

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, SCWQS~~

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 via 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 exits. 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	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 Business 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.