

## UPSTATE WORKFORCE BOARD FOUR YEAR LOCAL PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and State Instruction 15-16, the Executive Director of each Workforce Board must submit a Local Plan outlining a four-year strategy for the area's workforce development system. The plan must be approved by all area county councils before submission to the state. The local Workforce Board must make the proposed plan available to the public and provide a 30-day period for comment. The plan must be submitted to the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) by November 1, 2016. DEW has 90 days from the date the plan is submitted to approve the plan. Local Workforce Boards must have an approved plan in place to receive funding for the six core programs:

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title 1),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act program (Title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title IV)

### Key Sections of the Four Year Local Plan

- A. Workforce and Economic Analysis,
- B. Strategic Vision and Goals,
- C. Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies,
- D. Program Design and Evaluation, and
- E. Operations and Compliance

#### **A. Workforce and Economic Analysis**

The Upstate Workforce Board (UWB) One-Stop Committee works with One-Stop Business Services staff and Economic Developers (EDs) to analyze local Labor Market Information (LMI) and identify in-demand occupations. The private sector industries that employ a large percentage of individuals living in the service area, and meet these criteria listed above, are: **Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Logistics, Distribution, Retail, and Construction Trades** (*Instruction Number: WIOA 13-12 Amendment 3*). Based on this information, the UWB established the following allocation of training resources for the local WIOA contractors:

- 60% - Advanced Manufacturing
- 25% - Healthcare, Retail, Logistics and Distribution
- 15% - Construction Trades

Among the three counties in the Local Area, the data for each category of Educational Attainment (Less Than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> No Diploma, High School Graduate, Some College, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Degree; presented in percentages of the *Population 25 Years and Older*), are very similar. (For example: Associate's Degree, Cherokee – 7.31%, Spartanburg – 10.02%, Union – 8.06%, Upstate Area – 9.46%) (*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2013 5-Year Estimates*)

There are factors that negatively impact our job seekers' progression through the workforce pathway. Lack of transportation and limited and expensive childcare, especially for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shifts, make it difficult for job seekers to accept lower paying job offers, keeping them on the government assistance track. The lack of cohesion amongst policies from DOL to State to Local Areas can cause disruptions in programs being enacted and/or totally understood by the required partners. The duplication of business service representatives and similar support services being offered by DEW and other system partners can be confusing and is not in the best interests of customers. These are areas of weakness that will be reviewed and acted upon to change them into strengths or Best Practices in the near future.

## **B. Strategic Vision and Goals**

Regional Vision Statement: The UWB is the champion for regional workforce development and economic growth. We fully support economic development regionally through our involvement with regional organizations.

We will continue to attend meetings related to regional transportation solutions. County boundaries are not a barrier, as proven by commuting patterns of the workforce for jobs yielding salaries that allow for self-sufficiency.

By improving services of current partners, while building new partnerships with faith-based organizations, UWB will be able to help more residents with barriers to employment. Communication with and education of employers who need to hire these residents will also provide a two-way street for offering more employment opportunities, leading to self-sufficiency for residents with employment barriers, while also preparing better educated and skilled workers needed to support regional economic growth.

## **C. Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies**

The UWB, through a *Request for Proposal (RFP)* process, contracts with three separate entities, The SC Works Upstate One-Stop Operator, The University of South Carolina Upstate ACHIEVE program, and The YouthStop™ Educational Services Center, to develop, administer, and provide services directly to participants, establish and maintain relationships with core and required partners in the delivery system, and work directly with employers to meet their business needs.

The UWB has taken care to align Upstate initiatives to the state's vision for a strengthened and expanded workforce. Middle skills jobs make up a large part of the Upstate's labor market. One of the continuing challenges has been a shortage of technically skilled individuals who have the right combination of hard and soft skills for these jobs. A lot of progress has been made through improved programming, collaboration, and business engagement. However, there is still a critical need for job re-entry training services for long-term unemployed older white-collar workers, and guidance for recent college graduates who cannot find employment in their fields of study, due to a lack of local white-collar jobs.

UWB works with core partners to facilitate a strengthening of referrals, partnerships, and outreach. It will become imperative over the next four years, to utilize partners in new ways and to reach out to organizations not used before. The UWB continues to work toward improvement in reaching targeted populations facing barriers to employment, despite the limits imposed by reductions in staffing and resources. These groups include: veterans, low-income individuals, migrant seasonal farm workers, homeless individuals, and ex-offenders.

UWB staff and SC Works staff have a proven rapport with local EDs. They are often consulted by them or at the table with new business prospects. They are viewed as valuable members of the team necessary for attracting new businesses to the area. The UWB has partnered with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for many years. UWB consistently makes referrals to SBDC and SCORE, a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship.

#### **D. Program Design and Evaluation**

Career Services are available to everyone in Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union Counties. These services include workshops, job fairs, recruitment events, interviewing skills training, resume development, ResCare Academy (web-based skills training) and basic computer skills training.

The UWB Associate Director is the primary liaison for the WIOA service providers. This staff member meets with providers consistently to ensure WIOA compliance at the federal, state and local level. Survey results are received monthly from WIOA clients (job seekers and employers). The Associate Director reviews the results and provides feedback to the service providers and they work together to address suggestions and make program enhancements.

UWB schedules visits to service provider locations and makes every effort to accommodate customers facing various challenges. A local policy is in place that addresses the needs of customers who do not have English as their primary language. The UWB Disabilities Committee makes recommendations to the full UWB on its full range of disability access issues.

Adult and Dislocated Workers enrolled in WIOA are provided personalized assistance. They are assessed to determine their skill sets, employment history, previous education and goals and to gauge their employability at a self-sufficient wage. UWB constantly seeks out partners unique to each community so that the One-Stop environment reflects local agencies and resources.

### **E. Operations and Compliance**

WIOA requires Workforce Boards to enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with mandatory partners. Of the twelve Workforce Boards in the state, the UWB is one of two areas which utilize their county as the fiscal agent; whereas, the other local Boards utilize the Council of Governments (COG) as the fiscal agent.

Locally, in keeping with WIOA regulations, the Request for Proposal (RFP) and procurement process are done every three years at a minimum. The UWB has three contractors that were awarded contracts under this process: Arbor E&T, LLC d/b/a ResCare, Workforce/Services (RWS), the USC Upstate ACHIEVE Program and The YouthStop™ Educational Services Center.

The UWB Chief Operating Officer (COO) directly monitors the WIOA service providers, the American Job Center (SC Works) and the two youth programs. The providers consistently meet with the COO to ensure WIOA compliance at the federal, state and local levels. SC Works receives survey monthly results from WIOA clients (job seekers and employers).

The UWB issues a RFP every three years for the operation of the SC Works One-Stop System. The cost of the entire system, to include infrastructure, is included in the proposals submitted. Board staff members compare and analyze the following costs: rental space; staff salaries; copier costs; cleaning services; security; utilities; and other miscellaneous costs.

### **Conclusion**

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