

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local Plan
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023**

2022 Modification

Local Area:

Upstate Workforce Area

Counties within the Local Area:

Cherokee
Spartanburg
Union

Local Area Administrator and Contact Information:

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Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

An analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions, to include existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The analysis shall include:

- ***The knowledge and skills necessary to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including those in in-demand industry sectors and occupations:*** (Plan sections in bold italics are from the SCDEW provided outline.)

The Upstate Workforce Board has developed this four-year plan. It will be used to implement continuous improvement, build stronger relationships, develop services that positively impact the business climate in the Upstate of South Carolina, and create opportunities for individuals to enhance skill sets to increase their earning potential. The Upstate Workforce Board will ensure businesses have access to real-time, viable solutions related to workforce recruitment, training, and retention.

The Upstate Workforce Board's staff constantly reviews labor market data from many sources. The Upstate Workforce Board's One Stop Committee identifies the in-demand occupations for which training dollars may be spent based on this particular labor market data. This decision was based upon a variety of factors including overall growth rates, high growth rates in key subsectors related to regional economic clusters, high quantity of total jobs, family-supporting median wages, and existence of entry- and mid-level jobs connected to career pathways. The Board designates a Business Services Lead and she works closely with the economic developers and with existing and new industries. This allows the group to consider feedback from employers regarding their current and future employment needs.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations encourage Workforce Boards to work closely with community organizations to enhance a coordinated effort. To this end, the staff also reviews the impact of related regional efforts like the Upstate Alliance, area Chambers of Commerce, economic development groups, and other regional economic organizations. The resultant "cross-fertilization" of information has developed many useful symbiotic efforts.

The top sectors employing a large percentage of individuals living in the Upstate service area are:

- Manufacturing – ~~43,398~~ 42,363 employed
- Healthcare – ~~19,961~~ 22,202 employed
- Retail – ~~17,661~~ 18,735 employed
- Educational Services – 14,358 employed

- Accommodation/Food Service – ~~14,977~~ 14,343 employed
- Administrative and Support – ~~14,658~~ 12,775 employed
Note: Includes Waste Management & Remediation Services
- Distribution and Warehousing – ~~11,874~~ 13,963 employed
- Wholesale Trade – 8,140
- Construction Trades – ~~8,179~~ 7,140 employed

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) - 2021 Q4
<https://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/15000020.pdf>

The Upstate Alliance (a ten-county regional marketing arm for economic development) has targeting recruitment in the following sectors:

- Aerospace
- Automotive Manufacturing
- Food Manufacturing
- Life Sciences
- Engineered Materials
<https://www.upstatesalliance.com/top-industries/>

Based on all of the above information, the Upstate Workforce Board's training focus is as follows:

- Advanced Manufacturing (20%)
 - Healthcare
 - Logistics/Distribution (15%)
 - Information Technology
 - Construction (15%)
- The remaining 50% may be spent on any of the above.

This is reflected in our regional instruction letter R17-01 <https://www.upstateworkforceboard.org/local-instruction-letters>.

The basis for the above training focus is because wages paid by these sectors meet the high employment wages required by SCDEW. Our state issued performance measures include minimum average wage targets. For example, the wages paid by the Food Service and Retail sectors are not high enough to meet these performance standards. Of course, we have also experienced a shortage of semi- and skilled workers in the sectors above.

In addition to basic job skills, there are additional knowledge and other skills sought after in the applicants applying for jobs. These skills include:

- Systems Analysis and Evaluation
- Production and Processing
- Hard Skills: such as preventive maintenance, safety, accounting, computer skills, material handling, welding, etc.

- Certifications – such as welding, commercial driver’s license, forklift, etc.
- Soft Skills per below:
<https://www.wikijob.co.uk/content/interview-advice/competencies/soft-skills>



- Industry Specific Skills (per our training area focus) – based on O*Net Online and employer feedback:

Construction Trades –

Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.

Manufacturing –

Production and Processing - knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.

Design – knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principals involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.

Mechanical – knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair and maintenance.

Engineering and Technology – knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.

Healthcare –

Psychology - knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation;

psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

Therapy & Counseling - knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for counseling and guidance.

Treatment – knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive healthcare measures.

Logistics/Distribution/Warehousing –

Clerical – knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as designing forms, office procedures, and terminology.

Production and Processing - knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.

Information Technology –

Engineering & Technology - knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.

Computer and Electronics - knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, computer hardware, and software. This includes both applications and programming.

- ***An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment:***

All three of the counties in the Upstate Workforce Area are very different. The community profiles for each county and one for the Upstate Workforce Area as a whole may be found in the links below:

Upstate:

<http://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/15000020.pdf>

Cherokee County:

<http://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000021.pdf>

Spartanburg County:

<http://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000083.pdf>

Union County:

<http://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000087.pdf>

Because the COVID-19 pandemic caused many shutdowns, the May 2020 unemployment rate for the area was devastating:

Upstate Workforce Area was at 14.8

Cherokee County was at 15.3

Union County was at 16.5

Spartanburg County was at 14.5

Prior to COVID-19, the area was at very low unemployment. The Upstate Workforce Area's unemployment rates for the past eight months prior to the disease-caused shutdowns are below:

February 2020	2.9%
January 2020	2.8%
December 2019	2.2%
November 2019	2.2%
October 2019	2.2%
September 2019	1.9%
August 2019	2.7%
July 2019	3.0%

Indeed, during the eight months prior to COVID-19, the Upstate area had a severe workforce shortage. The previous worker shortage time was marked with many creative employment efforts including:

- The Upstate Workforce Board embarked on a geo-fencing effort with the Palladian Group. This technology allowed us to have targeted marketing/outreach to out-of-state areas in an effort to entice workers to move to the Upstate.
- The Upstate Alliance developed a campaign to interest individuals in relocating to the Upstate of South Carolina.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHq1kZmzh6Q&feature=emb_rel_pause

- This video was removed. Per the Spartanburg Chamber, 19 individuals are moving to the county per day. The Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce developed a video for recruiting people to Spartanburg. <https://www.spartanburgchamber.com/live> and click the 'Calling Spartanburg Home is Easy' video.
- The March 2019 launch of the Manufacturing Sector Partnership (Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg, and Union) has provided a real-time tool to connect with industry leaders and support them as they develop communication strategies, talent recruitment strategies and skill specific requirements within certain occupations, such as maintenance technicians. This group continued to meet virtually during the pandemic. They recently changed their name to the Upstate Manufacturing Network.

In February of 2020, we had 186,599 individuals employed in the Upstate and only 5,599 unemployed. This resultant unemployment rate of 2.9% was well below "full employment" per the definition from economists. Full employment is "the point in which employers must begin raising wages to attract the labor force they need." That rate is usually around 4.6 to 4.9%. In May of 2020, due to COVID-19, those employed dropped to 171,542 with a devastating 29,684 people unemployed. Our unemployment rate spiked from 2.9% to a staggering 14.8% in a mere 3 months.

2022 Update: The Upstate Area has recovered from the COVID-19 crisis and did so quickly unlike many other areas of the country. This may be attributed to the fact that the SC Governor did not shut down the state like many other governors in the US. We are currently at what economists would deem to be full employment. The unemployment rates are as follows for the last six months:

Month, 2022	Rate
January	3.9%
February	4.1%
March	3.3%
April	2.7%
May	3.2%
June	3.6%

In June of 2022 in the Upstate, 188,218 individuals were employed and 7,049 were unemployed with 3,417 job openings.

The Upstate Workforce Area has many characteristics as listed below:

1. Our Population is aging. We are witnessing a significant "skill drain" in our working population as baby boomers exit the workplace into retirement or semi-retirement. Many

- have technical skills that are much needed in all of our Upstate employment sectors. Some are being incentivized to remain in the workplace past retirement age due to their skills.
2. Pre-COVID-19, we were experiencing significant wage growth due to limited worker availability. Now that COVID-19 has eased, we have seen a big spike in wage growth due to the reluctance of many to return to the workforce quickly, retirements, a plethora of incentives that were being doled out and inflation growth.
 3. Technical certifications and technical degrees are still in high demand by employers. Thankfully, STEM career training is abundant in the area. Spartanburg Community College is located in all three of the counties in the Upstate Workforce Area. They now have free tuition.
 4. Employers in the area are increasingly embracing the apprenticeship model. In July of 2020, Apprenticeship Carolina™ received two U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship grants (see attachment I-A). One is the Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant for \$4,499,999 for a four-year time frame. The other is an Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant for \$6,991,000 for a three-year time frame. There is a need for the German equivalent for Apprenticeship Trainer Certification. Attachment I-B is an updated list of the apprenticeships in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties per the last report received.
 5. ~~43,398~~ 42,363 workers in the Upstate work in manufacturing. Surprisingly, these numbers are projected to remain steady with little to no growth. Automation continues to replace workers. Paradoxically, this trend creates more demand for higher skill sets more technical in nature. Somebody's got to build, program, and repair the robots that replace the people.
 6. Our area enjoys a robust automotive manufacturing sector.
 7. The Greer inland port has grown substantially in the past few years. This has been a help to the Upstate for three reasons: 1. The port has eased high truck traffic volumes on our roads. 2. More use of rail transportation has helped ease the trucker shortage, and 3. The inland port presence has had the effect of attracting more companies looking at the Upstate for potential relocation.
 8. ~~Our transportation costs are going down.~~ The cost of fuel continues to go up, and especially diesel which has driven up transportation costs.
 9. Ten at the Top (TATT) led an effort to form the Upstate Mobility Alliance www.upstatemobilityalliance.org. The vision is for the Upstate to be a vibrant and connected region, where transportation policy and investments promote innovation, sustainable development, and economic prosperity for all residents and businesses.
 10. There is an increased focus on small business startup in the Upstate. The area's conscious efforts on increasing minority and small business startups are working. The links to the incubators in the 3 counties is as follows:
 - ~~Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation | USC Upstate~~ The Greenhouse is a business incubator space located in downtown Spartanburg occupying the entire third floor of the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics, "The George."
 - <https://www.sccsc.edu/spark-sc/index.php> - The Spark Center is a primary resource for business development in at SCC, Spark Center SC, is an invaluable tool to help

entrepreneurs and businesses launch, build, expand, and reorganize. The Spark is in a foreign trade zone, located along the I-85 Corridor on Highway 290 in Duncan at the SCC Tyger River Campus, a designated enterprise campus.

- www.know2bgen.com – BGEN works with start-up companies, entrepreneurs, freelancers, creatives, and mobile workforce to help by providing workspace, mentorship, expertise, access to networking, educational resources and sometimes capital (in the form of micro-loans via our community partners).
- <https://www.startmespartanburg.com> – Start:ME Spartanburg is a free intensive 14-week business training program for entrepreneurs who work, live, worship, or plan to open a business in the Northside community of Spartanburg or whose business will provide products and services to the residents of the Northside.
- Referrals are also made to the Small Business Development Centers serving Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties.

11. In Spartanburg, there is an intentional push on white collar job recruitment/creation.

12. During these post-COVID-19 times, it will continue to be difficult to be at full capacity in most businesses due to social distancing requirements. This will serve to slow the growth in employment until a vaccine is developed. Thus, it will take many months to get back to full employment. Mask mandates are no longer in place except in medical facilities. Anyone wanting the vaccines has the opportunity to get them.

13. The Upstate is fortunate to have a well-respected hospital system which now covers all three counties in the Upstate Workforce Area and serves as our 2nd largest employer. We also have ReGenesis Healthcare (a federally qualified community health provider) in all three counties. The Upstate Workforce Area has free health clinics. Healthcare & Social Assistance employment in the Upstate Workforce Area is at 19,961 22,202 and expected to grow and is expected to see a slight decline.

14. Distribution and warehousing are also expected to grow in the have a slight decline in the Upstate.

15. There is a shortage everywhere for individuals in the information technology field and especially in the focus area of cyber security.

16. We also enjoy an outstanding metropolitan university in USC Upstate. This four-year, public institution continues to grow. Due to COVID-19, we have seen a decrease in enrollments at USC Upstate. Some of this may be due to the fact that the technical college tuition is free. Spartanburg Methodist College also has free tuition. There was improvement in the education levels in Spartanburg over the last plan update.

Educational Levels for Spartanburg are as follows:

Population 25 and Older US Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2013 2020 5-year Estimates

Less than 9 th Grade	7.05%	4.44%
9 th through 12 th No Diploma	10.75%	8.44%
High School Graduate	30.76%	30.66%
Some College	20.15%	21.08%
Associate's Degree	10.02%	10.56%
Bachelor's Degree	13.73%	15.55%

Graduate Degree	7.53%	9.28%
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The above data that is listed in the SCDEW Labor Market Upstate Profile is quite old. For example, we know that in Spartanburg, there is a 24% 27% Bachelor's Degree attainment for those 25 years old and above Spartanburg Academic Movement latest data. report <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/524977c2e4b031f96a6912ce/t/5dd40b11c2af6160a098618e/1574177568251/SAM-Chapter4+updated+final.pdf>.

Of the high school graduates in Spartanburg County high schools in 2012-2013 2013-2014, 25% 27% have completed a 4-Year Degree at institutions all over the country and 12% 11% have completed at least a 2-year degree. Some are still enrolled. Some completed technical certifications not included in these numbers. (Data Source: National Student Clearinghouse Student Data Tracker April 2022)

Of the high school graduates in Spartanburg County high schools in 2014-2015, 27% have completed a 4-Year Degree at institutions all over the country and 11% have completed at least a 2-year degree. Some are still enrolled. Some completed technical certifications not included in these numbers. (Data Source: National Student Clearinghouse Student Data Tracker April 2022)

An overwhelming majority of our high school graduates across the entire county of Spartanburg go to Spartanburg Community College when they graduate high school. As of April 2020 report:

- Class of 2013 - 693 went to Spartanburg Community College, 53% remained there for a 2nd year, 155 have received an Associate's Degree and 22 Certificates
- Class of 2014 - 717 went there, 55% remained there for a 2nd year, 139 received Associate's Degree and 25 received Certificates
- Class of 2015 - 611 went there, 51% remained there for a 2nd year, 105 have Associate's Degree and 22 Certificates
- Class of 2016 - 534 went there, 51% remained there for a 2nd year, 94 have Associate's Degree and 23 Certificates
- Class of 2017 - 560 went there, 56% remained there for a 2nd year, 88 Associate's Degree and 7 Certificates
- Class of 2018 511 went there, persistence and completion data not yet available
- Class of 2019 - 470 went to Spartanburg Community College (persistence and completion data not yet available)

This represents nearly 20% of all Spartanburg County High School Graduates from 2013-2019 (ranging each year from 2800 - 3100 graduates) attending Spartanburg Community College (our technical college). Many are still enrolled in college or transferred to other institutions.

Data Source is Spartanburg Academic Movement's Student Tracker for High Schools April 2020 Report.

In Spartanburg, Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) is focusing heavily on educational improvement in partnership with the seven school districts. SAM is a part of the national Strive Together Network that is helping every child succeed, from cradle to career, regardless of race, zip code or circumstance. The Spartanburg chapter is the most advanced in the entire Strive network. In the Upstate area, there are a lot of children living in poverty and especially within the City of Spartanburg. Organizations like SAM are doing amazing work with the schools serving those in poverty. The benchmark measurement areas for SAM are: kindergarten readiness, early grade reading, middle grade math, high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, post-secondary completion and employment. The actual work of SAM reaches deeply into the classroom level on a daily basis.

Cherokee County Educational Attainment is below:

Population 25 and Older US Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2013 2020 5-year Estimates

Less than 9 th Grade	9.42%	5.51%
9 th – 12 th No Diploma	15.61%	13.01%
High School Graduate or GED	35.15%	36.24%
Some College	18.24%	20.85%
Associate's Degree	7.31%	10.00%
Bachelor's Degree	10.4%	8.68%
Graduate Degree	3.87%	5.70%

KNOW(2), a non-profit in Cherokee County, has a focus on education. Their goal is for the residents of Cherokee County to excel academically and obtain certification degrees necessary for economic success. They initiated the Talk to Me and Read to Me programs in Cherokee County. Their Neighborhood Ambassadors program is comprised of an outreach team that reaches a broad base of the community. They build trust and relationships, rooted in service, to help where needed and inspire adults and children to improve their education. Each year, KNOW(2) holds Campo Giorno which is a county wide field day competition for elementary students that celebrates both academic and athletic achievement. KNOW(2) partnered with Cherokee County to develop the Honorable Rufus H. Foster KNOW(2) scholarship project. This project provides qualified residents of Cherokee County the unique opportunity to attend college tuition-free.

Union County Education Attainment is as follows:

Population 25 and Older US Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2013 2020 5-year Estimates

Less than 9 th Grade	7.58%	4.38%
9 th – 12 th No Diploma	14.27%	11.43%
High School Graduate or GED	37.51%	40.04%
Some College	19.7%	20.32%
Associate's Degree	8.06%	10.35%
Bachelor's Degree	8.63%	9.73%

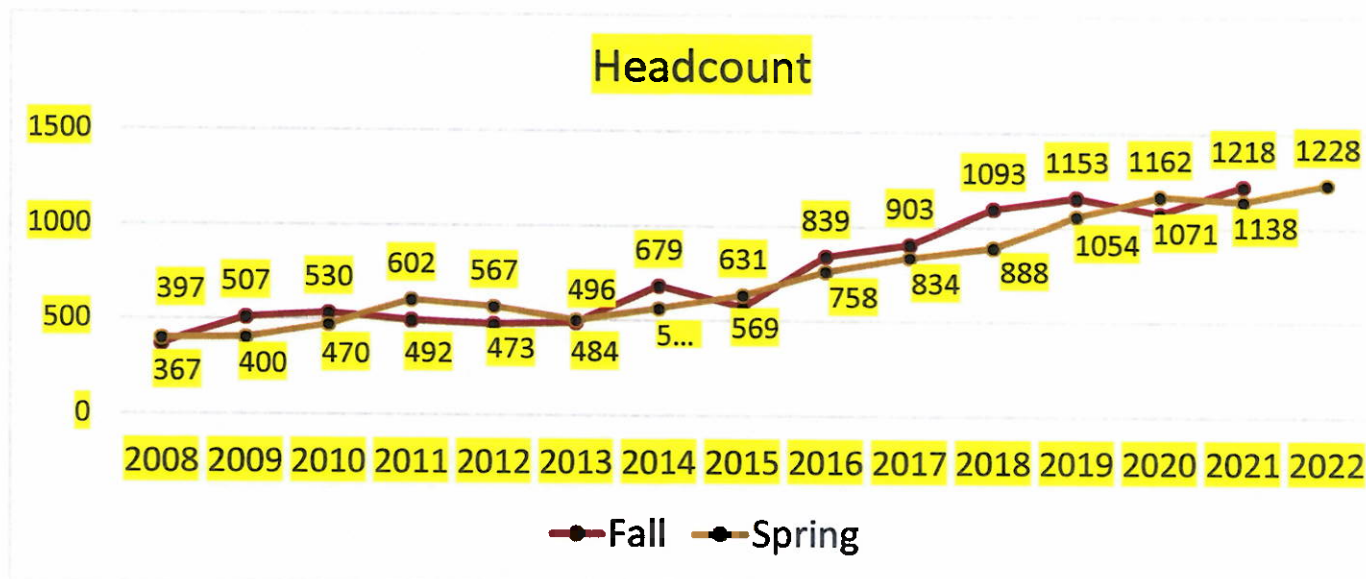
Graduate Degree	4.25%	3.75%
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Each summer, Union County Schools partners with the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation and the Upstate Workforce Board to conduct a STEM Camp at Sims Middle School. Students focus on STEM subjects in an effort to maintain basic skills levels over the summer. They also learn about local careers and take several plant and organization tours. The Union County School District also has a STEM summer program for earlier grades.

Operation Workforce Training is for seniors or recent graduates of Union County Schools (home, private, public, or charter school). They attend 65 hours of classroom training which prepares them for general industry positions. They become knowledgeable in Six Sigma Yellow Belt, MSSC Quality Practices and Measurement as well as receive OSHA and forklift certifications. These students do not have to pay for the class (SCC has a grant that covers the costs). Their graduation ceremony is held at a luncheon (students and parents attend). Each student receives \$500 from Lockhart Power's CEO, Bryan Stone.

Union County developed a scholarship program to provide eligible residents access to post-secondary education and training programs leading to jobs that are in demand today and in the future. Students may attend USC Union or Spartanburg Community College.

USC Union has experienced considerable growth – see below (this is an updated chart)



Ms. Cherie Pressley, Workforce Advisor with the SC Department of Commerce, recently completed an Education GAP Analysis and asked that the PowerPoint about this analysis be included with this plan. Please see Section I – Attachment I-C. The GAP Analysis was completed in partnership with Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union County School Districts in response to the

need for a comprehensive local needs assessment. Questions regarding the PowerPoint may be sent to cpressley@sccommerce.com.

- ***Individuals with Barriers to Employment:***

The Upstate Workforce Board partners with the SC Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Commission for the Blind and ABLE, SC to serve individuals with disabilities in the area of education and employment. The data for the three Upstate counties related to the disability rates are below for those under the age of 65:

South Carolina: ~~10.4%~~ 16.1%

Cherokee County: ~~13%~~ 11.6%

Spartanburg County: ~~10.7%~~ 10.6%

Union County: ~~15%~~ 16.1%

(Data source: US Census Bureau, ~~2014—2018~~ 2016 – 2020 Estimates)

The Upstate Workforce Board employees serve on the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. The Mayor's Committee holds advocacy and awareness events throughout the year. Yearly, a large disabilities walk is organized to bring awareness to the fact that those with disabilities make great employees.

Homelessness (Data Source: ~~2019 Report—Continuum of Care in South Carolina~~ 2020 SC State of Homelessness Report) shows ~~1,401~~ 1,536 homeless in the Upstate (~~13~~ 11 county region). Spartanburg had ~~229~~ 201 homeless. Cherokee County had ~~59~~ 85 homeless.

The Upstate Continuum of Care has the largest population of students experiencing homelessness (~~46%~~ 48% of the homeless students in SC are in the Upstate). A remarkably high percentage of Upstate students were experiencing unsheltered homelessness (~~1,345~~ 1,697), accounting for ~~76%~~ 80% of students experiencing unsheltered homelessness across the state. This is ~~was~~ very concerning and especially since when these students have not been able to ~~could not~~ physically attend school due to building closures.

Veterans and their family members receive priority of service at the SC Works centers. Veterans have more services now than at any other point in history. They are very deserving of these services and more. The veteran count is in the tables below.

COVID-19 shed light on the lack of broadband in the state of South Carolina. All Upstate school districts pushed their curriculum and learning out via the internet. Many students were unable to receive this information. This serves as a big barrier for children not physically attending school. Educators fear a significant learning slide in the best of circumstances. The lack of access to computerized learning has struck the impoverished disproportionately. Update: The state

and counties received funds related to the pandemic and are using a portion of those funds to increase broadband.

The tables below provide household broadband access information as well as other useful demographic information that is more recent:

Cherokee County, South Carolina

2019 Population Estimates

57,300

Source: Vintage 2019 Population Estimates

Median Household Income

\$ 35,836

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons in poverty, percent

16.8 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

Educational Attainment: Percent high school graduate or higher

79.6 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent

12.8 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE)

Median Housing Value

\$ 95,300

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Total Housing Units

24,380

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Number of Firms

3,165

Source: 2012 Survey of Business Owners: Company Summary

Veterans

3,596

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Percent of households with a broadband Internet subscription

61.1 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Union County, South Carolina

2019 Population Estimates

27,316

Source: Vintage 2019 Population Estimates

Median Household Income

\$ 40,120

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons in poverty, percent

20.4 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

Educational Attainment: Percent high school graduate or higher

81.4 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent

11.8 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE)

Median Housing Value

\$ 77,300

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Total Housing Units

14,100

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Number of Firms

1,694

Source: 2012 Survey of Business Owners: Company Summary

Veterans

1,796

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Percent of households with a broadband Internet subscription

62.0 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Spartanburg County, South Carolina

2019 Population Estimates

319,785

Source: Vintage 2019 Population Estimates

Median Household Income

\$ 50,179

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons in poverty, percent

13.6 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

Educational Attainment: Percent high school graduate or higher

85.3 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent

12.7 %

Source: 2018 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE)

Median Housing Value

\$ 133,700

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Total Housing Units

127,850

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Number of Firms

21,249

Source: 2012 Survey of Business Owners: Company Summary

Veterans

18,334

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Percent of households with a broadband Internet subscription

76.4 %

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

UPDATED:			
Demographic	Cherokee	Spartanburg	Union
Population Estimates	56,052	335,864	27,016
*US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP), updated annually - 7-1-21			
Median Household Income	\$ 37,787	\$ 53,757	\$ 41,117
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates - 2016-2020			
(in 2020 dollars)			
*Persons in poverty, percent	14.6%	14.2%	14.9%
*The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 1-Year Estimates - 2020			
Educational Attainment: Percent high school graduate or higher	81.5%	87.1%	84.2%
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates - 2016-2020			
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	15.2%	12.9%	12.4%
*The Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE), 1-Year Estimates - 2020			
Median Housing Value	\$ 98,300	\$ 153,000	\$ 80,300
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates - 2016-2020			
Total Housing Units	24,944	140,821	13,487
*US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP), updated annually - 7-1-21			
Number of Employers	907	7,166	455
*July 22, 2022 SCDEW LMI Community Profile			
Veterans	3,437	18,590	1,886
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates - 2016-2020			
Percent of households with a broadband Internet subscription	67.0%	82.1%	74.4%
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates - 2016-2020			

- **An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including available education and training opportunities. This analysis must indicate the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities necessary to address the education and skill needs of job**

seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers in the region.

The Upstate Workforce Board is responsible for oversight of the performance of the SC Works system in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties and is a large financial contributor to the system. The Upstate Workforce Board has had ~~did have~~ substantial federal budget cuts over the years. ~~again this year.~~ We were fortunate to be level funded for program year 2022. The co-location of the Spartanburg SC Works Comprehensive One Stop Center with the downtown campus of Spartanburg Community College has been great. The space allotted to SC Works provides several advantages in service delivery: increased access to computer resources for work search related tasks; increased capacity for workshops to meet job seekers' needs more effectively; increased capacity for testing; and the ability to host job fairs more frequently on site at a significant cost savings. Being located on the campus also gives job seekers easier access to the college, its resources, and academic/continuing education staff. The location is very close to public transportation. This location allows for seamless service options. The only weakness of the co-location is poor signage for the SC Works Center. Update: Spartanburg Community College offers free tuition. Due to this, they have had explosive growth. They needed the space that we occupied in the downtown campus of their school. We had to move to a temporary site in the Business Technology Center in downtown Spartanburg at 145 North Church Street, suite 110. In Union, we are located inside the beautiful, newly renovated, Union Carnegie Library. This space is located in the downtown area. Being co-located with the library allows us to tap into some of the library customer traffic for our services. In Cherokee County, we rent a stand-alone location in the Tiffany Park area of the city. The Upstate Workforce Board funded SC Works centers will continue in all three counties we serve to provide help for job seekers and training dollars for those needing to upgrade their education. For training options, we utilize an eligible training provider list. Training providers submit applications to provide training to our customers and the trainings are approved by the One Stop Committee of the Upstate Workforce Board. Due to free tuition at Spartanburg Community College and other technical colleges, our training options listed on the eligible training provider listing continue to dwindle. Training institutions do not want the burden of data reporting on all students as required by USDOL.

The Upstate Workforce Board has a very strong Regional Director of Business Solutions, and she is the best in the state of SC. She is designated by the Upstate Workforce Board. The Upstate Workforce Board has a written employer services strategy and an integrated Business Services Team. This team includes multiple partners from various agencies and other organizations. The Regional Director of Business Solutions serves as the liaison with the three economic development entities in the three-county area. Our Business Services Team is business driven. Team members are cross trained to represent the workforce system holistically. They deliver services through an account executive approach which eliminates program focus and decreases duplication of services. This team meets at least ~~monthly~~ quarterly to discuss challenges within the business community and to brainstorm creative approaches to quality solutions. Recruiting and screening for employers is a primary business

service. This team holds recruiting events in all counties throughout the year. A large annual job fair is also conducted in ~~each county~~ the Upstate Workforce Area once per year at a minimum. This team could be strengthened if the Wagner-Peyser staff were under the supervision of the SC Works One Stop Manager. It would allow us to improve quality and save dollars. ~~This model is now allowed per USDOL.~~ In 2022, USDOL does not allow for this model unless grandfathered. For more information on all services offered by SC Works, see www.scworksupstate.com.

We are fortunate in the Upstate Workforce Area to have many educational resources (see list below). Although there is a plethora of educational support opportunities, it is still difficult to recruit people willing to continue their education. This resistance to continue education is especially prevalent in our low-income population. SCDEW requires us to spend 70% of our training dollars on those that are low-income. Pre-COVID-19, the unemployment rate was so low that individuals preferred working to attending technical school or college. The Upstate Workforce Area has embarked on several outreach efforts to entice people to further their education. One such effort included geo-fencing low-income areas in the City of Spartanburg. We were able to do this with a \$7,500 grant we received from the Spartanburg County Foundation. We have increased our speaking engagements in the low-income areas, and in the middle and high schools. We have also developed several partnerships with organizations which target their services to low-income populations. We plan to continue these efforts even more aggressively. Update: The Technical College has free tuition and has increased enrollments substantially. We are focusing a lot of our funding this program year towards On-the-Job Training with local businesses. We also are co-enrolling to offer supportive services. We have had an opportunity with this at USC Union with the nursing students.

We do not know how many individuals will permanently lose their jobs due to the COVID-19 shutdown. We believe a forced employment gap will be an opportunity for skill upgrading for those losing their jobs due to COVID-19 related layoffs. We will not know this until unemployment benefits begin to dwindle. The CARES Act benefits have been too lucrative and have caused some employers to lose out on their employees when they try to call them in to work now. The speed of the economic recovery will also dictate whether the unemployed will choose to regain employment quickly or if they'll seek additional skills training. We assume SCDEW will perform outreach to bring the individuals into the SC Works centers to review employment and training opportunities. Businesses in the area are struggling to fill skilled/technical positions. Using this gap in employment could help fill this need. Update: SCDEW has done a great job with conducting outreach to those on unemployment to help facilitate a return to the workplace. We still have a labor shortage, but it is improving slowly.

Another weakness we have seen is with childcare centers closing during the initial COVID-19 crisis. We are very concerned that childcare may continue to be a barrier for workers and for those seeking work. For a long period, approximately 50% of daycare facilities were closed due to COVID-19. If the schools only offer a partial onsite presence this fall, childcare

availability will continue to plague the workforce. That is to say, limits of childcare availability could well become a deterrence to economic recovery. **Update: Childcare centers have reopened.**

In the Upstate we have also had a long-standing problem with lack of affordable/available transportation. Individuals in outlying areas and rural counties cannot get to jobs and education. These people are needed in the workforce. With budget cuts over the past few years and a steep one this year, the Upstate Workforce Board will not have the funds to support reliable transportation in the area. Once recovery occurs, we believe there will be more private sector led transportation efforts in the area to address this need for workers and learners. **Update: We were level funded for program year 2022. We are offering transportation funding through supportive services.**

There are 9 school districts in the Upstate Workforce Area. There are five Career Technology Centers linked to high schools. We will continue to speak in the classrooms, be at career fairs and partner with education as much as possible in an effort to interest students in the in-demand jobs in our area.

We have a strong college presence in our area. The following post-secondary educational institutions are located in the Upstate Workforce Area:

Limestone College
1115 College Dr.
Gaffney, SC 29340
800.795.7151
2018 Degrees Awarded: 1,338

Converse College
580 E Main St.
Spartanburg, SC 29302
864.596.9000
2018 Degrees Awarded: 608

Kenneth Shuler School of Cosmetology-Spartanburg
1515 John B White SR Blvd.
Spartanburg, SC 29301
864.587.6000
2018 Degrees Awarded: 194

Palmetto Beauty School
2601 East Main St.
Spartanburg, SC 29307
864.579.2550
2018 Degrees Awarded: 36

Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic
2020 Springfield Rd.
Spartanburg, SC 29316
864.578.8770
2018 Degrees Awarded: 172

Spartanburg Community College

107 Community College Dr.
Spartanburg, SC 29303
864.592.4500
Campuses in Union and Cherokee Counties
2018 Degrees Awarded: 1,502

Spartanburg Methodist College
1000 Powell Mill Rd.
Spartanburg, SC 29301
864.587.4000
2018 Degrees Awarded: 342

University of South Carolina-Upstate
800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29303
864.503.5000
2018 Degrees Awarded: 2,586

Wofford College
429 N Church St.
Spartanburg, SC 29303
864.597.4000
2018 Degrees Awarded: 1,062

University of South Carolina-Union
309 East Academy St.
Union, SC 29379
864.429.8728
2018 Degrees Awarded: 126

Source: Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Spartanburg is also home to a full medical school, the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM).

The Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation is a non-profit that supports the Upstate Workforce Board. It applied for and received a grant to help with transportation challenges in Cherokee County for adults pursuing their high school diploma or GED. This grant from the Cherokee County Foundation allows us to transport individuals from their homes to Adult Education. This grant was received again in 2022. The non-profit also received a grant for \$27,295 from Women Giving for Spartanburg to purchase a vehicle for the USC Upstate ACHIEVE WIOA program. A Ford Explorer was just received in August of 2022. In October of 2022, the non-profit was awarded a grant from the Spartanburg County Foundation in the amount of \$26,180 to purchase another vehicle for the USC Upstate ACHIEVE WIOA program. We hope to have this vehicle by the first of 2023. We continue to apply for grants to bring needed funds for transportation options.

The Upstate Workforce Board has funded two fantastic youth programs over the past several years (one credit recovery program named YouthStop and one GED program named USC Upstate ACHIEVE. These are for individuals 16 – 24 years of age and low-income). Due to budget cuts, only one program will be funded in program year 2020 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). The YouthStop program elected to close and not apply. The request for proposals was issued and we have received two applications that are under review.

SC Works Greater Upstate purchased a virtual job fair platform during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed us to hold our first virtual job fair. It was very successful with 42 businesses and 529 job seekers attending. This will likely become the primary means for conducting job fairs in the future. We will also conduct a Career Awareness Showcase for high school students utilizing this platform in partnership with the Regional Center Director from the SC Department of Commerce. We will be able to host virtual career fairs in the schools using this platform. This will help link companies with students more directly to spark interest in careers in the Upstate area. SCDEW also purchased a license for another job fair platform, so we now have two options for virtual workforce job and career fairs.

In 2018, a group of upstate manufacturers were convened to discuss mutual employment problems. The group took off, generating a life of its own. It has rebranded named itself “the Diversified Manufacturing Partnership the Upstate Manufacturing Network.” The Network will kick off networking events and a Re-ignite event in the fall of 2022. This group has matured into a motivated, if not passionate, effort pursuing a manufacturing sector strategy. The Business Services Lead Partnership Facilitator/Convener from SC Works serves as the point of contact for convening the group. He reports to the Business Services Lead. They continue to meet regularly to address workforce development in the region. They even continued to meet during the COVID-19 shutdowns. The following businesses serve on the steering team and meet monthly: BMW, Century Printing, Michelin North America, Strama MPS, West Fraser, and ZF Transmission.

The following businesses are involved:

BMW, Century Printing, Contec, Cooper Standard, Customer Performance Engineering, Dantherm Air Handling, EPC, GE, IVC Inc., Michelin, Milliken, Minileit, Inc., Siemens, Teijin Carbon Fibers, ABB, AWL Automation, Bosch, Mogul, Norbord, Nutra, Standard Motor Products, T&S, TransTech of SC/Wabtec and ZF Transmission.

In March 2019, this partnership identified two initial priorities to tackle as a group through focused and industry led action teams:

Talent Team: Build a talent pipeline through improved career awareness. The talent team has secured TALLO for a pilot marketing campaign targeting college non-completers. This campaign will run under the SC Future Makers brand and will not duplicate efforts. The team will also revisit recruitment needs for manufacturing post-COVID as the targeted talent pool target may change.

Middle Skills Team: Address technical skill gaps of entry level Maintenance Technicians. The middle skills team has unveiled the maintenance technician skills matrix, identified core competencies for curriculum and is working on the development of an exit assessment. The team will work with the technical colleges to implement a shared curriculum.

The Upstate Workforce Board partnered with Spartanburg County, SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Spartanburg Community College on a prisoner-to-work training and employment program in

2016. The program, called “Operation Educate”, has been both an employment and a recidivism reduction success. It has been replicated in other areas. A grant was just received to continue the Spartanburg program and expand the program into Cherokee County. United Way of the Piedmont was included as a partner in this grant. United Way will receive funds to provide transportation. A mobile unit is being purchased to be located at the jail in Cherokee County to offer onsite classes. A staff person has been hired to work at that site.

As has been mentioned, our past, fully employed workforce has been more motivated to work and less motivated to advance their training. If this continues, the Upstate Workforce Area’s training efforts will migrate to a more targeted on-the-job training at local business locations.

The Upstate Workforce Area’s funded SC Works center has partnered with the Spartanburg Northside Development Initiative. This is a community-based effort to improve the economic circumstances of a poverty-dense neighborhood. The program is a construction project in partnership with the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System. The program seeks to train individuals for the construction industry. The training is both classroom based and hands-on based.

~~The Business Services Lead of SC Works Upstate has worked with the SC Manufacturers Extension Partnership (SCMEP) on a training program that includes virtual classroom instruction and on-the-job training. This will be rolled out in the program year starting in July, 2020.~~ Due to Covid-19, this did not roll out. The following has occurred regarding virtual reality:



In June 2021, SC Works Greater Upstate added a career exploration resource to its arsenal. Amidst the pandemic, this technology provided a solution, but even today career exploration has expanded to include a virtual platform. This virtual platform allows SC Works to offer our job seekers, high school students, and partner participants to access more than 23 occupations within multiple industries through a virtual reality immersive experience. For employers, this platform is seen as a marketing tool to attract students and adults to careers within their industry. Since July 2021, SC Works has provided career exploration opportunities to more than 200 individuals in partnership with Eckerd Connects, Greenville County schools, Greenville Technical College, Spartanburg Regional Project Search, and USC Upstate Achieve.

In addition to career exploration opportunities, virtual reality is now a platform for training for high school students, those seeking employment, and those already in the workforce. SC Works plans to provide virtual reality training to both job seekers, youth, and employer partners by July 1, 2023.

ResCare Academy is a database housing hundreds of online training courses that our customers may take free of charge. This has been a great resource for the individuals in our area. Update: Equus has switched to LinkedIn Learning Platform. There are over 13,000 courses to choose from and individuals can upload their certificates directly to their LinkedIn profiles.

Workshops are offered continuously at the SC Works one stop centers for anyone in the public. These were offered via internet once COVID-19 hit and centers were closed to the public. Update: All centers are fully operational with both in-person and online options for workshops. We were first in SC to open our doors back to the public.

We are disappointed that incumbent worker training (IWT) dollars will not be available from SCDEW this coming program year as they have been for many years. With our 15% budget cut, we cannot use any of our formula funds for IWT. This is a real loss to our area businesses and for individuals to build transferable skills while working for their companies. Update: SCDEW did issue IWT funds during PY21 for which we were grateful. We also have the opportunity to request Rapid Response IWT funding.

We have also been waiting on SCDEW to roll out an anticipated soft skills training. The state has been working on a soft skills program for over three years. Should the state be unable to develop this vital program soon, the Upstate Workforce Board has plans to work with the private sector to develop this program. We plan to develop an employer-led and employer-validated soft skills training locally. This has been the primary area of concern for businesses, and we need to quickly address resolving this problem in a formalized manner. Update: SC Works currently offers a specific soft skills workshop that is open to anyone interested in the topic. The workshop entitled Skill Me Now! provides an overview of what soft skills are, why employers seek out candidates that possess them and a deep dive on communication and conflict resolution/problem solving. The workshop is offered twice a month at different times to allow for people with varying schedules to attend. This session has also been conducted onsite for partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education in the Upstate. The workshop was developed by the Service Delivery team at Equus. Prior to the development, our local team including the Regional Director of Business Solutions participated in reviewing a list of 50 soft skills. The team then selected the top 5 needed for our market. That information was provided to Equus (corporate) who built the presentation around those skills. In addition to Skill Me Now!, the SC Works Facilitator staff also revamped other workshops to incorporate at least one soft skill component in every workshop offered.

Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

A description of the local board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency, including:

- ***Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and***
- ***A description of how the local board will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic-vision and goals referenced above.***

Mission: To build and maintain a workforce development system that meets the needs of employers

Vision: To create and oversee a continuously improving workforce development system that:

- Encompasses all necessary resources for the citizens of our region to obtain employment at a livable wage
- Ensures employers have a work ready pool of applicants and a point of contact to obtain other employer related services
- Promotes youth development in education, training and employment

Core Values:

- Uncompromising integrity in all situations
- Honestly and justly holding each other accountable in ethical challenges
- Embracing different perspectives, experiences, cultures, backgrounds, talents, and contributions of others
- Striving for excellence in workforce and community development

Tagline: Advancing the Future of Business and Community

The Upstate Workforce Board is the champion for regional workforce development and economic growth. We fully support economic development regionally through our involvement with regional organizations. Through our work with Ten at the Top, Upstate Alliance and the 14-county Manufacturing Sector Strategy work, we will work to address barriers that keep our economy from moving forward. Transportation and upskilling are two primary efforts on which we are focused regionally.

Update: During COVID-19, the Manufacturing Sector Strategy work continued virtually. The businesses have now named their group “The Upstate Manufacturing Network” and will have a reignite event this year. We are focusing our attention on enhanced supportive services of all types. We think this will help with retention for those upskilling. With gas prices so high, this will definitely help those traveling regionally for training. For those with significant barriers to employment, our supportive services might be the difference in a decision on whether to go to training or not. The Upstate and Greenville Workforce Boards are close partners and cost share many resources such as several staff. We have quarterly regional meetings and also bring in the One Stop Operator staff from Equus for a portion of these meetings to plan and look at regional activities. We issue regional instruction letters in most cases so that the staff being cost shared are not having to following two sets of instructions. We have held joint trainings for staff. This cost sharing has saved us a lot in federal funding in a time when funding cuts have occurred over the years. The 12 local Workforce Boards in South Carolina held a retreat in Charleston in 2022 in an effort to share best practices and discuss regional sharing. This meeting was well attended. Since a past director of SCDEW encouraged the dismantling of the Workforce Board Directors Association a few years ago, we have not had a retreat. It is very important to have these retreats to hold longer discussions and share concerns and promising practices. Also at the retreat, a Boeing spokesperson informed the group about their efforts to recruit employees across the entire state. The spokesperson also encouraged the Workforce Board staff to reach out to him when there was an opportunity to speak to students at events. Bringing the group together statewide for a full day or two with an invited speaker is money well spent and also motivates us to try doing things differently.

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment:

Barriers to employment exist for residents who are low-income, disabled, veterans, ex-offenders, and/or have a drug abuse history, lack of basic and/or occupational skills, and lack of transportation/childcare. To address these barriers, we offer the following:

- Funding a quality WIOA youth program with staff experienced in serving youth with barriers;
- Identifying current programs in place that are addressing employment barriers in order to make referrals. Staying on top of changes in programs that address barriers to employment as grants come and go within these organizations. This is done through partner meetings, safety net meetings and getting out in the community to do outreach and meeting with agency/non-profit/education staff from other organizations;
- Identifying gaps in services and working with communities to fill the gaps. The WIOA Youth Program, USC Upstate ACHIEVE, noticed that students were often not eating breakfast or did not have food at their homes. They also noticed basic hygiene issues. To remedy this, the ACHIEVE Director asked in our grantee meeting if she could start a food pantry. Everyone rallied around this. The non-profit serving the board raised funds from

board members and others and seeded the pantry with \$200.00. ACHIEVE staff purchased snacks, pop top cans of mac and cheese, soups, etc. They also purchased deodorant and other hygiene items. They were able to secure condoms from another agency for the back of the pantry. Some students do not wear clean clothing so we are now doing a t-shirt drive so that they can issue clean t-shirts when needed. We realize we must address these types of issues as they arise and not ignore them. Often, staff must address the basic needs before learning can occur;

- Encouraging citizens to use the 211 number for services. 211 is a free and confidential service that helps citizens identify local resources. This is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week;
- Explore fee-for-service opportunities that other Workforce Boards in the U.S. are doing in an effort to increase funding due to cuts. COVID-19 put a hold on this for the Upstate Workforce Board. We are planning to take another look at this in future grantee meetings. The Upstate Manufacturing Network had four sponsors donate \$583.00 each to have a kickoff reignite event this year. Having the non-profit helps us secure sponsorships for events for which we might not have funding budgeted. We have also secured several grants for the ACHIEVE program through the non-profit. One example is a \$27,400 grant from Women Giving for Spartanburg to purchase a Ford Explorer so that we could replace a 2006 Dodge van for student transportation to and from their homes to classes;
- Funding a one stop system that serves as the go to place for employment in each county;
- Providing training dollars and supportive services to individuals in need of skill building in order to earn self-sufficiency wage in an in-demand occupation;
- Continue to perform targeted recruitment to individuals with barriers to employment and training;
- Ensure that soft skills training is a priority for our customers ~~that is employer led and employer validated~~. This was discussed in more detail earlier in the document. We moved forward without employer involvement due to COVID-19; and
- Promoting career pathways as a route to self-sufficiency. With the shutdown of schools during COVID-19 and then the reluctance to have visitors in the schools last year, we were unable to speak much in the schools. We are hoping to get back in the schools more frequently to talk about career pathways.

A description of how the local board will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above.

- Hold regular partnership meetings with all partner programs on a monthly basis so that alignment of resources is maximized. This should include discussion on difficult cases;
- Hold Business Services Team meetings on a ~~monthly~~ quarterly basis to ensure that we do not duplicate contacts with businesses. Coordinate efforts with all partners in the hiring and screening process;
- Continually seek new partners that can help us meet the needs of our businesses and job seekers;
- Partnering with others for grants to enhance our services due to funding cuts;

- Build and utilize relationships to improve our services to customers;
- Continue training staff on racial equity and using our knowledge to make changes in our communities. Update: Unfortunately, we stopped this training due to COVID-19. We do review demographics of our customers often. We also discuss equity in our grantee meetings;
- Present cases to the Safety Net Council as needed to address the barriers that our customers have;
- In partnership with the Upstate Workforce Board's Disabilities Committee and the Spartanburg Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, we will continue to educate businesses and community members about the importance of inclusion in the workplace for individuals with a disability. Update: We asked for funding from Spartanburg County from the ARPA funds for a driving simulator that may be used by the high schools to assess individuals with disabilities to determine if they are able to drive a vehicle safely prior to providing driver's education. This simulator may also be used in the evening to assess disabled veterans prior to offering driver's education specifically around their disability. We are awaiting to hear on this funding. There is a big need for this simulator in the area. The local school districts have committed to staff the project if funding is secured;
- Hold outreach and recruitment sessions in the low-income and rural areas in our three counties; and
- Continue to convene groups to address issues in the communities. Ensure proper follow through on suggestions by setting goal dates and assigning individuals to these tasks.

Section III: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

- 1. A description of the planning process undertaken to produce the local plan. The description must include how the chief elected officials, local board, and core and required partners were involved in the development of the plan.***

The Upstate Workforce Board's Executive Director decided to follow a similar model used in developing the last four-year plan. ~~Due to COVID-19, the meetings were held via Zoom rather than in person.~~ A group of individuals was selected to receive an invitation for each section of the plan. This group represents a cross section of community leaders/elected officials, Upstate Workforce Board members, educators, core/required partners, community partners and program staff. You will find the list in Attachment C-1 ~~III-A~~. A memo was sent to each group ~~(see Attachments C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, C-6)~~ along with an assigned draft section of the plan ~~(see Attachment III-A)~~. A Zoom meeting date/time was emailed to the group so that discussion and input could be conducted. Any individual that could not attend the Zoom meeting was asked to email suggestions to the Upstate Workforce Board's Executive Director. Changes and suggestions ~~were~~ **will be** incorporated into the plan. Once the entire plan ~~was~~ **is** completed, it was sent to all groups prior to posting to the public for comments.

- 2. A description of the workforce development system in the local area, including:***

Identification of the programs that are included in the system: The Upstate Workforce Board issues Requests for Proposal (RFPs) to solicit applications for funding of programs for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds. If programs are performing well, we may extend the program for an additional three years without issuing a RFP. For program year ~~2020~~ **2022** (July 1, ~~2020~~ **2022** to June 30, ~~2021~~ **2023**), the following two programs are WIOA funded:

USC Upstate ACHIEVE Program – This is a GED program for out-of-school youth ages 16-24 from Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. This program includes an opportunity to complete a paid work experience and/or on-the-job training (OJT). In addition to high school degree **equivalency** completion, the ACHIEVE Program also offers occupational and soft skills training components. Case management and counseling are incorporated. This program also provides transportation from the student's home to the program site that is located inside the comprehensive SC Works One Stop. Spartanburg Adult Education provides the GED instruction for the ACHIEVE

students. Students may also attend the workshops offered at SC Works. The goal after obtaining a GED is placement in employment and/or post-secondary education.

SC Works Comprehensive Center - This program is located in three places: 1. The downtown campus of Spartanburg Community College **Business Technology Center in downtown Spartanburg (145 North Church Street)**; 2. An affiliate site in Union County at the Union County Carnegie Library; and 3. In a stand-alone affiliate site in the Tiffany Park area in Gaffney that services all of Cherokee County. Equus (formerly ResCare) Workforce Solutions is the operator of the SC Works centers in our three-county area. Equus Workforce Solutions administers and manages the SC Works centers in cooperation with community partners, including core partners in the workforce system. The mission of SC Works Upstate is to provide a level of service to facilitate the attainment of meaningful employment consistent with customer interests and abilities. This is accomplished by providing employers and job seekers with a wide range of employment services. For the employers, these include: job postings, job fairs, screening of potential candidates, on-the-job training, labor market data, assessments and incumbent worker training grants. For the job seeker, services include: telephones and computers for use in applying for unemployment and jobs, resume assistance, job readiness and other workshops, career planning services, and classroom and work-based learning training opportunities.

SC Works accomplishes the provision of all services through partnerships with many related community services. The goal is to operate a seamless system from the viewpoint of the customer. The SC Works Comprehensive system consists of the following partners:

Partners include:

~~South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation~~

- ~~• For GED & High School Diploma, WIN Assessments~~
- ~~• Assistance with workforce development and training for individuals with disabilities~~

~~Job Corps~~

- ~~• Handles recruiting and application process to a Job Corps Center~~

~~Equus Workforce Solutions~~

- ~~• Adult and Dislocated Worker comprehensive services, supportive services, training and employment, Operation Educate~~

~~SC Commission for the Blind~~

- ~~• Assistance with workforce development and training for blind individuals~~

~~SC Department of Employment and Workforce~~

- ~~• Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services, Unemployment Insurance, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Reemployment Services, Veterans programs, SCWOS~~

~~Able SC~~

- ~~• A change agent committed to fostering an inclusive society that empowers individuals with disabilities to live fully engaged and self-directed lives. Able SC is an organization lead by individuals with disabilities that challenges stereotypes, protects disability rights and champions social reform.~~

~~USC Upstate ACHIEVE~~

- ~~• Youth provider for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act serves youth ages 16-24 (detail in Section III, 2)~~

~~Adult Learning Center~~

- ~~• Receives adult education funding for GED instruction~~

~~Goodwill~~

- ~~• Senior Community Service Employment Program~~

~~Adult Education~~

- ~~• High School Diploma or GED Instruction~~

~~Piedmont Community Actions~~

- ~~• Community Service Block Grant~~

~~SC Department of Social Services~~

• ~~Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program~~

Spartanburg Community College

• ~~Perkins Career and Technical Education~~

Spartanburg Housing Authority

• ~~Housing Assistance~~

Indian Development Council

• ~~Indian and Native American Program~~

Organization	Services
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation	Counseling and training services for individuals with disabilities and other barriers
Job Corps	Employment and training services for individuals between the ages of 16 and 24
Equus Workforce Solutions	Adult and Dislocated Worker comprehensive services, supportive services, training and employment, Operation Educate
SC Commission for the Blind	Assistance with workforce development and training for blind individuals
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services, Unemployment Insurance, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Reemployment Services, Veterans programs, SCWOS
Able SC	A change agent committed to fostering an inclusive society that empowers individuals with disabilities to live fully engaged and self-directed lives. Able SC is an organization lead by individuals with disabilities that challenges stereotypes, protects disability rights and champions social reform.

USC Upstate ACHIEVE	Youth provider for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - serves youth ages 16-24 (detail in Section III, 2)
Adult Learning Center	Receives adult education funding for GED instruction
Goodwill	Senior Community Service Employment Program
Piedmont Community Actions	Community Service Block Grant
SC Department of Social Services	Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Spartanburg Community College	Perkins Career and Technical Education
Spartanburg Housing Authority	Housing Assistance
Indian Development Council	Indian and Native American Program

We have many other partners in the community helping us serve individuals as needed.

Note: Spartanburg County serves as the fiscal agent for the Upstate Workforce Board

How the Local Board will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development programs in the local area:

Partners are essential contributors to accomplish seamless, accessible and comprehensive services within the SC Works One Stop setting. Additional partners are always welcomed in the system to help us serve the needs of the customers. The Upstate Workforce Board's SC Works One Stop Committee periodically reviews the information related to partners and partner participation. The Equus Workforce Solutions/SC Works One Stop Operator briefs this committee at each meeting. If there are partner challenges, the Upstate Workforce Board will become more involved. Good communication and consistent partner meetings go a long way in maintaining positive relationships with partners. Partners share information across programs to include introduction of new services and initiatives that may benefit mutual customers. As the Upstate Workforce Board employees monitor, they review the partner referral process. Information about how to access services that includes clear points of contact are critical to job seekers who may be dealing with a variety of basic

life needs while also seeking employment. The ~~core~~ Business Services Partner Group meets ~~monthly~~ quarterly on a formal basis. However, routine communications occur much more frequently on specific business needs as they arise. The general partnership meeting is still held monthly.

Memorandums of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements are utilized with partners to detail relationships and to agree upon cost sharing and on services offered. These documents are also monitored by the Upstate Workforce Board staff to ensure that partner services are in place.

3. *A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:*

Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

We hope to be able to serve more individuals than we serviced this past year. We are also looking into fee-for service opportunities to raise funds. We were fortunate that the State Workforce Board allocated state funds to help backfill the void that was created by a severe budget cut in all three program funding areas. We want to significantly increase our number of on-the-job training contracts this year.

Update: The on-the-job training continues to grow. We did secure several grants over the past two years through our non-profit (the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation) that have helped our programs. We have not launched fee-for-service since businesses were hurting from the pandemic. The timing did not seem right for this at this point in time. We continue to be very thankful to the State Workforce Development Board for their support of local boards. The most recent Resiliency Grant saved critical staff positions in our workforce area. We are hopeful for continued support from the State Workforce Development Board.

We have also applied for several grants from other sources. We did receive a major grant from DOL (WORC) in partnership with Spartanburg Community College and United Way that is over \$2,000,000. This grant allows us to continue serving those incarcerated at the jail in Spartanburg and allows us to add the Cherokee County Jail for service. The grant title is GROWsc.

Update: We had to move this program from the Spartanburg County Jail due to the pandemic and them being short staffed. Luckily, we were able to start a new partnership with the SC Department of Corrections Tyger River Facility located in Spartanburg County. We have requested and received an extension on the WORC DOL grant due to the time lost because of the pandemic. This has been a very successful program.

We are also looking to expand the eligible training provider listing this program year and have initiated meetings with institutions to discuss what they have to offer that might qualify as a training option for our customers.

Update: This has not been a fruitful effort. Institutions are not interested in the eligible training provider list due to the burden of reporting placed on them by the US Department of Labor. Our main training providers are truck driving schools as they are willing to report on performance. We are focusing heavily on on-the-job training contracts. There has not been much success with co-enrolling individuals into WIOA when training is provided by others except with USC Union. We have recently co-enrolled ten nursing students and are helping them with supportive services. We hope to continue our efforts with co-enrollment if the students are willing to meet our requirements for contact with case managers and documentation. Spartanburg Community College continues to have free tuition and we have not had any success with co-enrollments there. It should be noted that we are reviewing and focusing on the quality of training providers on our current list. We have noticed issues with credential attainment recently and want to ensure that we are setting our customers up for success. We were waiting for the state to issue the eligible training provider listing performance measures, but we were told there is no timeline to complete this task. We will be implementing local eligible training provider listing performance expectations to address this concern.

We plan to try some creative outreach methods in the low-income areas to try to reach and serve those individuals most in need. We have tried many communication methods which have not yielded the results we anticipated. We will meet with informal leaders in various communities to request assistance with our messaging. We want to improve our attractiveness to inspire those most in need of the services we and our other partners offer. Our SC Works centers are in ideal locations. The Spartanburg SC Works center is very close to the public transportation hub.

Update: Staff have had pop up tent locations in the three counties at different gatherings in an effort to attract new customers. Staff have also held workshops at various locations in order to attract the customers from other organizations such as the Opportunity Center (serving the homeless) in Spartanburg, TK Gregg Recreational Center in Spartanburg and the Municipal Center in Jonesville. There are many other locations that have been used for outreach. We have had a burst in enrollments recently as a result of our efforts. We recently had to relocate our comprehensive one stop and it is now even closer to the public transportation hub.

We have recently modified our supportive service policy to provide additional support to WIOA clients. COVID-19 has impacted the delivery of classroom training. We are seeing the need to assist with internet and computer access. We also increased transportation and childcare rates to match the current cost in our communities. We

are working with local training providers to offer wrap around services. There are currently many tuition scholarships available to the general public and we are seeing a shift in the need for WIOA classroom dollars. We are working to support training students with supportive services regardless of if they need WIOA tuition dollars.

Update: We have now recovered from the pandemic. We have increased our supportive services for WIOA clients in an effort to keep them in training. Many institutions have maintained their online training offerings that were started during the pandemic, so we have kept the internet and computer access supportive services. We find that people are not taking advantage of the childcare offerings since they are required to first apply with the Department of Social Services for childcare vouchers. This process can also impact child support arrangements/enforcement in which many families are not comfortable pursuing for different reasons. They find the process too cumbersome. There is also a stigma associated with the vouchers and some daycares do not accept them.

Improve Access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable:

We are looking for other training providers at this time. We would like to see more competition and options for our customers. We have held one meeting with Limestone University via Zoom and hope to continue seeking out other institutions that can provide qualified training. In the past, training providers would not submit trainings to the eligible training provider list due to the burdensome performance reporting required by US Department of Labor (USDOL)/SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW). SCDEW did request and received a waiver from USDOL waiving performance reporting for program year 2020. Due to this, we think we can encourage other training providers to offer training through the www.SCPATH.org for program year 2020. We were informed by SCDEW staff that USDOL stated a waiver will not occur in PY21. If that is the case many of the technical colleges in the state will pull their trainings from the eligible training provider listing.

Update: USDOL did not approve a waiver for PY21 or PY22. We are still very limited on training providers and are paying for a lot of truck driving training. We do refer individuals to the free tuition programs, but they are not interested in WIOA once they get the free tuition. We do focus a lot of attention now on on-the-job training. As long as the performance reporting is a requirement, the situation with limited training options will continue.

Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations:

The SC Works Business Solutions Team is very active and effective. The Regional Business Solutions Director is well connected in the Upstate. We currently work with employers of all sizes and are constantly making contacts to increase the number of businesses to serve. Since business services are identified by the Upstate Workforce Board as the #1 service we provide, a major focus is placed on meeting the workforce needs of employers. The Business Solutions staff are often out in the communities calling on businesses. The Business Solutions Lead works early with new businesses when they are recruited by the economic development staff in the three counties. We also work very closely with the Cherokee and Spartanburg Chambers. The SCDEW Labor Exchange staff provide many services to local businesses. In the past, we have not received many returned business surveys from the job postings. This year we have brought this to the Upstate Workforce Board staff level. The board staff will begin conducting several surveys each month to monitor the quality of the services to businesses we provide. This should allow us to expand the engagement of employers by improving any inefficiencies uncovered in the services we provide. We hope to eventually procure someone else to conduct the surveys.

Update: Business services continue to be strong. The Business Solutions Team is very active in the business community. We conduct a good number of hiring events each year and partner with other organizations on hiring and career fairs. We did hire a part-time consultant to conduct the business surveys and this consultant is shared with the Greenville Workforce Development Board. The survey results yield us timely feedback so we can focus on the needs and concerns of our business customers.

Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area:

We are very excited that the State Workforce Board is going to migrate to Zip Recruiter for service delivery. We think this will be a much-needed improvement over the current system. We look forward to rolling this out. We think the Greater Upstate team can better drive the entire system toward success with this partnership.

The State Workforce Board decided against Zip Recruiter once the past State Workforce Development Board Chairman resigned. We continue to use the State Workforce Operating System.

SC Works partners offer an array of services to local businesses in an effort to grow and maintain businesses in the Upstate. Partners also refer their jobs seekers to job listings posted in the state system.

Our local Business Solutions Team works with local businesses to identify recruitment, retention and training needs using the pull method, listening to each employer's needs and matching them with appropriate available services through WIOA or other

partner agencies such as SCVR, SCDEW and Adult Education. Typical conversations with business partners include, but are not limited to, probing questions such as:

What is their expected growth?
Biggest workforce challenge:
Reason people are not hired:
Questions for pre-screening:
Turnover rate: High Normal Low
Reasons people leave:
What other recruiting sources are used?
What is your re-entry policy? (ex-offenders)
What is your policy on hiring Veterans?
Who are your competitors for talent?
Interested in recruiting from High School? Y N Community College? Y N
What is the application process like?
What is the interview process?
What is the hiring/on-boarding process? How long does it take?
What marketing material do you use?
Culture/mission/values:
Occupation hiring trend (past 6 months/year/2 years?):
Occupation pay trend:

Below PY20 individual and team goals are listed.

INDIVIDUAL GOALS

- ~~Meeting or phone call to at least 4 new businesses per week~~
- ~~Conduct 30 field visits per month~~
- ~~Monthly TDS OJT file review (track vis SharePoint)~~
- ~~Business Solutions presentation to community organization, professional group or association once per quarter~~
- ~~Minimum of 25 OJT Contracts per BSC per program year~~
- ~~Trade show or community event in each county quarterly~~

TEAM GOALS

- ~~4 recruitment events per month at comprehensive center~~
- ~~Develop 50 OJT contracts per year (encourage contracts developed specifically based on WIOA participant need) as funds allow~~
- ~~SC Works hosted Employer workshops — one per quarter~~

- ~~One annual job fair per region in partnership with local workforce partners such as SCVR, SCDEW, and Adult Education~~

The following strategies are part of our local business engagement plan to serve business partners in Cherokee, Greenville, Spartanburg and Union counties.

Employer Outreach & Engagement Strategies

Always reiterate: Recruitment, Retention, Training!

Outreach/Public Service Announcements:

Outreach and public service announcements (PSAs) provide the opportunity to promote the SC Works brand through controlled messaging and placement. Through local media partnerships, we are often able to promote events at no cost. When funding is available, paid outreach messages may be possible with local media television and radio.

Public Relations News

Recruitment events and job fairs are promoted to a vast distribution list to include local media, radio and community partners.

Social Media

SC Works Greater Upstate promotes recruitment events, job fairs, training opportunities, hot jobs, workshops and more through multiple social media outlets (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn). SC Works Greater Upstate also offers business partners the option to boost social media posts to increase the visibility of events and job opportunities.

Events/Seminars

SC Works Greater Upstate hosts at least one multi-employer job fair within the Greater Upstate region annually. Additionally, the region offers quarterly workshops for business partners, such as HR Café, SCWOS 101, OJT and IWT sessions. Organizing or hosting events, job fairs and human resource seminars is another strategy to attract businesses to our services. SC Works Greater Upstate also partners with other community agencies and businesses to co-host information sessions and appreciation events.

Speaking Opportunities

Speaking opportunities are a great way for staff to connect with targeted groups of businesses through professional associations, Rotary Clubs, HR Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc. Equus Business Solutions Consultants are required to present to one group per quarter.

Networking

SC Works Greater Upstate Business Solutions Team members should continue to maximize networking opportunities through professional associations, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, business clubs and other groups frequented by private-sector professionals.

Referrals

Referrals and positive word-of-mouth are still two of the most viable marketing strategies, especially in rural areas like Cherokee and Union counties. SC Works Greater Upstate receives numerous business referrals from existing business partners and community partners.

PY22 Business Outreach Plan Equus – July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

All Equus Business Solutions Consultants will have specialty focus areas.

INDUSTRY FOCUS

MaryBeth Walters	Vacant Role	Ben Abrams
Manufacturing and Logistics	Skilled Trades	Manufacturing and Logistics
Healthcare	Professional (Admin/CSR)	Information Technology

PARTNERSHIP/STRATEGY FOCUS

MaryBeth Walters	Vacant Role	Ben Abrams
Registered Apprenticeships (Apprenticeship Carolina™)		Refugee Project
Technical College – Manufacturing (Upstate)	Technical College – Professional (regional)	Technical College - Information Technology (regional)
Technical College – Healthcare (regional)	Technical College – Skilled Trades (regional)	Technical College – Manufacturing (Greenville)
Staffing Partnerships	SCRLA – Restaurant and Lodging)	Staffing Partnerships
EMT Programs – Jeremy and Josh		Manufacturers Roundtable – Greenville
Spartanburg Reentry	Skilled Trades Alliance	Vocational Rehabilitation OJT stacking

Entrepreneurship (Small Business Development Center and SCORE, EDBuild)		
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TEAM GOALS:

*Each Business Solutions Consultant needs Core 4 employers per quarter to support placement within industry focus.

*Each Business Solutions Consultant should develop 8 on-the-job contracts per quarter (regardless of the local workforce development area) which would put us at 96 on-the-job contracts for the year as a region. If evenly split = 48 per local workforce development area.

*Business Solutions Consultant outreach should reach a minimum of 15 meetings per month (new or repeat)

*Business Solutions Consultants community engagement should include 1 per month, based on partnership/strategy focus

*All Business Solutions Consultants will contribute to Dislocated Worker Grant placements based on candidate eligibility (Upstate grant but also serves GVL residents)

Regional Director, Business Solutions

- Oversee business engagement for Equus Business Solutions Consultants Team;
- Deliver Incumbent Worker Training services;
- Serve as point of contact if complaint is made; and
- Point of contact for customized training projects

The Regional Director for Business Solutions is also heavily involved with the ~~Greater Upstate Manufacturing Partnership~~ Upstate Manufacturing Network, which is a forum for manufacturers across 14 counties to come together to identify industry wide needs and to develop strategies and plans to address the needs. The Regional Director for Business Solutions is also in constant communication with local economic development and ReadySC to ensure existing and expanding companies are aware of available resources and are receiving quality services from the workforce system.

During COVID-19, the impact of outreach to employers ~~has been~~ was very difficult. Many businesses ~~do~~ did not allow onsite visitors. ~~We look forward to getting back to a normal way of doing business once this crisis is over.~~ We are definitely back to normal with business

services. The labor shortage that existed prior to the pandemic still persists even with the significant growth in wages.

Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development:

This is a noted program of strength for our area. Our Business Solutions Lead has a seat at the table early in the recruiting process with economic development. She is able to offer help with recruiting and labor market information for new business prospects. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director also has a close relationship with economic development staff in the region. Our coordination is very strong, and we will continue to improve and maintain these relationships.

Strengthen linkages between the SC Works delivery system and unemployment insurance programs:

The unemployment insurance (UI) program staff are not onsite in the centers. It has been several years since the UI staff were onsite. The recent COVID-19 crisis has shown us that there would be a great benefit to having unemployment insurance staff in the centers for face-to-face assistance. This would reduce customer angst initiated by busy lines, dropped calls, and less-than-satisfactory service per UI claimants. Other than having UI staff onsite, we do not know how to strengthen the partnership with UI since unemployment is conducted via online and call centers. This crisis has also highlighted the importance of the SC UI program in participating more financially in the operation of the SC Works centers, as during the first month of re-opening, 76% of customer traffic was related directly to UI services. During COVID-19, we were all forced to learn more than we wanted to know about the unemployment insurance system. Data entry into the system was cumbersome at best, impossible at worst. Not having local on-site services severely limited benefit enrollment, particularly for those without computer access or knowledge. Many creative "work-a-rounds" were required for helping folks to get their benefits. I believe many in the workforce business all learned a great deal from this experience. We have all learned that there is much room for improvement with the current system software.

The recent addition of the SC Works 101 Online Training course has provided a general overview of all partners in the SC Works workforce system and includes UI services.

If SCDEW has any suggestions on partnership strengthening in the UI area, we are open to suggestions.

4. A description of how the strategies discussed in Question 3 above will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the State Plan; specifically:

Increasing participation in work-based (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs:

The Business Solutions Team promotes and secures opportunities for work-based learning such as on-the-job training, work experiences, transitional employment, etc. to appropriate local employers. Funding directed to work-based learning provides better results long term over classroom training, so increasing this investment makes sense. With training providers not wanting to participate in the SC Eligible Training Provider database due to reporting requirements, 'earn to learn' programs are a great option.

Apprenticeship Carolina™ is the entity responsible for registered apprenticeships in South Carolina. SC Works Business Solutions staff make referrals to them if an employer expresses interest in competency-based training combined with classroom training. Apprenticeships are a part of the offerings to employers when the Business Solutions staff meet with businesses. Partners on the Business Solutions Team are fully aware of Apprenticeship Carolina™. We will continue to speak about registered apprenticeships when making presentations in the community. Most companies in our area move incumbent workers into apprenticeships rather than hiring new individuals for those slots. Apprenticeship Carolina™ does not post the jobs for their apprenticeships on the SC Department of Employment and Workforce SCWOS site. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has webpage links to the US Department of Labor apprenticeship finder page where apprenticeship openings are listed. There are currently 1,070 companies in South Carolina with registered apprenticeships. The Upstate has the second highest number of registered programs in South Carolina. Update: Update: Per Apprenticeship Carolina, as of 9/16/2022, there were 1,140 active apprenticeships in South Carolina. There were 383 in the Link Upstate Region. The Link Upstate Region had the highest number of the four regions in South Carolina.

The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director serves on the SCC Youth Apprenticeship Council.

The youth programs funded by WIOA offers youth work-based learning activities.

In the Upstate, the board and SCWorks WIOA funded staff often speak to students in the classrooms in the middle and high schools and encourage students to seek work-based learning activities. They also promote work-based learning when conducting career fairs in the schools. Virtual Reality is often taken to the classrooms and schools may check out the virtual reality equipment by appointment in the Greenville and Upstate workforce development areas.

Increasing the formal assessment and provision of soft-skills training:

The Upstate Workforce Board has been waiting on SCDEW to roll out an anticipated soft skills training. This was supported and voted on by the State Workforce Board. We did not want to

duplicate this important SCDEW effort. So the Upstate Workforce Board did not develop our own soft skills product. SCDEW initially funded a pilot project with Clemson University, but it did not materialize for the balance of the state. Thus, the state has been talking about a soft skills program for over three years. The Academy offered by SC Works has a number of soft skills online courses to train on soft skills. Our current customers use this program. There is a test at the end of each module. While this program is adequate, we think there needs to be a more robust effort. Should the state be unable to develop this vital program soon, the Upstate Workforce Board has plans to work with the private sector to develop a meaningful, current program. We plan to develop an employer-led and employer-validated soft skills training locally. This has been the primary area of concern for local Upstate businesses. As such, we need to quickly address resolving this problem in a formalized manner. While we do provide workshops that focus on soft skills, contextualization and assessment are lacking. We would ask SCDEW if they are developing such a program and when it might be available. In the alternative, we are happy to proceed in creating a current soft skills program and would be happy to make it available to SCDEW.

Update: The contractor, Equus Workforce Solutions, developed a Soft Skills Workshop for jobseekers in 2019 which was developed at the corporate level. However, the curriculum did not seem to fit locally and has been modified. It is based on the four most important skills needed to include: communication, adaptability, problem solving and teamwork. This workshop is offered both in-person and virtually and there is no registration required at this time, thus removing any barrier to attend. The workshop encompasses basic definitions, examples and other engaging activities that assist the jobseeker in applying the necessary skills in real work and life environments and situations. In addition, the workshop was also demonstrated to a group of local employers to provide feedback and to ensure that we are covering the right material. As with any workshop, we offer access to all partners to increase awareness of the necessary skills needed for successful outcomes.

Facilitating the development of career pathways and increasing co-enrollment across partner programs, as appropriate:

Career pathways help workers acquire marketable skills and industry recognized credentials by encouraging greater collaboration across adult education, post-secondary education, talent development specialists, and community partners. Working towards career pathways begins as early as middle school for many youths. Local teachers and guidance counseling services start planting seeds of interest in the minds of students regarding all of the different pathways available, both locally and nationally. One way SC Works presently participates is through the Career Showcase held annually for 9th-graders ~~those in high school~~. This effort is led by Ms. Cherie Pressley, Workforce Advisor, ~~through~~ with the Department of Commerce. We also have virtual reality equipment to allow students to immerse themselves within

various occupations to get a closer feel for what that work might be like. ~~Such virtual reality technology is also quite responsive to current COVID-19 concerns.~~ Various Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works staff also attend school career fairs and make classroom presentations, when possible, to provide training and/or workforce information to students. We often take the Virtual Reality equipment with us so that students can use the equipment for career exploration.

Career Pathways can also be achieved by co-enrolling workforce partner participants into the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Program's On-the-Job Training. Sometimes an employer already has the 'right' employee, and needs some help increasing their skills to stay within the framework of their occupation. This can be nicely accomplished through Incumbent Worker Training. The most important thing that SC Works can do is to help ensure that job seekers, the already employed or in-training people receive assistance in maintaining their pathway. These training, guidance and support services accomplish this goal.

Talent Development Specialists discuss all career pathway options with clients. They encourage clients to visit the www.SCPATH.ORG website to search for training providers and programs. Unfortunately, there are not many options for the Upstate Workforce Area as can be seen on the SCPATH eligible training provider list. Sadly, as has been described, our primary provider, Spartanburg Community College ~~is not able~~ chooses not to report performance data required by USDOL/SCDEW and offers free tuition. The Talent Development Specialists also encourage customers to conduct labor market research based on their training program choice to ensure the job demand is present and they are setup for success. Also utilizing the Traitify Personality and Career Assessment helps point out personality traits and skills clients may not even be aware of. This serves to help guide the client to the appropriate career choice based on their talents and preferences.

When the Business Services Team meets with employers, they distribute a Career Pathway Template that may be completed to showcase the career pathways within their business. ~~(See Attachment E for samples)~~

Co-enrollment with partners is very important across programs since we cannot address all barriers utilizing shrinking WIOA funds. Talent Development Specialists see partners for co-enrollment when assessing barriers to employment and training. Many customers are enrolled in more than just the WIOA program. The Upstate Workforce Board monitors client participation to ensure that SC Works staff are co-enrolling.

Implement cross-program staff training to enhance service delivery to businesses and job seekers:

The Upstate SC Works Local Operator participated on a state level ad hoc committee charged with the creation and implementation of SC Works 101. The SC Works 101 Training Program is designed to equip attendees working in the SC Works Centers or in the field. They provide services to jobseekers or businesses, with knowledge and understanding of the SC Works system to ensure that customers receive high-quality services each time they engage with the system. This cross-training is considered an important part of the workforce system. The training does go into the basics of partner roles and provides a pathway for co-enrollments when in the best interests of the customer. The SC Works One Stop Operator is responsible for tracking all partner staff in the assigning of the training and its completion.

Prior to COVID-19 affecting all operations in the country, the SC Works One Stop Operator conducted quarterly training for 'all hands'. This provides an opportunity for partners to discuss their programs for the benefit of all. Additionally, we had Able SC providing specialty training. This improves service sensitivity for the special community of individuals with disabilities. In April, we had Stephani Frese, Director, Division of Technical Services, SC Human Affairs Commission, provide a well-received Webex EO Training for all Upstate partners.

BST meets monthly to review the Upstate Workforce Board's employer service standards and to learn best practices from each other. Sector Strategy collaboration has increased greatly since our last four-year plan. Of course this involves some training of staff to better serve the employers.

Update: Staff and partners are continuing to participate in the SC Works 101 training. We have had a One Stop Committee member go through the training and we hope to have more board and committee members participate this program year.

Whenever there is a new hire in the SCWorks system (both WIOA and partners), the Upstate Workforce Board staff provide an orientation to them on the system as a whole.

As the business services team works with businesses, career pathways is always a part of their conversation as a recruitment and retention strategy.

Streamline intake and referral processes:

~~This objective and priority seem to assume that the process has not been streamlined to the extent possible under existing conditions. There are a number of reporting requirements which cause resistance to enrollment. We could better align and make the process work if there were less impediments to state and local areas working close together. Often, it appears as though there is a struggle to determine if the state is going to get the credit for the program. For example, local SCDEW staff work in correctional facilities or with local employers, without the local area being a part of that process. A solution would be to fold Wagner Peyser services into local area responsibilities, to include the staff associated with those functions. The local SC Works Manager is supposed to have "functional management responsibility" for these Wagner Peyser services. He is held accountable for the entire system. Sadly, the state is resistant to operationalize this level of responsibility. SC Works Management is prevented from hiring/firing and operational management decisions. This prevents him from having optimal customer satisfaction and quality.~~ This consolidation is no longer a

possibility per a recent ruling by USDOL. We will have to manage the intake and referral process the best we can regardless of the separation of authority and responsibility that the SCWorks Operator must work under.

Another area that virtually every area workforce region in the country routinely has problems is the referral process. Since federal DOL did not institute a particular system, it is left to states to develop the data systems employed by the major WIOA partners. There is no singular data system currently in use. SCWOS is the closest thing to it, but not all partners participate in SCWOS. The referral process in SCWOS is very complicated and time consuming. Within each area's MOU/IFA, there are procedures established for referring customers to other partners, but these are not actively consistently used by MOU partners. Many partners have their own forms and systems and are not eager to change. What has proven to work the best, and ensure results, is for a partner needing to refer someone to another partner, they pick up the phone and contact them referral by phone. Direct communication remains the best form method for partner referrals.

The Business Services Lead was developed for the local areas to determine who would lead employer relations and activities locally. Understandably, some organizations are reluctant to allow the functional leadership the local area has determined would serve our local employers businesses best. In addition, several partner agencies have their own system to track business services and business outreach, limiting SCWOS entries regarding business service activity to Equus and SCDEW only. This inability to track all business services and job seeker services in one system limits the opportunity for expanded collaboration and regional data regarding the businesses and job seekers we all serve. This can make makes it more difficult for the appointed Business Services Lead to fully meet both the business employer and job seeker needs through the intake and referral processes. Our goal in the coming years is to facilitate a better understanding of the need for this continuity of leadership, accountability and representation.

Intake has been improved by better using the VOS Greeter. Expanding this role has served to save time, improve customer visitation, provide statistics, and provide a method to measure traffic flow for particular organizations.

Developing strategies that increase access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and access to identification and vital records:

In Spartanburg, there is a public transportation system within the City. These buses do not go into the county where the bulk of the manufacturing and distribution facilities exists. Buses also do not operate during the evening hours.

Two of the counties in the Upstate Workforce Area have no transportation options other than small cab companies. Uber's presence isn't at a volume of reliability. In Union County, the County Government has been exploring options for transportation. In Cherokee County, the Chamber is embarking on addressing transportation shortages. In Spartanburg, the Spartanburg Chamber, City of Spartanburg, United Way of the Piedmont and SC Works have

been planning a project utilizing Commute with Enterprise www.commutewithenterprise.com. There was a lot of momentum with the private sector on this initiative, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, this effort was put on hold. This will be revisited as soon as economic recovery improves. Transportation has been a topic that has been discussed for many years. If governments are not willing to invest in transportation, the only other way it can be resolved is through private sector funding or a combination of private/public partnerships/funding. Update: Union County is still working on their transportation project. Cherokee County has had some success with Commute with Enterprise in the Blacksburg community. The Cherokee Chamber of Commerce held a listening session for businesses to share information and gauge interest. In Spartanburg (as of August 31, 2022) the following companies are participating in the program:

Number of Riders per Van	Employer Name
4	Grace Management Group, City of Spartanburg
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
5	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
7	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
7	Lutheran Services of the Carolinas
5	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
5	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
6	Boysen USA, LLC, Spartanburg
4	Tietex International, Spartanburg
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
4	Milliken - Blacksburg, SC
4	Tietex International, Spartanburg

The Business Services Team of SCWorks continues to inform businesses of the Commute with Enterprise model as a means to recruit applicants who do not have transportation.

Our programs have used Uber or Lyft for customers in emergency situations. We have also purchased bikes for customers when their work site was within a bikeable distance from their residence. Our youth program, USC Upstate Achieve, has vans and drivers in order to transport students to the program. Without this service, many of the rural students would not be able to earn their GED. We were able to secure a grant from Women Giving of Spartanburg for \$27,000.00 through our non-profit to replace a 2006 van with a Ford

Explorer. We used WIOA funds to replace another 2006 van that is used for Cherokee County. We have applied for other grants hoping to replace one additional 2006 van.

The City of Spartanburg suffers from a lack of affordable housing. As one moves farther out of the city, affordable housing options are more available. The United Way of the Piedmont has been focusing on these housing issues. The Upstate Workforce Board staff attended a housing event held by the City of Spartanburg and United Way to become educated on the shortage. There has been movement in the City of Spartanburg to build affordable senior housing. Currently, we try to convince individuals to upskill through education and on-the-job training so they earn more. In this way, folks can afford to pay more for the available housing stock. Update: Affordable housing is even more of an issue at this point in time. Rent continues to increase and housing stock has been scarce. The City of Spartanburg continues to work on this issue with developers. There has been some progress, but it certainly does not match the demand. It is also difficult in our area to convince those in the rental market to take Section 8 vouchers. We have had a boom in the number of apartments being built in the area, but the rental cost of these are expensive.

Access to identification and vital records: This has not been much of an issue for the customers we serve. The ACHIEVE and SC Works staff members work closely with customers to secure these documents so they may be enrolled. Co-enrollment with other partners also helps with obtaining documents.

Supporting industry-led, sector partnerships:

The March 2019 launch of the Manufacturing Sector Partnership – (Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg, and Union) has provided a real-time tool to connect with industry leaders and support them as they develop communication strategies, talent recruitment strategies and skill specific requirements within certain occupations, such as maintenance technicians.

The Greater Upstate Manufacturing Sector Partnership is an industry-driven collaboration supported by partners in workforce development, education, and economic development, and made up of regional companies including Michelin North America, AWL, Century Printing, Norbord, and ZF Transmissions, to name a few. The collaboration is modeled after similar partnerships active in 17 states around the country.

In March 2019, this partnership identified two initial priorities to tackle as a group through focused and industry led action teams:

Talent Team: Build a talent pipeline through improved career awareness. The talent team has secured TALLO for a pilot marketing campaign targeting college non-completers. This

campaign will run under the SC Future Makers brand and will not duplicate efforts. The team will also revisit recruitment needs for manufacturing post-COVID as the targeted talent pool target may change.

Middle Skills Team: Address technical skill gaps of entry level Maintenance Technicians. The middle skills team has unveiled the maintenance technician skills matrix, identified core competencies for curriculum and is working on the development of an exit assessment. The team will work with the technical colleges to implement a shared curriculum.

The steering committee has placed marketing/branding, annual celebration and full partnership meeting planning, and a regional mask campaign on the agenda for the next leadership meeting.

Update: Following the pandemic, the Partnership Steering Team continued meeting and rebranded as the Upstate Manufacturing Network and will kick off networking events and a Re-Ignite event in the Fall of 2022. The following businesses serve on the steering team and meet monthly: BMW, Century Printing, Michelin North America, Strama MPS, West Fraser, and ZF Transmission

During Program Year 2022, SC Works hired an individual fully dedicated to the Upstate Manufacturing Network. He is also charged with developing the other sector partnerships that were identified for the 14-county region.

Sharing best practices across partner programs in order to increase awareness of partner services, promote a workforce environment of growth and continuous improvement, and support a system viewpoint.

Prior to COVID-19, the SC Works Operator was conducting a quarterly training with partners. During this time, partners would share information and best practices from their own organizations. The Operator consistently stresses a systems approach to all areas of the SC Works system. The Operator may begin scheduling the quarterly trainings via Zoom if partners are not willing to travel to the SC Works site. **Update:** During PY21 the Operator maintained virtual all staff training with SCDEW, Equus and all partner staff. As we entered into PY22, the Operator began hosting in-person all staff quarterly training sessions that consist of program overviews and relevant guest speakers.

The Upstate Workforce Board staff meet with the Greenville Workforce Board staff quarterly to share information and best practices. We also discuss more ways in which we can partner or cost share in an effort to save funding and staff time. The shared SC Works Operations Manager and Business Services Workforce Solutions Manager join us for a portion of our meeting to discuss the quarter's progress and to request any needed assistance. They also alert us to what they are hearing from customers during this meeting. **Update:** This meeting still occurs quarterly.

The Upstate Workforce Board staff meets monthly with the two top employees in each of its funded programs. This grantee meeting is conducted in a relaxed offsite atmosphere like a coffee shop or restaurant. During these meetings, we go over instruction letters issued, performance, staffing issues, challenges and concerns, and great news. These have helped the board staff identify what technical assistance is needed for the grantees. Grantees also share tough cases that might need some additional attention. These meetings have helped us generate ideas for the programs and our customers. One example was the need for food for our youth program participants while they are in the program. Many come in hungry due to homelife situations or a lack of a home. Our non-profit was able to start a food pantry for the youth program so the participants have needed food and certain hygiene and other products.

The Upstate Workforce Board recognizes the performance of our programs and partners each year with an annual event when the grantees meet all performance measurements. We have had snow cone and ice cream trucks visit the center for a day. We have had hot dog/hamburger cookouts in the past and are having this again in October 2022, in recognition of the program year 2021 outstanding performance.

5. A description of how the local board will work with core, required, and other partners, including economic development, to implement the strategies and services discussed in Question 3.

See Section II details on how we will work with all partners to implement strategies and services in Question 3 above. In summary;

- Hold regular partnership meetings with all partner programs on a monthly basis so that alignment of resources is maximized. This should include discussion on difficult cases;
- Hold regional Business Services Team meetings on a monthly basis with in-house partners (DSS, SCDEW, SCVR, and Equus). Hold regional integrated meetings quarterly to ensure that we do not duplicate contacts with businesses. Coordinate efforts with all partners in the hiring and screening process;
- Continually seek new partners that can help us meet the needs of our businesses and job seekers;
- Partnering with others for grants to enhance our services due to funding cuts;
- Build and utilize relationships to improve our services to customers;
- Continue training staff on racial equity and using our knowledge to make changes in our communities;
- ~~Present cases to the Safety Net Council as needed to address the barriers that our customer have;~~
- In partnership with the Upstate Workforce Board's Disabilities Committee and the Spartanburg Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, we will continue to educate businesses and community members about the importance of inclusion in the workplace for individuals with a disability;

- Hold outreach and recruitment sessions in the low-income and rural areas in our three counties; and
- Continue to convene groups to address issues in the communities. Ensure proper follow through on suggestions by setting goal dates and assigning individuals to these tasks.

Also, we plan increased outreach with appropriate messaging in the low-income areas of our three-county area. We cannot fully serve low-income individuals without the help of our partners as it takes all partners to address the barriers that many individuals may have.

~~We are looking to expand the eligible training provider list by researching trainings that are eligible for WIOA funds. Now that the performance reporting by training providers has been removed as a requirement, we know we can interest a more educational organizations into accepting WIOA clients for training. The waiver on performance was denied by USDOL so we are very limited on training providers. Those we contacted were not interested in being on the provider listing.~~

The Upstate Business Solutions Team call on business customers to engage with our SC Works system. We do very well in this area but are always looking to increase these relationships. We were disappointed with the lack of business surveys being completed so we brought this function to the Upstate Workforce Board office beginning July 1, 2020. We need to get feedback from our business customers (positive and negative). Our services must offer more than Indeed, Manpower, etc. If we are not properly screening applicants for businesses, then we are not needed for job posting. When surveys are received, we need to call and ask probing questions if there is a need to do so. This will ensure that we continually improve the services to businesses.

Economic Development: Two of the Upstate Workforce Board staff have completed the Economic Development School training conducted by the SC Department of Commerce. The Regional Director of Businesses Solutions has also gone through the same training. As written earlier, our relationships with economic development entities are strong in our area. Board members and the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director serve or have served on some of these boards at various times. The Regional Director of Business Solutions is at the table when new industry is coming to the area in an effort to provide workforce availability support. Labor market information is also provided as needed. Our economic development partners are also engaged with the Upstate Manufacturing Network (UMN). Economic development representatives from Greenville and Spartanburg serve on the UMN Core Partner Team.

The unemployment insurance (UI) program staff are not onsite in the centers. It has been several years since the UI staff were onsite; however, during the COVID-19 crisis certain SCDEW staff members were taken with assisting customers with their UI claims, but they have now returned to their original duties. This The recent COVID-19 crisis has shown us that there would be a great benefit to having unemployment insurance staff in the centers for face-to-face assistance. This would reduce customer angst initiated by busy lines, dropped calls and less-than-satisfactory service per UI claimants. Other than having UI staff onsite, we do not know how to strengthen the

partnership with UI since unemployment is conducted via online and call centers. This crisis has also highlighted the importance of the UI program in participating more financially in the operation of the SC Works centers, as during the first month of re-opening, 76% of customer traffic was related directly to UI services. During COVID-19, we were all forced to learn more than we wanted to know about the unemployment insurance system. Data entry into the system was cumbersome at best, impossible at worst. Not having local onsite services severely limited benefit enrollment, particularly for those without computer access or knowledge. Many creative 'work-a-rounds' were required for helping folks to get their benefits. Many in the workforce business learned a great deal from this experience. We have all learned that there is much room for improvement with the current system software.

The recent addition of the SC Works 101 Online Training course has provided a general overview of all partners in the SC Works workforce system and includes UI services.

If SCDEW has any suggestions on partnership strengthening in the UI area, we are open to suggestions.

6. *A description of the Adult, DW, Youth assessment processes of soft-skills and subsequent provision of soft-skills training, including descriptions of formal tools or resources utilized.*

Youth – the instructor in the ACHIEVE program provides offerings that go far beyond simple GED instruction. The program is committed to future/career/college aspirations of their students. Its Director uses a check list to make sure students are completing their post-GED completion goals. Dealing with stress is a major issue for many of these GED students. The program has guest speakers come in who help the students understand conflict and help with ways to provide conflict resolution. They also openly discuss conflict resolution issues in class.

Further, clients work on cooperation through team-building activities and group work.

In Social Studies and in English, they get the students to think critically through leading and open-ended questions. In reading, they dissect the material to determine if there is any information bias. They then learn to use those skills in everyday life. The following are also done:

1. ~~WIN~~ Soft Skills Assessment
2. End of the Work Experience Surveys are sent to the host employers to rate the student's soft skills on the job
3. Mock interviews
4. Workshops and lectures on soft skills, such as the one that is held by SC Works
5. Samples of thank you notes to employers for interviews etc. are in the student packet

6. Students are taught to write a cover letter
7. Written materials and booklets are used in life skills training. The "Rapid Guide to Job Hunting" is an excellent preparatory resource.
8. Community Service and sense of self, are introduced.
9. We also offer the option of mental health counseling to students to help provide for the whole student, due to the population services.
10. Financial Literacy is also introduced to students as they prepare for the workforce.

Adult/Dislocated Worker - As the current Adult/Dislocated Worker service provider in Upstate/Spartanburg, SC Works invites all WIOA participants and partner customers to attend center-sponsored workshops. ~~During this time of COVID-19 impacts to center operations and partner availability, the Facilitators/Outreach Coordinators continue their work. They are providing~~ provide job preparation skills and training workshops virtually and in-person, to include, Resume Roadmap, Financial Literacy, Job Search Strategies, Skill Me Now, Way Employers See and Interviewing with Success ~~Get-LinkedIn, Intensive Resumes, Personal Branding and Job Search Strategies. Workshops such as Dress for Success and Networking will return when conditions allow~~ are offered.

Talent Development Specialists (TDS) utilize Career Pathway Explorer, a scientifically backed visual personality assessment designed to be completed in under two minutes. This helps to determine a customer's potential success in general occupations, and to identify skills the individual might need for training in various jobs. During the interview and application period, a TDS is with a customer. They are determining what soft skills would benefit an applicant. Depending on the individual, it might be determined that he/she has a work history that proves the customer is lacking in time management, or conflict management. A very important soft skill that is often overlooked is the ability to communicate effectively. This basic skill deficiency identifies those needing further English learning assistance. As part of the suite of tools, SC Works offers The Academy LinkedIn Learning, which provides thousands of courses, including opportunities to improve soft skills, career readiness and industry specific courses. ~~This platform includes the GED Academy and Money Essentials. A few of the courses that help participants improve their employability are Interpersonal Communication Foundations, Communicating Effectively, Excel Essential Training (Office 365/Microsoft 365), Critical Thinking, Essentials of Team Collaboration, Time Management, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. Communication Skills, Communicating Across Cultures, Communicating with Professionalism and Etiquette, Handling Team Conflict, Critical Thinking and Conflict-Stress-Time Management. These courses are available to anyone with an internet connection. In the near future, SC Work will be providing access and recommended training strategies via the LinkedIn Learning platform, another online depository of thousands of courses to better prepare a job-seeker for employment.~~

~~As stated earlier in the plan, we have been waiting on a state developed roll out of the soft skills training. As of the writing of this plan, this has not been developed. If this doesn't materialize, a curriculum will be developed that is employer led and validated once we are able to convene an in-person group. In the meantime, we'll continue to use the above soft skills training.~~ Update: Equus developed a soft skills training curriculum that is now in use.

- 7. A description of the strategies and services for employers that may include the implementation of initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs, On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers and support the local board's strategic vision and goals.**

SC Works offers an array of services to local businesses in an effort to help maintain and grow business in Upstate South Carolina. Business services are a key element of the Upstate Workforce Board's operational plan. WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff share an integrated job matching system named South Carolina Works Online System (SCWOS). One Stop partners utilize job listings and encourage their customers to register for work in SCWOS. Efforts to contact businesses and promote workforce development to employers are coordinated with the SC Works Regional Director of Business Solutions (in most cases). In addition to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser representatives, the Business Services Team is comprised of representatives from multiple workforce agencies such as the Department of Social Services, SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education. In addition, local community colleges, vocational schools and industry specific associations participate on the Business Services Team. SC Works Upstate Business Solutions Team provides business services using an account executive approach which includes workforce partners. This limits duplication, leads to more collaboration, encourages shared responsibility and promotes success when followed by partners. Each Business Solutions Team member receives cross-training via participating partnering agencies. This training includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Customer Service
- Employer Relations
- Job Posting
- Recruitment Events
- Job Fairs
- On-the-Job Training
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Regional Education Centers

- ReadySC
- SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- Work Experience
- WorkKeys and WIN
- Work Opportunity Tax Credits
- E-zone
- Federal Bonding
- Business Etiquette
- Workforce Board Plan and Goals
- Economic Development

~~Upon completion of all training, a Business Solutions certification is issued.~~

Partner services are included in the outreach and informational materials distributed to businesses. Also, HR Café sessions are offered in all three counties based on employer interest.

The integrated Business Services Team meets regionally, at least quarterly. Workforce partners are invited to update the team on initiatives and opportunities to partner. Additionally, there is an educational topic each quarter and an opportunity to talk through innovative approaches to serving employer partners. The internal Business Services Team, to include SC Department of Employment and Workforce, SC Department of Social Services, Equus, SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education is hosted monthly.

8. ***A description of how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional and economic development activities that are carried out in the local area, including how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.***

Economic Development: Two of the Upstate Workforce Board (UWB) staff have completed the Economic Development School training conducted by the SC Department of Commerce. The Regional Director of Business Solutions has also gone through the same training. We would like for other Business Solutions staff to attend this training, but do not currently have the funds. As written earlier, our relationships with economic development entities are strong in our three-county area. Board members and the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director have served on some of these boards at various times. The Regional Director of Business Solutions is at the table when new industry is coming to the area in an effort to provide workforce availability support to ReadySC on recruitment. Labor market information is also provided as needed. More information on the regional efforts has been detailed in earlier portions of the plan.

Entrepreneurial: Referrals are made to the Small Business Development Centers serving the counties. See Section One for the incubators located in our area to which we make referrals. SCORE is a non-profit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. Referrals are also made to this group. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director ~~serves~~ **served** on the Ten at the Top Board (TATT). TATT hosts the Upstate Entrepreneur Ecosystem Workshop monthly. This is a great source for small businesses or potential start-up businesses to obtain free information and training. There are very knowledgeable individuals serving on this group. They are a good resource for us to tap into to help customers interested in small business startup or growth. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director also serves on OneSpartanburg, Inc.'s Small and Minority Business Development Partnership that was formed in 2022. The primary focus is the startup and growth of minority owned businesses. The UWB Executive Director also serves on the KNOW2 Board in Cherokee County. KNOW2 started the bGen business generator in downtown Gaffney. Several startups are renting space in this generator. Although there is no longer a formal incubator in Spartanburg County for any size startup, the staff are aware of other services and are able to make referrals to programs and services that will help individuals with their startup and growth.

Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

1. A description of the SC Works delivery system in the local area, including:

- *How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers:*

Career Services are available to everyone in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. These services include workshops, job fairs, recruitment events, interviewing skills training, and resume development. The LinkedIn Learning Platform to which Equus Workforce Solutions subscribes (web-based skills training) has 13,000 courses for customers and upon completion, they may upload certificates to their LinkedIn profile. This platform also has online training modules in basic computer skills and Microsoft Office training, essential skills needed in the current workforce. Customers are introduced to all that is available to them through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). SC Works is able to provide funds, when available, for training/education for those who qualify. Customer needs and interests are assessed to target the precise steps required to obtain meaningful employment. Every effort is then made to provide very specific assistance to each customer based on their unique need (example of a specific need is purchasing eyewear needed so they can be successful in their educational training). Appropriate referrals are then made. Many local partners are available to further these services. Section III gives a more detailed description of just how the SC Works delivery system operates. Also, the attached Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement gives further detail on partner services and contributions.

The Upstate Workforce Board's Chief Operating Officer is the primary liaison to the WIOA service providers. This staff member meets with providers consistently to ensure WIOA compliance for the federal, state and local level requirements. Survey completion is encouraged and received from job seekers and employers. Any deficiency identified is immediately addressed. The Upstate Workforce Board requires the completion and submission of monthly dashboards on performance, events and community engagement. This dashboard is given to the corresponding Upstate Workforce Board committee with the grantee present for discussion. The SC Works Director also requires social media statistics be met.

~~Pre COVID-19, the SC Works Operator held a "stand-up" meeting every morning invited to participate daily. The Operator looks forward to beginning these meetings again as soon as it is feasible.~~ Equus holds a weekly 'stand-up' meeting

for WIOA funded staff and all partners are invited and strongly encourage to attend.

Additionally, the Upstate Workforce Board Director ~~held~~ holds quarterly monthly grantee meetings. It is at these meetings that a review of instruction letters, policies and performance are reviewed for clarification. This time also allows grantees an opportunity to vent any frustrations they may have or report activities of concern. ~~During program year 2020, a monthly grantee meeting will occur.~~ Ongoing training is provided to grantees upon request. The employees working for the grantees are also asked during monitoring if further training is needed. This ensures that a process of continuous improvement is in place.

The Upstate Workforce Board Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer formerly monitor the programs funded by the Upstate Workforce Board on a yearly basis and a formal report is issued. Throughout the year, desktop monitoring is performed. Secret shoppers are hired to shop the services of our programs and formal reports are sent to the Upstate Workforce Board. At times, the shoppers may wear recording devices. This has proven to be the best method of checking the services of our programs and allows us to address any areas needing improvement. It also allows us to praise staff on what is working well. During the pandemic, we did not procure secret shopping, but may resume this program year.

The Upstate Workforce Board provides written instruction to WIOA service providers. The most recent instruction letters can be found at <http://www.upstaterworkforceboard.org/local-instruction-letters>.

- ***How the local board will target rural communities, including facilitating increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system through the use of technology and other means;***

The local library systems have been a key way we have connected with the rural areas. There are 13 public library locations in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. The libraries normally have meeting space available. They serve as key access points for customers in remote areas. Trained library staff are able to assist the customers with computer access, information about SC Works and knowledge about community partners.

When COVID-19 occurred, things changed drastically as it relates to connection with job seekers, WIOA customers and employers. The following methods were used:

- ✓ Youth programs developed student packets with instructions for students to work from home much like the K-12 schools have done. Youth program staff stay in touch with the students via phone and email to ensure that they are staying on task and were available during regular hours for participant questions/assistance. Zoom meetings to offer instruction were hosted. They have also asked students to take online workshops offered by SC Works. ~~The students have access to The Academy from Equus Workforce Solutions.~~
- ✓ SC Works Talent Development Staff used email and video Webex sessions to stay in touch with clients. A few new clients were even registered into WIOA through remote means. Some customers switched to online classes rather than in-person classes. Some customers participated in online workshops.
- ✓ The WIOA staff person responsible for workshops scheduled and conducted them through Webex. SC Works staff have also provided WIOA orientations via Webex video sessions.
- ✓ Business Services Team staffers positioned themselves as a convener and provided information and resources in real time to the businesses in our area. They are now able to provide virtual employer workshops and virtual job fairs through a recently purchased platform that facilitates these services. Unfortunately, no such services were available through the SC Department of Employment and Workforce or the SC Works Online System that would adequately do what was needed to support a job fair in a professional and helpful manner. The first large scale virtual job fair was held May 7, 2020. Recruiting and matching services were provided virtually. Over 500 job seekers attended and over 40 employers had virtual booths. The event was a big success.
- ✓ The Greater Upstate Manufacturing Sector Partnership meets every two weeks via Zoom. This effort was founded by efforts of the WIOA staff. Business managers have found so much value in networking together that their meeting has gained a life of its own. There is an update on this group earlier in this document. It is now called the Upstate Manufacturing Network.
- ✓ IWT and OJT customers are served virtually. We are now serving these customers in person.
- ✓ Meetings started being conducted via Zoom or Webex. Not requiring travel has likely improved participation.

Going forward, everyone now realizes that we don't have to be face-to-face to serve job seekers and businesses. We don't have to travel to go to a meeting. This may be a new way of doing business even after COVID-19 is eliminated. We see an increased use of technology for connecting with individuals, especially in the remote areas. This certainly will be a way we can case manage and converse with customers without them having to physically come to a center. **Update:** Zoom, Webex and Teams have changed the world of work as we still have several meetings online rather than in person. It is important to meet occasionally in person to maintain close relationships. Online meetings save on travel costs when budgets are tight.

This crisis has also taught us that not all training must be in a classroom. Some individuals do fine with online classes. SC Works uses Facebook and Twitter to communicate important information about services, workshops and job fairs. SC Works through www.SCworks.org has a mobile app that allows customers to access information and services.

We hope to continue experimenting with virtual services and have a mix of in person and virtual options for the customers. New technology will continue to emerge due to the COVID-19 crisis. We look forward to exploring all of these emerging options.

- ***How entities within the SC Works delivery system, including center operators and partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities:***

The Upstate WIOA programs provide services to all customers without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Quality services and effective communication to all customers are very important to the Upstate Workforce Board. To assure all accessibility requirements of Section 188 of the WIOA law are met, the Upstate Workforce Board staff schedule visits to service provider locations and make every effort to accommodate customers facing various challenges. A local instruction letter is in place that addresses the needs of customers who do not have English as their primary language <https://www.upstaterworkforceboard.org/files/files/wia%2013-03%20amend%201.pdf>. This ensures that the Upstate Workforce Board meets

the requirements of Limited English Proficiency customers. All enrolled customers receive a grievance handout that details their rights to services and how to file complaints, as necessary, against any organization not serving them according to those rights.

Recently, Assistive Technology in the Resource Rooms of each of the SCWorks centers were updated to ensure vision impaired customers have access to services. ZoomText is a software that brings advanced text magnification and powerful reading tools to a computer. Vision impaired customers' experience surfing the web, creating a document, or emailing. These features allow customers to use the computer applications more easily than ever before. Also, the Assistive Technology designated computer is equipped with such products as a large monitor, an adjustable table for wheelchair users, a modified keyboard, joystick, trackball and JAWS for reading text.

Upon assignment, new staff (both operator and on-site partners) and volunteers receive training on the operations of the center and its many parts. The Resource Room equipment, along with its ADA assistive technology, are highlighted in this training. Follow up refresher training is conducted, as deemed necessary, by the Comprehensive SC Works Center Manager and other center leaders.

As stated in the SC Works Certification Management Standards, "There are consistent expectations for physical infrastructure and facilities which includes accessibility of each SC Works Center so that all job seekers and business customers can fully participate in the services offered." In an effort to provide staff training and support, the state EO staff provided training to local staff on serving customers with disabilities. When re-location of an SC Works Center is considered, compliance with ADA is of paramount concern. The Upstate Local Area contracted with Able SC to assure the accessibility of the new Cherokee facility a few years ago. The local EO officer also monitors to ensure accessibility to programs and facilities annually. Update: The Comprehensive Center has re-located to 145 North Church Street, B110, Spartanburg, SC 29306. The space is ADA compliant. Staff are working with developers and architects to ensure the new space is also ADA Compliant.

The Upstate Workforce Board's Disabilities Committee reviews and provides information as needed to local service providers. This assists with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. This information may include issues relating to compliance with section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). It may also address programmatic and physical access to the services, programs and activities of the one stop delivery system. These interim communications may also address additional training for staff on providing

support for accommodations as well as targeted ways for helping employers with accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

One function of the Disabilities Committee is to make recommendations to the full Upstate Workforce Board on its full range of disability access issues. It may suggest ways to facilitate the participation of customers with disabilities. This Committee can be flexible in its formulation and is intended to provide an effective means for participants with interests in this area to exchange ideas and develop recommendations for accessibility solutions. This will, in turn, enhance the board's policy making on disability access issues. A board member of the Upstate Workforce Board chairs the Disabilities Committee. The Committee consists of board members appointed by the Upstate Workforce Board Chair and individuals within community partners that are appointed by the Disabilities Committee Chair.

The Disabilities Committee partners with organizations such as AbleSC, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC School for the Deaf and the Blind and SC Department of Employment and Workforce to provide disabilities training for the Upstate Workforce Board staff and service provider staff. Staff members of the other partners in our service area also benefit by the work of this committee. Topics covered include: understanding disabilities and the misconceptions that go along with them, hidden disabilities, hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities, etc. ~~There is an upcoming training that is being planned for~~ There was a training held in the spring of 2021. ~~This will offer~~ The trainers shared expertise to educators on guiding students with disabilities toward post-secondary training and careers. This training will be in partnership with the Regional Center for Educational Support and our 9 school districts.

Update: The committee has planned and hosted several events geared towards, staff, partners and employers. All events focus on increasing disability awareness. The committee strives to offer a minimum of one event per program year.

~~SC Works staff attend the Safety Net meetings where tough cases may be shared with a group of providers. The goal is finding solutions. Predictably, many cases brought before the group are for individuals with disabilities.~~

- ***Identification of the roles and resource contributions of the SC Works partners.***

Core Partners Include:

SC Vocational Rehabilitation

- For GED & High School Diploma, WIN Assessments
- Assistance with workforce development and training for individuals with disabilities

Job Corps

- Handles recruiting and application process to a Job Corps Center

Equus Workforce Solutions

- Adult and Dislocated Worker comprehensive services, supportive services, training and employment

SC Commission for the Blind

- Assistance with workforce development and training for blind individuals

SC Department of Employment and Workforce

- Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services, Unemployment Insurance, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Reemployment Services, Veterans programs, SCWOS

Able SC

- A change agent committed to fostering an inclusive society that empowers individuals with disabilities to live fully engaged and self-directed lives. Able SC is an organization lead by individuals with disabilities that challenges stereotypes, protest disability rights and champion social reform.

USC Upstate Achieve

- Youth provider for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – serves youth ages 16-24 (detail in Section III,2)

Adult Learning Center

- Receives adult education funding for GED instruction
- English as a Second Language

Goodwill

- Senior Community Service Employment Program

Adult Education

- High School Diploma or GED Instruction

Piedmont Community Actions

- Community Service Block Grant

SC Department of Social Services

- Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program and TANF
- Childcare Voucher Program

Spartanburg Community College

- Perkins Career and Technical Education

Spartanburg Housing Authority

- Housing Assistance

Indian Development Council

- Indian and Native American Program

We have many other partners such as United Way, SC Legal Services, Upstate Fatherhood Coalition, and many others in every county. Please also view our MOU/IFA (attachment) that is negotiated annually for more information on our partnerships.

In the Upstate Workforce Area, the SC Works Centers are operated by Equus Workforce Solutions. They were assigned this role based on the results of a competitive procurement process. They provide day-to-day support for SC Works System operations in all three locations. The SC Works Project Director provides strategic oversight to the entire system, regardless of where it is hosted or by whom it is managed. Several partner programs (see Section III and attachments for more detail) support infrastructure costs with cash support and/or with staff assistance in the centers. The remaining partners provide support in terms of electronic access to their services, periodically stationing personnel in the SC Works Centers, participation on the business services team and/or collaborating to plan and implement special projects and events.

2. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), career services are available to everyone. These services include workshops (such as interviewing skills, resume development, social media networking and basic computer skills) as well as job fairs and recruitment events. Other offerings include: ~~The Academy by~~ **LinkedIn Learning** offers 13,000 courses and is paid for by Equus Workforce Solutions (web-based skills training), assessments for referral to WIOA, WIOA Orientation, self-directed and staff assisted job searches and more. Funding is available for qualified individuals in need of additional education and training to upgrade their skills.

Individuals may be laid off due to a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), business closing or substantial layoff. The state Dislocated Worker Rapid Response Department of the SC Department of Employment and Workforce coordinates meetings and the local Director of Business Services presents information to these workers. These presentations include guidance about filing for unemployment compensation as well as familiarization with Workforce Information and Opportunity Act (WIOA) opportunities. The discussion includes methods to get the workers back into a job as quickly as possible.

SC Works program enrollment in the Adult category must use a “priority of service” method. This includes giving priority to those with a Veteran status, on public assistance, low income and those with basic skills deficiencies for enrollment into WIOA. The State Workforce Board requires that 70% of the individuals we serve fall into these categories. This requirement does serve to limit us from serving the needs of businesses when there is a very low unemployment rate. Many of the working poor tend to be just above the income threshold. ~~Pre-COVID, there were~~ There are more jobs than people willing to work to fill them. If the priority of service percentage were changed to 50% rather than 70%, we could fill more jobs with on-the-job training and place more individuals into college. Other partners can serve more of these lower income individuals until they are ready for training and higher-level employment. If they are very low basic skills, they will not be able to attend post-secondary training. Our performance measures are too high in the area of wages to place individuals in low-wage jobs for which they might be suited until their basic skills levels improve. Many states only require the 50% threshold. Having a 70% requirement makes sense if you have a high unemployment rate. But in a great economy with low unemployment, the needs of businesses should drive these types of decisions. This percentage threshold should be a decision made by the local workforce boards since they know their local economy and business needs. This flexibility is specifically allowed by the WIOA law and regulations. The needs of South Carolina would be well served if the State Workforce Board would allow this adjustment.

Adult and Dislocated Workers who are enrolled in WIOA are provided personalized and individualized assistance. They are assessed to determine their skill sets, employment history, previous education and goals in order to gauge their employability at a self-sufficient wage. In instances where a customer may have employment barriers such as a criminal history or need for a GED, guidance is provided to help address these needs. WIN and Traitify Interest Profile ~~are were~~ administered to all WIOA enrollees in the past. WIN testing came to a halt, and we have not had this assessment for many months due to a challenge in the courts. We hope to have WorkKeys or WIN available soon. With these assessment results, Talent Development Specialists provide individualized job coaching to help the customer identify their needs and establish employment goals. Together they build an individual employment plan.

If it is determined that the customer is in need of employment skills, a training track may be deemed necessary. Training is contextualized with regard to local labor market information and the Upstate Workforce Board approved training lists. The Upstate Workforce Board has set the training target to be for advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, logistics and IT. SC Works is approved to pay \$12,000 over a two-year period to train an individual. WIOA funds are “the last payer resort” and other forms of payment for which the client is eligible are applied first before WIOA funds are spent.

Upon completion of training, Talent Development Specialists continue to provide services such as career counseling, job referrals, mock interviews, resume review and other areas of support. This continues until the customer is employed.

Supportive services, based on verified customer need, are also available in the form of transportation assistance, emergency assistance, help with internet cost for online training, computer purchase, childcare reimbursement at a capped amount, etc.

3. A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

The Upstate Workforce Board delegates local rapid response activities to SC Works. SC Works partners with the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) to offer rapid response services. Upon receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, a collaborative meeting occurs to conduct fact-finding. This helps target the most appropriate services for the company and its employees. The SC Works staff members participate in management meetings and in group orientation sessions for the affected workers. By meeting with the affected worker group prior to the layoff date, SC Works employees are sometimes able to assist those individuals in obtaining employment *before* they need to draw unemployment insurance. SC Works often schedules job fairs for local companies who are hiring, and for the affected worker group before the layoff date. In addition to job fairs, local SC Works staff develop job seeker packets highlighting local opportunities available for direct hire placement as well as placement through WIOA on -the-job training. The Regional Director of Business Solutions manages coordination with local employers interested in hiring individuals impacted by upcoming layoffs. SC Works Upstate invites Adult Education and SC Vocational Rehabilitation to provide services to impacted workers, as needed, (often prior to the layoff). SC Works Upstate makes accommodations to ensure these services are given priority before layoff. We realize the importance of reaching out to individuals early in the process.

If it has been determined that the closure or significant layoff will have a great impact on the local area, additional state resources can be accessed. Under extreme circumstances, a temporary one-stop can be set up at the business to assist the affected workers.

In addition to rapid response services, the Upstate Workforce Board's designated Director of Business Solutions works closely with SCDEW to execute rapid response incumbent worker training grants used for layoff aversion. The Director of Business Solutions partners with the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership staff to identify companies in Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties that may be struggling and considering layoffs. Additionally, the Director of Business Solutions meets with local economic developers, ReadySC staff and chambers of commerce staff to create awareness of the incumbent worker training program. This collaborative effort provides the best opportunity to identify struggling companies and offer a potential solution to turn the businesses around and ultimately avert layoffs. Recently, SC Works Upstate was able to eliminate a layoff at a local plant, Cooper Standard Automotive, by securing rapid response incumbent worker training funds from the SC Department of Employment and Workforce to train workers while being paid, during a production shutdown. Spartanburg Community College was paid from the grant to conduct the training.

Additionally, SC Works staff work to connect local companies together to decrease the cost of raw materials. Referring and building local business collaboration averts layoffs by decreasing the overall expenses and increasing profit for Upstate businesses.

4. *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, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.*

We have one youth program for program year 2021. This is the USC Upstate ACHIEVE (Academic Challenges Helping Individuals Expand Values and Education) program. They focus specifically on the area's socially and economically vulnerable youth. The program serves Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. The program is provided year-round and does not take the summer off like some education programs. ACHIEVE serves 85 youth ages 16 – 24.

ACHIEVE operates a comprehensive, youth basic skills, pre-employment and employment program for school dropouts in need of obtaining a GED or out-of-school youth who need upgrading in basic skills. This training is done on-site, where ACHIEVE is co-located with SC Works Spartanburg in the Spartanburg Community College downtown campus in the Business Technology Center at 145 North Church Street in Spartanburg which is also where the SC Works Comprehensive Center is located. ACHIEVE has vans and van drivers that transport the students to and from their homes. Over the past year, two vehicles were secured from grants received by the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation totaling over \$53,000.00. These vehicles replaced two 2006 vans. The Upstate Workforce Board allocated funding for a third van to replace another very old van. This

transportation is the primary reason the students are successful as many have no transportation options.

ACHIEVE is designed to help youth gain their full potential in education and employment, and to become productive citizens. The youth are assessed to determine their individual needs and receive personalized assistance while in the program. While academic skills are a main part of the program, intensive work readiness to identify career pathways, including occupational skills and post-secondary education for gainful employability, is the driving force.

ACHIEVE is required to serve youth with one or more of the required barriers to employment. Barriers include unemployment, offender status, runaway/foster care/homeless, disabled, pregnant/parenting and/or no driver's license. Over the years, ACHIEVE has worked with many youths with disabilities. Often, the disability is not documented, and it is very difficult for ACHIEVE staff to obtain this information since the student has been released from the secondary schools. For several years, the disability documentation could be obtained from the schools, but HIPPA privacy regulations changed this. Further, students are reluctant to disclose a disability. It might be behavioral, dyslexia, ADHD, etc. Many students come to ACHIEVE because they have been expelled from high school or are referred by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The Adult Education partner places a staff member at the site of ACHIEVE at no cost to our program. She serves as the GED instructor for the program. This is a great partnership. This instructor provides the students with core GED preparation and basic skills upgrading. Students receive on-site classroom and individualized instruction in reading, writing and math skills. The instructor must have the ability to figure out how each student learns and adapt instruction to that student. This is the reason they failed in high school. They did not get the necessary, individualized instruction based on their ability. It has always been the philosophy of the program that activities can be planned accordingly and re-evaluated as necessary to accommodate the needs of the student (and the student's disability). The youth have access to the ADA stations located in the SC Works centers. The staff rely on guidance from the Upstate Workforce Board and the experience of SC Works partners in providing any other accommodations that may be required. Student success is the goal of all partners.

Many community partner programs are available in the Upstate Workforce Area that serve youth. We often receive and make referrals to these organizations. In the following link, there are several organizations listed that help individuals which include youth in the area. <https://uwpiedmont.galaxydigital.com/agency/>

The Upstate Workforce Board works closely with Project Search and serves on their Business Advisory Council. Project Search is a high school transition program that ensures center readiness for students in special education programs. This program is different in that it is a school-to-work program that takes place entirely at work during the student's

senior year of high school. Spartanburg County District 6 partners with the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System to provide internship opportunities for their students. SC Vocational Rehabilitation provides students with job coaching. During the year, students intern with three different departments, gaining valuable work experience that can lead to employment. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director and a past Upstate Workforce Board Member introduced the program to Spartanburg leaders through a convened meeting for the purpose of getting a Project Search site in the Upstate. It was the first in South Carolina. Now, there are many Project Search sites in South Carolina mostly modeled after the Spartanburg program. Spartanburg Regional Healthcare has also expanded the Project Search program to their Cherokee County hospital. Sadly, the Upstate Workforce Board staff have not been able to perform co-enrollment into the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act programs as SCDEW/DOL does not recognize the training as a legitimate training for the Eligible Training Provider List. This co-enrollment would be very beneficial to the students as many are in need of transportation help throughout the year in addition to help with transitional employment. We have been able to help some students with transportation in the past through our non-profit, the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation.

5. A description of how the fourteen youth program elements are integrated in program design, including a description of partnerships or formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program.

ACHIEVE either has the elements available from their program or they have a memorandum of agreement on file with all partners providing any of the requisite fourteen elements. The ACHIEVE Director provides the list of the partnering agencies to the Upstate Workforce Board office no later than the end of the first quarter of each program year.

The Fourteen Elements:

1. **Tutoring & study skills leading to the completion of the GED:** ACHIEVE provides GED instructional training and basic skills upgrading for high school dropouts or those lacking basic skills. Students receive classroom and individualized instruction in reading, writing and math skills. Those on a GED track continue until they achieve a functional grade level high enough to take the GED exam. Once that level is attained, ACHIEVE schedules them for the GED exam. If the student fails any part of the GED, they continue in the classroom until they are ready to retake the GED. GED instruction is held 4 days per week for 4 hours per day.
2. **Youth Alternative Secondary School Services:** The ACHIEVE program is an alternative program.

3. **Occupational Skills Training:** Occupational skills training must be offered to students on-site at ACHIEVE or at a local training provider location. Each student will be given the opportunity to choose from curriculums that meet their interests. Upon completion of the training, a certificate will be kept on file. The training must meet the SCDEW/DOL definition of a degree/certificate. Some of the trainings offered during program year 2020 2021 are forklift certification, certified nursing assistant, phlebotomy certification, CellBotics, CDL and NCCER.
4. **Work Experience:** Granted funds may be used to pay stipends for work experiences in the public or private sectors. The ACHIEVE staff will maintain appropriate paperwork on all work-based activities. Work experiences should not exceed 480 hours.
5. **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster:** While customers are attending classes, and usually after receiving pre-employment (work readiness training), they may engage in occupational skills training. These types of training activities may lead to an attainment of a degree/certificate and may result in a work experience and continue to employment. Where possible, customers will be grouped into cohorts, depending on occupational interests, for educational services, related workforce readiness and industry-specific training.
6. **Youth Leadership Development Services:** Leadership development includes tours of community colleges, local colleges and universities, field trips to cultural events, a guest speaker program and a life/work skills training component. The life/work skills training component provides students with the opportunity to participate in community service projects as well as help them to develop and/or enhance communication skills vital to success in the workplace. Community involvement and a sense of civic responsibility are also fostered through group projects and volunteer opportunities. Recent past projects have been held at ~~Mobile Meals and the Soup Kitchen~~ Ruth's Gleanings and the Period Project and included activities such as volunteering in food drives and helping to set up projects for community agencies.

All leadership development opportunities are developed in conjunction with each county's appropriate agencies through linkages. These activities are designed to be fun, informative and motivational, while meeting pre-determined, measurable outcome expectations.

7. **Supportive Services:** Supportive services for customers are offered in the areas of transportation, childcare, educational fees, work clothing, assistance with toiletries and household needs and any other funded service that may be needed to remove a barrier and promote educational and employment activities. Since students often

come to class hungry, the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation helped secure donations so that ACHIEVE staff could create a food pantry for students. Donations are secured to continually supply the pantry. Often, supportive services are also offered through partnering agencies.

8. **Youth/Adult Mentoring:** ACHIEVE provides adult mentoring through job shadowing and worksite supervisors, tutors and community organizations for those individuals determined to be in need of adult guidance through initial assessment.
9. **Follow Up:** ACHIEVE follows up not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate. This follow up is done via phone, email, text or social media options. Information obtained in these post-program contacts may be used to make program adjustments.
10. **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:** This may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals through alcohol and drug abuse recovery agencies. Any needed behavioral counseling may be done through the Department of Juvenile Justice. Academic and career counseling services are provided to all customers. Mental health counseling is offered to all customers and is provided to interested customers at intervals deemed appropriate by the staff. These mental health referrals are offered to customers needing assistance outside of the scope of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services. It would be very beneficial if the youth program could actually pay for immediate psychiatric counseling for some of the students. Tragically, we have had several students commit suicide over the years. Our programs continue to work with community partners to identify and recruit eligible customers who will benefit from all aspects of our services. These partners include DSS, local school districts, Birth Matters, Safe Homes Rape Crisis, The Forrester Center, SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and many others. These have been lead partners for providing information on pregnancy counseling, sex abuse counseling, domestic violence counseling, bullying counseling, etc. ACHIEVE was able to secure a licensed therapist through a non-WIOA grant to provide behavioral counseling to the students.
11. **Financial Literacy Education:** Workshops are provided in partnership with local business and non-profit organizations to introduce students to financial literacy and budget management. Topics may include developing and following a workable budget, establishing and monitoring credit, choosing a checking and savings account, planning for large expenditures and maintaining appropriate insurance. Attention is also given to planning for costs associated with post-secondary education and training.

12. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** This is a part of the pre-employment and career pathway training to acquaint customers with owning one's own business. Workshops are provided in partnership with local businesses and non-profit organizations and focus on researching the market, creating a business plan and securing and managing finances.
 13. **Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration services:** A Career Development Specialist/Job Coach ensures that students have access to the most up-to-date labor market information pulled from the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.
 14. **Activities that help youth prepare for and transition into post-secondary education and training:** Services are provided through a series of workshops and field trips designed to explore post-secondary options, arrange financing and create a plan to implement enrollment. Additional services, especially those related to financial aid and scheduling, may be provided through one-on-one case management. The Upstate Workforce Board staff are also available to speak to classes.
6. ***If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), what is the LWDAs policy that further defines how to determine if a youth 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. If your area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency, a local policy is not required.***

ACHIEVE utilizes the TABE/GED Ready tests to determine basic skills deficiency.

7. ***A description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.***

All individuals without a high school diploma or GED are referred to Adult Education, the Adult Learning Center or USC Upstate ACHIEVE. In addition, businesses with a high number of employees without a High School Diploma/GED are encouraged to take advantage of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds to upskill their existing workforce.

~~Individuals may take the practice tests at www.winersystem.com. They choose the assessment they want/need to practice on: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and/or Reading for Information. Unlike WorkKeys, WIN does not have the same remediation offerings.~~ The State of South Carolina has not offered WIN or WorkKeys for a while and as of 10/25/22, it is still not available.

Anyone needing help with FAFSA is helped by SC Works, ACHIEVE, Upstate Workforce Board staff or referred to other agencies that will help them.

SC Works and the Upstate Workforce Board employees participate in career fairs in the middle and high schools and speak in classrooms about careers in the area. We also speak about the importance of post-secondary education. We have presentations that were developed in-house. We are also able to do manufacturing simulation and make extensive use of virtual reality technology. Schools may check out our virtual reality equipment for their use. SC Works serves as the point of contact for educators interested in implementing virtual reality experiences for students in the Upstate Workforce Area.

~~With our comprehensive SC Works One Stop co-located with the Spartanburg Community College, it allows us to showcase the college and provide tours to interested individuals. We also conduct several recruiting events at the site.~~ The Director of Advanced Manufacturing from Spartanburg Community College has a seat on the Upstate Workforce Board. This greatly enhances inter-program coordination.

The ACHIEVE youth program students participate in field trips to colleges in the area. SC Works, ACHIEVE and the Upstate Workforce Board employees stand ready to speak to any group about the importance of secondary education completion and post-secondary education and show the increase in earnings based on educational attainment.

~~We also have partnered with the SC Department of Commerce's local Regional Center on a Career Showcase held yearly for all 9th grade students in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. This showcase may serve up to 4,500 9th grade students and has approximately fifty businesses on-site showcasing their products, work culture and jobs. Several colleges also have booths. This was held at the Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium last October (2019). Due to COVID-19, we are working with the Regional Center Director to hold the event virtually this year using our Virtual Job Fair platform. SC Works and the Upstate Workforce Board staffers help with this event each year.~~ The showcase will not be held this year. However, we will still partner with the SC Department of Commerce's local Regional Center to directly connect industry and educators. Our goal is to provide a space for industry partners to create awareness of available opportunities, both direct and through apprenticeship tracks; and to provide a space for students and educators to learn more about the local labor market and potential resources to assist with learning after high school. The Upstate Workforce Board Chairman also serves on the Regional Center board.

A STEM summer camp has been held each year at Sims Middle School in Union. There are approximately 12 students in the camp each year. During the 2022 summer camp, we had 20 students attend. There is a focus on STEM subjects and STEM careers. Students tour colleges and businesses. ~~Due to COVID-19, we were not able to organize the program this year, but plan to start back next year.~~ Funds are raised from businesses, local

governments and other organizations to pay for the costs of the program. We are planning the same type of program for Cherokee County for the Summer of 2023.

KNOW(2) is a non-profit in Cherokee County with a focus on secondary education completion and post-secondary attainment. This organization was formed from the Cherokee County Community Indicators work started by the Upstate Workforce Board in partnership with United Way of the Piedmont. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director is an officer/board member of this vital educational support organization.

The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director is an officer and board member of the USC Upstate Foundation. This foundation awards several scholarships each year to local high school students. The Upstate Workforce Board Associate Director serves on the Spartanburg Community College Foundation. Spartanburg Community College is currently offering free tuition.

The Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation (UWFC) is a non-profit that was started in 2010 to support the work of the Upstate Workforce Board. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director is a board member and officer. This board raises funds for workforce development projects which are not funded by WIOA. Each year, the UWFC gives scholarships to local students in memory of a past Upstate Workforce Board Member, Mr. Danny E. Allen. Mr. Allen helped form the non-profit. This organization partnered with several entities to provide virtual reality experiences related to STEM careers.

The non-profit funded a pilot project at Spartanburg County School District 3 called The In10tional project. Ten (10) students were selected to participate. We asked the district to select 10 students with no solid plans after high school. We worked with the students for 4 months (approximately 5 meetings) to help them figure out a pathway after high school. The meetings included business speakers, college tours, soft skills training, career assessments, videos and virtual reality. We continue to apply for funds to offer this project to all nine school districts in the Upstate Workforce Area. We find that many students need additional help in planning a solid career path.

In addition to partnerships with K-12, the Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works collaborate with local technical colleges to define strategies and reduce duplication by:

- Serving as co-applicants on grant opportunities;
- Building customized training programs, based on industry requirements (such as IWT, IWTRR, and short-term continuing education projects);
- Serving as ambassadors of the apprenticeship model, which may also be supported through WIOA funds; and

- Building and filling programs (like Operation Workforce Training), often leading to WIOA funded on-the-job training following completion of the classroom training.

In addition to collaboration and partnership among the technical college system, SC Works partners with higher education to promote and coordinate job fair events, and internship or work experience events. Additionally, SC Works provides an overview of available services beyond college related to career paths, apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Existing local partnerships or projects within the Upstate include Limestone University, Spartanburg Methodist College and the Universities of South Carolina Upstate and Union.

There are other examples in other parts of this document.

8. A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation, childcare, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

In the Upstate, we have had a long-standing problem with the lack of affordable/available transportation. Individuals in outlying areas and rural counties cannot get to jobs and education. These people ~~were~~ **are** needed in the workforce when we are under 5% unemployment. ~~Once recovery occurs, we believe there will be more private sector led transportation efforts in the area to address this need for workers and learners.~~ Commute with Enterprise is an option that ~~was~~ **is** being considered and used ~~pre-COVID-19~~ (<https://www.commutewithenterprise.com>) in the Upstate Workforce Area to help address transportation barriers. ~~The Economic Futures Group/Spartanburg Area Chamber, OneSpartanburg, SC Works Business Solutions, United Way and private businesses were considering~~ are using this partnership utilizing Commute with Enterprise. Per their website, it reads "Commute with Enterprise remains committed to helping your workforce move forward. As an essential service provider, Commute with Enterprise is staying open to serve customers who rely on us to get employees to and from work - including those who are on the front lines of relief efforts." **The SC Works Business Solutions Team often refers companies struggling to fill jobs offering lower market wages in rural areas to Commute with Enterprise. Through collaboration with existing workforce partners, several companies have been able to tap into a pool of candidates who would not have been available without transportation.**

The Upstate Workforce Board has used Uber and Lyft in some cases for transportation for customers to solve emergency transportation, last minute issues. Transportation solutions are definitely a focus for the Upstate Workforce Board as well as many partnering programs.

The SC Works Talent Development Specialists have been able to solve most childcare problems in the past except those related to individuals working on the 2nd or 3rd shifts. ~~When COVID-19 hit, this changed when childcare centers closed. We fear this may continue to be a problem. We do not have a solution for this, but will work with other community leaders to address any problems in this area.~~ The Talent Development Specialists work closely with DSS on childcare vouchers. They also work closely with other partners on support services. The Upstate Workforce Board has issued an updated instruction letter for supportive services - <https://www.upstateworkforceboard.org/files/files/R17-02%281%29.pdf>.
https://www.upstateworkforceboard.org/files/files/Scans_2021011312123200.pdf

9. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the SC Works delivery system.

Partnership meetings occur monthly and at those meetings, challenges are discussed. Partners also discuss any new grants/programs. Partners tend to work well together on most identified issues. Not all of the partners use the SC Works Operating System (SCWOS), so there is duplication. This will not change unless the Governor requires that all agencies performing workforce activities use one single system. ~~The State Workforce Board is now considering Zip Recruiter. If SC Works is to use both systems, this will complicate matters even more. We do feel Zip Recruiter would probably be much more user friendly than the current SCWOS. Having a single, designated system will be most helpful.~~ The Upstate Workforce Board's designated Director of Business Solutions oversees the function of the Business Solutions Team for the SC Works system.

In the past, this has been challenging when individuals do not follow her lead. In an effort to avoid duplication with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, the Director of Business Solutions, at times, comes to the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation for help with funding to address an immediate issue for the business customer(s). At other times, we use another community partner in order to react quickly. ~~Mostly, when this occurs, it is an issue from the Columbia SCDEW office and not a local decision by SCDEW staff.~~ These cases do not happen often, but they do occur and we have had to work around the barriers when they cannot be solved by partner staff. We have to do what is needed to serve the business customers in a timely manner. ~~These types of challenges will never be totally avoided until the Wagner-Peyser staff are fully under the SC Works Operator which is now allowed by USDOL (see <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=ETA-2019-0004-0001>).~~ If you cannot hire and fire staff, you cannot have optimum quality, customer services and processes. Responsibility and authority must go together. **Unfortunately, this system is set up this way.** This lack of coordination for business services leaves the Business Services ~~Workforce Solutions Manager and One-Stop Project Manager with complete responsibility, but with little authority over partner staff actions. You would never see~~

~~such a dysfunctional set up like this one under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in the private sector. It just does not work well. We strongly encourage the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) Director to consider this staffing flexibility that is now allowed by the US Department of Labor. It would mean a reduction in staff for SCDEW and improve the system.~~

In addition to our core, required and optional partners, there are many other community partners. We seek out partners that help us solve problems in serving those seeking services whether it is an individual in need of work or training, or a business in need of workers or other services. We have worked with the United Way, Northside Development Group, HR associations, Regional Centers under the Department of Commerce, chambers, economic developers and many more organizations to address workforce challenges.

10. A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under the WIOA Title II, including how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements.

The adult education partners work very well with the Upstate workforce development system. Cross referrals occur often between adult education providers and the other partners in the SC Works system. Spartanburg County Adult Education and the Adult Learning Center are core partners. Spartanburg Adult Education provides an instructor for the ACHIEVE program. The Directors of the Adult Learning Center and Spartanburg County Adult Education are both on the Upstate Workforce Board. The Cherokee County Adult Education Director rotated off the Upstate Workforce Board on June 30, 2020 and is now a staff person in the USC Upstate ACHIEVE program. During PY22, USC Upstate ACHIEVE, Adult Education and the Adult Learning Center are increasing co-enrollments. This goal is to increase services available to Adult Education and Adult Learning Center students. Services being targeted are work-based learning activities, driver's education, occupational skills training in addition to many others.

The Upstate Workforce Board (UWB) participated in the last Adult Education Application Review process. We were able to secure UWB member volunteers. We are not sure what the process will be this time. The last review was cumbersome, and the SC Department of Education realized this and plans changes for this round of reviews. We will once again ask for Upstate Workforce Board members to participate with Adult Education on the review process once they issue the instructions.

Note: The second round of reviews was still very involved and overwhelming for board members. Board staff will continue to support board members through this process.

Section V: Operations and Compliance

- 1. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local SC Work system. This includes agreements between the local board or other entities with respect efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, such as the cross training of staff, technical assistance, the use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination:***

The SC Works Business Plan is attached to this section (Attachment V-A).

Attachment V-B contains Memorandum of Agreements between the Greenville Workforce Development Board and the Upstate Workforce Board.

Attachment V-C contains the SC Works System Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Sharing Agreements.

The Upstate Workforce Board issues instruction letters on its website. There is an instruction letter that allows for technical assistance requests. In addition to this, we ask grantees if they need any training or assistance during our monthly grantee meetings and during monitoring.

Earlier in this plan, we described how staff/partners are cross trained on ADA assistive equipment so they may serve all customers with disabilities.

Businesses must sign Incumbent Worker Training and On-the-Job Training agreements. Those templates are issued by SCDEW to the local boards.

Sharing of information is primarily done through social media, through our monthly dashboards, grantee meetings, partnership meetings and job fair notices.

- 2. A description of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the chief elected official(s):***

The Upstate Workforce Board chose Spartanburg County as the fiscal and administrative agency for the WIOA federal funds many years ago. This was also approved by the local elected officials in Cherokee and Union counties. Spartanburg County has the lowest indirect cost rate of all workforce board administrative entities in the state of South Carolina. The Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is considered a Department Head under Spartanburg County. All Upstate

Workforce Board staff are on the payroll of Spartanburg County except one staff person doing business surveys and she is on a temporary payroll.

3. *A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities:*

The Upstate Workforce Board follows the procurement process policy of Spartanburg County. Our next request for a Youth Training Provider will be issued in 2024. The next request for a SC Works Operator will occur in 2025. The SC Works Operator procurement is done jointly for both Greenville and the Upstate by Spartanburg County.

Policy:

- \$50,000 and above: Must receive the approval from Spartanburg County and the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director. Our two program grantees fall under this procurement. A non-mandatory, pre-bid conference is scheduled prior to the due date for the proposals. This procurement is done by sealed bid, but the lowest bid does not necessarily have to be awarded. When procuring for a grantee to run our SC Works One Stop, the One Stop Committees of the Greenville and Upstate Workforce Boards share the responsibility for reviewing proposals and making a recommendation to the full Greenville and Upstate Workforce Boards for approval. The Youth Committee of the Upstate Workforce Board is responsible for reviewing proposals for youth program funding and making a recommendation to the full Upstate Workforce Board. There is an appeal procedure.
- \$10,000 and above: Must receive sealed bids in response to a written request, awarded to lowest bidder. Must also have approval of the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director.
- \$5,000 and above: Must receive SCDEW approval for equipment. Must also have approval of the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director.
- \$2,500 to \$9,999: Must receive 3 quotes, awarded to the lowest bidder. Must also have approval of the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director.
- \$1,000 to \$2,499: Must receive 2 quotes.
- \$250 - \$999: Requires written approval in advance (email permitted) by the Associate Director.
- Under \$250: Processed by the Upstate Workforce Board Finance Manager.

4. Agree Upon local performance goals after negotiations are finalized:

Program Year 2022 and 2023 goals are below -

WIOA Title I – Adult	Program Year 2022 & 2023 Goals
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	78.7%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	76.5%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,429
Credential Attainment Rate	66%
Measurable Skills Gains	55.2%

WIOA Title I – Dislocated Worker	Program Year 2022 & 2023 Goals
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	81.6%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	80%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$7,935
Credential Attainment Rate	60.5%
Measurable Skills Gains	57.1%

WIOA Title I – Youth	Program Year 2022 & 2023 Goals
Education or Training Activities or Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	79%
Education or Training Activity or Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	73%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$2,500
Credential Attainment Rate	72.2%
Measurable Skills Gains	40.5%

5. A description of actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce area, including:

- The effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement to assess their one-stop centers** - The Upstate Workforce Board has its Chief Operating Officer (COO)/Associate Director in direction over the WIOA service providers/grantees. The providers consistently meet with the COO to ensure WIOA compliance at the federal, state and local levels. SC Works receives survey results monthly from job seekers and WIOA customers. ~~Beginning in program year 2020, the business surveys are conducted and received by the Upstate Workforce Board staff. This was necessary as no employer surveys were coming in for job postings and screenings except when specific recruiting events occurred.~~ The Upstate and Greenville Workforce Boards now contract with an individual to conduct the business surveys. The survey results are sent to the Upstate Workforce Board staff. At the recruiting events, the Regional Director of Business Solutions ~~would~~ ensures that surveys ~~were~~ are completed. The results of surveys are reviewed, and changes are made to the system processes as needed. Secret shoppers are used periodically to 'shop' the services of the programs. This has proven to be the best method of monitoring customer service, processes and outcomes of the customers. ~~This program year, the State Workforce Development Board implemented secret shopping of the 12 workforce areas.~~

Each WIOA grantee submits monthly dashboards that reflect relevant program information. See Attachment V-D for a copy of the October 2022 Dashboards. The dashboards give the Upstate Workforce Board the ability to observe trends and see a monthly snapshot of the services provided. Any areas of concern are immediately addressed. The dashboards provide performance information above the WIOA required performance measures.

Grantee meetings are held to have discussion on program services and customers. These meetings are held monthly offsite at a coffee shop or restaurant to deter distractions. During this time, technical assistance may be requested. At times, the Upstate Workforce Board staff may detect a training need based on dialogue with program staff.

The youth program grantee conducts customer surveys sporadically with their customers. Upon exit of the program, students give feedback for improvement or make suggestions.

The Upstate Workforce Board's Executive Director issues numbered instruction letters to the two programs as needed to communicate changes and updates. The link to those letters is below.

<https://www.upstateworkforceboard.org/local-instruction-letters>

- ***A description of fiscal and program performance goals beyond the federal measures and how progress will be tracked and made publicly available*** – See the above answer to previous question. Dashboards are posted on the Upstate Workforce Board website. They are also reviewed in the One Stop Committee, Youth Committee and Upstate Workforce Board meetings and these meetings are also open to the public. The Upstate Workforce Board staff also require that success stories be published. <https://www.upstateworkforceboard.org/news>.

In addition to the above, the local area tracks the following measures monthly to ensure the requirement is met annually.

- ◆ Participant Cost Rate Policy (expected to meet a minimum of 30%)
 - ◆ Obligation Rate Policy (must obligate 80% of the program portion of current allocations)
 - ◆ Fund Utilization Policy (must have a minimum of 70% of funds expended by end of program year)
 - ◆ Priority of Service (must serve 70% low income and/or basic skills deficient). This requirement is higher than the federal law requires and impacts us to be able to serve individuals already working that are interested in promotions or skill upgrades. If this were 51%, we could better serve our employer customers in dire need of employees.
- ***A description of the methodology used by the local board to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds*** – The Upstate Workforce Board utilizes the square footage methodology for allocating infrastructure costs of the SC Works center. The Infrastructure Funding Agreement is a plan to fund the costs of the operations of the One Stop System. Partners enter into an agreement to support the cost of shared services and jointly occupied facilities. The square footage methodology classifies space based on its purpose and reasonable methods of determining each partner's proportionate share. The three types of space are sole, public assess resource room and common space. (see Attachment V-C)

Cost allocation among partners shall meet the WIOA regulations, Federal Uniform Guidelines, state rules and policies. This agreement is modified annually. Some shared costs may include:

- ✓ Rental space
- ✓ Copier costs
- ✓ Phone and internet services
- ✓ Information and technology maintenance

✓ Office supplies

- ***A description of the roles and contributions of SC Works partners, including cost allocation*** – this description is detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement plan which has been included as an attachment. Infrastructure costs related to the operation of the SC Works Upstate Center are currently allocated among partners who either occupy the facilities or make use of the facilities. The cost of rent, phones, etc. is divided based on the square footage method by which each partner is apportioned their part of the costs. This is based on the blend of the amount of space they actually occupy within each center and the number and variety of customers served or usage time for the facilities.

See page 62 which begins the listing of the partners and their roles. Financial contribution is listed in Attachment V-C.

6. ***A description of how adult and dislocated worker training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including:***

- ***If contracts for training services will be used*** – The Upstate Workforce Board’s SC Works WIOA program primarily utilizes the training services from the eligible training provider list and issues individual training accounts, not contracts. The exceptions are on-the-job training contracts, incumbent worker training contracts, work experience agreements and transitional job agreements. These are written with the employer. The maximum expenditure amount for any combination of training that SC Works staff may approve is \$12,000, excluding supportive services. Requests for exceptions to these requirements or limits require a completed waiver request form, to be signed and approved by the Upstate Workforce Board Executive Director, but cannot exceed \$14,000. It is very rare to have a cost exceeding the \$12,000 limit.

The ACHIEVE youth program may have signed agreements with training providers based on the student’s interest such as forklift certification/training, CellBotics training, certified nursing assistant, MSSC, etc.

- ***How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs*** – we do not use training service contracts other than those listed above. Should an individual complete training through the use of the individual training account (ITA) and then be placed in on-the-job training, the Project Accountant will ensure that the customer’s training costs do not exceed the ITA limit. Equus Workforce Solutions staff utilize a financial reporting system that tracks all costs associated with the participant. Training providers must upload their trainings on the eligible training provider list and sign a memorandum of agreement with SCDEW in which the providers agree to supply data about themselves and their programs. Once the customer selects the training desired

from the eligible training provider list, their assigned Talent Development Specialist creates their ITA under the established guidelines.

- ***How the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided*** – The One Stop Operator's Talent Development Specialists will review training options with customers. Customers may make an informed selection of their training program through the www.scpaath.org site. The assigned Talent Development Specialist must feel confident that the individual has the basic skills and ability to complete the training program.

The Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works staff engage with as many training providers as possible directly. This ensures that information pamphlets, social media links, points of contact, presentations and other information shared by the Talent Development Specialists are up to date. The SC Works staff make valuable use of tools such as the O*Net and Career Interest profiles which help customers make decisions on training options. Other factors considered when these decisions are being made are transportation methods to and from training, childcare availability during the times of training, household budgeting, etc. These same factors are also reviewed for on-the-job training, work experience and transitional job customers. We currently do not have many options for customers on the eligible training provider list as most providers find the reporting too cumbersome and choose not to participate.

7. ***A description of the process used by the local board to provide a 10-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of the business, labor organizations, and education.***

In Section III, we list the individuals invited to review the plan along with those attending the Zoom meetings for plan review. In addition to this, the plan is posted on the Upstate Workforce Board website along with the regional plan and on the SC Works website for public comment. We also have the link sent to the 13 public libraries, the 4 chambers of commerce and all 9 school superintendents. We also have a representative from labor on the Upstate Workforce Board. We ensured that small, medium and large businesses were included in the review invitation. All three counties had individuals invited to participate in the review process.

8. ***A description of how the local area SC Works centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by SC Works partners.***

A virtual job fair platform was purchased by the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation. This has allowed us to hold several virtual job fairs. This purchase was made due to the

COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to serve businesses and provide conference opportunities to organizations. All fairs and conferences will be offered for a fee. That fee is based on size and staff time required. This virtual platform has been so successful that it will likely become the primary means for conducting recruiting events in the future. We will also conduct a Career Awareness Showcase for high school students utilizing this platform in partnership with the Regional Center Director from the SC Department of Commerce. We will be able to host virtual career and college fairs in the schools using this platform. This will help link companies with students more directly to spark interest in careers in the Upstate area.

Update: The State Workforce Development Board purchased a virtual job fair platform, and the 12 local boards may use this platform. Equus purchased the same platform that we purchased during COVID-19 as our license expired. That platform has been preferred because our business customers have built profiles in that system and had experience in its use. We are mostly conducting in-person job fairs currently.

As has been written in other sections, the staff in both WIOA funded programs have been using Webex and Zoom for meetings with customers to conduct workshops and for case management. WIOA orientations have also occurred virtually. Emails and texts are also used. We look forward to other technologies that will surface due to our need for distancing.

Update: Staff still use virtual methods to communicate; however, they are not as prevalent as they were during the pandemic.

Job seekers already had the SCWOS system available to them virtually. We are seeing more online training options coming available, so individuals do not have to go to a classroom. These online trainings will be properly vetted for quality.

Update: Online training works well for some curriculums, but for others it is not appropriate. We are definitely more open to online training options post pandemic than we were prior to the pandemic.

O*Net has a plethora of careers that people can review that include videos.

Co-enrollment is occurring virtually, but it would be much more successful and seamless if all partners were under one data system.

9. ***A description of how the local board is serving priority populations, including those with barriers to employment, as required by WIOA – please see the following link.*** Also, the The Associate Director performs desktop monitoring quarterly to ensure that we are meeting this measure. This is also discussed during our monthly grantee meetings.

The SC Works and Upstate Workforce Board staff have engaged in outreach to those in low-income areas. We also hold events (job fairs and workshops for example) in many of the low-income areas. This was placed on hold with the China virus outbreak. We plan to continue this

~~outreach in person once there is a cure. In the meantime, we will work to conduct outreach virtually, but it is tougher with the low-income population using this method.~~

10. ***A description of how the local board is serving priority populations, including those with barriers to employment, as required by WIOA –*** Also The Associate Director performs desktop monitoring quarterly to ensure that we are meeting this measure. This is also discussed at the grantee meetings monthly.

All program staff are aware of this metric. The Operations Manager and Project Accountant for SC Works monitor this metric periodically to ensure compliance.

Our local agreements with our grantees operators contain goals to ensure we are striving to serve all populations. Most recent goals are as follows:

- ~~20 Veterans~~
- ~~14 Individuals with Disabilities~~
- ~~20 Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds~~
- 155 new enrollments with 70% being low-income or basic skills deficient with a recommendation that we be at 75%
- 20 On-the-Job training contracts at a minimum
- Community outreach events in each county per month (4 in Cherokee, 4 in Union, 8 in Spartanburg)
- 4 recruitment events at SC Works monthly
- 1 regional job fair annually
- 1 social media post per workday
- 200 new Facebook followers during PY22 (baseline 5,627)

Different recruitment strategies are used to identify these individuals priority populations. Partner referrals tend to be the most effective. The Upstate Workforce Board staff review the demographics of those we serve quarterly. We do find that individuals do not want to disclose a disability which makes it difficult to truly know the number of individuals we are serving with a disability.

11. ***A description of the local area's fiscal and programmatic monitoring process.***

All Upstate Workforce Board grants will be monitored once during the grant period for programmatic compliance and once for financial compliance. Desktop monitoring, to include SCWOS data, will be ongoing throughout the year. Areas to be reviewed during on-site compliance monitoring visits include:

- Performance and Compliance
- Financial Procedures and Reporting
- Equal Opportunity
- Grievance Procedures
- Competency Attainment
- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Eligibility Certification

- Inventory
- Case Management Processes/Tools
- Spreadsheet associated with Local Instruction Letter 13-20 (Tracking Training Related Employment)
- Compliance with all One Stop processes/standards
- Customer Interviews

Please see attachment V-C V-E for details on this process.

12. Copies of current local board policies and definitions, including:

- **Supportive Services Policy** – see attachment V-F for both programs
- **OJT reimbursement policy** – see attachment V-G (also more detail in Equus Work Statement)
- **IWT Policy, when using local funds** – see attachment V-H
- **Youth incentives policy** – see attachment V-I
- **Local training cap policy** – see attachment V-G
- **Youth BSD policy** – not applicable as we use TABE tests
- **Local definition for youth who “require additional assistance”** - see attachment V-J
- **Adult and Dislocated Worker self-sufficiency definition(s) for training** – The Adult self-sufficing policy is 200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL). The Dislocated Worker self-sufficiency policy is employment attained at 85% of pre-layoff wages.

13. Copies of current local workforce area documents, including:

- **Memorandum(s) of Understanding, including signature sheets** – see attachment V-C
- **Resources Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets** – see attachment V-C
- **All service provider grants including statements of work and budgets** – see attachment V-K for Equus and V-L for ACHIEVE
- **Statements of work for in-house operational staff (where applicable)** - the Upstate Workforce Board outsources all programs
- **Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s) for Proposals** – Youth Program RFP is attachment V-M and One Stop Operator RFP is attachment V-N
- **LWDB By-Laws** – see attachment V-O
- **LWDB and Committee Schedules** – see attachment V-P
- **LWDB budgets** – attachment V-Q
- **Local monitoring schedules** – see below

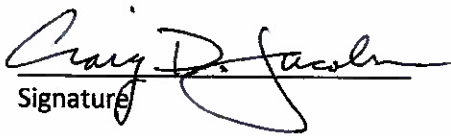
<u>Site</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
USC Upstate Achieve	10/21/2022	12/2/2022
SC Works Upstate (all locations)	01/27/2023	03/10/2023

Programmatic, EO review/inspection and financial monitoring will occur concurrently. Entrance and exit conferences will be scheduled as closely as possible to the end date listed above.

Local Plan Signatures

Upstate Workforce Board

Upstate Workforce Board
Craig D. Jacobs, Chairman


Signature

12-6-22
Date

Local Grant Recipient Signatory Official:

Upstate Workforce Development Area
B. Cole Alverson


Signature

12.12.22
Date