing excellent customer services during their participation in one-stop activities.

We provide orientation to the services available through the One-Stop career center and assess customer's skills levels and abilities to determine job readiness and provide immediate assistance with job matching of employer job requirements and screening for supportive service needs. Career Services are provided to all customers who are primarily seeking employment assistance, both self-service and assisted, including customers seeking veteran's services that have no identified significant barriers. Customers are registered in Employ Florida (EF).

To improve the service delivery and avoid duplication of services, CareerSource Polk maximizes its resources by working cohesively with partners. Partner's staff participates in cross training sessions related to customer service, eligibility, resources, referrals, and performance issues, which empowers them to effectively identify and assist customers according to their needs.

- AARP Senior Citizen Supported Employment Program- available on request to assist customers with Resource Room services.
- The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. - staff is co-located in the Lakeland career center and assist customers with housing, transportation and utilities as well as training and employment.
- Job Corp - staff is co-located in the Lakeland career center and assist eligible youth customers with engaging in alternative residential education and job training.
- Polk County Drug Court – CareerSource Polk provides the mobile unit services as well as staff to assist individuals referred by the Drug Court system with job search activities.
- Polk County Public Schools - CareerSource Polk partners with Polk County Public Schools in providing services to individuals enrolled in the GED program. Our mobile unit travels to specific locations removing the transportation barrier for some while providing immediate access to technology. We also host GED classes in our career centers, and fund GED tests.

Our partnership with the above listed partners allows us to enhance the participation and performance of customers served through the system.

- (8) Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy:** Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the LWDB carries out the review of local applications submitted under Title II WIOA § 108(b)(10), consistent with WIOA sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA § 232 (20 CFR 679.560(b)(12)).

CareerSource Polk partners with the Polk County Public Schools - Adult Education and with Alternative School Opportunities to offer a variety of alternative learning opportunities for adults and youth customers to engage into academics through non-traditional methods.

We continuously meet with the Polk County Public Schools - Adult Education to strengthen partnership and to collaborate on various grant opportunities.

At the local level, some adult education providers have developed relationships with postsecondary education providers. Students who do not earn a high enough score on placement tests at the postsecondary institution are referred to a local adult basic education program for remedial work. After the student has demonstrated sufficient academic progress at the local adult education program, as determined by an approved standardized test, the student is referred back to the postsecondary institution.

- (9) Reduction of Welfare Dependency:** Describe how the local board coordinates workforce investment activities to reduce welfare dependency, particularly how services are delivered to TANF/Welfare Transition and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) participants, to help individuals become self-sufficient. This description must include strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support co-enrollment of Welfare Transition and SNAP E&T participants into other workforce development programs. 20 CFR 675.100(h) and 20 CFR 680.620

Welfare Transition Program:

We often co-enrolled participants in the WT Program in adult education/literacy training and in WIOA to provide training opportunities, while WT provides support services. Classroom training and OJTs are also coordinated effort between programs. For WT participants who are medically deferred or have documented disabilities, we refer them to VR or the Division of Blind Services, and for legal assistance to apply for SSI or SSDI.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Participants in the SNAP program may be dually enrolled in the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Workers and/or Youth Services programs to receive education and training opportunities. Participants are also referred to community partners for adult education/literacy training, legal assistance, and housing. Participants in the SNAP program receive assistance with transportation costs related to participation through the Food Stamp Reimbursement (FSR) Program.

G. PERFORMANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

(1) CareerSource Polk's negotiated measures of performance are below:

LWDB 17 CareerSource Polk WIOA Performance Measures	PY2022 Negotiated Performance Levels	PY2023 Negotiated Performance Levels
Adults:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	87.0%	87.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	86.0%	86.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,500	\$7,500
Credential Attainment Rate	77.0%	72.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.0%	60.0%
Dislocated Workers:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	85.0%	85.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	75.0%	75.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,152	\$8,152
Credential Attainment Rate	72.1%	68.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.0%	75.0%
Youth:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	70.0%	70.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	72.0%	72.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,251	\$3,251
Credential Attainment Rate	91.4%	91.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.0%	60.0%
Wagner-Peyser:		
Employed 2nd Qtr. After Exit	61.0%	61.0%
Employed 4th Qtr. After Exit	66.0%	66.0%
Median Wage 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,497	\$5,497

(2) Describe the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high- performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board pursuant to section 101(d)(6) of WIOA.

CareerSource Polk has engaged in a comprehensive accountability model that aims to ensure a service delivery strategy that positions the customer at the forefront of all we do. We will continue to seek innovative approaches to service delivery that align with the rapid growth, generational and technological changes in our workforce.

A monitoring plan is in place to review Board policies, practices, and fiscal and programmatic operations, which is conducted by a third party on a quarterly basis every fiscal year. Monitoring reports, along with the Corrective Action Plans are provided to the Board, through the appropriate Council for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

Once each program year, we are also monitored by the DEO which conducts a fiscal and programmatic review. Results are shared with the Board of Directors through the appropriate Councils for full review and comment. The Councils review the reports and address concerns to the Board staff on a quarterly basis.

A Financial Audit is performed by a third-party audit firm annually, which is shared with the Board of Directors.

CareerSource Polk's Workforce Performance Council reviews, on quarterly basis, all customer concerns and addresses those concerns with the One-Stop Operator. The goal of this process is to ensure that customer concerns are being addressed timely and effectively and to determine if any workforce policy or procedure is impeding staff's ability to deliver quality customer service to our customers.

- (3) Describe how the LWDB considered feedback from one-stop career center customers when evaluating the effectiveness of its one-stop career centers.

CareerSource Polk places a priority on effectively serving customers, not only by providing basic services available through any LWDA, but by continuously

looking for ways to increase the value of its services. CareerSource Polk Career Center staff are trained to prioritize customer needs and assist to meaningfully remove barriers to employment. CareerSource Polk is dedicated to understanding the customers' expectations and preferences, and then organize programs and services around what matters to the customer and what will continue to benefit the customer beyond their interaction with our staff.

In addition to being customer focused, CareerSource Polk continues to explore and employ career pathways with area businesses and educational entities. Each adult, dislocated worker, WTP customer and young adult enrolled into services will have a career plan to identify their career goals. CareerSource Polk is focused on enhancing the lives of our customers by helping individuals envision bright futures.

CareerSource Polk provides opportunities for customers to share their experiences anonymously or not to any member of staff, including the CEO. This can be done by way of designated survey boxes, in person, via phone, electronically or via website. If feasible, consideration to existing policies may be reviewed and/or revised to ensure that we are investing in our local workforce. However, in many cases we will assess the needs of our region and evaluate areas for improvement proactively.